

BRANCH NOTE

Metropolitan Police Office
A8 Branch

25 April 1979

NATIONAL FRONT ELECTION MEETING AT SOUTHALL 23 APRIL 1979

DE-BRIEF

1. On Monday 23 April 1979, following the public order event, Mr D HELM, QPM Deputy Assistant Commissioner 'A' (Operations) held a de-brief in the Administration Offices at Southall Police Station commencing at 10.55pm. Present were the following:-

D POWIS Esq	Deputy Assistant Commissioner 'C' (Operations)
A DELLOW Esq	" " " " No 1 Area
Commanders RICHARDSON	'X' District
DOVEY	'C' "
RUSHBROOK	Airport District

All Chief Superintendents employed on the event

Additionally Superintendent [redacted] 1 (XS) the officer responsible for policing the Town Hall (inside)

Chief Inspector [redacted] 2 CLO

Detective Superintendent [redacted] 3 'X' District

Representatives from Press Bureau, Special Branch and Catering.

2. Mr HELM commenced the de-brief by referring to the excellent standard of policing that he had witnessed during the course of the event. It was stated that those present should know that they could be proud of the Metropolitan Police Force.

3. In particular he made reference to Chief Inspector [redacted] 4 Community Relations Officer 'X' District. This officer had worked extremely hard throughout, not only to ameliorate difficult situations but also to assist and advise all senior officers engaged. Special Branch were to be congratulated. Mr HELM complimented them on the very good information that they had been able to provide, not only prior to but during the course of the event. It was very difficult to give an accurate assessment, and during the course of both Sunday and Monday their assessment had been close to the mark. He then called upon the Commanders to outline the events that had occurred on their sectors.

4. Commander RUSHBROOK stated that between 1.00pm and 3.00pm there had been groups of youths moving towards the Town Hall. These groups had been policed and continuously moved away from the immediate area, but by 2.30pm a group of 200 had been cordoned by police in South Road 200 yards from the Town Hall. This group contained members of the Southall Youth Movement. It was noisy, but well contained. Further small groups began to develop in the area around the Town Hall and these were moved into the Broadway and contained. The group in the Broadway began to swell in number, either because of gradual dispersal from South Road from the group that had already been contained, or from other areas west of the Broadway or from movements west of the Broadway. The crowd was noisy at 3.00pm, and by 3.10pm stones were being thrown at the police cordon.

5. Commander RICHARDSON agreed with the opinions of Commander RUSHBROOK.
6. Chief Superintendent HIRD stated that he had brought a team of officers along with Commander DOVEY to the Broadway to reinforce the cordons. A double-decker bus was attacked by a group of youths who took timber from a parked lorry nearby. The bus remained stationary and police interceded to quieten the disturbance. Some arrests were made for this incident. The bus was unable to start and a police officer eventually moved the bus.
7. Commander DOVEY then moved to South Road where the crowd of youths were still present, and after the incident in the Broadway gradually moved them to the south of the bridge. He allowed sections of the crowd to return to the junction South Road/Beaconsfield Road in small numbers, and cordoned the position just south of the junction.
8. Referring to the incident at the High Street j/w Park View Road, Chief Superintendent WEST had been the officer in charge of a cordon of police 4 - 5 deep at this location. He had maintained shield serials behind the police cordon. The crowd he estimated was some 3,000 strong. There was previous information that Rastafarians keeping a 'squat' at 6 Park View Road intended to cause a disturbance. Cordons were placed across the footway. The demonstrators attacked by rushing forward throwing paint, stones, flares, smoke. One police officer was stabbed. The mounted serials went forward on his direction with truncheons drawn into the crowd, which broke up. The occupants of the 'squat' continued to bombard police and it was necessary on his instructions to send forward a shield serial to take the occupants out of the house. Numerous arrests were made and the raid was led by Chief Superintendent TROTMAN who gave instructions for those arrests. Just previous to this incident Chief Superintendent WISE had gone forward with 2 serials to a point beyond the 'squat' to prevent bric a brac being thrown by demonstrators against police. They were trapped behind the advancing crowd.
9. Referring to the incident at the Broadway Commander HUNT stated that after 5.30pm a large crowd gathered, but there were only sporadic incidents of stone throwing. A shop window of the Co-operative Store was smashed by youths at a point beyond Greenford Avenue. He had directed that the cordon should move west and remove 30 demonstrators who were situated on roof tops of shop premises. The shield serial from D8 was assigned to this task. Special Patrol Group and further shield serials were instructed to reinforce the cordon. The crowd then remained quiet until some time later when the crowd threw further stones at SPG Units. The SPG moved into a side turning, restored order, but took a few prisoners. The crowd remained quiet again, but subsequently became frustrated at not being allowed to go further forward (east). They broke shop windows and dissipated westwards.
10. Referring to the meeting at the Town Hall, Superintendent [REDACTED] stated that WEBSTER had asked for the audience to put their hands up if they were not National Front members. 12 put their hands up. 5 Asians who were present did not signify that they were not members of the National Front. A Council representative was spoken to by WEBSTER about the meeting being a public meeting, and he stated that he was satisfied that it was a public meeting. Throughout there were no incidents of heckling. The 5 Asians left at the break and there was no untoward incident. 2 representatives from A7 Branch were present along with Special Branch officers.

11. Commander RUSHBROOK made arrangements for the departure from the Town Hall. The candidates left via the north side into Lady Margaret Road and sufficient serials were deployed to escort them away from the area.
12. Commander HUNT referred to a crowd of 150 who purported to be sympathetic to the National Front being seen in the Broadway. Special Patrol Group had been deployed and the crowd had been displaced. Throughout there were sporadic movements by National Front supporters but these had been turned away.
13. Chief Superintendent STEVENS stated that a crowd of 150 SWP supporters had marched off towards Ealing via Uxbridge Road following the Park View incident. There was no further information concerning this incident.
14. Commander RICHARDSON stated that the demonstrators had arrived earlier than expected. Special Branch considered that there were only about 50 supporters of the SWP present throughout. Chief Inspector [REDACTED] 61, CLO, considered that the white left had successfully and steadily infiltrated the Asian community prior to the event, but were not significantly in evidence. Mr SHARMA, President of the IWA (Southall) had allowed the left wing forces, the Anti Nazi League and the SWP to become embroiled in local politics. His intentions were thought to be peaceful, but with this subversive influence he was unable to contain the younger element - the Southall Youth Movement. This political faction, made up of 400 members (half Asian and half Carribean) were responsible for the provocation offered to police.

CONCLUSION

15. Mr HELM outlined the injuries to police officers and the number of arrests made. He praised the efforts of the shield serials but criticised the containment by police and the use by sub-sector Commanders of reserve officers, including the SPG, without his approval. Mr HELM left the meeting.