

IN THE MATTER OF THE UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

OPENING STATEMENT ON BEHALF

OF

SURESH GROVER AND THE MONITORING GROUP

The Inception of The Monitoring Group and its work

1: The Monitoring Group (formerly known as the Southall Monitoring Group (SMG)) was established in Southall, West London, in the early 1980's by young local community activists and lawyers to challenge State misconduct and neglect as well as all forms of racism.

2: It changed its name to The Monitoring Group (hereafter referred to as the Group) soon after the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry recommendations in February 1999. In that period, it was contacted by over 1,000 victims of racism from across the United Kingdom (UK) and attempted to meet their needs by developing a national presence.

3: The Group is still active and is recognised as one of the oldest anti-racist organisations in the UK. Through its daily advocacy work, community-led activism and public interest campaigns, it has become a permanent feature for Black, Asian and Migrant communities in their struggles for civil rights and state accountability and, therefore, occupies a unique space in the UK's social justice landscape.

4: Over the course of its formative years, the Group crystallised its key founding principles that included defining its aims, vision, mission, ethos and terrain of activity. In that period, it used the term Black to include all communities who had a shared history of colonial rule and racism in the UK; and Racism to include caste and religious based discrimination and violence.

Aims:

- To promote good race relations
- To advance race relations by means of education and awareness raising; and
- To relieve the needs of those who are distressed or suffering violence and harassment

Vision:

The Group's long-term aspirational vision is to work towards the eradication of racism and its impact on victims and their communities. It is committed to a pluralistic society where human and civil rights are intrinsic and paramount and where cultural, social and political diversity is valued.

Mission:

In order to achieve these goals, the Group will help victims of racism to seek justice by providing advice and practical assistance. In doing so to seek to raise public awareness of racism and religious prejudice and its consequences, and, where possible influence thinking at a local, regional and global level.

Ethos:

The ethos of The Monitoring Group is defined by the social history of Black and other oppressed communities and their struggles against racism and for social justice in the UK. The Group considers the presence of real equality, justice, liberty and secularism as fundamental and non-negotiable to achieving a just and fair society. The Group's relationship with institutions, individuals and others is determined by their views on the interaction of these principles. The Group's work is underpinned by empowering discriminated, marginalised communities by advocating self-organisation principles and through solidarity actions where human development and thinking is always enhanced.

5: The young founders of the Southall Monitoring Group, including Suresh Grover, not only participated in local struggles against racism that included responding to the racist murder of a young Asian student, Gurdip Singh Chaggar, in June 1976 and the killing of school teacher, Blair Peach, in 1979 by Metropolitan Police Force's Special Patrol Group during an anti-racist demonstration, they were also inspired by national and global struggles against racism and apartheid. In January 1981 thirteen Black people were killed in an arson attack in the New Cross area of London. The justice campaign led by an alliance of Race Today and the Black Parents Movement to support the bereaved families led to the first ever Black People's Day of Action in the UK culminating in a demonstration of over 10,000 people demanding an end to racist policing. From April onwards of that year, over 30 British cities and towns, mainly inter-city conurbations (including Southall), experienced violent public disturbances involving mainly Black, Asian and poorer white young people. Both official and non-official Inquiries

acknowledged that the principle causes for the disturbances were racial disadvantage, discriminatory policing (including Operation SWAMP in Brixton) as well as deprivation and poverty. In the USA, although the civil rights movement had succeeded in forcing the Government to pass non-discriminatory legislation, racialised police violence against Black communities persisted. The term “monitoring”, a term adopted to describe the Southall group, was derived from the USA’s Black Panther Party of Self Defence and their street-based challenges to the regular use of arbitrary and unlawful racially motivated violence by police officers against young Black people and the ‘First Nations’.

6: Both the history and work of The Monitoring Group is so wide ranging that this Opening Statement does not allow us to cover all the significant moments. Its longevity can be explained by its independence from the State and its unique hybrid character which was moulded by lessons learnt from the civil rights movement in the USA and Northern Ireland and the struggles waged by working class Black communities in the UK. The Group does not only provide direct service to clients but supports them to become stronger and less isolated. It also develops policy and makes strategic interventions at Government and International forums. At the same time, it advocates for root & branch and structural change in society to dismantle discriminatory and oppressive structures in society. It has a unique but selfless partnership with families experiencing injustice, where cases can be developed into public interest campaigns leading to causes and movement building for change. Over the last forty years, the Group has:

- responded to over 1000 callers every year on its self-funded help line. The helpline also provides advice to women suffering sexual violence;
- dealt inhouse with an average of 200 cases every year;
- provided support to over 300 families affected by the death of a loved one – including suicides, unexplained and suspicious deaths, and killings both in the UK and abroad;
- provided trauma support to over 1,500 victims of racism over the last decade;
- initiated or supported hundreds of family or community led justice campaigns relating to racism, miscarriages of justice and State neglect;
- established scores of self-organised anti-racist advocacy projects and networks in ‘hard to reach’ communities;
- organised or participated in small and large scale public demonstrations and gatherings

Public Interest Campaigns – From 1976 to 2008

7: Both Suresh Grover and The Monitoring Group have either initiated or participated in scores of public interest campaigns and events. We list a selection of campaigns organised or supported from 1976 to 2008 (given the remit of the Inquiry) where individual members of the Group or the organisation as a whole was involved:

8: The murder of Gurdip Singh Chaggar in June 1976

Suresh Grover was one of the active ‘leaders’ of the youth movement established during the aftermath of the murder of Gurdip Singh Chaggar in Southall 1979. The incident galvanised Asian youth to challenge violent racism and police response throughout the UK. Despite the passage of time, The Monitoring Group has kept in contact with the Chaggar family and last year a plaque was installed outside Southall Town Hall in memory of Gurdip Singh Chaggar.

9: The murder of Blair Peach in April 1979 and Southall Defence Campaign

Blair Peach, a schoolteacher, was killed during an anti-racist demonstration in Southall. Police actions on the day also led to over 800 arrests and 345 being charged for a variety of criminal offences. Mr Grover was one of the key activists who established the legal defence for those charged, documented the social impact of the event and galvanised local, national and international support, for over a decade, to name those responsible for the killing of Blair Peach. The Monitoring Group has been in regular contact with Blair Peach’s partner, Celia Stubbs, and the campaign group – Friends of Blair Peach. In 1999/2000 The Monitoring Group organised a meeting with the then Home Secretary and argued for a public inquiry to examine the circumstances leading to Blair Peach’s killing. Although this demand was refused, in 2010, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner released Commander Cass’s internal report that strongly suggested that an officer from the Special Patrol Group was responsible for Blair Peach’s murder.

Last year in April 2019, to mark the 40th anniversary of Blair Peach’s murder, the Group organised a series of events under the banner Southall Resists that included a large scale demonstration and the installation of a number of plaques outside Southall Town Hall including one in Blair Peach’s memory. The event was attended by Celia Stubbs, the Leader of Ealing Council and Members of Parliament.

10: 1981 Public order disturbances

In 1981, as stated earlier, the UK experienced violent public disorder in at least 30 cities and towns. The Southall Monitoring Group was instrumental in establishing legal defence campaigns and a national committee to look at the causes of these disturbances. Public pressure led to the establishment of Lord Scarman's Inquiry into the Brixton disturbances.

11: Bradford 12 Defence Campaign

Suresh Grover was the one of the founders of the National Coordinating Committee of the Bradford 12 campaign, an organisation established to defend twelve young men facing conspiracy charges. The campaign led to the acquittal of these men and defined self-defence legally (*Regina v Gata-Aura*). He visited the defendants in prison in the first week of their incarceration and helped organise legal representation for six of the defendants.

12: National Campaign Against the Police Bill - 1983

Suresh Grover was the chair of the National Campaign established to oppose some of the draconian powers such as stop and searches in designated areas and intimate body searches proposed in the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill which was passed as an Act in 1984. The campaign organised national and local rallies across the UK.

13: Bhopal Victims Support Committee and Justice Campaign 1984

The Southall Monitoring Group established the Bhopal Victim's Support Group that organised regular events across the UK for over a decade. The campaign was in response to the Bhopal Gas tragedy that is considered to be the world's worst industrial disaster. The event occurred on the night of 2–3 December 1984 at the Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) pesticide plant in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Over 500,000 people were exposed to methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas and other chemicals. The toxic substance made its way into and around the shanty towns located near the plant. Estimates vary on the death toll. The official immediate death toll was 2,259. The government of Madhya Pradesh confirmed a total of 3,787 deaths related to the gas release. A government affidavit in 2006 stated that the leak caused 558,125 injuries, including 38,478 temporary partial injuries and approximately 3,900 severely and permanently disabling injuries. Others estimate that 8,000 died within two weeks, and another 8,000 or more have since died from gas-related diseases.

The Southall Monitoring Group organised legal representation in India for many of victims to sue both Union Carbide and local State Government for damages.

14: Black People's Miner's Support Group - 1984

The Group was a key member of a national coalition of Black organisations supporting the miners' strike and provided legal support. It also created a solidarity fund for Black and Asian miners on strike in Nottinghamshire. Southall as a town was twinned with a mining town in Kent and for over 12 months raised money on a monthly basis for that town.

15: Kuldip Sekhon Family Support Group – 1988/9

Mr Sekhon, a local Southall taxi driver, was murdered by Steven Cocker, a well-known youth supporter of the National Front in December 1988 in Hounslow, Middlesex. The Group established a family justice campaign to ensure a thorough police investigation and organised local family led protests to highlight the case, including a successful half day closure of Southall town centre to mark Mr Sekhon's funeral in January 1989.

Soon after the demonstration Suresh Grover was informed by a number of local labour councillors that an intelligence report was being compiled on the Group by local police.

16: Drummond Street Defence campaign 1992/3

The Group provided critical support to the Drummond Street Defence Campaign. The campaign was formed to defend two Bengali youths who had been unjustly charged with causing grievous bodily harm at a football tournament in Ealing on 4 October 1992. The campaign was concerned that those charges were politically motivated. The two youths were members of the Drummond Street Youth Association and their arrests were followed by dawn raids on the homes of several Bengali families in the Drummond street area. They were acquitted on 15th May 1993.

17: Stephen Lawrence Family Campaign 1993

The Group was involved in supporting the Lawrence Family Campaign from autumn 1993 onwards, and played a critical role in developing the campaign from 1994 onwards, in particular during the private prosecution and Public Inquiry periods. The Group also provided office space, secretarial support and full time personal support to the family campaign during the intervening years. It organised local and national meetings and events to gather support for the family's quest for Justice.

18: Garry Walton Support Group 1996

Garry Walton, a 21-year-old Irish man, was racially murdered in November 1996 while he was on a pleasure boat in Tenerife. Evidence showed men from Essex continuously taunted him. It is alleged that these same people murdered him by throwing him overboard. In July 1997, GMP obtained statements from witnesses claiming they heard the men boast of their killing. Although the Group provided support for the family, and exerted pressure on police to take the investigation seriously, the case remains unsolved.

19: Support for Hillingdon strikers 1997

The Group provided daily support for the Hillingdon Hospital Strikers: twenty-one strikers at Hillingdon hospital eventually won their three year fight after an industrial tribunal ruled that they should get their jobs back and receive compensation. The dispute began in 1995 when the company Pall Mall, which had won a contract to provide domestic services to the hospital, imposed a 20% pay cut, reduced holiday and sick pay, followed by checks on the immigration status of Asian workers. The strikers, all Asian women, never gave up despite losing strike pay from their union, Unison, which urged them to settle the dispute.

20: Justice for Ricky Reel: 1997 to present

The Group has played a central role in supporting the Reel family. In 1997, Ricky Reel was found dead in the River Thames, at Kingston following a racist attack on him and a group of friends. Police maintained that Ricky died while trying to urinate in the river and refused to acknowledge any racial motivation in the original attack. Apart from liaising with three separate police investigation teams, some of the key events in the campaign included:

- Organising search parties to find Ricky Reel in the first week when he was deemed missing;
- Organising regular protests in Kingston;
- Organising annual memorial lectures;
- Supporting Information appeals on the BBC Crimewatch programme;
- Developing hard copy and online petition campaigns;
- Supporting the family through the Inquest process; and
- Organising parliamentary initiatives

21: Michael Menson Family Campaign 1997

The Group played a central role in supporting this family and established the Campaign. Michael Menson died in February 1997, after being set alight in a racist attack in Edmonton, North London. Despite police insistence that this was an act of suicide, an Inquest jury found that Michael had been unlawfully killed. The Group helped galvanise support for a new investigation by organising a meeting with the then Home Secretary, Jack Straw and the newly established Scotland Yard Racial and Violent Taskforce headed by DAC John Grieve. The reinvestigation led to the conviction of three men in the UK and the trial of a fourth man in Cyprus. Suresh Grover accompanied the family to Cyprus for the trial in 1999. In 2000, DCI Robin Scott, the original investigating officer and ten other officers were removed from operational duties.

22: Establishment of BRAIN - 1998

This important initiative brought together anti-racist monitoring groups from across the country to develop best practice on race hate crimes and to campaign and organise a national conference out of which the Black Racial Attacks Independent Network (BRAIN) was established. The conference was entitled ‘the betrayal of Stephen Lawrence’, and was attended by 400 delegates from across the country. Speakers included Doreen and Neville Lawrence, Sukhdev Reel, Suresh Grover and Myrna Simpson.

22: Okofa Hodasi Support Group -1998

The Group supported the family of Mr Hodasi. 24 year old Akofa Fodasi, a Ghanian student found hanging from a tree on 29th April 1998 in Frimley, Surrey. An inquest into his death in September 1999 heard that three days before he died, Akofa and his friend Natham Evans were racially attacked, and that Natham needed 17 stitches. The attackers also told them “we know where you live, and next time we will shoot you.” Akofa was badly shaken by the attack and two days after reporting the incident to the police he was dead. The police told the inquest there was a possibility that Akofa was strung up and the inquest recorded an open verdict.

23: Edgar Fernandes Family Campaign 1998

The Group supported the family of Edgar Fernandes. Edgar Fernandes was a librarian living in Hackney, east London. He left for a week's holiday to Turkey on 8 April 1998. When he failed to return, his family alerted the local police in Kentish Town. The police officer did not take the family's concerns seriously and instead suggested that he had run away from the family

and tried to probe into the family's history. Two members of the family flew to Turkey while others remained in London to exert pressure here. Although the Turkish authorities were unhelpful, within days the family had located Edgar's belongings and medication in the hotel room and had a description of the person who was last seen with him. This was immediately reported to Kentish Town police station, who still maintained that Edgar had run away from home. Meanwhile the traumatic search for Edgar continued. The family researched all the hospitals and institutions in Turkey. On 8 May 1998 two members of the family were looking at pictures of dead bodies in the morgue. Depressingly one of the photographs was of Edgar's body. The family continued with their investigation and located the chief suspect in Malta. In an impressive and unprecedented feat they managed to galvanize the Maltese authorities to arrest the man. He initially confessed to the murder of Edgar Fernandes, although later changed his story. After the family approached the Monitoring Group, the Metropolitan Police began to work more seriously on the case. The trial of the man suspected of killing Edgar began in Turkey in February 2000 and he was convicted.

24: Elizabeth Chou Support Group 1999

Elizabeth Chau, a student at Thames Valley University, was 19 when she disappeared from Ealing in April 1999. She was last seen outside Ealing Police Station in Uxbridge Road. Together with the family, the Group exerted pressure on the local police to investigate her disappearance seriously, and organised community based search parties for over four months. Elizabeth remains missing. In 2010, the local police finally admitted that she was probably the victim of a serial murderer.

25: National Civil Rights Movement (NCRM) - 1999

The NCRM was launched on 28 March 1999 in London attended by over 800 people, including over 40 family justice campaigns and supported by eminent human rights lawyers. By mid 1999, NCRM branches were established in Sheffield, Leicester, Manchester, Exeter and Plymouth and Cardiff. It organised numerous public meetings and protests, including a national demonstration in London in 2001. Over 5 years the NCRM supported more than 80 family justice campaign throughout the UK including in Northern Ireland.

26: Liban Ali Family Campaign - 1999

Liban Ali and two friends were attacked and racially abused by a gang of white men and women in Leicester City Centre in August 1999. Liban had his head 'kicked like a football'. All those

involved were arrested but only one, James Watson, was charged with attempted murder and he pleaded guilty to a charge of section 18 GBH.

27: London Nail bombings 1999

Over three successive weekends between 17 and 30 April 1999, David Copeland placed homemade nail bombs, each containing up to 1,500 four-inch nails, in holdalls that he left in public spaces around London. The first bomb was placed outside the Iceland supermarket in Electric Avenue, Brixton, an area of south London with a large black population. The second was in Brick Lane in the East End of London that has a large Bangladeshi community. The third was inside the Admiral Duncan pub, in Soho's Old Compton Street, the heart of London's gay community. The bombs killed three people, including a pregnant woman, and injured 140, four of whom lost limbs. Stewart Copeland was arrested in May 2000. Copeland had a list of other targets including Peckham, Southall and Tottenham. The Group organised independent community led street safety patrols in Southall in April 2000 and meetings in various parts of London throughout 2000. The Group also received a letter threatening to nail bomb Southall that was handed to police.

28: Abdi Dorre Support Group 1999

Abdi Dorre died in August 1999 after sustaining fatal head injuries falling down a flight of steps in a Northampton nightclub. His family sought the Group's support to pressurise the police to carry out a thorough investigation and find those responsible. The Group organised several meetings with senior investigation officers to persuade them to review their investigation but they refused, and as a consequence, the family organised peaceful vigils to seek public support for the case. At the Inquest in May 2001, the Coroner returned an open verdict. It was revealed at the Inquest that the police had never carried out any forensic tests at the scene and that there was an unexplained fourteen-minute gap in the CCTV coverage of the events. A number of CCTV cameras recorded Abdi Dorre's argument with the doorman at the club, but none recorded the moment he was said to have fallen down the stairs.

29: Spencer Weston Support Group 1999

Spencer Weston received multiple fatal injuries when he was hit by a car at 2.30am on a Saturday night in August 1999, after running away from a large fight in the City Centre. During the fight, bricks and bottles were thrown between white and Black youths and both sides received serious injuries. Spencer suffered a head injury after being kicked to the ground

outside a taxi office and subjected to racial abuse. He was then chased, along with other Black men, by police officers attempting to make an arrest. Two police investigations in 1999 and 2001 failed to discover who assaulted Spencer Weston but the Police complaint concluded that police failure was due to institutional racism.

30: Farhan Mire Support Group 1999/2000

The Group created a support group for Mr. Mire's family. Mr. Mire was a Somali refugee who was kicked to death by white men in Harrow, London. Ryan Kelly was arrested and charged with the murder on 18th February 1999. However, when the case came to trial in April 1999 Kelly was discharged after the CPS claimed that there was not enough evidence to prosecute the racial motivation of the murder. The family was told that there was no forensic evidence and that a witness and suspect had disappeared.

31: Tewodros Afework Family Support Group 2000

Mr. Afework was a 24 year old Eritrean who was left in a coma after being beaten unconscious in a racist attack in Kentish Town, north London on 23rd April 2000. His attacker, a six foot white man shouted racist abuse before punching and kicking Mr. Afework to the ground. The Monitoring Group organised information leafleting throughout Camden for over three months to identify the suspect.

32: New Diamond 5 campaign 2000

Five Chinese waiters from the New Diamond restaurant in Chinatown, London, were arrested after defending themselves from a racist attack by eight white men. The perpetrators of the attacks were only arrested and charged after pressure from the campaign.

33: Zahid Mubarek Family Campaign 2000

19 year old Zahid Mubarek, was killed at Feltham YOI, by 20 year old Robert Stewart, in the early hours of March 21, 2000, five hours before he was due to be released after serving 40 days for handling stolen goods. Stewart had been in custody almost constantly for three years and had a history of mental health, violence against fellow prisoners and disruption. He was on remand on a charge of sending racially motivated malicious communications, an offence under the Harassment Act. He wrote hundreds of racist letters in which he revered the killers of Stephen Lawrence, fantasised about planting nail bombs and predicted the murder of his cellmate. He had scrawled 'KKK' on a board in his cell. Despite this he was allocated the same

cell as Zahid Mubarek. The Group supported the family campaign for over a decade. This included meeting with the Minister for Home Affairs, Paul Boateng, to press for a Public Inquiry; attending the trial of Robert Stewart in October/November 2000; supporting the family during legal proceedings to establish the Public Inquiry chaired by The Honorable Mr. Justice Keith, and during the Inquiry itself.

34: The Najieb Family Support Group 2000

The Group was instrumental in supporting the Najieb family for over two years. In January 2000 Sarfraz Najieb stopped to watch a fight outside a Leeds nightclub. A white gang that included a number of prominent premier league footballers then assaulted him, and chased Sarfraz and his friends down the street. He suffered a broken leg, broken ribs and damage to his nose. Police made five arrests. The case led to two trials, and resulted in the conviction of one of the footballers, Jonathan Woodgate.

35: Dover 58 Campaign 2000

For over 2 years, the Group organised support and campaigning activities for many relatives of the 58 migrants who had died in a container in Dover, Kent. It also made representations to Government ministers to create a safer route for desperate asylum seekers arriving in the UK.

36: Jason and Errol McGowan Family Campaign 1999/2000

Harold (aka Errol) McGowan was found hanged in suspicious circumstances after suffering a two-year campaign of racist abuse in Telford, Shropshire. Jason McGowan disappeared minutes before midnight on New Year's Eve while out with his wife in Telford. He was found hanged on roadside railings a few hours later. He had been investigating his uncle's death. The Monitoring Group organised a campaign support group for the family that included a meeting with the Home Secretary; forcing a new police investigation headed by DAC John Grieve from the Met's Race and Violent Task Force; and organising legal representation during the Inquest proceedings.

37: Victoria Climbié Support Group - 2000

After suffering months of horrific abuse, Victoria Climbié died aged 8 years on 25th February 2000. Nearly 18 months earlier her parents had sent her from her home in a shantytown in the Ivory Coast to live with her great-aunt in the hope she would get a good education and enjoy a better life. Instead she was abused and beaten with bicycle chains and kept trussed up in a

plastic sack in an unlit, unheated bathroom. The Group worked with her parents, Berthe Amoissi and Francis Climbié to help establish a Public Inquiry.

37: Glyn Agard Support Group 2000

The Group organised a family justice campaign for Glyn Agard. Four soldiers were charged for the murder of Glyn Agard and assaulting Stephen Agard and Gary Belgraves. They were on a night out in Wiltshire in June 2000 when they were beaten in a car park. Glyn died of head injuries. On 18 May 2001 Mark Hunter and David White were found not guilty of the murder after the prosecution offered no evidence against the men.

38: Dawood Family Justice Campaign 2002 (India)

In February 2002 Sakil and Saeed Dawood went to India with their childhood friend Mohammed Aswat and their 18-year-old nephew, Imran. Whilst returning from an excursion trip, they were stopped at a roadblock organised by a Hindu mob fueled by religious hatred. The mob circled the jeep and demanded to know from the occupants their religious identity. The tourists answered that they were British citizens and were indeed Muslims. The hired driver was then dragged out of the jeep and attacked with sticks and killed on the spot. His body was then thrown back into the vehicle and set alight. In the meantime, the British tourists were chased to a nearby farm.

Mohammed Aswat and Imran Dawood were stabbed and left for dead. Imran miraculously survived and he recalled Saeed and Sakil pleading with the mob to spare all their lives. The Dawood family not only endured this terrible tragedy but their grief was compounded by the lack of any serious or thorough investigation by the Indian police. The family had to visit the crime scene themselves, find vital clues and collate forensic evidence including the charred remains of bodies.

The killing of these British citizens took place in the midst of anti-Muslim carnage that resulted in over 3000 deaths and the displacement of over 100,000 people and the raping of over 100 women. The Monitoring Group has worked with the family since 2002. The campaign was successful in forcing the local police to investigate the murder and charge those responsible, and established a legal team in India which filed a civil action against senior politicians and police officers for crimes against humanity. The campaign organised meetings, protests and parliamentary debates.

39: Chohan Family Support Group 2005

Amarjit Chauhan, his wife Nancy, two children and mother in law were all kidnapped and murdered. Nancy's brother, Onkar Verma, who came to the UK from New Zealand, contacted The Monitoring Group for help. At first, local police showed no interest in the disappearance wrongly believing that Mr. Chohan had fled for tax evasion reasons. The campaign, through publicity and legal support, forced a new police investigation, headed by one of the most able and senior detectives based at New Scotland Yard. The exhaustive investigation led to the conviction of three individuals for the five murders.

40: Mi Gao Huang Chen Support Group 2005

The Group worked with the widow of Mr. Chen and together forced police to investigate the murder of her husband. Mi Gao Huang Chen was a British Chinese man who was attacked on 23 April 2005 by a group of youths outside the Chinese takeaway he ran in Scholes, Wigan, Greater Manchester. He died of his injuries on 28 April at the age of 41. The police arrested 23 people in connection with the attack, four of whom were eventually convicted of murder.

41: Response to London Bombings 2005

The Monitoring Group provided support and advice to victims of the London bombings and also organised meetings in Beeston (West Yorkshire), the town of residence of a number of the bombers to understand the causes of the appalling attack. The meetings led to The Monitoring Group providing legal support to the estranged wife of the main bomber and her family and working with young Asian and Muslim people on civil rights projects.

42: Lee Phipps Support Group 2006

Yusef Porter, and her son, Lee Phipps, experienced many years of racist incidents and had installed video cameras throughout their home, which captured many of the incidents. In March 2006, Lee went for a walk to take photographs near his house, and on his way back home he was killed in a knife attack. Scott Nicholls, one of the individuals who had previously harassed the family, was charged with his murder and he pleaded guilty in January 2007. The Monitoring Group was instrumental in providing support for the family during the investigation period.

43: Xiong Zhang Support Group 2007

Mr. Xiong Zhang, 33, who lived in Hackney, was found injured on a towpath in east London following an assault. He was taken to hospital but died a week later in August 2007. Police said

Mr. Zhang had been in the area selling DVDs that were stolen from him prior to him being found. The Monitoring Group organised numerous meetings with senior police investigators and were successful in persuading them to conduct a thorough investigation. Despite this, it did not result in an arrest or conviction.

The Surveillance and its impact

44: To date neither Suresh Grover nor The Monitoring Group has had any disclosure from the Inquiry. It is not even clear when, if any, disclosure will be made and the period(s) that it may relate to. Given the Group's long history and the varied number of campaigns and events it is associated with, this is deeply disappointing. The Inquiry was provided with the Group's history at the very beginning when it made the application for Core Participant status. The Monitoring Group believes that its members were probable subjects of covert operations from April 1979 onwards when the anti-racist school teacher Blair Peach was killed and over 800 people arrested in one day. This is one of the pivotal events in its history that lasted decades and remains 'unfinished business' as no one has ever been brought to justice for Blair Peach's killing.

45: It seems that the Inquiry is only relying on the disclosure made to the Group by Operation Herne, which is pitifully low on information and mostly redacted. The couple of sentences that are not redacted relate to incidents at the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry in 1998, almost two decades after the group was formed. The Inquiry's lack of disclosure is unprecedented and has led to the erosion of the Group's trust in the Inquiry's ability to be transparent and robust in its ability to examine evidence thoroughly.

46: Suresh Grover is currently the co-Director of the Monitoring Group and is also one of its founders. The Group has supported a number of families who are also Core Participants (non-state and non-police) at the Inquiry. Some of the families, Ricky Reel and Michael Menson for instance, are mentioned in Operation Trinity (Operation Herne Report 2, page 53 (21.1.5)) and others, such as Celia Stubbs, the widow of Blair Peach, and Janet Alder, the sister of Christopher Alder, have been visited by senior Operation Herne officers to confirm undercover deployment in those campaigns. Currently, The Monitoring Group is also actively supporting the Burke Monerville family who have also been granted Core Participant status at the Inquiry.

46: Suresh Grover and the Group also coordinated the Stephen Lawrence Family campaign during the Private Prosecution (1994) and the Inquiry (1998) period. This is confirmed by Operation Herne which notes that *“The intelligence indicates that these protest groups wanted to befriend the Stephen Lawrence family in order to promote their own agenda however this was not successful due to the shielding from Suresh Grover and lawyer, Imran Khan, who wanted a peaceful public support.”* (Operation Trinity, page 7, 8, 55 (21.1.0) and 58 (21.2.1))

47. It is now confirmed that there was undercover police deployment at the founding conference of the National Civil Rights Movement (NCRM) in March 1999, a month after the publication of the Macpherson report and its subsequent activities. The aim of the NCRM was twofold: firstly to provide support for family justice campaigns and secondly, to ensure that the Macpherson/Lawrence recommendations were implemented through community pressure. The NCRM provided campaigning advice and support to over 80 family justice campaigns. Suresh Grover was the Chairperson of the NCRM and The Monitoring Group provided both office space and secretarial support for the movement.

48: The first revelation of any police surveillance by Special Branch of the Group was made in The Guardian of the 13th October 1989 in an article by the investigative journalist, David Rose, who stated that in 1987, the Southall Monitoring Group (SMG) was the subject of a report written by Ealing police intelligence officer, PC J.E. Black which, quoting a disaffected Labour councillor on the controlling Labour group, described SMG as a 'political cell' set up by the Greater London Council (GLC) to follow an agenda while purporting to be a community organisation. It further described SMG's efforts to make links with militant left-wing trade unionists as an active attempt to expand its influence over the whole of West London. It concludes that while the Group 'can be expected to continue its attempts to undermine the police, they are unlikely to be successful except in conditions of widespread disorder, general strike, etc. when they might have a potential for more widespread destabilisation'. This report has never been made public nor its assertions ever verified. The article details a protracted battle between a local police Superintendent and the SMG over a family suffering racial violence in the London Borough of Hounslow.

49: The Group's work was continually undermined by local police for nearly a decade and as a consequence its funding from the local council ceased in 1997. Although the reasons were not put in writing, both council officers and members made it clear that the Group's persistence in challenging racism in the locality coupled with its close relationship with the Lawrence

family and the campaign was viewed negatively as it continued to undermine confidence in the police by Black and Asian communities. It is worth reminding ourselves of the obstacles, hardship and difficulties endured by the parents of Stephen Lawrence and their supporters (including other families in similar situations) before their concerns were acknowledged and vindicated by Sir William Macpherson's findings and recommendations. At that time, both Human Rights lawyers and anti-racist campaigners were viewed as 'anti-police' carrying an insidious 'political agenda'.

50: Unsurprisingly, the report has never been disclosed to the Group nor made public but if its contents are reported accurately, it bears little resemblance to the origins and influence of the Group. It was true that SMG was supportive of the anti-racist initiatives developed by the Greater London Council under the leadership of Ken Livingstone and his Deputy, John McDonnell MP. Their approach represented a positive sea change in its engagement with and policies on BAME communities. For the first time in the UK, a local authority was willing to engage with ordinary people as partners and it opened access for a generation of working people that had been locked out from decision making processes. It was also the first time that a Government body was prepared to acknowledge the prevalence of racism (as well as other forms of prejudice and bigotry) and its damaging impact on the Capital. They created specialist departments to achieve positive outcomes. In this context, the Group submits that the real intentions of the Special Branch report becomes clearer. It was not only collating information on a group unlawfully but attempting to discredit it by presenting a wholly false picture. The Group's genuine support for anti-racist policies advocated by a progressive and left-wing politician were being deliberately misconstrued in order to generate opposition to SMG from within the local community.

51: Indeed there is no doubt that the report compiled by Special Branch does exist because its collation was relayed to SMG by local politicians at the beginning of 1989. What prompted the discussion was the Group's ability to galvanise local support for a half day closure of the town – shops, businesses including Banks and Bookmakers - to mark the funeral of Kuldip Singh Sekhon, a taxi driver who was deliberately lured and targeted because of his race and then stabbed 58 times. The Group was told that the police feared SMG's growing influence locally, and as a consequence they had been asked to provide intelligence.

52: For the Group, the cold reality and consequences of the potential surveillance only became clear years later. Suresh Grover and SMG became aware of a number of trends that affected its work. These were:

- a reluctance on the part of local politicians to refer cases because they were also worried about the prospect of being under surveillance;
- a greater presence of non-uniformed police officers at community meetings hindering the ability of victims to speak openly;
- a lack of access to resources as many funders sought recommendations or supporting statements from police officers;
- a number of unexplained robberies at the Group's office premises; and
- being targeted for arrest at protests.

Collateral Intrusion and Racism

We should all remind ourselves what AD Philo wrote in the 1st Century, "When a judge tries a case he must remember that he is himself on trial".

53: It is the Group's submission that Operation Herne in its report on Black Justice Campaigns wrongly concluded that all these campaigns were simply and only victims of collateral intrusion. It stressed that there was no evidence of covert operations targeting families of justice campaigns, "the SDS and the covert operatives did not directly target such campaigns but became directly exposed to them as a result of the activities of the groups that they had infiltrated" (Operation Herne July 2014).

54: Both the narrative of collateral intrusion and its justification is a serious cause for concern for Black and anti-racist groups and the issue requires a thorough examination by the Inquiry. At a meeting, in April last year, with another core participant, Mr Burke Monerville who was accompanied by Suresh Grover, the Chair, according to the Group, worryingly voiced his uncritical acceptance of the police explanation on collateral intrusion of family justice campaigns. The Group reserves the right to make additional submissions once further and enhanced disclosure is provided to all the non-state non police Core Participants. For the moment, the Group wishes the Inquiry to consider these additional points.

55: Operation Herne's conclusions are based on the apparent absence of records indicating direct targeting of these campaigns. This is a flimsy argument. Herne is not only aware of the ad hoc process of how records were kept but how limited they were and their absence, therefore, does not itself prove that the campaigns were not directly targeted.

56: Operation Herne's conclusions are an attempt to hide the extensive nature of covert operations against Black political and social groups, including justice campaigns, that challenged the status quo and were and are often viewed as 'subversives'. The Group submits, in reality and at operation level, Operation Herne was aware of the close and interchanging of relationships and information between SDS and its parent partners – the Special Branch and MI5 but it chose to limit its search thereby presenting an incomplete picture.

57: There is an extensive body of evidence showing that the British state took the politics of Black Power and activism seriously and the potential likelihood of 'civil unrest'. They were worried about the international impact of the explosion of 'race riots' in the USA in the 1960's and believed the UK was also prone to similar protests. Rather than deal with the underlying causes of discrimination, the British State began to carry out covert operations against Black organisations and activists. For instance, during the summer of 1967 Special Branch officers carried out covert operations at Hyde Park in London against members of the Universal Coloured People's Association (UCPA). In 1968, Special Branch gathered evidence to support the prosecution of UCPA and Black Panther Movement (BPM) founder Obi Egbuna and fellow activists Peter Martin and Gideon Dolo. Special Branch also carried out covert operations on a meeting organised by the Indian Workers Association (GB) who invited Malcolm X to the UK in 1965. None of these groups used violence but they were clearly not collateral damage.

58: As predicted, civil unrest did explode in the UK but not in the 1960's. Although there were frequent race related public disturbances in the 1970's, British inner cities and towns finally exploded in 1981 and unfortunately, for the very reason that British intelligence had feared. In fact 'racial disadvantage' is the very term that Lord Scarman used in his Inquiry into the Brixton disorders to describe the key driver for the disorders:

"The evidence which I have received, the effect of which I have outlined, leaves no doubt in my mind that racial disadvantage is a fact of current British life, . Urgent action is needed if it is not to become an endemic, ineradicable disease threatening the very survival of our society racial disadvantage and its nasty associate racial discrimination, have not yet been eliminated. They poison minds and attitudes; they

are, as long as they remain, and will continue to be a potent factor of unrest". (Lord Scarman, at page 135 of his Report relating to the Brixton disorders of 1981)

59: In reality, the history of race relations in the UK is littered with significant moments of public disorders going back at least a century. The first ‘race riots’ in the country were in 1919. Unfortunately, Lord Scarman’s warnings were not heeded. The reaction of the British State was dramatic. It passed draconian legislation limiting people’s rights and implemented major changes in the policing of citizens targeting working class communities, both Black and white. According to the Institute of Race Relations:

“ Sir Kenneth Newman, the head of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, had been drafted in to lead the Metropolitan Police in 1982, with the specific purpose of bringing the lessons of public order policing from Belfast to the capital. He immediately introduced ‘targeting’, drawn directly from anti-terrorist operations in Northern Ireland, under which police resources were concentrated in black areas with particular estates, clubs and meetings places regarded as ‘symbolic locations’, subjected to intense surveillance and military-style operations”.

60: One of these symbolic locations was Broadwater Farm in Haringey, the other was Southall. Given the context above, it is, at best, naïve to suggest that there was never any discussion by the leadership of the SDS to examine the threat posed by public order disturbances and the emergence of Black activism in the UK. Indeed, the basis of its very existence was precisely to stem this form of apparent threat and violence. There were dramatic changes to policing in London after the 1981 events fusing a more strategic and political approach to contain public order in mainland Britain – it not only led to changes in legislation but also for instance, very directly to the lives of black youth workers in Haringey and Southall who suddenly became the frontline in a politically drawn boundary with devastating consequences for themselves and for policing in these and other areas for decades. There are Core Participants in this Inquiry directly because of Sir Kenneth Newman’s legacy and certainly not and only because they are collateral intrusion.

61: It is critical for the Inquiry to understand that The Monitoring Group (and some other Core Participants in our category) do not only work with families on their campaigns. It was established with a very distinct aim to hold State bodies to account and its sustained advocacy on policing made it, given the remit of the SDS, vulnerable to covert operations beyond collateral intrusion. The Group illustrate the point with a clear example. As stated earlier, after

the carnage of the London Bombings in 2005, the Group began to work in Beeston, West Yorkshire, the geographical area where three of the four London Bombers lived. In the first week Suresh Grover was contacted by MI5 operatives on at least two occasions to dissuade him from working with the ‘suspect’ community and discuss legal representation for arbitrary arrests. The Group, therefore, does not believe that its work was not monitored and remained unshared with undercover police officers.

62: The Group wishes to express its frustration at the manner in which the issues of racism (and sexism) have been dismissed or made invisible by the Inquiry. Whenever the topic of racism has arisen, the Group considers that the Chair has demonstrated extreme discomfort and stubbornness.

63: This Inquiry needs to acknowledge that the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry definition of institutional racism was the culmination of a lengthy and exhaustive judicial process, possibly stretching over two decades as the subject was also explored by Lord Scarman in his Inquiry. We believe it is simply not possible for the Chair to examine the prevalence of any racial prejudice or bias within the SDS and its adverse impact on core participants and BAME communities if he is unwilling to accept the definition and start from its basis. Sir William was acutely aware of the likely resistance to explore the problem of racism and he gave this advice:

“There must be an unequivocal acceptance of the problem of institutional racism and its nature before it can be addressed, as it needs to be, in full partnership with members of minority ethnic communities..” (The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, February 1999).

64: A key question posed for this Inquiry is whether any bias can be detected in any decisions, actions or process involving covert operatives and their operations that affected BAME core participants and communities adversely. Currently the Inquiry possesses little knowledge and few tools to examine this issue in forensic detail in order to learn lessons. At the moment it is not clear whether the Inquiry will seek to appoint internal advisers. There is a vague indication that this may be done at the final stage of the hearing schedules. That appointment of internal advisers should have taken place before the hearing stage so that the ‘forensic’ analysis and scrutiny of the evidence could be examined concurrently with a race lens. The decision not to appoint specialist advisers was a fundamental mistake and the Group do not believe its negative consequences can now be fully remedied.

65: What are the indicators to detect racism in an organisation such as the SDS? As a starting point this Inquiry cannot dismiss Sir William's conclusions or the framework he provided to answer this question. This Inquiry is however, more broad ranging and will examine forty years of covert operations of a secretive unit dictated by a militarised structure. It was established for a specific purpose of averting an internal violent threat, whether the threat was real, exaggerated or false, the Inquiry cannot discount the fact that the assessment and ongoing decisions are prone to bias and subjective thinking. Indeed the Stephen Lawrence report accepted the idea that widespread 'unwitting prejudice' can lead to racially discriminatory practice.

66: Recent findings of empirical psychology, about implicit racial biases, provide a framework for better understanding the unwitting part of institutional racism. Understanding the workings of implicit racial bias helps us to see the implications for the kinds of steps needed to combat racial discrimination in policing and in the criminal justice system more broadly.

“Over the past decades, empirical psychology has consistently shown that the workings of our minds are not transparent to us, and that many of us harbour and are influenced by implicit biases. Some kinds of bias, such as implicit race biases, are particularly troubling. Studies conducted by the psychologist Patricia Devine show that people tend to have more positive associations with white rather than black people; other studies show that black male are more readily associated with weapons; others that black males are more strongly associated with danger and hostility than are white males. These associations influence behaviour, as the work of psychologists Jack Glaser and Jennifer Eberhardt has shown. For instance, the findings about implicit race bias indicate that individuals will perceive as more hostile black individuals, and that whites will behave with greater hostility in interracial interactions. Individuals are more ready to identify an ambiguous object as a dangerous weapon when in the hands of a black male than a white male. More worrying yet, in shooter simulations where participants in the study are told to shoot only at individuals who are armed, it has been found that individuals are more likely to make the error of shooting an unarmed black male, and also to shoot more quickly black, rather than white males”. (Dr Jules Holroyd (University of Nottingham))

67: These findings are not surprising: we live in a society structured by racial injustice, and it is no surprise if our minds bear the traces of those social structures. One of the important implications of this research is that it vindicates the lived experience of individuals who are

subject, on a daily basis, to sometimes overt but at other times subtle forms of discrimination. Another important implication is that knowing more about how such discrimination operates, we are better equipped to combat it.

68: There is a broader context in which policing practice occurs, of course. That is a context in which implicit biases might be influencing in subtle ways a whole range of behaviours in addition to the behaviour of individual police officers – how individual citizens react and interact with each other, what or who gets reported to the police, where policing is focused, and so on. This means that, for the purposes of tackling racial bias, it is important to get clear exactly what biases are implicated in producing which sorts of discriminatory outcomes. There are different kinds of implicit biases which may call for different interventions. For example, is it weapons bias or associations with hostility or both, that affect decisions to stop and search? It is important to find out more about which are present and when they fuel discriminatory practice. And crucially, it will be important to find this out in order to work out how to combat these implicit biases.

69: However, many of the strategies for combating implicit bias have been used in experimental settings, in the confines of psychology labs. This means that to work out which are useful in the context of policing practice, earnest endeavours would be needed to identify the biases at work, the contexts in which they operate, and the specific strategies that might be feasibly deployed in policing practice in order to combat those biases, and try to mitigate or overcome their discriminatory effects.

70: Police use powers to interfere with freedoms and use coercive force that stand in need of legitimising. In a context in which it is known that implicit racial bias is pervasive we can reasonably foresee that (as a result of implicit bias) such powers will be used to discriminatory effect. Given this, to fail to take these measures against implicit bias raises serious questions about the legitimacy of police powers. At the very least efforts should be made to tackle their discriminatory implementation. It is also worth noting that the phenomenon of implicit bias raises questions for the functioning of the legal system more broadly: how might implicit bias be implicated in a judges' decision or his/her assessment of the credibility of a witness?

71: The findings about implicit race bias then, pose difficult questions for much of the workings of the legal system. On the one hand, the emphasis on implicit bias might seem too optimistic: we all know that explicit racism tarnishes policing and the legal system more broadly. And, so long as there is racial inequality and injustice in society more broadly, tackling the ways in

which this is reflected in all of our cognitions will be just one small part of the picture. So addressing implicit race bias can only be seen as a small part of the wider problem of tackling racial injustice and racial discrimination.

72: Finally, racism has always been, and remains, a political and structural problem. If the Inquiry decides to examine this issue seriously then the Government of the day will have to consider its conclusions and it requires political will to eliminate it or lessen its impact. The State is the foundation, the arbiter and developer of racism, including racism in its popular or individualistic forms. If one loses sight of this fact, it becomes an issue of prejudice between different people. The Group is not saying that prejudice itself is not important or relevant but one cannot challenge everyday racism unless you challenge the source of that problem. It is State practice, policies and laws that set the context for, and create, new ideologies and forms of racism.

Conclusions

73: The Inquiry is confronted with a difficult task to ensure its findings and recommendations are both relevant and implemented when it concludes its work. Firstly, it is examining the actions of State agency over a time span that will seem less relevant when it finally publishes its work, nearly two decades will have passed since the apparent disbanding of SDS. Secondly, the State parties, as usual, will attempt to convince the Inquiry that its structures and outlook have qualitatively changed and that they have already learnt their lessons. Regardless, the Inquiry has a legal duty to scrutinise every claim they make and act if it believes unlawful acts have been committed. Thirdly, it will have to negotiate the land mines dug in by the Government's Covert Human Intelligence Bill, which will have given vast powers to the security services and questionable collection by public bodies. The Bill in its current form allows them to commit crimes, including murder and torture, not only in the interests of national security but also on the disconcertingly vague grounds that they are "in the interests of the economic wellbeing of the United Kingdom".

74: The Monitoring Group has participated as family campaigners in three previous public inquiries. When this Inquiry was announced in 2015, they encouraged other individuals and groups to apply for Core Participant status. Once they were granted Core Participant status, they organised meetings and conferences to galvanise interest in the Inquiry. They even invited members of the Chair's legal team to participate in a Q&A session at one of their conferences

and they were grateful for their attendance. Once the preliminary hearings started, they expected to be playing their part in a fair, open and robust process. However, the Inquiry process has been disappointing and damaging to its own credibility. Although five years have passed by, the Group remains in complete darkness over disclosure of the identity of the covert officers who spied on them. Not a single shred of material has been provided to them. They do not even know at which stage their evidence will be heard although they possess accumulated knowledge and information spanning over 40 years

75: The Inquiry's difficulties are of its own makings. It acceded to State applications to restrictions orders when there was no reason to do so; it allowed State parties to frustrate and delay the process. And it has shown remarkable reluctance to address critical areas of racism and sexism because, in reality, it sees them as marginal, issues that are not worthy of its time. As a consequence, it has discarded our positive suggestions of recruiting specialist advisers to assist the Inquiry. In short, the process has led to the creation of an unequal playing field in favour of those who spied on the Group.

76: However, the Inquiry exists because of the bravery and tenacity of Core Participants especially the Lawrence family and the targeted women. It has substance because of the whistle-blower who exposed the skeletons in the first place and journalists who uncovered the horrors to the public. Its conviction derives from the unshakeable spirit of protestors – Black and white, women and men - who dared to dream for a better world. That dream will live on regardless of the conclusions of this Inquiry. The Group endorses all the following recommendations agreed at the People's Public Inquiry into Secret Political Policing at Conway Hall, London July 2018:

- a. Full disclosure of all names – both cover and real – of officers from the disgraced political police units, accompanied by contemporaneous photographs
- b. Release of the names of all groups suspected to have been spied upon
- c. Release of all the police's personal files on activists
- d. Extension of the inquiry to all countries where the British spy cops are known to have operated
- e. The appointment of a diverse panel with experience relevant to victims to assist the Chair in making decisions and judgements

- f. Inclusion of children and young people who had contact with spy cops as Core Participants in the Inquiry
- g. Urgent and immediate review of convictions where spy cops had involvement in the cases and who misled courts – 50 wrongful convictions have already been overturned and this is likely to be a fraction of the true total.
- h. The Inquiry must extend its scope to understand political policing and its impact on democracy. This must include a thorough investigation into racist, sexist, anti-working class, anti-democratic behaviour on behalf of the spy cops and those that instructed them to operate in this manner. Such political policing and political policing units must be abolished.
- i. An urgent review into all undercover police activities to investigate whether the bad practice exposed by this Inquiry has been extended to other areas of undercover operations
- j. Make available the necessary resources of the judge to be able to do their job in the available time
- k. Equalising of resources, the police are spending millions on stonewalling the Inquiry, victims have almost nothing
- l. Increase the severity of penalties for [police] non-compliance with the Inquiry
- m. Investigation into collusion between police and corporate spies

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