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S.B. No. 1 (Plain)

Special Report

SUBJECT Anti-Apartheid Demonstration

Reference to Papers 400/70/154

39A

METROPOLITAN POLICE

[redacted] 29/4/71

INDEXED
Date 29.4.71 Initials [redacted]

SPECIAL BRANCH

25th day of October 1970

1. Following publicity in the national and political press a demonstration took place, on Sunday 25th October 1970, in central London, organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement, to protest against the British Government's intention to resume the sale of arms to the South African Government.

2. The day's events were preceded by a small march, organised by the Streatham Labour and Liberal Parties, starting at 11.20am outside the Brixton London Transport Garage, Streatham High Road, S.W.16, when some twenty person assembled and marched peacefully by way of Brixton Hill, Brixton Road, The Oval, Kennington Park Road, Kennington Lane, Westminster Bridge Road and Westminster Bridge to the Victoria Embankment, W.C.2, where they joined the main bulk of demonstrators at about 2pm. They were accompanied by uniformed police throughout and no incidents took place.

3. The main demonstration commenced as expected with a march which assembled on the Victoria Embankment outside Charing Cross Tube Station. By the time the march moved off, at about 2.40pm, some 3,500 to 4,000 persons were involved, mainly students, including contingents from many of the universities in this country, and other organisations representing the broad spectrum of political bodies sympathetic to the Anti-Apartheid Movement. (See Appendix 'A'). Accompanied by uniform police the march proceeded via Victoria Embankment, Temple Place, Norfolk Street, and the Strand to Trafalgar Square, where they joined a crowd of some 2,000 (including casual spectators) waiting to hear the speakers at the meeting which followed. Banners carried by the marchers, which echoed the slogans chanted en route, are included in Appendix 'B'.

4. The meeting commenced at 3.30pm and ended at 4.50pm by which time some 8,000 persons were present in and around Trafalgar Square. A summary of the speeches made is included later in this report. In general the crowd was peaceful and no incidents occurred, at this stage, connected with the Anti-Apartheid demonstration. There were however, small contingents of anarchists, obviously intent on 'trouble' but lacking the necessary leadership and influence to be able to arouse support. At about 4.10pm a small contingent of about 60 Maoists, including some 20 coloured and oriental people, arrived in Trafalgar Square, having marched from Hyde Park with the intention of protesting at Canada House over the treatment of the F.L.Q. (a separatist movement in Quebec). They had been

M.P.-70-83694/20M W112

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intercepted and accompanied by uniform police from Oxford Street and on reaching Canada House refused to comply with police instructions regarding the placing of their pickets or dispersing. They attacked the police cordon and 35 arrests followed (See Appendix 'D'). Whilst the arrests were taking place the contingents of anarchists attending the main rally joined in the melee and remained in that corner of the Square shouting abuse at the police cordon, until shortly before the rally concluded when they moved across the Square to the front of South Africa House. They made an abortive attempt to breach the police cordon at this point and were moved on to the pavement of Trafalgar Square opposite.

5. As the meeting in Trafalgar Square broke up at 4.50pm the demonstrators split into two groups. The smaller group comprising some 50 persons, including the leaders of the organisations represented among the speakers, made their way down Whitehall to Downing Street to present petitions and letters of protest at No. 10. These were pushed through the letter box, as no-one answered the door, a fact which caused some annoyance to Reg PRENTICE M.P. and Andrew FAULDS M.P., who were among those who presented the petition.

6. Meanwhile the larger group from Trafalgar Square, comprising some 2,000 persons and including many anarchists, formed into a column behind a model of a 'Buccaneer' aircraft some 10' long and mounted on wheels, and marched via Cockspur Street and Pall Mall to St. James Square, S.W.1 to demonstrate outside the offices of the Hawker Siddeley Co. Ltd. They entered St. James Square by the South-west corner but were prevented from approaching the offices of Hawker Siddeley by a cordon of police. The model aircraft was used in an attempt to breach the police cordon and in the general melee that followed plastic balls containing red paint were thrown but for the most part the paint fell into the roadway and no serious damage was done. The model aircraft burst into flames when it was overturned by the police cordon but it was quickly extinguished by the officers without having recourse to the fire brigade. Several arrests were made during this fracas. The demonstrators were contained by police and eventually moved out into Pall Mall where, with the aid of mounted patrolmen, they were split into two groups. A small group made their way to St. James Palace and dispersed quietly. The larger group, about 1,000 strong, formed into a column and marched back towards Trafalgar Square where they halted outside South Africa House, at about 5.30pm.

7. At about 5.45pm a group of about 500 young people broke away from the crowd outside the front of South Afica House and made off down Whitehall with the expressed intention of "releasing the prisoners held at Canon Row Police Station". On reaching Derby Gate and Canon Row they were contained by police cordons and shortly afterwards ran around Bridge Street S.W.1 into Victoria Embankment and thence to Horse Guards Avenue where they were halted by a cordon of police. They immediately sat

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down on the lawn in front of the Ministry of Defence and were surrounded by uniformed officers. After consultation with senior police officers it was agreed that a deputation of two members of the group would be allowed to go to Canon Row Police Station to speak to senior officers there but when this was put to those present the demonstrators refused to accept. They were therefore moved by police and eventually made their way to Northumberland Avenue where they dispersed at about 6.30pm. A large number of spectators had remained in Trafalgar Square throughout this latter period and small groups of demonstrators had roamed idly in the vicinity but no other incidents occurred. By 7.30pm all was quiet.

8. In all, during the demonstration and coincidental incidents, 65 persons were arrested, details of whom are given in appendix "D".

9. During the rally in Trafalgar Square, the chairman, John ENNALS, confined his remarks to introducing the speakers and giving potted histories of their activities against the apartheid policy. The first speaker was Mike TERRY of the National Union of Students who initially thanked the Anti-Apartheid Movement for organising the rally and enabling such groups as the N.U.S and other progressive bodies to combine in a single unit to voice their opposition to the sale of arms to South Africa. This policy was one that would inevitably produce in South Africa a situation akin to that in Vietnam. In a country where so many of the native sons were fighting in liberation movements against a governing racialist minority it must be recognised that support for such a government, either by economic or political links, must lead to a confrontation that would be devastating in its effect.

10. Canon COLLINS, of the International Defence and Aid Fund, quoted from a recent speech by Mr HEATH in which he stated that the British people didn't want to be pushed around, and then posed the question of what British people Mr HEATH was referring to. A reputable opinion poll had shown that at least 50% of the British people were opposed to the sale of arms to South Africa. Until the South African government changed its apartheid policy it should not be sold arms and this would be in our own interests to preserve world peace and avoid race war. Submarines could not be used against South Africans but they could be used to stop a United Nations blockade. He concluded by expressing the pride it gave him to be associated with the rally and hoped that his friends in the Labour Party would come out in firm opposition to the policy of the sale of arms.

11. Reg SEPTEMBER of the African National Congress gave a very reasoned speech stating that he represented the ideals of Chief LUTHULI, the Nobel Prize winner, and also the aims of those freedom fighters carrying on an unceasing campaign against the racialist governments in Southern Africa. He compared life as known to everyone living in this country with conditions experienced by

the average black African in his homeland. Things we took for granted here, like power to vote, to work in skilled trades, to join the professions, were all banned to the majority in South Africa. He expressed satisfaction that the attitude of the Churches, the Labour Party and the United Nations was now turning to one of condemnation of the apartheid system imposed in South Africa and he urged the Conservative Government not to negotiate with a white minority government in that country as it was becoming more and more obvious that that government was based on "shifting sands".

12. The next speaker was Dick SEABROOK of the Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers, who complained of the lack of trade union banners on the rally and said that his union had backed the A.A.M from its inception, and was the first to send a protest to the Government concerning the planned arms sale. He went on to give examples of the differences in working conditions between the two races in South Africa quoting wages, infant mortality rates and the black tuberculosis rate. United Kingdom business interests had investments in South Africa totalling many millions and this money was needed in this country to assist in our balance of payments. He stressed the plan of action trade unionists should follow in attempting to stop the sale of arms - by blacking cargoes and refusing to work for firms exporting goods to South Africa.

13. The Rt. Rev. David SHEPPARD, the Bishop of Woolwich, spoke of the great issues currently existing throughout the world. The sale of arms to South Africa was not in itself the real issue for that country, rather it was the desire to have this 'badge of respectability' that the tacit support granted by the sale would give South Africa. It wasn't sufficient to condemn apartheid on moral grounds and still carry on business trading. The moral and business issues could not be separated. Christianity always decreed the dictum of help for your brother but it was right that if that brother misbehaved himself he should be corrected.

14. Reg PRENTICE M.P. stated that his resignation from the Labour Govt. was because he had disagreed /their policy /with concerning the sale of arms. Not only the left wing press but the right wing press also were now against the proposed sale. The threat of Soviet naval forces in the Indian ocean was exaggerated and the presence of a handful of frigates and aircraft would obviously make no difference to the situation. He drew attention to the fact that only three members of the present Conservative cabinet had ever set foot in Africa so how could they know the conditions prevailing in that country. If such a sale went through it would convince Ian SMITH that Rhodesia could demand favourable concessions in any future negotiations.

15. Abdul MINTY of the Anti-Apartheid Movement emphasised that it was generally known that freedom fighters were waging campaigns in South West Africa,

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Mozambique and Rhodesia and it was not possible to ignore the rightful demands of these people. It would be hypocritical to claim that the weapons of war sold to South Africa would only be used in defence of that country. British weapons and armaments were currently being used in oppresive police actions against these people. The A.A.M. had been fighting for many years against the apartheid system and would continue to fight as long as the white minority ruled to the detriment of the black majority. He stated that the rally was only the beginning of the current campaign. He called for pressures to be brought by lobbying M.P.s, action through trade unions and letters to the national press. He ended by making an appeal for membership of the A.A.M.

16. The last speaker was Paul FOOT, the well known humorist from 'Private Eye'. His speech was the one that drew the most appreciation from the crowd because he made them laugh, mainly at the expense of Sir Alec Douglas HOME. He poured ridicule on the idea that the Cape routes must be protected. The policy of the present government appeared to be more influenced by racist solidarity rather than military strategy. The government of white Africa epitomised white supremacy in a black continent. He went on to suggest that little support could be expected from the leaders of the former Labour government as when in power their policies differed very little from current policies. He urged all present to unite behind the new mood of militancy growing rapidly in this country and smash the type of political regime that breeds on racialism.

17. Messages of support were read at various times during the rally from Mrs. Indira GHANDI, Prime Minister of India; the Nigerian High Commissioner; Hugh SCANLON, General Secretary of the A.E.F.; Lawrence DALY, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers; and the Bakers Union.

18. Persons identified as taking part in the demonstration are listed in Appendix 'C'.

Chief Inspector
R. Wilson

[redacted]
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT.

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APPENDIX "A"

Organisations supporting the Anti-Apartheid meeting held on 25.10.1970 in Trafalgar Square and their respective Special Branch references :

African National Congress	400/67/194
Aston Socialists	346/68/1-44E app "a"
Bexley Young Communist League	No trace 400/64/73
Cambridge University Socialist Club	400/60/120
Catford Young Communist League	400/65/210
Central London United Nations Association	No trace
City of London & Westminster Trades Council	"
City Polytechnic Union	"
Edinburgh Anti-Apartheid	400/65/74-8b
Edinburgh Union Socialist Society	No trace
Exeter University Anti-Apartheid	"
Gloucester Labour Party Young Socialists	"
Goldsmith College Socialist Society N/C	400/50/226-1a
G.L.C. Labour Party Young Socialists N/C	371/69/55b-29b
Hackney Committee Against Racialism	346/70/5-36a;40a;51a
Havering Anti-Apartheid Committee	No trace
Highgate Communist Party	400/64/50
India Workers' Association	400/68/191
International Socialism- Ilford	No trace
Keele University Students Union	"
Kingston Polytechnic Students	"
Kingston & Richmond Anti-Apartheid Committee	400/67/70
Leatherhead Anti-Apartheid	No trace
Leeds University Socialist Society	346/68/15B-22a
London District Communist Party	400/70/173
Mid-Surrey Anti-Apartheid	No trace
Peace Pledge Union	400/69/216
Plumstead Anti-Apartheid Movement	No trace
Potters Bar Young Liberals	"
Putney Young Liberals	371/69/55B-2a
Queen Mary's College Socialists	400/67/84-57a
Sussex University Socialist Action Committee	No trace
Sutton & Cheam Anti-Apartheid	400/65/41
University of Surrey Students' Union	No trace
Womens' International League for Peace & Freedom	301/AFAW/308

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APPENDIX "B"

Banners and slogans displayed on an Anti-Apartheid Movement march to Trafalgar Square on 25.10.1970.

"Heath is hollow"
Apartheid is wrong
Anti-Apartheid demands release of South Africans
British arms will make great contribution to S. Africa way of life
No sell-out to Apartheid
Stop collaboration with racialism
Sarecens for another Sharpesville
Herr MULLER loves home
University of Essex condemns Simonstown
Boycott Apartheid
Black Heath
No arms pacts, deals with S. Africa
Why don't you sell arms to Hitler
Wales rejects Apartheid
Arms with love from Ted
Don't start a race war
Hawker-Siddley arms mongers to S. Africa
Back Kuanda
Don't play with Apartheid
No blood money from S. Africa
Britain invests in S. African slavery
Free Mandela
Racialism means fascism

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APPENDIX 'C'

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PERSONS IDENTIFIED AS TAKING PART IN ANTI - APARTHEID DEMONSTRATION ON SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER 1970 TOGETHER WITH REFERENCES IN SPECIAL BRANCH RECORDS.

Privacy

COLLINS, Canon John ✓ RF 402/ Privacy

Privacy

FAULDS, Andrew ✓ RF 405/59/1641
FOOT, Paul ✓ RF 405/64/395

Privacy

APPENDIX 'C' (continued)

Privacy

GURNEY, Christobel ✓ RF 405/70/17

HAIN, Peter ✓ RF 405/69/702

Privacy

R.A.

MINTY, Abdul ✓ RF 405/ Privacy

Privacy

PRENTICE, Reg ✓ RF 405/64/292

Privacy

APPENDIX 'C' (continued)

Privacy

SEABROOK, ✓ RF 402/

SEPTEMBER, Reg ✓ RF 402/

Privacy

Privacy

SHEPPARD, ✓ David, Right Rev. Bishop of Woolwich
RF 405/70/415

Privacy

TERRY, Mike ✓

Privacy

Privacy