



Copy No .../4

(173)

Mr Andrew
Mr Pilling

Sp Bch



Sir Brian Cubbon

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE METROPOLIS:
SPECIAL BRANCH

You will recall, only too well, the report MPSB sent me on 27 January. Following our discussion, Mr Pilling and I talked to Mr Hewett about our very serious concern at the breadth and tone of, and market for, that report. He gave us some answers at the time: it was his idea; it seemed to fit with what the Commissioner seemed to want; and SB were the only people well equipped to map this terrain. He had obviously not expected us to launch ourselves at him, welcomed the fact that we were not raising it formally, and undertook to reflect on what we had said.

...
2. The attached letter is the result. I do not think the response stands up to examination, and I doubt whether Mr Hewett really does either. He acknowledges that he has pushed to the limit a "broader concept of public order intelligence". This is meaningless as expressed, and dangerous in implication. Nor do I find it persuasive to argue that a mapping of monitoring groups (a perfectly sensible collation of, often, public information) could not have been done elsewhere in the Yard. A "secret" annex from MPSB, reflecting the intelligence on potential disorder which it has properly collected (as in a recent report on Hackney), would have fitted the bill.

3. But having said that, I doubt if further missiles of detailed criticism from us will improve things. I strongly doubt whether they will be tempted to paint on such a broad and sensitive canvas again. If you agree, I will tell Mr Hewett that we are grateful for his acknowledgement of the dangers the report contained; that we hold to the view that the only safe and practical course is to keep the public order focus of their work reasonably tightly defined; and - without mentioning this particular report - will probe the 'concept of public order intelligence' in our review of the role of Special Branches.

4. This last reference reveals that that particular skeleton is still in our cupboard. It will, however, be given a good shake soon. I have a meeting on the review planned for 18 March, and Mr Oxford and Mr Kelland are coming.

G H PHILLIPS

11. 3. 83



[REDACTED]
Special Branch,

174
18 MAR 83

New Scotland Yard,

Broadway,

LONDON, SW1H 0BG

G H Phillips Esq
Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
London
SW1H 9AT

Our reference:
361/83/15

4th March, 1983

Dear

Hayden,

We discussed the MPSB report on Political Extremism and the Campaign for Police Accountability within the Metropolitan Police District, which I had sent you on 27th January. I promised you an informal note and my thoughts on this.

The objective of the report was to provide a limited number of senior officers of the Force with an overview of the recent growth of monitoring groups and the motivations of certain persons either within those groups or supporting them. With this knowledge senior officers should be better prepared for any dialogue with the groups and also be aware of their potential to create such an atmosphere of dissatisfaction with the police that it could, due to some police misconduct or even at the slightest pretext, be expressed by anti-police or indiscriminate violent behaviour.

The report is however a contentious document because it relates to political extremism which is closely connected with elected GLC members openly carrying out their publicised policies. If I had to justify producing it I would say that it contains assessed intelligence relating to public order and it assists senior officers by drawing their attention to a further dimension in the policing environment.

I do not think that MPSB should take an active interest in individuals or groups just because they seem unpalatable to us, are highly critical of police or want to transform the present system of police accountability. We are dealing here with a broader concept of public order intelligence, and on this particular aspect have probably gone as far as a Special Branch should go. The Commissioner now has the opportunity to direct other officers to take note of the overt activities of these groups and to determine whether they are monitoring police activity fairly or are just engaged in destructive criticism.

.../...

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

It was appropriate for MPSB to prepare the report. Although some of the content had been published in some form or other, some information was from our secret sources and from the Security Service, and it would not really have been feasible to have supplied material for, say, a Branch in 'A' Department to formulate a report. Similarly, because we are not talking about 'subversion' in the accepted definition of the word, I would not have expected a Security Service initiative here. However, we are talking about political extremists so less there should be any doubt I should stress that we fully accept that subversion is a matter for the Security Service and that I do not intend that MPSB should either intrude on this role or attempt to duplicate any part of it.

I think that I appreciate the reasons for your concern over this matter, particularly as police accountability is a current and quite legitimate political issue in London. We can discuss this further if you wish.

Yours *sincerely,*

C V Hewett

C V Hewett
Deputy Assistant Commissioner