

B E T W E E N:

THE MAYOR ALDERMEN AND BURGESSES
OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM Applicants

- and -

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE OF THE
METROPOLIS Respondent

I, DAVID BLACKSTOCK McNEE, QPM of New Scotland
Yard, Broadway, S.W.1H OBG MAKE OATH and say as
follows:-

1. I am Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.
2. I am informed and verily believe that meetings were held and arrangements were made by officers acting under my direction and control as described in the paragraphs set out hereunder.
3. On Tuesday the 26th July, 1977 at 3 p.m. at Catford Police Station a meeting took place between representatives of an organisation known as the National Front and senior police officers of the Metropolitan Police Force. The National Front gave notice of intention to hold a demonstration on Saturday, the 13th August, 1977. It was agreed by the Metropolitan Police Officers that a march could take place along a certain route commencing at 3 p.m. Notice of the agreed route, a copy of which is now produced to me and marked DBM 1 was served on a representative of the National Front.
4. On Tuesday the 26th July, 1977 at 4.30 p.m. at Catford Police Station a meeting took place between members of the "All Lewisham Committee of Racism and Fascism" and senior officers of the Metropolitan Police Force concerning a proposed counter-demonstration to that of the National Front on Saturday, the 13th

August, 1977. No route for the counter-demonstration was proposed at that meeting but the senior Metropolitan Police officer impressed upon members of the Committee the importance of organising an assembly point and route of any march at a different time and different location from the National Front.

5. At 5 p.m. on Tuesday the 26th July, 1977 Roland Moyle M.P., John Silkin M.P., Christopher Price M.P., Dr. Mervyn Stockwood, Bishop of Southwark, the Reverend Father Naylor and Councillor Roger Godsiff Mayor of Lewisham attended New Scotland Yard to express their objection to the proposed National Front march in the Deptford area and requested me to apply to the Secretary of State for Home Affairs for an order banning the march. They were informed that the police were satisfied that having regard to the times of each demonstration and the prescribed routes agreed with the organisers no serious public disorder should ensue.

6. On the 27th July, 1977 a representative of the All Lewisham Committee against Racism and Fascism telephoned the Superintendent in charge of Lewisham Police Station and as a result of that telephone conversation agreement was reached as to the route of a counter-demonstration march to be held by that organisation on the 13th August, 1977 commencing at 11 a.m. A Notice in a similar form to Exhibit DBM 1 setting out the route was served on the organiser.

7. The question of the routes to be taken by each organisation was reviewed the same day by the Deputy Assistant Commissioner responsible for Public Order at New Scotland Yard and as a result further meetings took place on Tuesday the 2nd August, 1977 at Catford Police Station with representatives of each organisation

separately when revised routes for the respective marches were agreed and Notice of these routes, copies of which are now produced to me and marked DBM 2 and DBM 3 were served on the respective organisers. These were not directions under Section 3 (1) of the Public Order Act, 1936.

8. Having considered all the circumstances I have no reasonable grounds for apprehending that either of the processions will occasion serious public disorder and I do not think it necessary to give any directions under sub-section (1) of Section 3 of the Act, let alone make use of the provisions of sub-section (3) of the said Section. Experience has shown that most organisations do not depart from a route which has been agreed with my officers and this has proved to be so in the past with regard to the National Front. The All Lewisham Committee against Racism and Fascism is a new organisation but I have no reason to believe that its organisers will ignore the agreed route.

9. It has, however, been brought to my attention that there is circulating in the Lewisham District a pamphlet, a copy of which is now produced and shown to me marked DBM 4. The organisers of this body have not been in touch with the police with regard to holding the assembly referred to in the pamphlet Exhibit DBM 4. My officers were informed at the first meeting with the All Lewisham Committee against Racism and Fascism that a member of their organisation who is also a member of the Socialist Workers Party had indicated that they were also organising a separate counter-demonstration but no information was available as to its time and venue. I am informed that all attempts to contact the headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party have

far been unsuccessful.

10. Arrangements have been made to my satisfaction for a sufficient number of police to be on duty in the district in which each of the proposed marches are to be held and also to be available to control any activity resulting from the unauthorised meeting of the Socialist Workers Party and I am satisfied in the light of the information made available to me by my senior officers that the police are able to maintain control of the situation and to prevent any serious disorder occurring.

11. I have read the report of the Inquiry by the Right Honourable Lord Justice Scarman OBE into the Red Lion Square disturbances of the 15th June, 1974 and in particular the principles enunciated in paragraphs 69 and 70 of the Report and I have been advised as to the law by the Solicitor to the Metropolitan Police.

12. I have also been made aware of the history of previous occasions when there have been conflicting demonstrations of this kind and the action taken by the police to deal with them.

13. In the exercise of my powers under Section 52 of the Metropolitan Police Act, 1839 I have made a regulation affecting traffic in the area but having regard to the number of Police available to be deployed in the maintenance of law and order and to prevent serious public disorder I have no reasonable ground for believing that any of the processions, including the Socialist Workers Party, will occasion serious public disorder, and for that reason, so far as the

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All Lewisham Committee against Racism and Fascism National Front and the ~~Socialist Workers Party~~ are

concerned, my officers have agreed routes and I do not consider it necessary to use my powers under

Section 3 of the Public Order Act, 1936.

14. In view of the time factor the whole of my Affidavit so far has been settled without the benefit of the applicant's evidence, which arrived at New Scotland Yard at approximately 2.40 p.m. and having regard to the shortage of time available it will be impossible to deal fully with everything set out in the Affidavit of Mr. Pepper. However, in Paragraph 8 Mr. Pepper exhibits as RWP 6 a copy of a letter written by me to Mr. Christopher Price, M.P. I adhere entirely to the views which I expressed in that letter.

15. Having carefully read every point made on behalf of the applicant by Mr. Pepper I remain convinced that I should not approach the Secretary of State for consent to make any prohibition order under Section 3 (3) of the Public Order Act, 1936 because in spite of what he says I am of the opinion that my powers are sufficient to enable me to prevent serious public disorder, and in the circumstances I ask that the Summons should be dismissed.

SWORN at *New Scotland Yard* }
in the *City of Westminster* }
this 10th day of August, }
1977 }

Yvonne White

Before me,

Colin McCulloch

A Commissioner for Oaths