

12 MAY 1979

INITIAL DRAFT REPORT

SOUTHALL DEMONSTRATION WITH SERIOUS DISORDER / AND DEATH MONDAY 23 APRIL 1979

INTRODUCTION

1. On 19 April 1979 a report was first received in A8 of a march at Southall on Sunday 22 April 1979 and a National Front Meeting on Monday 23 April at Southall Town Hall. However, prior to this there had been some considerable consultation between Chief Inspector [redacted] ^[1], Community Liaison Officer 'X' District, and members of various associations from the Southall area, together with the Anti Nazi League and Socialist Workers Party.

PRELIMINARY MEETINGS

2. Chief Inspector [redacted] ^[2], with Inspector [redacted] ^[3], attended a meeting on 11 April at the Dominion Cinema in Southall at the invitation of the Indian Workers Association. There were about 70 people from a number of organisations and the Church. The meeting was chaired by Vishner Dutt SHARMA, President of the Indian Workers Association. It was stated that the meeting was to decide what form of protest the community should make to the National Front's presence in Southall on 23 April. Shortly after the meeting commenced [redacted] Privacy [redacted] organiser of the Anti Nazi League, Southall, proposed that police officers should be excluded from the meeting. He was supported by other left wingers and although others, more reasonable, wished the police to stay SHARMA overruled them and without taking a vote the police officers were requested to leave. It is pertinent to note [redacted] Privacy was arrested in the

Anti Nazi League demonstration in Leicester on 21 April and was thought to be involved in the violent attack on police at 6 Park View Road on 23 April mentioned later.

3. Chief Inspector 4 afterwards learnt from others who attended the meeting that there would be an appeal for a complete shut down of all Southall from 1.00pm, and for a demonstration outside the Town Hall commencing at 5.00pm, when they would probably sit down in the road and offer themselves for arrest as their form of protest. The Southall Youth Movement had disassociated themselves from this form of protest.

4. Chief Inspector 5 suggested to Chief Superintendent DEE of Southall Division that a meeting be called of the responsible community leaders. This was done, and arranged for Tuesday 17 April 1979 at Southall Police Station. 19 persons attended, including representatives from Chamber of Commerce, Anti Nazi League, Churches, Social and Welfare, and Southall Youth Movement. Their names are shown at Appendix 'A'. Chief Inspector 6 had spoken to those attending and appealed to them to use their influence to prevent the irresponsible elements causing disorder on 23 April.

5. At the meeting Chief Superintendent DEE pleaded with those present to stay at home and keep away from the National Front meeting. There was a great deal of heat engendered by certain of the groups and they made it clear that a protest was necessary and would be held, stating that it would take the form of a peaceful march and sit down outside the Town Hall. They

were warned of the consequences of any such action.

POLICE ARRANGEMENTS

6. Chief Superintendent DEE attended A8 and saw the A/Commander on Thursday 19 April 1979 with his preliminary report, and the preliminary arrangements for policing the Sunday march and the Monday demonstration were discussed. It was considered that this National Front meeting would be policed in a similar way to those at Battersea and Islington, that is to cordon the area and allow in a limited number of demonstrators through filter cordons into pre-arranged positions within sight of the Town Hall. The Special Branch assessment showed a potential for disorder and possible violence, with over 1,000 participating on Monday 23 April. In view of this cordons were arranged to seal off the area if necessary and the preliminary police arrangements were for 1 DAC, 2 Commanders and 2871 other officers, including 94 mounted.
7. On Sunday 22 April the march took place as arranged from the Dominion Cinema to Ealing Town Hall. About 3,000 took part and there was considerable disorder, mainly from the Southall Youth Movement, and on more than one occasion there were organised sit downs. DAC 'A' (Ops) was convinced that because of the mood of the young people on the march there was a strong possibility of violence on 23 April. He therefore arranged for a further Commander on this demonstration. Thus the command structure was to be:-

In command	DAC HELM
Protection of Southall Town Hall	Commander RICHARDSON
Lady Margaret Road and High Street	" RUSHBROOK
South Road and The Broadway	" DOVEY.

BRIEFINGS AND TACTICS

8. On Friday 20 April DAC'A' (Ops) carefully briefed Commander RICHARDSON and Commander RUSHBROOK on the tactical deployments and a thorough briefing was later given to all senior officers on the demonstration, down to and including Inspectors.

9. The tactics to be employed were to allow demonstrators into the area to be contained by police in the following positions:-

1. West footway of Lady Margaret Road
2. West footway of South Road
3. Avenue Road to the junction of High Street

10. Arrangements were made to seal off the area if it became necessary at the following points:-

Uxbridge Road at junction of Greenford Avenue

Lady Margaret Road at junction of Shackleton Road

High Street at junction of North Road

South Road at junction of Beaconsfield Road.

11. There were also officers to provide the necessary cordons at side streets in the area to completely seal them off. There would also be police to marshal demonstrators at the 3 locations mentioned earlier.

12. Further police were to be employed behind demonstrators at the cordons to deal with organisers of disorder and missile throwing. Mounted serials to be available if required to support each cordon. Ample Reserves were posted at strategic points, and it will be seen that because of the shortage of time the Operation Order No100 for this demonstration was sent out on teleprinter on 19 April and did not show the exact deployment. These were carefully given at the briefings on 20 April.

Appendices
C - F

13. The police arrangements were originally to commence at 12 noon with mobile reserves patrolling the area but as a result of information from Special Branch that the Southall Youth Movement intended to protest at 1.00pm, two serials were brought on earlier - namely at 11.30am.

DEMONSTRATION - EARLY EVENTS

14. Chief Inspector ⁷ [REDACTED] 'X' District, was in charge of the mobile reserves and at 12.15pm saw a group of about 25, mostly Asian, walking north in The Green. One was recognised as being wanted on warrant for non-appearance at Court. He was arrested and another Asian tried to free him; this resulted in a second arrest for 'obstruction of police.' There were some protestations namely from a white woman in the group. Heavy rain then dispersed this group to shelter. Shops were closing and many were boarded up.

15. At 1.15pm Chief Inspector ⁸ [REDACTED] saw a group of about 100 Asian youths walking east along the north footway in The Broadway. He spoke to the apparent leader who said they were just walking around. On reaching the Town

Hall, one of the group suggested they sit down but no one did.

16. There was a gradual build up on all corners of the junction by the Town Hall and Chief Inspector ⁹ [REDACTED] posted his men on each corner. The police officers were instructed to keep the footway open for pedestrians.
17. Between 1.15pm and 2.15pm, the numbers increased and further police were sent for to keep the area free for pedestrian movement. However, there was an increased reluctance to move away by the Asians.
18. At 1.50pm a youth was arrested outside the Town Hall for being in possession of an offensive weapon, viz a stiletto knife. There were a number of Asians in the vicinity of the Three Horseshoes Public House. These were obviously spoiling for confrontation and on the advice of the Chief Inspector the licensee stopped serving.
19. As further police arrived, the demonstrators were moved south down South Road. There was a lot of movement - crossing the road apparently at the instigation of a white woman. Bottles were thrown by the demonstrators and some arrests were made.

LATER DISORDER

20. Soon after this, a crowd of demonstrators built up in The Broadway. Between 3.00pm and 4.00pm there was considerable disorder. An LTE Bus was boarded by a number of demonstrators who then smashed the windows. Stones and bottles

were thrown at police. Shields were brought into use at 3.40pm.

21. At this time, it was decided that because of the breaches of the peace, the injuries and damage, the outer cordons would be put in. This was done. There were crowds of demonstrators at three of the cordons - South Road, High Street and The Broadway.
22. DAC'A' (Ops) decided to send for Commander HUNT to assist. On arrival he was carefully briefed and at 5.15pm was put in command of The Broadway area. We now had Deputy Assistant Commissioner in command, Commander RICHARDSON at Southall Town Hall, Commander RUSHBROOK at High Street and Lady Margaret Road, Commander DOVEY at South Road and Commander HUNT at The Broadway. The operational control from a forward control was at Southall Police Station. This was put under the charge of Chief Superintendent PERRETT with officers from A8, B6 and local police stations.
23. Commander HUNT had continuous problems in The Broadway with sporadic missile throwing and continuous chanting of anti-Nazi and anti-police slogans. In addition to his cordons across The Broadway, he had serials of police deployed behind the crowd. The number of demonstrators in this area varied up to 1500 or more. At times, the cordons in The Broadway had to be moved west to protect property in shops whose windows had been broken. In all, nineteen windows were broken in this street. Commander HUNT also had to deploy serials including the Special Patrol Group to deal with serious disorder. Missiles were continuously being thrown. It was in one

of these incidents that Blair PEACH lost his life. Commander CASS, CIB2, is currently investigating this matter.

24. When Commander DOVEY went to South Road to supervise the cordon at the junction with Beaconsfield Road he found that a crowd of Asian demonstrators, about 300 in number, had been shepherded over the railway bridge into The Green. He allowed them to come back over the bridge from The Green. They stopped some forty yards away from the police cordon and sat down. They completely blocked the road which would normally have carried a considerable weight of traffic. The position had dangerous potential as the demonstrators were able to throw missiles at the police if they chose to. The Asians were being organised by persons with loudhailers. Commander DOVEY tried to persuade them to move. They said they wished to go to the Town Hall. They were told that they could do so but in groups of three or four. They agreed. However, a bottle and stones were thrown at the police. It was decided to warn them that unless they moved they would be arrested.
25. Police were deployed at the rear of this crowd and when the demonstrators would not move three serials of police from 'L' District were carefully briefed to make arrests with the minimum of force and fuss. This was done and there were numerous arrests. Afterwards, the remainder either moved off the road or were ushered away by police. There was no further problem in this area and it would appear that most of the demonstrators left to join the crowd at The Broadway or the High Street.

Appendix
'G'

26. At the time Commander DOVEY was dealing with South Road there was a further outbreak of disorder and violence at the High Street cordon. The police cordon in the High Street was placed a few yards east of North Road to protect the Police Station from missile throwing. The numbers of demonstrators at this cordon varied throughout the day from 500 to over 2000. They included a number of hostile black youths who were seen to be kicking down a small brick wall obviously intent on getting missiles to throw at police. Extra police were deployed behind this crowd. At about 6.30pm there was a concerted attack on the police cordon, bricks, stones and a smoke cannister were thrown and a number of police were injured, one police officer was stabbed. There was a concerted effort to breach the police cordon and some officers were cut off by the crowd. Two serials of mounted officers were brought forward and dispersed the crowd, two mounted officers were injured and they used their long truncheons to disperse the crowd. They were followed by shield serials commanded by Ch. Superintendent TROTMAN. Many of the demonstrators dispersed into Southall Park whilst others went into Park View Road, some of these started stoning police from the garden of number 6 Park View Road, as they were dispersed by police there was a heavy concentrated shower of missiles thrown from the house, they included
27. It was necessary to enter and take these premises which were occupied by squatters. This was a difficult task and the officers came under heavy attack from missiles thrown from the top floor, the stairs being heavily barricaded. One PC was knocked unconscious, another suffered a fractured ankle. Paint and other articles were thrown down the stairs. Police were

twice forced to retreat down the stairs because of the violence of the occupants including 4 persons behind the barrier who were lashing out with chair legs. Chief Inspector [REDACTED] eventually persuaded the occupants of the top floor to surrender and they removed the barricade and were taken into custody. Over 80 persons were arrested either in or outside 6 Park View Road for various offences. 7 motor vehicles were damaged and 12 police officers were injured. There was damage to the uniform of 75 police officers mainly from paint in 6 Park View Road.

28. Police were re-grouped and the cordon placed in its original position and the number of demonstrators was considerably reduced. At about 6.00pm an elderly National Front supporter was found in the railway siding of Southall Station with a fractured jaw and a broken nose after being attacked by a group of black youths. He was admitted to hospital in a serious condition. He is still detained in Ealing Hospital.

NATIONAL FRONT MEETING

29. The National Front members started to arrive at 7.30pm mainly down Lady Margaret Road, although some came by way of South Road. The number to enter the hall was restricted by the Council to 60. The Council wished to have 20 members of the public in the hall. These were chosen at random - 5 from each of the 4 police cordons.
30. Because of the serious disorder it was decided on the grounds of safety not to allow any demonstrators through the police cordons, although persons

living in the area were allowed freedom of movement.

31. There was a group of about 50 persons contained on the footway opposite the Town Hall and one Asian had loudspeaker equipment on a first floor property opposite from which he continuously broadcast anti National Front slogans. There was no disorder at the meeting which ended at 9.30pm and the National Front dispersed by way of Lady Margaret Road.
32. It should be mentioned that when the Town Hall was full National Front and supporters were still arriving. They were not allowed through the police cordons but escorted away from the area. The demonstrators started to disperse, the cordons were removed and at 10.00pm traffic was allowed into the area.

CONCLUSIONS

33. Once the Ealing Borough Council had given permission for the National Front to hold their meeting in Southall Town Hall there was a potential for serious disorder and once more police were to find themselves in the middle between the opposing factors and being accused, by the opposition, of protecting the National Front.
34. The Community Liaison Officer and the Chief Superintendent of Southall division tried their very best to cool the situation but they were fighting

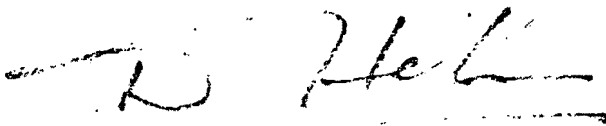
a losing battle and the potential for violence became patently obvious on the Sunday march.

35. Police could be accused of keeping the demonstrators too far away from the Town Hall, but it should be remembered that arrangements had been made for demonstrators to be in positions much closer to the Town Hall, but the early violence and disorder, hours before the arrival of the National Front, made it unwise for any but a few to be allowed through the police cordon.
36. The Community leaders were conspicuous by their absence on this occasion although it is believed they will say they were unable to pass through the police cordon.

CONDUCT OF POLICE

37. At the early stages police were patient and indeed tolerant in the face of disorder and abuse. When there were attacks on the police cordon by weapons and a variety of missiles those on duty showed professional ability in restoring order by firm and courageous policing. I have nothing but admiration for their conduct when under severe stress for a long period of time.

Appendix



D Helm
Deputy Assistant Commissioner 'A'
(Operations)