

2775

Extract No.

Info for review by
~~MIS/SB/OGD~~

SB report

Info to be Redacted

Please return

s. 3 (4)

1



MPS

3. 6. 2013

FOI Exemption

Date due to open

Reason/Justification for closure

2775



Mr. Hains
T.H.

M. Phillips

(21)

There is nothing here for us
to report to Ministers immediately
though we might keep track of
matters for S&D interest.

S.B. No. 1 (Plain)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Special Report

SPECIAL BRANCH

16th day of April 1981

SUBJECT

1. This is an assessment of the political activity taking place in Brixton since the disturbances of the 10th-13th April 1981 and the likely public order situation over the Easter weekend.

2. The information from Special Branch sources concurring with that of another Government Department indicates that the black community in Brixton feels that the riots were caused by a combination of (i) a belief that they are all second-class citizens, (ii) unemployment and (iii) a general feeling caused by the first two reasons that they are being oppressed by society in general and the police in particular. Frustration at being unable to do anything about this "oppression" (not assisted by the fact that there is no specifically West Indian political group through which they could effectively vent their feelings) built up, and reached such a peak as to explode on the streets when what was seen as another example of police "harassment" occurred.

Reference to Papers

3. Even black extremists agree that police were in fact acting in the interests of the black stab victim and that local blacks merely misunderstood what was happening.

A. Dean

4. There is no indication from any source that any subversive group, black or white, deliberately started or planned the disturbances. Our sources show that the various groups were taken off guard when the riots first occurred, although the attitude was generally expressed that the fact that they had occurred did not surprise them, and indeed they state that other black communities, Lewisham for instance, are equally tense and could be the scene of similar rioting should some insensitive policing occur.

5. Black activities

The black organisations locally are the Race Today Collective (most recently using the name of the Massacre Action Committee following the Deptford fire) run by Darcus HOWE from 74 Shakespear Road, and the Black Peoples Information Centre, which is a Notting Hill based organisation run by Cecil GUTZMORE who commands the loyalty of a large number of Rastafarians. Both leaders were present at the start of rioting (since they live locally) but both quickly absented themselves from the scene and thereafter kept a very low profile. Neither organised his followers to take part in the subsequent violence, although



no doubt some were involved. Both are scathing about the so-called Brixton Defence Committee (BDC).

6. That Committee appears to have been merely a name adopted by Rudy NARAYAN (the black barrister who has dreams of being the leading black moderate in Britain, and is seeking to become a Labour MP) in order to try to gain personal political kudos from the aftermath of the disturbances. He has little real influence among the young blacks, but is a powerful speaker and is able to impress both black and white members of the race relations industry with his ideas. He announced that he would chair an open meeting of the BDC at the Abeng Centre on Sunday, 19th April 1981, but then switched this to the green outside the Ritz Cinema, and finally announced that it was cancelled. He also announced his support for the SCARMAN Tribunal and then withdrew that support.

7. It seems clear that there will be some form of rally in Brixton on Sunday, although whether it will take place at either of the above two venues, or at St Matthews Church Hall (as moderates are beginning to want) or at Brockwell Park (as many others seek) is not clear. It is also possible that the young criminal blacks in the area may well decide to wind up the Bank Holiday with a riot on Monday, as has become almost the traditional end to the Notting Hill Carnival on the August Bank Holiday.

8. White Left Activities

The anarchists in Brixton have a bookshop at 121 Railton Road and a number were involved, as individuals, in the rioting. Organisation is anathema to them and there is no evidence that they took any active leadership role.

9. It is reported that one anarchist obtained radio monitoring equipment from Duncan CAMPBELL of the "New Statesman" and is using this to monitor police wireless traffic.

10. The various trotskyist organisations have been active in the area for a long time, each trying to recruit young blacks to its cause; all have failed. The Revolutionary Communist Tendency has its London headquarters at 38 Electric Avenue and the Revolutionary Communist Group has its London headquarters at 49 Railton Road. The Workers Revolutionary Party have a training centre for local youths in Beehive Place.

11. All are doing what they can to "assist things" in the area, such as producing leaflets and selling their publications which give prominence to allegations against police, but again there is no evidence that any were involved in an organising capacity.

12. The Socialist Workers Party which does not get involved in violence as an organisation, has cancelled its participation in a rally in Skegness so as to enable their 40 local members to be present at any rally held in Brixton over Easter.

13. Many of these far left groups have photographers who do their best to obtain the most compromising photographs of police action, both for publication in their own papers and for sale to the national and international news media.

14. White Right Activities

Both the National Front and the British Movement have welcomed the riots as proof of their opinions of blacks. Both are preparing inflammatory leaflets but neither is likely to make an appearance in Brixton while black tempers remain high. The danger is that they will inflame similar feelings among the black population of Deptford, Lewisham, etc.

15. Enquiries have been made of every provincial Police Force where there is a large population of blacks but no evidence has come to light to suggest that any will make arrangements to travel to Brixton for any activities over the Easter weekend. This is being monitored and should late arrangements be made they will be reported.

16. The big question mark is what the young ruthless blacks of Brixton will do over the Easter weekend. As previously stated they are apolitical and have no normal outlet for their frustrations which thus tend to build and explode unpredictably. According to our sources if police manage to maintain a low profile and are careful in the way they deal with young blacks on the streets in Brixton the weekend could pass peacefully. If however there is any heavy handed reaction to the blacks the area could again see the violence and destruction it witnessed over the period 10th-13th April 1981.

[2]

Delective Chief Inspector

[3]

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT