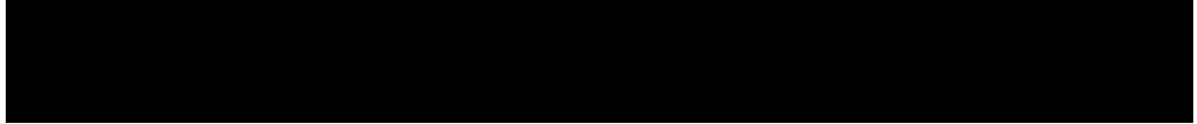


7 JUL 1981



PO Box 500  
London SW1P 1XH

Telephone 

*L. Mr. Home*

2 G H Phillips Esq  
Home Office

Our Ref. 

Your Ref.

Date 7 July 1981

*Dear Hayden*

We have been examining subversive aspects of racial activity with a view of issuing a Box 500 report on the subject.

2. We have produced a penultimate draft (which will require some further editing and to which a summary will be added) and I thought that since the Home Office is our principal customer for intelligence on racial matters, you might welcome an opportunity to comment on it at this juncture, and to let us know whether, as drafted, it would help to meet Home Office needs. I am also conscious of the advisability of showing you the result of our work as soon as possible so that it might be related as appropriate to work that you have been doing in connection with the Scarman Enquiry and the study of racist attacks which now must be reaching an advanced stage.

*Yours sincerely*



Enc: 1(7)  




[REDACTED]

SUBVERSIVE ASPECTS OF RACIALIST ACTIVITY

Introduction

This paper aims to assess the threat posed by West Indian and Asian organisations and individuals, having subversive objectives, and by white left-wing subversive organisations which exploit racial problems to further their own political purpose. The paper discusses the potential for violence used for political ends, but excludes criminal violence and those activities by extreme right-wing organisations which may lead to violent confrontations.

The West Indian and Afro-Caribbean community

2. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Black Power was the major subversive influence within the black community reflecting the racial upheavals in the United States. There has since been a shift away from the Black Power ideology, with its themes of black separatism and armed insurrection by which black communities were to secure dominant political and social status. While such means were perhaps feasible for blacks in the United States, they were never so for the comparatively small black community in the UK. 'Black consciousness' is now largely expressed in Pan-Africanism, an urge to unite all the black peoples of African descent coupled with an interest in the politics of modern Africa. (At a more mystical and religious level it is also manifest in Rastafarianism, which sees Ethiopia as a spiritual and physical homeland for all black peoples, and the late Emperor Haile Selassie as a divine figure)
3. The black subversive organisations and individuals have all to a greater or lesser extent adopted a form of 'Revolutionary Socialism' and it is here rather than in the Black Power ideology

[REDACTED]

that the greatest subversive potential lies. They seek to exploit what they allege to be inequality before the law, police harassment, white racist attitudes and abuse, extreme right-wing attacks and discrimination in education, housing and employment. These they use as illustrations of the essentially racist nature of British society, leading them to challenge the whole basis of the existing system and to call for revolutionary change. The police and the legal system especially are seen as the executive arm of the oppressive capitalist state and are therefore attacked both in retaliation and as a method of undermining the authority of the state.

4. This philosophy is gaining ground particularly among young blacks. It gives political legitimacy in their eyes to the conflict over such issues as the SUS laws as well as the routine confrontation with the police over crime. Using extreme language and imagery, it has increasingly shaped the thinking of the black youths on the 'Frontline' and there is a danger that a continuing feeling of harassment will lead to their further politicisation. Under the pressure of events and of the more radical attitudes of their young, the older generation who have in the past been prepared to counsel caution and condemn anti-police and criminal activities are now less willing to do so. Many older blacks for example seemingly for the first time approved of the activities of black youths during the Brixton riots.

5. Since the early 1970s, there has been an abandonment of attempts to form mass party organisations, in favour of the setting up of black self-help groups aiming to aid blacks in

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trouble with the law such as the Black Peoples Information Centre (BPIC) in Notting Hill or collectives, such as the Race Today Collective (RT) in Brixton, which publishes extremist material.

6. These small organisations can sometimes come together to exploit a current grievance or gather support among otherwise uncommitted West Indians for a particular cause. This strategy was strikingly successful when Race Today and two other small groups, the Black Parents Movement and the Black Unity and Freedom Party combined under the leadership of Darcus HOWE to form the New Cross Massacre Action Committee (NCMAC) in January 1981. NCMAC orchestrated and dominated the widespread grief and shock felt by West Indians as a result of the fire in Deptford in which 18 black teenagers died. The Black Day of Action on 2 March saw an estimated 3500 blacks demonstrating in the West End of London. (Both the numbers and the violence on the march were exaggerated by the media.) Other causes have not gained equivalent support. Blacks Against State Harassment (BASH), currently involved in an attempt to counter and discredit the Scarman Enquiry, and the Pan-African Congress Movement UK (PACM) which organises an annual African Liberation Day festival have not been particularly successful, possibly because anti-police theorising and pan-Africanism do not command widespread interest within the black community.

7. Because of general inability on the part of West Indians to organise themselves effectively for any length of time without dissension and splits, and because of their susceptibility

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to charismatic leaders, individual West Indian politicians often assume a far greater subversive significance than the organisation that they lead. None of the current leaders can claim to have any mass following or any particular charisma

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Some of these individuals have however for over a decade been urging opposition to authority, the police and the Commission of Racial Equality (CRE) throughout the country, thus helping to create a climate of conflict and tension.

8.

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The few blacks in the higher echelons of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and other white left-wing extremist organisations have little following outside their organisations.

#### The Asian Community

9. The Asian community in the UK originates from many very different political, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds

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and given the marked Asian propensity for organisation, they have established a correspondingly varied range of political groupings. The Asian political organisations however (with the exception of the Youth Movements) are largely established on a national basis, i.e. according to the country or origin of members. Asians tend to retain a keen interest in the politics of their country of origin and the political line of their organisations in the UK often reflect political alignments there. For example, divisions within the Indian Workers Association of Great Britain (IWA(GB)) echo the division in the different Communist (including Maoist) parties in India. Asian political organisations are usually marked by a high membership and by considerable political sophistication. Unlike the situation in West Indian organisations, Asian organisations play a far more important role than the individuals who lead them.

10. The two largest organisations, the IWA(GB) and IWA(Southall), together number about 50,000 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Vishnu SHARMA, a prominent Asian member of the CPGB, has been deeply involved with the IWA(Southall) and has been both General Secretary and President. In spite of the defeat of his CPGB-dominated executive in 1978, he continues to play an active role in the Association's affairs [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

11. The Asian youth movements present a far more radical image and contain a number of ultra-left sympathisers. They are much smaller than the national organisations but the mainly Indian Southall Youth Movement (SYM) and the mainly Pakistani Bradford Asian Youth Movement are persisting in their efforts towards co-ordination at a national level. Their sometimes violent and virulently anti-police posture tends to isolate them from the traditionally law-abiding and conservative Asian community.

12. Asians are far more willing than are West Indians to play a part in or with white subversive organisations (and also to participate in the organs of Race Relations machinery, such as the Community Relations Councils). Whilst the Southall riot in 1979 was a vivid example of such collaboration (between the SYM and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), issues which currently unite both Asian and white subversive groups in the UK are the immigration and nationality laws and attacks on Asians by white racists. A notable example of this co-operation was the 12000 strong demonstration in London in April organised by the CPGB-dominated Campaign Against Racist Laws (CARL) in which 75% of the turnout was Asian and the remainder white. This demonstration showed the efficient mobilising machinery of the Asian groups as well as that of the CPGB. This and a previous 8000 strong CARL march mainly Asian in composition in November 1979 were both marked by good discipline and lack of violence.

Black and Asian-dominated umbrella organisations

13. The Afro-Asian Caribbean Convention (AACC) set up in June 1980, as an intended rival organisation to the CRE, with its

all black membership and anti-police attitude has not, so far, been successful in achieving any widespread support.

The small Institute of Race Relations (IRR) is considered subversive but is influential only among black and Asian intellectuals. There are many black and Asian-orientated defence and ad hoc committees set up either to defend blacks accused of crime or to organise reactions to an event which has affected the ethnic communities. An example of the first is the now defunct Brixton Defence Committee and of the latter, the NCMAC (paragraph 6 above).

#### External Influences

#### White subversive organisations

15. All white left-wing subversive organisations take up anti-racist positions, differing only in ideological emphasis and the degree of effort that they put into 'race work'. Racial

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issues provide them with a seemingly promising area for exploitation which however they tend to see primarily in terms of their class and 'anti-imperialist' struggles and as an important aspect of the fight against the extreme right. They seek to capitalise on the situation; to demonstrate that no effective solutions can be found under the existing political system; to develop their influence within the ethnic community and to increase their coloured membership.

16. The CPGB has put a good deal of effort into making its influence felt in the ethnic communities and into anti-racist and anti-fascist committees throughout the country, partly as a counter to the early predominance of the SWP in this field. Amongst other things, it is in the process of planning the publication of a Punjabi journal. Its most important and successful initiative to-date has been the CARL, formed in October 1979 to mobilise opposition to the proposed changes in the immigration and nationality laws. Nevertheless the CPGB has so far failed to make an impact on coloured people because of its overwhelmingly white leadership and membership and the coloureds' disinclination to accept the strict party discipline.

17. Of the Trotskyist groups, the SWP which has a membership of around 4000 has tended to make the running in the exploitation of racial issues. The most important SWP initiative was the formation in 1977 of the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) which developed into a broad front organisation. It failed however to attract significant support from the coloured communities or to provide the SWP with a reservoir of recruits of the type that it was seeking with the result that SWP interest in it has waned. When

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members of the SWP's black caucus, FLAME, increasingly rejected the direction and discipline imposed by the party machine and in 1980 attempted to become autonomous, the SWP closed it down and FLAME members were faced with rejoining the party or leaving. Many left.

18. 'Race work' has traditionally been an important aspect of the work of the Trotskyist International Marxist Group (IMG) which has a membership of about 800 but despite this, it cannot or is not prepared to devote the same resources to it as in the past. As a result in the last year, its activity in this area has declined. The continuing presence of Tariq ALI in the IMG however provides a focal point for its activities in this area. Two smaller, 120-130 strong, Trotskyist groups, the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) and the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) (until recently known as the Revolutionary Communist Tendency) have concentrated their efforts and campaigned vigorously on the (for them) interrelated themes of Ireland and Race. Whilst the RCG has been instrumental in setting up several campaigns in support of individuals and families such as the Anwar Ditta Defence Campaign, the RCP organises groups with the generic title of Workers Against Racism to agitate in areas with large coloured populations in which there is some degree of racial tension. For example East London Workers Against Racism (ELWAR) have formed vigilante groups to protect Bengalis in the East End against racist attacks. South London Workers Against Racism (SOLWAR) has been organising anti-police activities in the wake of the Brixton riots.

19. Two of the larger Marxist-Leninist (Maoist) groups in the

UK, the 170 strong pro-Chinese Revolutionary Communist League of Britain (RCLB) and the 150 strong (pro-Albanian) Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) (RCPB(M-L) seek the maximum exploitation of what they (like the Trotskyists mentioned above) see as the related problems of Ireland and Race.

[REDACTED] the RCPB(M-L) which has a propensity for violence and a 10% coloured membership concentrates on support for demonstrations in protest at alleged racist attacks.

20. Most anarchist and alternative groups are not particularly interested in race work except as a way of attacking or vilifying 'authority' particularly the police. Individual anarchists have shown themselves prepared to participate in disturbances as and when they occur e.g. in Brixton. The Anarchist group Big Flame is opposed to all immigration controls and seeks to unite coloured and white workers against capitalism, [REDACTED]

21. In their activities, the white subversive groups have not made a significant impact and have been unable to recruit a disproportionate coloured membership. They have had to contend with the reservations and suspicions of the ethnic minorities which although at times welcoming their support for particular campaigns recognise the differences in motives and objectives and are reluctant to become too closely associated or influenced. They recognise that white subversive groups exploit racial grievances primarily in their own interests and consider that in the past they have placed too much emphasis on the anti-Nazi [REDACTED]

aspects at the expense of what they consider to be the inherent racialism of society and the institutions of the State. As a result, blacks and Asians prefer to agitate through their own political pressure groups rather than through predominantly white groups, in which they feel that they are being used as pawns in the struggles of a different culture. Whilst white left-wing subversive organisations are committed to multi-racialism, in British conditions this inevitably means white domination.

#### THE THREAT

22. The ethnic communities in the UK are very vulnerable to subversive penetration and exploitation because of the disadvantaged and threatened position in which immigrants and particularly their British-born descendants perceive themselves to be and which leads them to conclude that racism is inherent in British society.

23. Despite this, the considerable efforts of the white left-wing subversive groups have not had any significant impact within the ethnic communities. In the face of this unfavourable response the white groups continue in their efforts to exploit racial grievances for their own ideological ends but there is currently no reason to believe that they will be more successful than hitherto or that they will pose a greater threat in this field.

24. The main subversive potential lies within the coloured communities themselves. The large Asian organisations are susceptible to but not necessarily dominated by a variety of subversive (mainly Asian Communist, including Maoist) influences. The West Indian community is influenced in varying degrees by

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the small West Indian organisations and their leaders which propound 'Revolutionary Socialism' and black 'nationalism'. The alienation and the militancy of the young of both communities exacerbates the problem.

25. It is unlikely that the majority of blacks and Asians are conscious supporters of extremist political movements and ideas. At the same time, they are becoming increasingly conscious of the militant groups and may quietly approve of at least some of their activities. If this tendency continues, particularly as a result of the pressure of the younger generation on the older, it could result in an increased influence by extremist organisations.

26. In the current social and economic climate, the Asian and black communities will continue to be a fertile breeding ground for the propagation of revolutionary ideas which present a long term subversive threat as well as a more immediate law and order problem.

27. Tension within the coloured communities (in which antagonism for the police is now an important factor) and the activities of subversive groups in exploiting it, increase the prospects of incidents leading to the break-down of law and order in predominantly coloured areas. There is no evidence however of pre-meditated or planned violence within the coloured communities nor of any attempts to procure arms (for other than criminal purposes).

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28. Disorders may occur as a result of retaliatory attacks or during marches, demonstrations and counter demonstrations whether subversively inspired or not, which may perhaps, because of the activity of only a small section of the crowd, deteriorate into violence and confrontation with the police. These are typically the result of clashes with right-wing extremist elements and with police attempting to exercise crowd control e.g. in Southall in April 1979. Demonstrations by the coloured community on a variety of causes of protest available to them could lead to similar outbreaks of violence.

29. A further threat to law and order arises from spontaneous, totally unplanned and unpredictable violence that (except for the general climate of tension) owes nothing initially to subversive influence but the aftermath of which white and coloured subversive organisations will be quick to try to exploit e.g. the disturbances by West Indians in Bristol in 1980 and Brixton in 1981. Similar disturbances may well erupt in other areas of acute tension resulting in injury and damage and other far-reaching consequences for law and order. As the crime rate amongst Asians is low, there seems less reason why police activity and pressure should raise tension to the point where rioting seems to act as an outlet. One likely cause of Asian violence however is the response particularly of the militant and volatile younger element to racist attacks to which the Asian community tends to be more subject than the West Indian.

Security Service

3 July 1981

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