

2776

Extract No.

Info for review by

~~MIS/SB/KOGB~~

Sys report.

Info to be Redacted

MIS -
please withhold
the report.

CS 27/6/13.

FOI Exemption

Date due to open

Reason/Justification for closure

Mr [REDACTED]

Mr Wright
Mr Andrew
Mr Woodfield
Mr Heaton

BRIXTON:
SUBVERSIVE INVOLVEMENT

... The Home Secretary will wish to see the attached report which I have today received from the Security Service. They will let us have further information on subversive influences in Brixton in due course. The report rejects, for lack of evidence, allegations that the riots were organised or instigated by extremists.

2. The Home Secretary will be touching on this matter at his meeting tomorrow with the Director-General, for which Sir Brian Cubbon is submitting a general brief.

G H PHILLIPS
5 May 1981

2776.1 31a.

SUBVERSIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE BRIXTON RIOTS
AND THEIR AFTERMATH

Introduction

Information from reliable sources indicates that the Brixton riots were not instigated or manipulated by either black racial extremists or white subversive organisations. The activities of black and white subversive groups in the area over the years must to some degree have contributed to the build up there of tension and antagonism, particularly against the police. There is increasing information on how various extremist groups are now trying to exploit the tensions. Their efforts are likely to be more successful than in Bristol (April 1980) where they made little headway in recruiting. (Relations between West Indians in South London and police were already strained before Brixton due to the investigations into the cause of the fire at the New Cross party on 17/18 January. The claims that the fire was the work of "white racists" have not been substantiated.)

Racial Extremists

Brixton Defence Committee

2. A Brixton Defence Committee (BDC) was formed on 12 April primarily to provide help and advice for those arrested during the rioting. It was formed at the initiative of Rudy NARAYAN a Guyanese barrister who has long moved in racial extremist circles in the UK frequently acting for West Indians in trouble with the police. He is mistrusted by West Indians in Brixton who consider him to be an opportunist and an outsider (many were angry that he had agreed to the banning of a rally in Brixton on Easter Sunday, 19 April). NARAYAN has now been ousted from his position as chairman of the BDC by Linton Kwesi JOHNSON a member of the Race Today collective (a racial extremist organisation led by Darcus HOWE) and the popular choice of young blacks in Brixton.

3. It is likely that the BDC, which has recently moved to the Lambeth Law Centre, will now follow a more militant line than previously. Reliable sources have indicated that JOHNSON may well be acting on instructions from HOWE who, although he has deliberately avoided becoming involved himself with the BDC, may well try to influence developments. (HOWE is currently preoccupied with the New Cross Massacre Action Committee of which he is Secretary and which he hopes might undertake some joint, as yet unspecified, action with the BDC.)

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4. Under JOHNSON, the BDC's stated aims are:-
- a. to organise the defence of those arrested during the disturbances and to try to secure their acquittal;
 - b. to set up an "international enquiry" into "oppression" in Brixton.

5. The BDC is extremely wary of attempts by white organisations to become involved in any aspect of its work or in the defence of those arrested.

White subversive involvement

During the rioting

6. White subversive organisations were not responsible for provoking the rioting. We do know however of the activities of a number of individuals some of whom were living in the area at the time and others who arrived later.

- a. Anarchist - Privacy, an anarchist of long-standing (and well known to the police) was arrested during Saturday's rioting holding a half-brick. She was living temporarily in the area. Privacy has been charged with having an offensive weapon and threatening behaviour and she could face more serious charges. Four other anarchists were arrested on Sunday 12 April. Several individuals with "alternative society" connections including squatters and members of the ~~Rising Free collective~~ were known to be present.
- b. Trotskyist - Three members of the International Marxist Group, including the official photographer, were in the area on Friday night. A Socialist Workers Party photographer claims to have been "attacked" by police while taking pictures of the arrests of black youths. Members of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency are known to have been in the streets, some taking photographs.
- c. Extreme Right - A member of the National Front (NF) was arrested while attacking a policeman. Both the NF and the British Movement are alleged to be pleased with events in the belief that they will help them in the coming local elections.

After the rioting

7. White subversive organisations are striving to keep the issue alive amongst their members and hoping to exploit racial tensions.

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- a. Anarchist - On 18 April, 18 people attended a meeting at the 121 Anarchist Bookshop Railton Road, Brixton, at which the rioting was discussed. Privacy gave an account of her arrest and she dismissed the idea, advanced by the police, of a "conspiracy theory" as having no foundation.
- b. Trotskyist - Two small groups, the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) and the Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT) have their London headquarters in Brixton. The RCT in particular have made strenuous efforts to exploit the disturbances. Through its new organisation the South London Workers Against Racism it was involved in arranging the defence for some of those arrested and documenting medical evidence. It is now trying to persuade those black families who had either relations arrested or their homes broken into to issue summonses against the police for assault, criminal damage etc. It is also collecting photographic evidence of events presumably to build up a dossier against the police.

The Militant Tendency (MT) claims to have made 60 recruits (30 black and 30 white) in the area since the riots. There is no evidence to substantiate these claims. It has since tried to consolidate these gains by launching an extensive paper-selling exercise in the area.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) is trying to exploit the situation to recruit new members. It has organised "street meetings and petitions", and public meetings were arranged by its Brixton and Tottenham branches on 29 and 30 April. It has pledged its full support to the BDC.