

**In the Undercover Policing Public Inquiry**

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**First Witness Statement of Tariq Ali**

**Dated 2.3.2020**

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**Preamble**

1. I make this Statement pursuant to a request made under Rule 9 Inquiries Act dated 16 December 2019. I received the Request and the accompanying Witness Pack on 23 December 2019.
2. I am very busy with work commitments as a full-time writer and public speaker. I am active politically and regularly travel to different parts of the world. Therefore I have had serious doubts as to whether this Inquiry is worth my time. My initial reason to seek CP status in 2018 was to see who had spied on me and their justification for doing so. I was very disappointed to see that not one single witness statement from any undercover officer has been supplied to me, merely one or two paltry extracts. Nor has the Inquiry disclosed to me any statements from any managers or an appropriate officer who could provide evidence in respect of the any deceased officers. There are no photographs provided of any SDS officer that could assist my recollection. This makes it all but impossible to provide any useful evidence about the activities of these

SDS officers and their effect on my private life - something I thought the Inquiry was here to investigate.

3. Having now considered the very precisely targeted Rule 9 questions asked of me by the Inquiry, my strong feeling is that this Inquiry is likely to be a monumental waste of time. This is because the direction of travel is clear from the questions - to dissect the politics of the victims of police spying, and therefore to turn the spotlight away from the actions of the police. This is the politics of 'blame the victim.' And no doubt I and others will be declared guilty. Even 50 years on, the State is fighting exactly the same battle it was engaged in in 1968. This comes as not the least surprise.
4. I have nevertheless been persuaded to stay in, having been told that the undercover police officers statements will be supplied in the Hearing Bundles prior to 1 June 2020. However, I would not be surprised, in light of the rather slight disclosure I have had so far (See 'Dick Epps' below at Q6) if these statements turn out to not to be worth the paper they are written on.
5. My Witness Pack consists of 80 Special Branch (SB) Intelligence Reports (and associated documents) dated between 17 March 1968 and 13 November 2003 plus 18 press clippings and a transcript of part of the "True Spies" Radio 4 documentary; my name is mentioned in all these. The Intelligence reports are largely based on the activity of officers of the Metropolitan Police Special Branch unit called the "Special Demonstration Squad" (SDS) set up in 1968 (albeit then called the "Special Operations Squad"). I note that my SB 'Registry File' ('RF') reference is given as 402/65/699 which I presume to mean a file was opened on me in 1965 when I was President of the Oxford Union. I note that the reporting on me by SDS appears to stop in 2003, some 5

years before this squad was finally closed down. I presume that routine (non-SDS) Special Branch and MI5 surveillance nevertheless continues right up to the present day.

6. The reports disclosed to me in this Public Inquiry are clearly only a fraction of the full 'Registry File' held on me by MI5 and Special Branch, and even less of the files held on the organisations I joined, in particular the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC) and the International Marxist Group (IMG). Will this Public Inquiry have any effect on whether the Security Service will now disclose the secret files still held on me? I suspect that they will continue to be sealed for the next 100 years or so.
  
7. The SDS undercover officers (as disclosed to me by the Inquiry) who spied on me appear to be as follows:
  
8. (i) DC HN299/342 "David Hughes" (deployed 1971-76 into the IMG, troops Out and Anti-Internment League), (ii) DC HN68 "Sean Lynch" (deployed 1968-74 into the VSC, Sinn Fein and the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Campaign), (iii) DC HN301 "Bob Stubbs" (deployed 1971-76 into the International Socialists), (iv) DC HN321 "Paul Lewis" (deployed 1968-69 into the VSC), (v) DC HN326 "Douglas Edwards" (deployed 1968-71 into the Independent Labour Party, Tricontinental, et al), (vi) DC HN329 "John Graham" (deployed 1968-69 into the VSC and Revolutionary Socialist Students Federation), (vii) DS HN330 "Don De Freitas" (deployed 1968-69 into the VSC), (viii) DC HN336 "Dick Epps" (deployed 1969-72 into the VSC and IMG), (ix) DS HN340 "Alan Nixon" (deployed 1969-72 into the IMG and Irish Solidarity Campaign), (x) DC HN345 "Peter Fredericks" (deployed 1971 into 'Black Power' et al), (xi) DC HN331 (deployed 1968-69, probably into VSC, unknown cover name, now deceased), (xii) DC

HN294 (unknown cover name, now deceased, deployed 1968-69 becoming Chief Inspector and head of SDS in 1971), (xiii) DC HN338 (deployed 1970-71, unknown cover name, now deceased), (xiv) HN332, (active in SDS in the 1960s and 1970s, Chief Superintendent in 1977).

9. There are more senior officers who may be playing management roles whose identities are kept secret namely DS TN036, Chief Inspector TN0044 and Chief Superintendent TN0039.
  
10. There are also named officers whose identities have *not* been kept secret: Chief Inspector Conrad Dixon (in charge of SDS in 1968) and his Chief Superintendent of 'C' Squad ('Domestic Extremism') A Cunningham, DC Barry Moss, WDS Crampton, WDC Joan Hillier, DS Roy Creamer, DS Ray Wilson (later DI, and then Chief Superintendent in 1976) and Detective Chief Inspectors G.Craft and L Willingdale. There are a number of later SDS reports signed off by the Chief Superintendents - Trevor Butler (1979), Nigel Short (1982), Tony Wait (1984). The identity of Chief Superintendent HN99 (in 1982) is due to be published.
  
11. I note (from '*Special Branch, A History 1883-2006*,' by Ray Wilson and Adams, 2015) that the Commissioner Sir John Waldron directed that the SDS unit be set up, in consultation with the Home Office who provided direct and dedicated funding. The 12 selected officers, headed by Chief Inspector Conrad Dixon, were then briefed by the Head of Special Branch (since 1966), Commander Ferguson Smith, and Assistant Commissioner for Crime Peter Brodie.

12. No photographs or witness statements have been provided of any officers, aside from 3 very short extracts as set out below in the Rule 9 questions 6,14 and 18.
13. All the SDS Intelligence reports from 1968-84 appear to have been sent as a matter of routine to MI5. I presume the same would be the case for those from 2001-03.
14. In the absence of a single witness statement from any of the SDS officers who spied on me, or any Opening Statement from the Home Office or Metropolitan Police, I have to draw my own conclusions about what their position is. I am guided by the Rule 9 questions that I have been asked, which appear to turn the Inquiry away from a focus on the police and into a dissection of my political beliefs, and whether or not I, and the organisations I was part of, presented a serious, or any, threat, of serious, or any, violence, to members of the public.

#### **Q 1. Personal Details**

15. I was born on 21 October 1943 in Lahore, Punjab, India. My grandfather was Prime Minister of the Punjab from 1937 to 1942. My mother was in the Communist Party and my father was later a journalist for the Pakistan Times. For a fuller account of my early years before I came to Britain please see Chapter One "*Preludes*" in my book "*Street Fighting Years, An Autobiography of the Sixties*" (Verso, London, 2005), pp.61-92.

16. I have been a journalist, writer and broadcaster all my life. I remain politically engaged. I am now 76 years old.

#### **Q 2. Political Activism - an Overview - to 1968**

17. I was already politically engaged before arriving in the UK, see Chapter One of my book. In my teens I opposed the dictator Ayub Khan and military rule in Pakistan. I left Pakistan to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) at Exeter College, Oxford.

18. I arrived in Britain in 1963 and joined the Oxford University Labour Club. See Chapter 2 of my book: *"First Thoughts on Britain 1963-5"* pp.93-124. I helped canvass for the Labour Party in the 1964 General Election in which Labour came to power with a very slim majority under Harold Wilson. Once elected however, Wilson reneged on Labour Party policies to abandon the independent nuclear deterrent and not to support the United States over Vietnam.

19. I recall being on a student anti-apartheid rally in Oxford in June 1964 (one of our slogans being "Free Nelson Mandela!") for which I was fined by the University. I met Malcolm X when he came to speak at the Oxford Union, his topic "Extremism in defence of liberty is no vice" (see the photo in my book). I even met Enoch Powell during this period.

20. I was elected President of the Oxford Union in Summer 1965. It is from this date that the Special Branch/MI5 file was opened on me.

21. I was active in the movement for solidarity with Vietnam and went to the Helsinki Peace Conference in 1965 where, amongst others I met delegates from the (South) Vietnamese National Liberation Front. I saw the issue of Vietnam as the overriding political (and moral) issue of the day.

22. In 1966 I finished at Oxford and joined the Bar at Grays Inn, but decided against law as a career and opted for journalism. I worked for the magazine, *Town*, edited by Julian

Critchley and run by Michael Heseltine. I was fortunate enough to be recruited by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation to go on a fact finding mission to Vietnam for the War Crimes Tribunal. I flew to Hanoi in January 1967 via Prague, Phnom Penh and Vientiane. My experiences are described in detail at pp161-182 of my book (and see photographs). It was a formative experience, something I will never forget. I presented my report to the War Crimes Tribunal in Stockholm.

23. After this I went as a reporter to Bolivia for a short time and then Palestine following the Six Day War.

24. Around this period the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC) was formed. There was an existing British Campaign for Peace in Vietnam (BCPV) but it was dominated by the Communist Party. Our aim in the VSC was explicitly to support a Vietnamese victory. We answered an appeal from American activists to organise a demonstration in London for 22 October 1967. My account of this demonstration is given in my book at pp.233-234. It was major success; 10,000 people turned out.

25. In 1967 I joined the editorial board of a new paper, *Black Dwarf*. Please see my answer to Q11 below.

26. I went to Berlin in early 1968 and met leaders of the 'Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund' (SDS - no relation to the undercover police unit) - one of their members, Benno Ohnesorg, had been shot and killed by police the year before in a demonstration against the Shah of Iran and his brutal regime. I attended the Berlin Vietnam Conference and demonstration of 15,000 people in support of the Vietnamese struggle.

27. Back in London I worked on the Ad-Hoc Committee for the coming VSC demonstration on 17 March 1968. My account of that demonstration is given in my book at pp251-259. There were at least 25,000 people at this demonstration.

28 After this demonstration I joined the International Marxist Group, a tiny organisation of around 40 members, mainly based in Nottingham. I remained in the IMG until 1980.

29. After Michael Foot was elected leader in 1980, I made an application to join the Labour Party, but this was rejected by the National Executive, I believe principally because I would have been selected as a Parliamentary candidate by some Constituency Labour Party members, and could have then been elected as an MP. After this I remained outside any political party but was an editor of *New Left Review*.

30. I was engaged with many campaigns subsequently and spoke at dozens of meetings against racism and fascism, or any topical issues of the day. I have written more than a dozen books on world history and politics, as well as 5 novels, and scripts for stage and screen. I was editor of *The Bandung File* for Channel 4 for 4 years and have often appeared on television and worked on TV documentaries.

**Q 3. Did you use an alias in relation to any of your political activity?**

31. A: When I joined the IMG in 1968 I did use the name "Clarissa Harwood" to pen articles, this was my 'Party name' (see Appendix A to Tab 57). I also used "Ghulam Hussain" for articles written for the press abroad. There were valid reasons for this - as part of an international organisation (the Fourth International) it was not always wise, and



could be dangerous to give too much information to foreign intelligence services. There were many regimes that might be prepared to kill political opponents.

#### **Q 4. Intelligence Reports and Other Documents**

32. **Tab 1. [MPS-0730076]** is the SB report on the VSC demonstration of 17 March 1968 (RF346/68/1). It is submitted by a Detective Superintendent whose name has been redacted, for unknown reasons, but also bears the name of A Cunningham, Chief Superintendent. The source of this "intelligence" is unknown. Some of the report may be accurate, for example the fact that it was held in solidarity and in commemoration of the first demonstration held 18 years earlier in Saigon against US involvement in Vietnam. I disagree with the author's opinions about "intended violence" or "disorder." It is a shame the report has redacted the sentence in the report that states the origin of the intelligence, and substitutes "*information from 3 factions within VSC showed that*" - *a clash with police ....was their main aim.* There is a further redacted source suggesting foreign students would bring "weapons and missiles." There is then a substantial redaction of a whole paragraph that is replaced with "*Information in relation to planned acts of violence involving explosives.*" An example is then given of a person "*preparing to cause an explosion*" - the address (the occupier being a Branch Secretary of the Young Communist League) is raided and bottles of paint are found. [It should be noted that the Communist Party actually declined to support the demonstration]. The report goes on to detail "persistent stories" reaching SB of provincial student groups who would be in possession of "weapons." I recall some paint and marbles being found and nothing more. In London a van was seized with 1000 bags of red dye and 13 smoke bombs.

33. I am recorded as speaking at Trafalgar Square along with Vanessa Redgrave and others. Apparently SB can produce a full transcript of what I said. I would appreciate a copy. There is a very short summary of what I said in the report. Vanessa said she would hand in a letter to the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square. Barbara Wilson (RF405/67/358) announced the route of the march in that direction. We spread across the road taking up the full breadth of the carriageway in Charing Cross Road, and then half the road along Oxford Street. I do not see this as a threat to public order, it is the normal method of demonstrating across the globe. Only the British police seem to want to walk alongside demonstrators, in a fashion that is intimidating and irritating. It is designed to choke legitimate protest, not facilitate it. In so far as we are said not to have followed the "original plan" a glance at a map of London would show that such a route was too long, and we took a simple direct route, down Oxford Street to North Audley Street. It is in fact ironic that after complaining of the route taken, the author then complains of 200 demonstrators doing exactly that and going down Wigmore Street to protest outside DOW Chemical (manufacturers of the lethal and hideous 'napalm', and the chemical defoliant "agent orange").

34. Police lined the road at an oblique angle at the entrance to Grosvenor Square, and the report correctly describes the police "funnelling the column". This caused a crush at this point, and soon after demonstrators began to occupy the green space in the middle of the Square. At first we were prevented from handing in the letter of protest that Vanessa had with her; this did happen later, but this was why the column stopped at the corner of North Audley Street. There are numerous photos available on the internet that show myself and Vanessa Redgrave and others. As far as any fighting with the police was concerned, this was mainly due to the vicious assault by mounted police, after which chaos ensued. In so far as there was any "terrifying ferocity" exhibited that day, it was by the uniformed police,

mounted or on foot, both armed with truncheons. There were many casualties. The VSC gave a press conference afterwards to give our side of the story. I find it amusing that the German contingent (120 strong) is suggested as some guiding force of agitators *“who nevertheless contrived to avoid being arrested.”* I believe the National Council for Civil Liberties, who had impartial observers present, largely supported our account of what happened.

35. **Tab 2. [MPS-0722106]** is Chief Inspector Conrad Dixon’s account of the 17 March demonstration. He is the first head of SDS as I understand it, and had everything to gain by playing up the threat of violence; it gave him a new unit under his personal command, and a budget of £500,000. His report is as dodgy a dossier as ever was: *“anarchist and student groups were discussing proposals for violent action at Grosvenor Square. It is not possible to use these sources for evidential purposes, and no evidence of violent intentions was obtained by police officers who gained entry to some of these closed meetings.”* Not only do I detect a certain amount of xenophobia as regards the German comrades from SDS, but he is also contemptuous of me perhaps for the same reason. My role was as a member of the Ad Hoc organising committee, along with others, and I was the second speaker on the platform at Trafalgar Square, so I was no mere braggart.

36. **Tab 3. [MPS-0730911]** is a police compilation of statements with a view of instigating criminal proceedings. It should be compared with the full NCCL file which includes all the observers’ witness statements and is held in Hull University. My legal representative has asked the Inquiry that he be authorised to obtain a full copy.

37. **Tabs 4-9.** [April-July 1968] are of little interest. I did wish to build an extra-Parliamentary Left outside of the Labour Party. And yes, I would like to see global socialism.

38. **Tab 10.** [MPS=0738692/3] See my answer to Q8 below.

39. **Tabs 11-13.** Intelligence reports from August 1968 of little interest.

40. **Tab 14.** [MPS-0730063] See my answer to Q9 below.

41. **Tabs 15.** [MPS-0742197] A short SB report of our Press conference of 3 October 1968 attended by the national media, TV and Press.

42. **Tab 16.** [MPS-0730096] Yet another product of Conrad Dixon, dated 3 October 1968. This time suggesting an attack by 50 anarchists from Liverpool on Scotland Yard - it never happened. Then LSE students planning to attack the London Stock Exchange - never happened. 400 Glaswegians with crash helmets, fireworks, ball-bearings, and hat pins (!) for use as weapons - never happened. He lists the political persuasion of the VSC demonstrators as: "*Trotskyists, Communists, Anarchists, Maoists, Students, Foreign Elements.*" I would be surprised if every one of the 100,000 demonstrators characterised themselves this way. Noteworthy in relation to other questions asked by the Inquiry about Maoist involvement is the assessment that there were only 100 committed Maoists (in Britain) at the time and that it is reported here that the Maoists will take "independent action" for a demonstration in Grosvenor Square on 27 October 1968, which was "*bound to have a disruptive effect on the Official march as planned by the VSC.*" Fortunately with good planning and stewarding we were able to avoid this possible disruption. Dixon was

dismissive of us as organisers, declaring that there was an obvious disparity between “*what the organisers say they intend to do and what actually happens.*” On this occasion we proved him wrong.

43. **Tabs 17-23.** A collection of 7 press clippings. The *Daily Telegraph* publicised our Press conference and the route of the march from Embankment to Speakers Corner. I challenged the Press to provide any hard evidence of the plotting of violence, and it was our position that it was largely the Press and the authorities who were overstating the threat of violence in order to keep people away, out of fear. By contrast we wanted the biggest possible mass mobilisation.

44. I (“impudently” according to *The Sun*) wanted the police away from the demonstration in order not to provoke violence. It was not an “outrageous” suggestion, I wanted to use our own stewards - this is how it is done abroad, and often perfectly peacefully. *The Sun’s* suggestion that the police “will be happy to stay discreetly in the background” if there was no disorder was a welcome one. The production of a VSC sticker overprinted with the stamp “Come Armed” is mentioned as being investigated by Special Branch. I deplored such childish nonsense.

45. **Tab 24. [MPS-0730091]** Conrad Dixon’s weekly update (16/10/68) on our “Autumn Offensive” to the powers that be. Another list of “targets” that never happened. There is mention of a “Black Power” leaflet: “The potential of a militant demonstration,” but it is not produced. It was not approved by VSC.

46. **Tab 25. [MPS-0742219]** *Guardian* article from 17 October 1968. I was in Glasgow and said that I was convinced that stories were being planted in the Press by police. At p.296

of my book I mention that *The Times* published an article about “a small army of militant extremists” that planned “to seize control of certain highly sensitive installations” and “who are understood to be manufacturing ‘Molotov cocktail’ bombs and amassing a small arsenal of weapons.”

47. The real give-away is in this sentence: “*This startling plot has been uncovered by a special squad of detectives formed to track down the extremists.*” Now as I look at the reports by Conrad Dixon it is obvious that this is a reference to SDS and that *The Times* report was based on information supplied by Special Branch, and that the “special squad” is none other than SDS. As I said in my book, “*this was pure fabrication, designed to excite passions and keep people away from the demonstration.*” The nationwide hysteria that was deliberately being generated by the police and press resulted in me receiving several death threats every week. I was even almost kidnapped shortly before the demonstration.

48. **Tab 26. [MPS-0742224]** *Daily Telegraph* article. See my comments below in relation to Manchanda.

49. **Tab 27. [MPS-0742220]** *Guardian* article from 18 October 1968. I note that Daniel Cohn-Bendit was banned from entering Britain, and that the Home Office/Special Branch had a list of 20 “foreign agitators.” It would be of interest to see the full list. It included the German Rudi Dutschke, SDS leader, who was at the time recovering from an assassination attempt (sadly, he died 11 years later as a result of this).

50. **Tab 28-29.** Press clippings from the *Guardian* and the *Morning Star*. I am reported to have argued against violence, as usual.

51. **Tab 30-31.** Met Police telegrams. Of little interest.

52. **Tab 32. [MPS-0742223]** Press clipping from the *Morning Star*.

53. **Tab 33. [MPS-0733981]** A SB Report from a meeting at the LSE when I made "a strong plea" for the Grosvenor Square area to be avoided. Both DC HN331 (cover name unknown) and DC HN68 "Sean Lynch" were present in the audience. How does this square with "Dick Epps" witness statement where he characterises me as a rabble rouser?

54. **Tab 34. [MPS-0730093]** Here we have the definitive Special Branch assessment of the 27 October 1968 demonstration by Chief Superintendent A. Cunningham. The preamble seems to be a distillation of the numerous reports provided by Conrad Dixon. I would agree with the statement that "*certain sections of the national press kept up the temperature with a spate of speculative and alarmist articles,*" but I would like to know the role played by the police in this regard by fanning these flames.

55. Regarding the demonstration itself, I think the assessment of 25,000 is way smaller than the reality. Of importance I would say is the confirmation that at Trafalgar Square at 3.20pm I used a loudspeaker to ask marchers to continue to Whitehall and not go to Grosvenor Square. It is reported that at this point 500 Maoists, behind the BVSF banner, left the main march, as planned, and agreed with the police, to go via Cockspur Street to Grosvenor Square. I handed in a petition to 10 Downing Street and the main march finished at 6.15pm in Hyde Park. The Maoists are said to have gone to South Audley Street, where they were later joined by an anarchist contingent, and then by others from the VSC main demonstration. The report states that "*the majority [of demonstrators] were*

*well disciplined and acted in an orderly manner under the direction of the VSC marshals.” I would agree with that assessment. Appendices A-J are not included with the report.*

56 .**Tab 35. [MPS-0742226]** The *Daily Mail* press clipping mentions 3000 demonstrators in Grosvenor Square facing 2000 uniformed police. My comment on the day: *“I am very pleased that the demonstration passed without incident. The main reason for this is that the police accepted our suggestion to stay away and not interfere with our march. Another reason was that the marchers imposed revolutionary self-discipline.”*

57. **Tab 36. [MPS-0736479]** See my answer to Q10 below.

58. **Tab 37. [MPS-0742227]** This press clipping is of a *Sunday Telegraph* article by Peter Gladstone Smith, entitled ‘The Revolution that Never Was.’ It is interesting for the fact that it is critical of MI5 and Special Branch for *“taking too seriously the influence of a tiny minority of violent anarchists and revolutionary marxists.”* In particular he mentions *“many new and comparatively green detectives of the Special Branch [who] grew beards to listen in at meetings of the Maoists and the Ad Hoc Committee.”* This is clearly a reference to the newly formed SOS (later SDS) who became known amongst their SB colleagues as “The Hairies.” Smith claims (and it is well known that *The Daily Telegraph* has always had close connection to the Security Services) that *“relations between MI5 and Special Branch were strained in the weeks before the march. The cause of their disagreement is not known.”* I posit this as a theory: MI5 knew that the SB Intelligence Reports coming over their desk from Conrad Dixon and his SOS unit were an unreal assessment of the supposed threat. And they took them to task for it. Will this Public Inquiry investigate that? It is important because it would be entirely wrong for this Inquiry to take any of these Intelligence Reports at face value, and for example, find that deployment of SDS officers into people’s private



lives was justified based on occasionally lurid and inaccurate reports of threats of serious violence that never transpired. I would not agree with his conclusion that the “hero of the hour” was “the British Bobby,” but it is clear that what he means is that routine policing by uniformed officers played its normal role at Grosvenor Square, while the “intelligence” provided by Special Branch was “greatly over-rated” and of little account.

59. **Tab 38. [MPS-0730768]** Report of a VSC meeting, of no particular interest.

60. **Tab 39. [MPS-07284406]** See my answer to Q11 below.

61. **Tab 40. [MPS-0722099]** Meeting at Conway Hall on 20 December 1968, anniversary of the founding of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF). HN321 ‘Paul Lewis’ and HN329 ‘John Graham’ in attendance from SDS.

62. **Tab 41. [MPS-0741313]** This is an almost illegible copy of the Minutes of a meeting in December 1968 of the VSC National Committee at which I was not present.

63. **Tab 42. [UCPI0000005797]** This is an extensive report by Chief Inspector Conrad Dixon on the VSC National Conference held at Conway Hall on 1-2 February 1969. We watched a film of the 27 October demonstration made by ‘Angry Arts.’

64. **Tab 43. [UCPI0000015669]** A report of a London IMG meeting on 11 May 1969 at Conway Hall by HN321 ‘Paul Lewis’. Membership of the London IMG was reported as 28 people, with me as one of them; 30 people were said to have been present. It was announced that the IMG had been recognised by the United Secretariat in Brussels as the official British section of the Fourth International.

65. **Tab 44. [UCPI0000015670]** A report by HN321 Paul Lewis about a meeting of London IMG in Conway Hall on 14 May 1969 which largely consisted of a report back by Pat Jordan on the 9th International Congress of the Fourth International. I was a delegate to that Congress.

66. **Tab 45. [MPS-0738359]** A report dated 28 May 1969 that I had been arrested in Paris. This was untrue, I had been banned from entering France. This ban was later lifted by Régis Debray when Mitterand was President.

67. **Tab 46. [UCPI0000015673]** A report dated 25 August 1969 from HN321 'Paul Lewis' listing known members of the IMG, which at this point had a total membership of about 100. Only 11 people are listed here and the Registry File references are redacted. My address is given.

68. **Tab 47. [MPS-0738381]** This is a report submitted by DS Roy Creamer confirming he was present with a Special Branch colleague (an un-named DC) at a meeting at Conway Hall on 7 November 1969. There were about 500 people to listen to a debate between Ernest Mandel (RF408/63/1, United Secretariat 4th International RF400/40/48) and Monty Johnson (RF402/49/569, Young Communist League RF400/69/237).

69. **Tab 48. [UCPI0000023887]** This report by DC HN336 "Dick Epps" is of a meeting of 25 people from the VSC at Conway Hall on 30 December 1969. For some reason the list of people at paragraph 10 has been redacted.

70. **Tabs 49-50. [MPS-0732216 and 0732276]** See my answer to Q20 below.

71. **Tab 51. [UCPI0000008181]** See my answer to Q17 below.

72. **Tab 52. [UCPI0000005812]** A report dated 18 September 1970 by HN340 DS 'Alan Nixon' of a meeting on 12 September 1970 at which a film about Vietnam was shown and at which I spoke briefly about Vietnam and the need for everyone to go on the demonstration planned for October.

73. **Tab 53. [UCPI0000008195]** A report dated 15 March 1971 by DS HN340 'Alan Nixon' about a meeting of the North London Red Circle held on 9 March 1971. There were 8 people present. We discussed the recent Women's Liberation demonstration, as well as events in Ceylon, Pakistan, and Czechoslovakia.

74. **Tabs 54-55. [UCPI0000005817 and 8923]** See my answer to Q17 below.

75. **Tab 56. [UCPI0000015688]** This report dated 1 June 1972 by DC HN338 (unknown cover name) is submitted by Chief Inspector HN294 and concerns an IMG rally for Vietnam held at Conway Hall on 27 May 1972. There is no report as such, just a long list of names and RF references. I believe the rally was held in response to US bombing of Cambodia. I was one of the 4 speakers, along with Robin Blackburn (RF Privacy) (then editor of New Left Review), Alain Krivine (RF Privacy) of the French Revolutionary Communist Youth (Jeunesse communiste révolutionnaire - JCR), and Chris Allen (RF Privacy) (active in the "Stoke Newington Eight" Defence Campaign). Where is the copy of the actual report of the meeting?

76. **Tab 57. [UCPI0000015694]** This is a very extensive joint report by DC HN338 (unknown cover name) and DC342/299 "David Hughes" subtitled to MI5 about the IMG and Spartacus League fusion conference (RF346/72/15) from 27-29 May 1972 and held at various venues in London.

77. **Tab 58. [UCPI0000008201]** A report by HN338 on a West London IMG branch meeting that he attended on 21 February 1973. Six people were said to be present and HN338 lists 5 of them. I was not present.

78. **Tab 59. [UCPI0000015700].** This is a report dated 18 April 1973 of a public meeting at Conway hall attended by 600 people concerning the police raids on the Irish community in Britain. Both HN338 and HN301 "Bob Stubbs" were present undercover. I was a speaker along with Gerry Healy (RF402/41/455) from the Socialist Labour League (SLL) and Duncan Hallas from the International Socialists (IS). The summary of what I said is missing from the report as page 2 is absent.

79. **Tab 60. [MPS-0729047]** This is a report dated 1 June 1973 by HN338 concerning the IMG annual conference which took place from 21-23 April 1973 in London. I have to admit a certain admiration for his attention to detail and clear and concise explanations of the different tendencies. But was all this undercover work really necessary?

80. **Tab 61. [UCPI0000015080]** A note to MI5 that I was to be guest speaker at a public meeting (organised by Lewisham IMG) in Goldsmiths College on 28 November 1974, the subject: "Fascism."

81. **Tab 62. [UCPI0000009602]** See my answer to Q16 below.

82. **Tab 63. [UCPI000009616]** Report submitted to MI5 by Chief Inspector G. Craft about the forthcoming student week of action against the education cuts (in public expenditure) to begin on 23 February 1976, with a demonstration on 27 February 1976. This was to be followed by an IMG rally on 28 February at which it was intended I would speak. This was during the Callaghan Labour government.

83. **Tab 64. [UCPI0000010676]** This is a report by Chief Inspector Craft of a meeting of 60 people, largely members of the IMG and International Communist League (ICL), at Conway Hall on 25 June 1976 to discuss "Building a Trotskyist International." Sean Matgamna of the ICL accused the IMG of "chauvinism" for calling for a 'No' vote on the EU referendum. The IMG was accused by the ICL of 'broad front' politics (with social democrats) that failed to give a clear revolutionary program, and the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) itself was characterised by them as a 'centrist' organisation. We were also accused of failing to elaborate a program of political revolution for the states in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, and effectively supporting their bureaucracies. The report deals with my role thus: "*Tariq Ali, the last IMG speaker, attempted to change the atmosphere of recrimination which was developing by injecting some humour into the debate. His insistence, however, that the Russian and Chinese revolutions had made 'some small advances for workers' which the ICL had failed to see, was not regarded as particularly amusing by the ICL members in the hall.*" And the report concludes: "*The atmosphere of the meeting had, by its close, degenerated into a barely concealed mutual contempt. Future relations between IMG/ICL seem likely to be worse, as the ICL have now withdrawn even the critical support afforded to the IMG/USFI in the recent past.*"

84. It took me another 4 years before this sort of sectarianism eventually drove me to leave the IMG, and to purge my demons I later (in 1990) wrote a novel, "*Redemption*" about the sort of sectarian madness that this conference exemplifies. But aside from that, what I would like to know is what was the attitude of the SDS undercover officers to these debates, did they join in, did they try and push an agenda to increase hostility between organisations like these? What was the operational agenda of SDS? It was not just to report on meetings as this could have been done, as it was in the past by routine SB surveillance. This is one of the questions I want the Inquiry to answer.

85. **Tab 65. [UCPI0000021343]** This is a very detailed report, in 44 paragraphs, presented by Chief Inspector Craft concerning the 1976 annual IMG conference. There were 32 members elected to the National Committee, I was not one of them. It is an incredibly detailed report as to the political positions of the four different "tendencies" (albeit one decided to call itself a 'faction') within the IMG. I have to take my hat off to the SDS officer who summarised this in clear fashion for MI5 consumption. One wonders what use they made of all this. My role in the proceedings is described in paragraph 17 when I gave a report on the Fourth International. I was concerned about the expulsion of 65 members from the US section of the International, the failure of the USFI to update Trotsky's 'Transitional Program' since it was written in 1938, and the political and organisational mistakes made (following the Ninth Congress of the FI) by the USFI in South America, in particular Argentina. I closed with a plea for open discussion and unity.

86. **Tab 66. [UCPI0000021427]** This report acted 4 October 1976 suggests that I approached the IS with a view to joining them. Not true.

87. **Tab 67. [UCPI0000021515]** A report that I was asked to speak at a public meeting of the Deptford Anti-Racist Campaign in November 1976.

88. **Tab 68. [UCPI0000021528]** A report dated 2 November 1976 of the SE London IMG at which six people were present - all of whom are listed here:

- all have Registry

Files with Special Branch/MI5. So one of them may know who the SDS officer present was. The question then arises, what did this officer get up to, both during and after the meeting? This SB report ought to go to those six people rather than me - after all I was not present, my name came up again as a proposed speaker at a future public meeting.

89. **Tab 69. [UCPI0000017583]** This is a report submitted to MI5 by Chief Inspector Craft concerning the Workers League (RF400/76/17) conference in Birmingham held on 23-24 October 1976 with up to 70 people present. There follows an impressive list of 65 names attached for use by MI5 if need be. I was not a member of the WL but I did attend to make a speech on the last day appealing to members of the WL to seriously consider the idea of a regroupment on the left.

90. **Tab 70. [UCPI0000017700]** A report of a large IMG public meeting of some 900 people that I chaired on 14 January 1977 at the Friends Meeting House in London. I opened the meeting by expressing sorrow that such a meeting was taking place at all. The reason it had been called was to refute charges made by Gerry Healey of the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) that Joe Hansen and George Novack, two veteran American Trotskyists, had been "criminally negligent" over Trotsky's murder on 21 August 1940 by Ramón Mercader an agent of Stalin's NKVD who had been recruited in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. Mercader had been ordered to Paris in 1938 to attend the meeting of

the Fourth International, and to pose as a Belgian Trotskyist, Jacques Mornard, in order to seduce an American sympathiser of Trotsky called Sylvia Ageloff. When she went to the US, he followed using a false Canadian passport in the name of Frank Jacson. Mercader spent 20 years in prison before flying to the Soviet Union in 1960 to be given the award 'Hero of the Soviet Union.'

91. Gerry Healy had discovered that a woman who was the niece of a CIA agent was in a relationship with an American Trotskyist, they had joined the American SWP, which had then criticised Healy's organisation for its sectarianism. Healy had responded by somehow suggesting that the leaders of the SWP had become "agents of the GPU" (an old Soviet Intelligence agency superseded by the NKVD - it is not clear why Healy insisted on still using the term GPU). Novack had been concerned with the security arrangements of Trotsky in Mexico from 1937-40. It had more recently been discovered that no less than 66 FBI agents had penetrated the American SWP, leading to a multi-million dollar law suit against the US government, hence further allegations by Healy. Novack knew Healy well, and described him as "a shameless liar and a political thug." An account of the meeting was given in the IMG newspaper 'Red Weekly.' The report attaches a list of 94 people attending mostly with RF files.

92. So, what are we to make of all this? I would like to know what part if any Special Branch SDS officers played in the sectarian rivalry between groups they infiltrated, was it actively encouraged? The degree of infiltration of the American SWP is quite extraordinary, but also seems to have been replicated in the UK, with Special Branch infiltration of the British Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) and other left wing groups across the whole spectrum. As yet there has been no disclosure by the Inquiry as to what the operational



orders were for this SDS unit, but they reported everything back to MI5, and one wonders what use was then made of the information gathered.

93. **Tab 71. [UCPI0000017347]** This report concerns a public meeting in Southall Town Hall on 14 April 1977 as part of the GLC election campaign. Our candidate for Ealing was Gerry Hedley, and our political position was opposition to the 'social contract' and to spending cuts to public services. We published a manifesto for our election campaign. I was a speaker at the meeting.

94. **Tab 72. [UCPI0000017375]** This is a SWP internal party bulletin No.1 from February 1977. IS had changed its name to the SWP. I was not a member.

95. **Tab 73. [UCPI0000017521]** A report of a conference in June 1977 of the Workers' League in Birmingham. I attended as an observer from the IMG.

96. **Tab 74. [UCPI0000011089]** A report that I lent the IMG bookshop £3000 to cover their trading deficit. This is correct, but one wonders what use MI5/SB made of this information?

97. **Tab 75. [UCPI0000010944]** A report of an IMG public meeting on 2 August 1977 at Conway Hall to discuss 'The British Road to Socialism' of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). The CPGB had a perspective that the UK Parliament should survive as the overarching political (legislative) body even if the Communist Party took power, through having a majority of their MPs elected. I disagreed and argued that Workers' Councils should be established as the main organ of working class political power.

98. **Tab 76-77. [UCPI0000021653 and 21699]** See my answer to Q22 below.

99. **Tab 78. [MPS-0733404]** See my answer to Q22 below. I want to know why the Inquiry has not sought fit to disclose the full Special Branch report into the Southall demonstration of 23 April 1979 when Blair Peach was killed. Was this made available to Commander Cass? Was it provided to the Coroner? Has it now been disclosed to Celia Stubbs (Core Participant) and her legal team?

100. **Tab 79. [UCPI0000020990]** See my answer to Q23 below.

101. **Tab 80. [UCPI0000021100]** See my answer to Q22 below.

102. **Tab 81. [UCPI0000013736]** This SB report to MI5, stamped 'SDS', and, no doubt 'Top Secret' (albeit redacted here) by Chief Superintendent Trevor Butler dated 23 January 1980 relates to my collaboration with the cartoonist Phil Evans on our book, "*Trotsky for Beginners*." This report is worth reading in full, as it shows how utterly out of control the British spying network was. Why should Phil's girlfriend be mentioned, not just her job as a teacher, but her address and friends, and why should his housemates be mentioned? What use is made of this prurient intelligence? Were any of the 3 women mentioned here targeted by SDS or MI5? And how? I also note that mention is made of the photo of Phil being a "very good likeness." Where are the pictures of me from my file, how often were they updated? All the RF file references here are redacted.

103. **Tab 82. [UCPI0000013769]** This is a report from an SDS officer undercover in the SWP concerning an SWP meeting of 10 people on 12 February 1980. 8 names are listed with RF references redacted. It is mentioned that I had been invited to speak, along with Tony Benn MP, Paul Foot, Hilary Wainwright and others at a debate in March 1980 on 'The

Crisis and the Future of the Left.' I note that MI5/SB even had a RF file on the National Abortion Campaign (400/77/159) and the Trades Union Congress (RF400/78/68). The National Front reference is 400/79/149 - was 1979 the first time that SB opened a file on this quasi-fascist organisation?

104. **Tab 83. [UCPI0000013809]** This report dated 5 March 1980 concerns a meeting in Conway Hall of 25 anarchists (12 with SB files) who had gathered to discuss tactics for the forthcoming TUC 'Fight the Cuts' march on 9 March 1980. (This followed an announcement by the Thatcher government of deep cuts to public spending). I am only mentioned in relation to the 'Debate of the Decade' conference to be held at Central Hall Westminster on 17 March 1980 at which I was to be a speaker along with Tony Benn MP. The "Autonomists" planned to disrupt the conference. I wonder if any SDS undercover officer went along with this, or even spoke in favour of the proposal? All the RF references are redacted, was one of them an SDS plant?

105. **Tab 84. [UCPI0000013860]** This report to MI5 by SB is simply a long list of 184 attendees at the demonstration against the National Front that took place on 2 March 1980. All the RF references are redacted.

106. **Tab 85. [UCPI0000013868]** This report to MI5 dated 24 March 1980 concerns the 'Debate of the Decade' at Central Hall, Westminster held on 17 March 1980. It was chaired by Peter Hain and about 2500 people were present. I spoke along with Tony Benn MP, Paul Foot, Stuart Holland MP, Hilary Wainwright, and Audrey Wise. This was the same meeting referred to at Tabs 82 and 83 above.

107. **Tab 86. [UCPI0000014082]** This report to MI5 relates to a demonstration organised by the Labour Party in central London on 22 June 1980 against the deployment of cruise missiles, and gives a list of 33 names, mine included. The RF references are redacted. This relates to the proposed deployment of 160 nuclear armed land-based cruise missiles to RAF bases at Greenham Common and Molesworth; this was part of an US plan to base over 500 similar missiles in NATO Alliance countries in Europe. They had a range of up to 1500 miles and could carry warheads of up to 50 kilotons, they were labelled as 'intermediate' weapons, rather than strategic. The problem with the deployment of 'theater' weapons was that it increased the chance of a nuclear exchange confined to Europe, much to the advantage of the United States. The missiles themselves could only be launched by the US, the UK had no control over them. These were some of the reasons that even the Labour Party was opposed to their deployment.

108. **Tab 87. [UCPI0000016579]** This report to MI5 by Chief Superintendent Trevor Butler dated 31 March 1981 concerns the ANL conference held in the Polytechnic of Central London on 23 March 1981. About 150 people attended. Peter Hain was the National Treasurer. This report says that I was elected onto the Steering Committee of the ANL. The reason for the revival of the ANL was due to the fact that, having suffered electoral defeat, the NF and the newly formed "British Movement" had become increasingly violent on the streets, and there had been a significant rise in racist attacks. The ANL report and conference declaration produced here sets out the aims of the ANL during this period.

109. **Tab 88. [UCPI0000017175]** This report to MI5 by HN99 dated 17 February 1982 relates to the 'Right to Work' march to be held from 21-25 February. I was asked to speak at the Rally on 22 February.

110. **Tab 89. [UCPI0000017986]** See my answer to Q24 below.

111. **Tab 90. [UCPI0000016970]** This report to MI5 submitted by Chief Superintendent Nigel Short, dated 2 February 1983, concerns an SWP meeting of 160 members from London held in Holborn Library on 22 January 1983. I was not present as I was not a member of the SWP.

112. **Tab 91. [UCPI000000]** See my answer to Q25 below.

113. **Tab 92. [UCPI0000024507]** This is the last report from SDS disclosed to me until 2003. Did even the Institute of Race Relations have a Registry File?

114. **Tab 93. [MPS-0006827]** Please see my answer to Q27 below.

115. **Tab 94. [MPS-0009971]** This is the transcript of The Radio 4 'True Spies' documentary broadcast on 21 August 2002 in which I feature. This was made into a 3 part TV series. I was told by the journalist Peter Taylor that an undercover officer ("Dan") in the IMG, someone I had known, had taken a copy of the keys to VSC and IMG premises; I was shocked at the time, as I thought that the Special Branch surveillance would not go quite that far. Why has the Inquiry not included this information in my witness pack? MI5 then burgled the premises and stole information. "Dan" apparently came under suspicion later, but I am nowhere informed about this - is there a witness statement? Who is he?

116. **Tab 95. [MPS-0527568]** This is the Guardian piece by Peter Taylor on SDS, 23 October 2002. I note that the attitude senior officers, according to one undercover officer, was that Britain in 1964 might become a "Communist State." I disagree with his

assessment that the scuffles of March 1968 in Grosvenor Square represented “*violence that had never been seen before on British streets.*” The General Strike of 1926 and the Battle of Cable Street in 1936 were more violent. The only difference to post-War demonstrations, was that previously the demonstrators had not acted in self-defence against the police. I disagree that there was a need for “intelligence” on marchers’ intentions; there was no plan for violence; this generally erupted spontaneously.

117. His characterisation of SDS as an “elite” unit within SB whose existence was a “closely guarded secret” is only true in so far as it was kept from the British public. It was however a unit that was closely integrated into the Security Services, reports were stated SDS and were all copied to MI5. Even the Commissioner was once taken to meet SDS officers. I note he says that most of these officers believed that the organisations they were infiltrating were “genuinely subversive.” It surprises me then that the Inquiry has not yet released the names of the hundreds of organisations spied upon, as identified by Operation Herne. Taylor says that SDS supplied “the vital records” that MI5 wanted. One wonders reading for instance the reports on the IMG annual conferences what use was made of these.

118. **Tab 96. [MPS-0527571]** A BBC News post about the ‘True Spies’ documentary of 2002.

119. **Tab 97. [MPS-0527578]** A *Guardian* piece by Richard Norton-Taylor on the SDS. He mentions the Cathy Massiter revelations about MI5 spying on any organisation, group or individual engaged in civil rights activity. It is amusing to think of even the Solicitor-General (as she was in 2002) Harriet Harman with a big thick MI5/Special Branch file on her dating back to 1978.

120. **Tab 98. [MPS-0018070]** This appears to be a 6 page SDS Intelligence Report filed by an undercover officer using the codename "Hog" - he signs off "*best regards - keep it spikey - Hog.*" It would be helpful to know the provenance of this - who is the officer involved, where is his witness statement, what was his brief, what was the justification for him spying on us? There are a number of phone numbers given, no doubt so that MI5 could use phone tapping against those involved in STWC. See my answer to Q26 below.

121. **Tab 99. [MPS-0018074]** Another document about 'Stop the War.' (RF400/02/11). See my answer to Q26 below.

122. **Tab 100. [MPS-0029752]** Please see my answer to Q27 below.

### **The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign**

**Q5. Please outline your political activities in connection with the VSC [several questions follow].**

123. A: I was a member and played a leadership role. My role was mainly public speaking on behalf of the Campaign. I was highly engaged in this. I was a member of the Ad Hoc Committee for the March and the October 1968 demonstrations. The October demonstration was called 'the Autumn Offensive' to get maximum publicity. It was a reminder that this campaign was about a war. We were trying to bring the politics into the Vietnam War, in this sense we aspired to be a force on the strategic battlefield, but a political/moral force, not a military one. The aims of the VSC were to end the war on terms favourable to the Vietnamese people, to see the United States withdraw, defeated. Ultimately this is what happened.

124. The VSC used meetings and demonstrations to advocate its aims; the idea was to generate maximum publicity and support for the Campaign to (a) ensure that the UK did not enter the war by sending troops; (b) stopped supporting the USA logistically and politically (c) to lend support to the global campaign against the war, to try and force the USA to withdraw.

125. The steps I took to advance these aims were speaking and writing about the war; as editor of Black Dwarf I kept the issue alive in that paper. I also was involved in planning events, and I went on the demonstrations in a leadership role.

126. The VSC did not 'vet' its members, it was an open democratic organisation. No security precautions were taken as none were necessary. Discussions were open. The route of the demonstrations in March and October were given to the police in advance. The VSC was not concerned about police reporting as we had nothing to hide.

127. I did attend the March 1968 demonstration. No violence was planned, but it erupted spontaneously from the demonstrators in response to the police tactics, in particular charging at people with horses and lashing out with batons. Police did try and arrest me but failed. I did witness some violence. There are numerous reports of the demonstration and photos publicly available. The police still maintain the same line to this day that the VSC was responsible for the violence. This is not true. The police were badly prepared, and the 'crowd control' tactics were badly executed; there was insufficient control over the violence exercised by uniformed officers. To divert attention from their own failings the senior officers presented to the Government and the Media that the VSC was responsible. This lie suited both the police and the Ministers of State. The NCCL report and witness



statements may be more accurate. We gave a press conference about this shortly afterwards.

128. I attended the October demonstration. We planned a route away from the US Embassy this time in order to prevent being drawn into a battle with the police, given what we had witnessed last time. In this we were successful. No violence was planned by the VSC. I cannot say if any others planned violence, although to have done so would have been in my view suicidal, given the thousands of police expected to be there. In so far as the Maoist groups and anarchists decided to march on the US Embassy, as many of them did, they were presented by a solid phalanx of police and after a bit of pushing and shoving they gave up. I believe both sides ended up singing "Auld Lang Syne."

**Q6. Please also note the following passages from the witness statement of DHN336, a former SDS undercover officer who used the cover name "Dick Epps." In relation to you he has stated as follows:**

*"Manchanda was one of the principal drivers of the student [unrest] around LSE. There was a huge amount of student unrest. I recall seeing Tariq Ali at those meeting[s] whipping up a fervour amongst the student population. My impression was that he was the driving force behind the London Student unrest. The protests with students were extremely volatile, very unpredictable, and didn't follow particular political party lines. It was a melting pot of protest groups and again, for my point of view, an ideal way of getting into the scene. It was the students' numbers at Grosvenor Square that had put thousands of people on the streets."*

129. A: This tiny fragment of the, as yet, undisclosed statement of HN336 "Dick Epps" gives a very distorted view, typical of a police officer. Neither Manchanda nor I was the

*“driving force of student unrest”*. The driving force was the objective political, economic and social conditions prevailing at the time. I merely spoke to students and anyone else wishing to listen about what I saw as the major contemporary political issues of the day; if my rhetoric had an impact on the students, it was only because I was able to effectively articulate these issues. The horrific US war on the Vietnamese was the main driver that put people on the streets. Students were particularly engaged in protest as they did not have full-time jobs, and had much more time to devote to politics; they were hungry for our radical ideas. I am very proud that we were able to draw up to 100,000 people to our VSC demonstration in October 1968.

130. In so far as ‘Albert’ Manchanda and the Maoist group he led are retrospectively coming under attack from ex-Special Branch officers or the Met Police by suggesting he and they created serious public disorder in 1968 or after, I note from the Inquiry website that, of the list of SDS officers provided, there does not appear to be an SDS officer deployed into his group at this time. Neither Manchanda nor his group are Core Participants in this Inquiry, but if they are to be criticised by the Police, and provide *posterior* justification for the deployment of SDS officers into the VSC, then I would like to know how the Inquiry will deal fairly with this issue?

**Q7 The document dated 17 March 1968 (MPS-0730076 at Tab 1) indicates that you, a speaker at the VSC demonstration on 17 March 1968, were “active in the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding - a pro-Maoist group” Is this accurate?**

131. A: This Society was set up by a well-meaning group of businessmen and Liberals, even I think some Conservatives, who were genuinely interested in China, it had nothing to do with the Chinese Embassy, nor was it a Maoist front organisation. I was once invited to

a country house and spoke on the Chinese Revolution. While I was explicitly not a Maoist, the Communist victory in China in 1949, when I was 5 years old, formed part of my political landscape.

132. It is very odd that I am characterised in this way by Special Branch, as though this established some political orientation of mine. I see that the Inquiry have not provided the appendices to this report which gives at Appendix A a list of the groups participating. No doubt the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding has its own Special Branch Registry File. What is the purpose of the question, does it matter?

**Q8 In the report dated 30 July 1968 (MPS-0738693 at Tab 10) Ernest Tate is recorded as having been a “dove” on the question of violence by comparison with the hawk” ‘Albert’ Manchanda. This report concerns a meeting chaired by you. You are described thus on page 2: *“Tariq Ali was not his usual extrovert self and concluded the meeting by merely observing that what they had heard gave them “food for thought.”***

**8.1 Is the description of the differences between Ernest Tate and Albert Manchanda accurate?**

**8.2 Please explain in your own words the tensions between Ernest Tate and those who subscribed to his way of thinking, and Manchanda and the Maoists. who, the Inquiry understands he led, during 1968 and 1969. The Inquiry is particularly interested in understanding these tensions in the context of the planning and execution of the 27 October 1968 demonstration.**

133. A: This meeting on 30 July 1968 was called by the Ad Hoc Committee to discuss the forthcoming October demonstration. I was in the Chair, but the meeting was an open

discussion for the approximately 100 people present. There was no need for any undercover officers, nothing was hidden. If I did not contribute to the discussion, it was because I was the Chair and I wanted primarily to hear what others had to say. Ernest Tate (RF402/66/451) was not a "dove" in my view, he was simply stressing, correctly, that no revolutionary situation could arise from a simple demonstration. In response to the idea that the *authorities* had that, following events in France in May '68, the October demonstration might turn into a French-style insurrection, I repeat what I say in my book: *"The very thought was absurd. Britain was not France. Labour was in office and the working class was restive, but quiescent. A minority of workers were involved in the VSC, but none of us ever believed that anything remotely resembling France could happen in Britain that year."* Ernie was effectively expressing this view.

134. As for Abhimanyu ('Albert') Manchanda (RF402/53/274) it is a shame he cannot speak for himself. All I can do is reiterate what is in the report, that he *"stressed, time and again , that although he did not seek violence, he felt it would be inevitable."* The SB officer, who I presume was present, Chief Inspector Conrad Dixon, author of the report says: *"It is noteworthy that there was almost universal condemnation of the violence used on 21 July - partly because it was purposeless, but chiefly because anarchists had been responsible."* (There is no SB report in my witness pack that mentions anything regarding 21 July 1968).

135. You have to understand that the differences supposedly over tactics were at heart due to fundamental political differences and effectively amounted to point scoring. The Maoists were trying to make political capital by appearing to be more militant than the VSC; in this way they hoped to gain recruits. Therefore the simple binary opposition suggested by the reports as between "hawks" and "doves" misses the point; this was not

about violence, this was about political point scoring. That may have been lost on the SB officers present, and indeed may be lost on those sitting in judgement on this Inquiry. Nevertheless, on a tactical level we would not want our supporters to be led down, not just a political blind alley, but a tactical one - in this case into the arms of the police. This is why Ernie Tate strongly opposed what Manchanda was advocating. The position of the Maoists was that the US Embassy was the lair of US Imperialism in London and it was the place where the demonstration should go. The problem for the VSC was that the talk of violence had been so hyped-up by the authorities and the media, that we in the VSC feared we were deliberately being led into a trap, where we might suffer serious violence from the police, and the result of which would lead us into VSC being characterised unfairly as a 'violent' organisation, which it was not. The Maoists had their own "Britain-Vietnam Solidarity Front" (BVSF) (RF400/66/120) and on 27 October 1968 they led their own march, a fraction of the size of the VSC one, from Trafalgar Square to Grosvenor Square. We had 100,000, they had 5,000 people.

136. I understand that SDS officers infiltrated Manchanda's group at some point, so their witness statements might be of some interest. There is at least one account on the internet of the Maoist point of view about the VSC and the 27 October demonstration, but I cannot say it is fair and objective assessment. Has the Inquiry sought out any former Maoists for their comments?

**Q9 Please look at the report dated 10 September 1968 (MPS-0730063 at Tab 14).**

**9.1 In the first paragraph on p.4 the report states that "*The Maoists felt that violence was inevitable - and said so. The more cautious representatives of International Socialism [IS] and the [IMG] paid lip service to the vision of a peaceful demonstration.*" Is that an accurate assessment of what happened?**

**9.2 Later in the same paragraph, the report states: “All the indications are that the Maoists and anarchists will disregard any sort of instructions from Police or march leaders - and take an independent line on the day.” Would you have agreed with that assessment on 10 September 1968? If not, why not?**

**9.3 On page 5, there is a list of tactics which are recorded as having been suggested at branch, but not national, level. To what extent were you aware of any such suggestions? To the extent that you were aware: (a) to what extent did you approve of them; and (b) in so far as you disapproved of them, what did you do about them?**

137. A: This is another report from the febrile imagination of Chief Inspector Conrad Dixon, who had a vested interest in over-estimating the threat of violence to give credence to the idea that his secret SB unit was valuable to the British State. He appears to have written it following the meeting in Sheffield of the National Council of the VSC on 7 September 1968. I gave an account of the meeting in my book at p.297.

138. I was not in IS (RF400/68/175) I was in the IMG and we did not simply “pay lip service to the vision of a peaceful demonstration”, we were actively trying to avoid confrontation with the police as we were concerned that demonstrators would be injured as they had been before - the police could be brutal as the March demonstration showed. We wanted the biggest possible mobilisation. The outcome is that we were entirely successful in this aim.

139. If the Maoists thought that “violence was inevitable” this may be because they had no illusions about the nature of the British State and police violence. I note from Tab 26 that Manchanda is quoted in the Daily Telegraph (17.10.68) as saying: “*If the imperialist police force uses violence, we will defend ourselves.*”

140. I cannot answer for the anarchists, they had their own meetings, no doubt also infiltrated by Special Branch - so it may be instructive to read those Intelligence reports. There is mention in the report of an anarchist conference in London on 8 September 1968 chaired by John Rety (RF407/57/50) and an anarchist 'Ad Hoc Committee' meeting a week later to plan their own line on the day. I note that while Conrad Dixon initially characterises them as "apostles of violence" he later states: *"The anarchist attitude seems to be that "senseless violence" is to be condemned, while violence for a political end is permissible."*

141. I also cannot speak for the Maoists, but it was publicly advertised by them that they would be marching to Grosvenor Square, so their "independent line" was already publicly known in advance, without the need for undercover police work. I note also from The Guardian report (Tab 27) that Commander John Lawlor of Scotland Yard, the operational commander for the demonstration, had approved the "breakaway" Maoist route from Charing Cross, Fleet Street to Trafalgar Square (alongside the VSC demonstration) and then on to Grosvenor Square. I understand that in fact the route may have been personally approved by the Commissioner, Sir John Waldron, himself. As one of the 'march leaders' I helped ensure that demonstrators on the VSC march did not get drawn away from Trafalgar Square into a pointless confrontation with police at Grosvenor Square. We were successful.

142. As for the lists (A and B) of supposed "targets" and "tactics" apparently raised at branch level I have never heard of this. I would say this is the product again of a febrile imagination. The fact is that none of the supposed targets were attacked; and none of the supposed tactics were used. It was all fantasy. Surely the purpose of "Intelligence Reports" is not to fan the flames of fantasy but to provide an accurate assessment? It appears to

me that to some extent the opposite is the case, and SDS had a vested interest in doing this. At the time (1968) their unit only had a limited shelf-life, and was going to come under review after the October demonstration. Hence they had to (a) talk up the threat of violence, and (b) claim the credit when it did not happen, in order to seek further funding for the secret unit. Chief Inspector Conrad Dixon seems to have achieved this. See my book, p.296 and my comment on Tab 25 above.

**Q10 The report dated 29 October 1968 (MPS-0736479 at Tab 36) regarding a meeting of the British Vietnam Solidarity Front regarding the political results of the demonstration on 27 October 1968 states “all persons present were unanimous in saying that “The Maoist/Leninist (BVSF October 27 Committee) Groups had achieved a victory by having some 5000 demonstrators at Grosvenor Square, many of whom were recruited from the revisionist Tariq Ali clique.”**

**10.1 The above report would suggest that you aligned yourself politically with the Maoists. Is this an accurate assessment?**

**10.2. Can you explain your political allegiances at this time and how these manifested themselves in regard to the activities of the VSC?**

143. A: This is the problem of having a Public Inquiry chaired by a High Court Judge and assisted by security cleared staff with little knowledge of the subject. The Inquiry should have at least coopted someone with knowledge of the political scene from these years if it is to adequately grapple with the issues thrown up. It shows a complete misunderstanding by the Inquiry. The use of the word “Revisionist” is a typical Maoist slur used to attack a political opponent who supported or defended the Soviet Union, or who supported the Fourth International, as I did. It refers to the Sino-Soviet split that took place from 1956, and concerned differences in the approach to “Marxism-Leninism.” The “5000” no doubt



included a relatively small number of VSC supporters who had been lured away, perhaps 1000 anarchists and all the Maoists. Our VSC demonstrators were not "recruited" as such, this is simply Maoist rhetoric. My political allegiance was to the VSC at the time. I note from the Sunday Times (13 October 1968, at Tab 23) that the BVSF called us in the VSC "*revisionists, pacifists, double-faced Trotskyists, and capitulationists.*"

**Q11 It is understood that in the late 1960s you were editor and contributor to 'Black Dwarf' a publication that existed between 1968 and 1972. Please look at the report dated 25 November 196[8] (MPS-0728406 at Tab 39) which concerns an article in *Black Dwarf*. From the description given in the report, it appears that the article encouraged participants in a demonstration against the Vietnam War in October 1968 to send fireworks, marbles and razor blades to London in advance of the demonstration in plain wrappings to avoid their detection by police during personal searches of those stopped en route to the demonstration.**

**11.1 Is this an article you approved for publication?**

**11.2 Was it the intention of the Black Dwarf editorial team to encourage demonstrators to equip themselves with items to use offensively during the demonstration?**

**11.3 What, if any, steps did you take, or approve in an Editorial capacity, to advance the cause of the VSC through this publication?**

144. A: In 1967 I joined the editorial board of a new paper, *Black Dwarf*. This was the name of a British radical newspaper from 1819 edited by a Sheffield printer, Tom Wooler, who advocated universal adult suffrage a hundred years before its time - and for which he was thrown in jail. His program was: "*To lead a consistent struggle for the day-to-day interests of the working masses and ward off attacks on their standard of living,*" while

simultaneously, *"to make use of every partial demand to explain the necessity of revolution and show the impossibility of even a moderately. Serious and lasting, let alone fundamental, improvement so long as the power of capital is maintained."* He declared that: *"The right of the People to resist oppression always exists and the requisite power to do this always resides in the People"* and his slogan was: *"Peaceably If We May. Forcibly If We Must."*

145. On the front page we printed "Est.1817", and continued the series so our first issue was "Volume 13, Number 1." It was a fortnightly with a print run of 20,000 and our office was at Carlisle Street, W1. The editorial and production group initially included myself, Clive Goodwin, Robin Fior, David Mercer, Mo Teitlebaum, Adrian Mitchell. We were affectively a collective. Issues of the paper are available on the internet, see [www.marxists.org](http://www.marxists.org).

146. The issue in question is Vol 13, Number 6 published on 15 October 1968, and the report concerns "Dwarf Diary" on the back page. I reproduce the whole issue attached to my witness statement. It had been discovered that the police planned to stop all coaches bringing demonstrators to London, no doubt using the justification that they were searching for weapons. The diary piece was tongue-in-cheek; it was not meant to be taken seriously. The report makes it clear that there is no evidence of any fireworks, razor blades or marbles in fact being sent to London (as if you would need to send things that were readily available in London anyway). Unfortunately the police did not have a sense of humour, and appear to have considered criminal proceedings fro incitement. Nothing ever happened about this. I do not recall myself approving this piece, and it was certainly not the intention to incite demonstrators to equip themselves with such things.

147. It is absurd for the Inquiry to raise this as though it is an important issue; it plays to police desperation, scraping around to find evidence of the threat of violence. It takes the focus away from what was happening in Vietnam - thousands upon thousands of Vietnamese people, mostly civilians, being killed daily by American troops, bombs and napalm. The Inquiry will need to get some sense of perspective before rushing to judgement.

148. As for Vietnam, yes, I tried to ensure that the issue was always prominent within the pages of the *Dwarf*.

**Q12 Are you surprised that the police deployed undercover officers to report on the activities of the VSC? Please explain your answer.**

149. I am not at all surprised at the police having Special Branch officers in our meetings. But most of the reporting could have been done by routine SB officers. What I want to know about is these long term deployments and the intrusive deployment into people's private lives. As yet I have been given no details of this. What did all these officers get up to *after* the meetings were over? Who did they befriend and sleep with? If there is a right to privacy, how far did they go in invading people's private and family lives? As for the VSC, it was not necessary in my view for the SB to deploy agents into, the VSC, and certainly not after October 1968. When I was interviewed by Peter Taylor for the BBC in 2002 I was shocked to be told that someone close to me - I am still not told who - had stolen the keys to the VSC and IMG offices and copied them so that they could be burgled by MI5. That depth of intrusive State surveillance was something I had not expected.

**The International Marxist Group**

**Q13 [A series of questions about my involvement in the IMG].**

150. A: I joined the IMG shortly after the VSC demonstration of 17 March 1968. At the time there were only about 40 or so members, mainly located in Nottingham and based around the magazine, *The Week*. The members I was closest to were Ernie Tate and Pat Jordan. My account of joining the IMG is given in my book (see pp.259-262). After the VSC demonstration of October 1968 the membership had grown to about 200. I was later elected to the National Committee. While the VSC was a single issue campaign, the IMG was a political group with perspectives that looked beyond the Vietnam War. The IMG was a revolutionary group, grounded in philosophical marxism and the revolutionary politics of Leon Trotsky, principal organiser of the Russian Revolutions of both 1905 and 1917, and the military victory by the Red Army, as well as founder of the Fourth International in 1938.

151. The IMG had an international perspective of world revolution, with socialism as its goal. As the British section of the Fourth International its goal in Britain was to build a mass revolutionary organisation of the working class. It was never big enough to redefine itself as a 'Party.' In terms of methods and tactics, most of our efforts were simply propagandist, putting our ideas into the public domain in print and in meetings; we would support causes that we saw as advancing our political perspectives, eg the VSC demonstrations, the women's movement, workers' strikes and occupations. We were militant in the sense that we were not pacifists, we believed in self-defence and direct action. This did not mean we "believed in violence" *per se*. We were no different than any other political group; the Conservative and Labour Parties not only believed that the use of violence was justified theoretically, they continually used the British army and police or security forces in a violent manner for political ends, eg in Palestine, in Ireland, in Yemen (Aden), in Malaysia

(Malaya), to name a few; both Parties believed that nuclear weapons were essential and that they should be used if necessary. The Metropolitan Police were allowed to use force, sometimes quite brutal force, on unarmed protestors, leading to serious injury and occasionally death. We were alert to the fact that the British establishment would be unlikely to give up their power willingly without a fight and that self-defence might be necessary. But the fact remained that the British State was very powerful, and a socialist, or revolutionary, transformation of society could only come about from mass working class action, and its success would be more likely to be guaranteed if this was done through peaceful democratic means. We were utterly against terrorism and insurrectionism, or adventurist tactics in Britain. We did not believe that public disorder would advance our cause, as I hope I have made clear in this witness statement in respect of my involvement in the VSC, especially in relation to the October 1968 demonstration. Had we believed that public disorder would have advanced our cause we would have opted for a pitched battle in Grosvenor Square with the vast numbers of police gathered there. We did not do so.

152. The IMG only vetted its members in a political sense; if you agreed with our positions then you were able to join; if you did not then you would go elsewhere. However, we allowed tendencies and factions within the organisation in the interests of internal democracy.

153. There were no real security precautions except for the use of 'Party' names. Some meetings were restricted for simple organisational reasons, just like every other political party. The IMG was not hugely concerned about Police infiltration, we knew we were being spied on by Special Branch, but we were not a conspiratorial organisation, we were trying to operate openly in a democratic way.

**Q14 Please note the following passage, again from the witness statement of HN336, a former SDS undercover officer who used the cover name “Dick Epps.” In relation to [the] IMG he has stated as follows:**

*“There was no structure but just a few dedicated individuals. Tariq Ali was in charge there. He was the political mentor and the driving force. It was a group that took part in every demonstration that was going at that time...They were a revolutionary group. Tariq Ali was perceived as a very important flagbearer of the far left. The violence that spun from demonstrations was spontaneous but centred from the anarchists rather than political groups themselves.”*

154. A: I was not “in charge”, there was a democratic structure, as is surely made clear from the Intelligence reports themselves. I was not the political mentor of the IMG, far from it. If there was any political mentor it was Ernest Mandel who was based in the office of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in Brussels. I accept that I may have been a “flag bearer for the far left.” I partially agree with his assessment that violence was largely spontaneous, but some of it was provoked by actions of the police.

**Q15 To your recollection did you ever come across an individual by the name of “Dick Epps”?**

155. A: I do not recall such a name. A photograph and sight of his complete witness statement may assist.

**Q16 In a report dated 4 February 1976 (UCPI0000009602 at Tab 62) the logical conclusion of the activities of the IMG are expressed as being “the destruction of**

***capitalism and the seizure of state power.” Is this an accurate assessment if the aims and objectives of the IMG?***

156. A: Yes. But see my answers above to questions about aims and methods.

**Q17 The reports dated 14 September 1970 (UCPI0000008181 at Tab 51), 15 March 1971 (UCPI0000008195 at Tab 54), 16 August 1971 (UCPI0000008923 at Tab 55) concern meetings of the North London Red Circle. [A series of questions follows].**

157. A: The North London Red Circle was a discussion group that was loosely affiliated to the IMG. I attended Red Circle discussions or was sometimes invited to speak at a Red Circle meeting. Red Circle (RF400/70/50) was principally used to discuss politics from a Marxist perspective. The IMG did recruit from these groups. There was no vetting or any security precautions I was aware of. We were no more concerned about police infiltration than we were in the IMG or VSC. I think there were about 10-15 Red Circles in various towns in England, Wales and Scotland; they were listed in the pages of *'Red Mole.'*

158. As I recall, when I was editing *Black Dwarf*, some young people got in touch with us from areas where there was no left wing organisational presence (other than the Labour Party), and suggested setting up *Black Dwarf* "Reading Circles". When the paper changed its name to Red Mole, they became "Red Circles."

**Q18 Please note the following passages from the witness statement of HN340, a former SDS undercover officer who used the cover name "Alan Nixon" or "Andy Bailey" : "I cannot recall the aims of the North London Red Circle but it appeared to me to be a recruiting ground for the IMG. I was invited to attend the first meeting of**

*the NLRC following my approach to Tariq Ali and Vanessa Redgrave at the Conway Hall...The NLRC was a 'talking shop' and was not, as far as I was aware, engaged in any criminality while I attended its meetings. It did support a revolutionary agenda and was subversive to the extent that it advanced the overthrow of the established political system in the United Kingdom albeit it never took any concrete steps."*

**Q19** Were you aware of an individual by the name of Alan Nixon or Andy Bailey? If so what is your recollection of him and his actions? Had you become aware of the presence of an undercover officer at meetings of the Red Circle what would have been the effect?

159. A: I do not recall this name, but a photograph and a complete copy of his witness statement may help. When did he meet me? It is a mystery why the Inquiry cannot even provide me with this basic information, it does beg the question of how seriously the Inquiry seeks assistance from Core Participants. I would like to see the Rule 9 request made by the Inquiry of this former undercover officer, and the Requests made to other officers. From the way HN340 has worded this paragraph, one can detect a pattern of directed questions, eg. "What were the aims of the NLRC? Was it engaged in any criminal activity? Was it a subversive organisation? Did it support a revolutionary agenda? Did it take any concrete steps in achieving its aims?" One gets the impression that the Inquiry is driving to its conclusions down a pre-determined path.

160. Had he been unmasked as a police officer I imagine we would have thrown him out.

**Q20.** Reports dated 15 July 1970 (MPS-0732216 at Tab 49) and 1 September 1970 (MPS-0732276 at Tab 50) concern meetings of the Steering Committee of the Irish Civil Rights Campaign. Rallies on 17 July 197[0] and 3 September 1970, at which



**you were a speaker, were the topics of these meetings. Paragraph 21 and 22 of the report dated 29 June 1972 (UCPI00000015694 at Tab 57), which concerns the IMG and Spartacus League fusion conference, address the IMG approach to Irish republicanism.**

**20.1 How did the IMG advance the cause of Irish republicanism?**

**20.2 Did the IMG condone the use of violence to achieve these aims?**

161. A: The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Campaign (NICRA) was formed in Belfast in 1967 to try and overcome the institutional discrimination faced by the Catholic community in Northern Ireland. The Northern Irish state, formed of 6 of the counties of Ulster in 1922, was carefully designed to entrench the power of the Protestant majority. Electoral boundaries were “gerrymandered” to give Protestant population greater representation, the Police (Royal Ulster Constabulary - the RUC) was almost 90% Protestant, and Catholics faced serious discrimination over jobs and housing. NICRA aimed to be non-sectarian and it was to an extent based on the National Council for Civil Liberties in the UK. It also sought to borrow the non-violent direct action tactics of the American Civil Rights movement. NICRA demonstrators were often savagely attacked by the RUC, and NICRA did not survive the events of ‘Bloody Sunday’ when British Paratroopers shot dead 13 people in Derry. By then it was clear that there was virtually no political space left for non-violent action.

162. The Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign (RF400/7055) was set up in the UK to support an end to discrimination in Northern Ireland, but also supported the creation of a united Ireland.

163. I was listed as a speaker (in my capacity as editor of *Red Mole*) at a mass rally in Chiswick Town Hall on 17 July 1970. The reason for the meeting was principally in response to the British throwing Bernadette Devlin in jail - she was later elected as an MP. A demonstration was called for 19 July 1970 from Shepherds Bush Green.

164. I also agreed to speak at a further rally on 3 September 1970 at the Coop Hall in Seven Sisters in my capacity as an IMG member. I spoke alongside 2 MPs and others. At this time there was increasing repression in Northern Ireland at the hands of the Army and the RUC. Hundreds of Catholic/nationalist families had been forced from their homes in areas of Derry and Belfast, hundreds had been jailed, and there was systematic and brutal use of force against this minority population. There had been some echoes of this in London where ICRSC members had suffered harassment and had their houses raided. We were particularly concerned that the British state would introduce arbitrary imprisonment without trial under the Special Powers Act 1922. This became a reality the following year, 1971, when Internment began.

165. The IMG supported the cause of Irish Republicanism, and there is some mention of this in the Special Branch report of the IMG annual conference held in May 1972. This conference took place after both Internment (August 1971) and Bloody Sunday (January 1972). The IMG supported the right of the Catholic/Nationalist community to defend itself against attack from the RUC and the British Army. The IMG gave support to Sinn Fein - this was the Irish political party that supported a united Ireland and had been founded in 1905. It won 73 of 105 seats in the 1918 election but following the Anglo-Irish War of 1919-21 became marginalised as the new Irish government accepted the new border with the new statelet of "Northern Ireland." The IMG saw the struggle in Ireland as an anti-imperialist struggle, similar to national liberation and anti-colonial struggles elsewhere. (In

similar vein we supported the ANC in South Africa, and the MPLA in Angola - both now in government). It was often said that Ireland was England's oldest colony (first invaded in the 12th century). The brutal and discriminatory statelet that the British had set up in Northern Ireland in 1922 was reinforced by the deployment of 8000 British troops (1969), mass internment without trial (1971), torture and shooting to kill in the streets. In such circumstances the IMG felt it necessary to support the IRA (Irish Republican Army). Our activity was confined to lending political support by calling for rallies and demonstrations against British policy in Northern Ireland, by producing leaflets and articles in our newspapers, *Red Mole*, *Red Weekly*, and later, *Socialist Challenge*. I would go and speak at various rallies and on occasion travelled to Northern Ireland to do so. Bob Purdie wrote a 68 page pamphlet 'Ireland Unfree' (1972) that explains IMG policy towards Ireland (see [www.cedarlounge.files.wordpress.com](http://www.cedarlounge.files.wordpress.com)).

166. The IMG did not use violence in the UK to advance the cause of Irish Republicanism but it acknowledged the right of the Irish Republican movement to defend itself against the British state in all its forms.

**Q21. Are you surprised that the police deployed undercover officers to report on the activities of the IMG? Please explain your answer.**

167. A: Not in the least. I would expect nothing less from the British state. This doesn't mean it was justified.

### **Anti-Nazi League**

**Q22. The reports dated 17 May 1978 (UCPI0000021653 at Tab 76) and 24 May 1978 (UCPI0000021699 at Tab 77) concern attendees at ANL events. The report dated 24**

**July 1979 (UCPI0000021100 at Tab 80) indicates that you were elected to the ANL steering committee. There are a number of other reports on which your name appears concerning the ANL which are contained in your witness pack. Please summarise your political activities in connection with the ANL, including dates and positions of responsibility held. In particular [the standard 5 questions about aims, methods, vetting, security and infiltration].**

168. A: As a member of the IMG rather than of the SWP (the Socialist Workers Party, renamed in January 1977 from IS, the International Socialists) I do not recall being invited onto the steering committee. I remained in the IMG until 1980. ANL was an initiative of the SWP, although it should be noted that "Rock Against Racism" was already in existence, and they often combined for the purposes of outdoor events, such as the Carnival I went to in 1978.

169. The first two SB Intelligence reports disclosed here are almost entirely redacted. One wonders why.

170. The first is a list of 229 names at the ANL/RAR Carnival held on 30 April 1978 in Victoria Park. Approximately 100,000 people marched six miles from Trafalgar Square to the East End for an open-air concert at Victoria Park. The Southall-based reggae band 'Misty In Roots' led the parade from the back of a lorry. The concert featured The Clash, Steel Pulse, Tom Robinson Band, X-Ray Spex, Jimmy Pursey (from Sham 69) and Patrik Fitzgerald. It was a fabulous day out.

171. It is worth mentioning that three weeks before the carnival, two parcel bombs were delivered by the neo-Nazi organisation Column 88 to the headquarters of the Communist

Party and the trade union NUPE (National Union of Public Employees). On 21 April, nine days before the carnival, 10-year-old Kenneth Singh was stabbed to death yards from his east London home. The killers - who were never found - left eight stab wounds in the back of his head. This is why RAR/ANL felt it essential to hold a show of peaceful, joyous, strength in London's East End.

172. The second SB report is a list of 69 names of people on the march from Aldgate to Hyde Park on 14 May 1978.

173. The ANL have the Registry File reference 400/78/79, the SWP have the reference 400/78/49. In the report of July 1979 the ANL are given a new RF reference 400/79/43.

174. The brief note of my being elected onto the steering committee mentions Vishnu Sharma as also being elected; he was President of the Indian Worker's Association located in Southall.

175. The 1970s had seen a rise in the profile of the National Front (NF) an extreme right-wing group which had a hard core of Nazi sympathisers running it (eg. John Tyndall and Martin Webster). The NF stood candidates in local and national elections and in the May 1976 local elections obtained a worrying number of votes, pushing the Liberals into fourth place in a number of areas. There was a real worry they were poised for an electoral breakthrough. Accompanying this rise was a rise in serious racist violence, including murders of young black and Asian men.

176. On 13 August 1977 several thousand anti-fascist protestors gathered to prevent a deliberately provocative NF march of 500 NF members through Lewisham, a London

borough which contained a high immigrant and black population. The NF marchers were protected by no less than 5000 police. The Commissioner David McNee had declined, despite urging by local Church leaders, the local council and the Liberal Party, to apply to the Home Secretary to ban the march. The police used baton charges and mounted police to try and clear the anti-fascist protestors from the area. There is now a mural and commemorative plaque in New Cross to what was dubbed the "Battle of Lewisham."

177. This was the background to the formation of the ANL. It was created to counter the rise of the far Right in Britain. I believe it was successful as within a few years the NF had largely disintegrated, although many political commentators say it was due more to the Conservative party under Margaret Thatcher largely adopting their clothes with her infamous comment about England being "swamped by people of a different culture".

178. The methods of the ANL were rallies, demonstrations, and publicity in opposition to racism and fascism. There was no vetting or security precautions taken that I was aware of. There was more concern about fascist attacks than concern about police infiltration.

The real question for me is what were Special Branch up to as regards the fascists? How did they go about monitoring the NF and other far right groups? Did SDS operate inside the NF as well as the ANL? There were racist murders happening on the streets at the time, it would be good to know if the Metropolitan Police dedicated any Special Branch resources to countering this threat.

**Q23. The report dated 22 June 1979 (UCPI0000020990 at Tab 79) concerns a public meeting organised by the ANL on the topic "Who killed Blair Peach?" At which you spoke.**

**23.1 Were you aware of police interest in events related to the death of Blair Peach?**

**23.2 Are you surprised that events connected with the death of Blair Peach attracted police attention?**

179. A: The killing of Blair Peach, an East London school teacher, by police officers from the Commissioner's "Special Patrol Group" (SPG), and the subsequent cover up is one of the most despicable events in the history of the Metropolitan Police.

180. In the Spring of 1979 the Conservative Council in LB Ealing decided to let the NF have the Southall town hall for an election rally, despite the fact that the NF had little support in the Southall, which had a high Asian population. I was the "Socialist Unity" candidate for that constituency. The election was due to be held in May 1979. For the NF to hold an election rally in Southall was a deliberate provocation; and they relied on the police to protect them.

181. It has been reported that Blair Peach was known to police for his anti-racist views, having been twice arrested (and acquitted); he had also been attacked in the street by NF supporters. What is now of great interest is that Blair Peach was already under police and MI5 surveillance and had a Registry File RF402/78/251. The SDS comment is as follows: *"The East London Teachers Association has come to the notice of Special Branch on numerous occasions."*

182. The police behaviour on 23 April 1979 was brutal, but I believe was sanctioned from those above. I was taken for my own safety to a house with members of the band, Misty In Roots, as ANL organisers were worried about the police being out of control. And they were. The police broke into the house and dragged us out. I was beaten and made to run gauntlet of uniformed police who stood in 2 lines outside the house and truncheoned as

we were pushed along. I collapsed unconscious and Clarence Baker, the lead singer of Misty, was severely injured. I wonder where the SDS officers were when all this was happening?

183. I was put on a bus and taken to a police station; then held for several hours until being unceremoniously thrown out at 2am. Still dazed and somewhat in a state of shock I was able to get a taxi home. I then heard of Blair Peach's death. It was a terrible moment to realise quite how far the police could go; how they had been unleashed by the powers that be, and clearly knew they could act with impunity.

184. I note from Tab 78 that there is a thick file that identifies all the people arrested at Southall on 23 April 1979, including me, supposedly for s5 Public Order Act 1936 (threatening behaviour) which was an imprisonable offence. It is said that I had to appear at court on 22 June 1979 at Ealing Magistrates' Court. I do not recall ever going to court. I do not believe I was in fact ever charged, in any event such a charge would be complete fabrication by the police.

185. What use was made of this report, all those of us with Special Branch files were listed separately - did this inform how people were dealt with? Were people deliberately criminalised or treated more harshly if they had an existing RF file?

186. On 12 June 1979 I spoke at a public meeting at Camden Town Hall. There had already been calls for an official 'Public Inquiry' but I felt that was almost certain to obscure the truth rather than highlight it. I called for an 'Independent Inquiry' with a panel of experts who could produce a proper report.



187. On 13 June 1979 Blair Peach was finally buried. Up to 10,000 mourners joined the funeral procession.

188. In the event there was no Inquiry of any kind, only an Inquest during which police officers plainly lied, resulting in a verdict of 'misadventure.' The Coroner, John Burton, had in his possession the full investigation report of Commander Cass, which named the likely killer, but he kept it hidden from the jury. Another disgraceful and deliberate way the establishment protected the police.

189. I am not in slightest surprised at the Met Police (and Special Branch) interest in the subsequent campaign for justice for Blair Peach. It mirrors the intrusion into the Stephen Lawrence campaign and family. The Met clearly wished to protect their organisation and their officers from criticism, even when they knew one of their officers had murdered someone. The internal investigation report by Commander Cass was buried (until 2010) as it clearly pointed the finger at the most likely suspect, Inspector Murray of SPG unit U111. Did Special Branch report to Commander Cass about where their operatives were on the day, and what they witnessed? Or was that, too, kept secret? We will of course never know, and this Inquiry I doubt will want to ask such questions.

190. The history of the cover up can be given in more detail by Blair Peach's former partner, Celia Stubbs, a Core Participant, who has my sympathy.

191. For more on the ANL/RAR, see the book *Never Again: Rock Against Racism and the Anti-Nazi League 1976-1982* (London, 2018) by David Renton.

**Q24. The report dated 2 April 1982 (UCPI0000017986 at Tab 89) concerns a branch of the ANL at which you spoke. Your speech is referred to as follows: “He stated that last years riots were basically the working people rioting against the State. He gleefully spoke of rumours of more riots in Brixton this April and whilst not directly encouraging them, gave the impression that there would be no alternative.” Can you recall if this is an accurate representation of what you said at this meeting?**

**24.1 What was your attitude towards further civil unrest?**

192. A: This report to MI5 from Chief Superintendent Nigel Short relates to an ANL meeting of about 70 people in Hounslow on 25 March 1982, the subject being ‘The Fight Against Racism.’ I am not told which SDS undercover officer was present. I was the principal speaker, indeed the SDS officer says I “gave an eloquent speech” linking racism to unemployment. At that point unemployment had reached almost 10% of the workforce, and was particularly acute amongst the unskilled and ethnic minorities (over 50% for young black men). I cannot recall this speech, but I may well have referred to the riots of the previous year. There had been riots in Bristol in April 1980, and then almost exactly a year later in Brixton, April 1981. But these were far surpassed in scale by the riots in July 1981 which swept through the major urban conurbations: London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, Nottingham and Manchester. The background to this was police harassment of the black community and the use of the ‘Sus’ law, (s4 Vagrancy Act 1824 used against “vagrants”, especially former soldiers of the Napoleonic Wars). In London, in April 1981, it was the SPG who were mainly responsible, the Commissioner David McNee having deployed them into Brixton in the notorious “Operation Swamp ’81” which saw almost 1000 people, mainly black youths, arrested on “suspicion” in 5 days. The ‘Sus’ law was only repealed in August 1981, after the July riots the month before.

193. There were no further major disturbances that year, 1982. If I gave an impression there might be no alternative, this was because the black youth in particular were completely alienated; there were no jobs and little hope for them. Riots tend to be a spontaneous eruption of protest against oppression, or some perceived injustice. The Police at the time were exempt from the Race Relations Act, and the Scarman Public Inquiry (into the Brixton riots) gave them a clean bill of health, stating that the police were not "institutionally racist," a laughable conclusion. However, the riots did have some beneficial effect - £90 million was allocated to deprived inner city areas. I do believe that one reason Kenneth Newman got the job of Met Police Commissioner because of his experience of Northern Ireland where there had been serious rioting since the 1970s.

194. I wanted to see alienated youth brought into the political struggle, I was perfectly aware that little could be achieved by spontaneous rioting; I wanted such behaviour to act as a catalyst for change. I cannot say whether I was fairly characterised as "gleeful" but after the beating I had had at the hands of the police in Southall, it was not unwelcome to know that some young people were willing to fight back against the police. My attitude towards further civil unrest was that it was inevitable if the Thatcher government continued down the same path.

**Q25. The report dated 11 June 1984 (UCPI0000020635 at Tab 91) concerns a meeting for invited groups to discuss "co-ordinated/solidarity activity against racist attacks in East and South East London." Paragraph 5 of the report indicates that "initially" the activity will comprise pickets of [public] houses where racist[s] gather.**

**25.1 Was any public disorder envisaged?**

**25.2 Did you attend any such picket?**

**25.3 Did any public disorder in fact occur?**

195. A: The report to MI5 by Chief Superintendent Tony Wait concerns a meeting in Bethnal Green to set up an East London campaign against racist attacks. It was attended by members of anti-racist groups from Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham and Greenwich. I was also invited.

196. At the time there was a real problem with racist attacks in East London, in particular Bangladeshi youths had been targeted. There had been a long history of this - in 1970 Tosir Ali had been stabbed in the street and killed. Racist violence in the East End was endemic. In 1978 Altab Ali, age 24, a factory worker from Bangladesh, had been stabbed and killed by 3 white teenagers. 7000 people marched behind his coffin to Number 10 Downing Street calling on the government to do something. But more murders followed. The National Front HQ was located not far away in Shoreditch and this attracted hard core racists to the area.

197. There was no detailed discussion about pickets, nor do I recall attending any picket of a public house.

198. This same kind of endemic violent racism shifted to South East London in the later 1980s and 1990s, resulting in the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The only way of stopping it was to fight back politically to isolate the racists, to cut the cancer of racism out of mainstream political debate.

199. What were Special Branch doing at the time to help put a stop to the racist murders? Spying on those of us trying to stop it. It would be nonsensical of the Inquiry to justify this spying on the grounds that a picket of a public house where known racists gathered (often

before they carried out their attacks, fuelled by Dutch courage) might cause some disorder, when the problem was the racists, not us. This would effectively be victim-blaming.

### **Stop the War Coalition**

**Q26. The report with the reference MOS-001870 (at Tab 98) indicates that you were elected to the Stop the War Coalition steering committee. Please summarise your political activities in connection with the STWC, including dates and positions of responsibility held. In particular:**

**26.1 What were the aims of the STWC?**

**26.2 What methods did STWC use to advance its aims?**

**26.3 Did STWC vet its members?**

**26.4 Did STWC take other security precautions to keep its plans, tactics or other matters confidential? If so please explain.**

**26.5 Were the STWC concerned about infiltration by the police or others? If so, please explain why.**

200. A: The Stop the War Coalition (STWC) of some 450 affiliated groups (including the Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru, the Scottish National Party and Greenpeace) aimed to stop the US and UK's illegal war on Iraq. Illegal because there was no second United Nations resolution to use force, and it was an attack on a sovereign state. The claim (in the 'dodgy dossier') that 'weapons of mass destruction' could reach the UK in 45 minutes, was blatantly false. After the death of Dr. David Kelly (a WMD inspector), in highly suspicious circumstances, we had the Hutton Inquiry, and then later the Chilcot Inquiry, with its damning conclusions about Tony Blair dragging the UK into a war from which it emerged

ingloriously. The consequences of our failure to stop this illegal war are sadly still being played out across the Middle East, and even globally.

201. I assisted the STWC, mainly by speaking at public events. I was elected on to the steering committee along with Jeremy Corbyn MP and over 30 others. MI5 and Special Branch have a full file, so I imagine that can be used as a source for my political activity in connection with STWC. If there are indeed only these 2 reports that name me, then I must have been busy with other projects.

202. The aims of the STWC at this time of course to stop the illegal war against Iraq. The methods used were the normal democratic methods of demonstrations, meetings, publicity, press conferences, etc. The mass demonstration of up to 2 million people that took place on 15 February 2003 was said by the Metropolitan Police to be the biggest ever demonstration in the UK. It was entirely peaceful, and was not closely policed. This was exactly the sort of mass demonstration I had wished for in 1968 with respect to the Vietnam War. I would be interested to know what was Special Branch's brief when spying on STWC.

203. There was no "vetting" or security precautions that I was aware of; the STWC was not concerned about Police infiltration. However, I now note that there was an MI5/Special Branch Registry File opened to spy on STWC (RF 400/02/11) and SDS officers were then tasked to infiltrate the organisation, just as they had been doing since 1968 in relation to the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. It is incredible to think that after 35 years, in 2003, under the Tony Blair Labour government, that Special Branch were still engaging in the same anti-democratic activity as they had been at the outset.

## **Globalise Resistance**

**Q27. The report with the reference number Resistance MPS-0029752 (at Tab 100) relates to a group called Globalise Resistance. Please summarise your political activities in connection with the GR, including dates and positions or responsibility. [The same questions 1-5 as above].**

**27.6 Do you have any recollection of having dinner with Omar Waraich of Globalise Resistance?**

204. A: I was not a member of GR but did speak at events. There are better qualified people than me to speak about the politics of GR, please ask them.

205. I did know Omar Waraich, but do not recall having dinner with him. He was an anti-War activist from the School of Oriental and African Studies. I believe he now works for Amnesty International. What is the significance of this report? It is just tittle-tattle, and shows that Special Branch really have nothing better to do.

## **Recollections**

**Q28. Please provide a factual account of events at the demonstration of 27 October 1968 in particular from the point of view of the freedom of the VSC to mount a demonstration and with regards to policing and any public disorder you may have witnessed.**

206. A: For a factual account of the October 1968 demonstration see my book *Street Fighting Years, An Autobiography of the Sixties*, pp.293- 306 (my account of the day begins at p.304). In my view the demonstration was an enormous success. Special Branch

or SDS played no role in keeping the peace - this was achieved by careful planning by the VSC, both beforehand and on the day. My political position was always in favour of peaceful mass action.

## **Impact**

**Q29 If not already covered in your answers to the above questions, please explain when you were first aware that the VSC had been the subject of undercover policing and the impact it had on you. Please also explain the impact the sight of the reports in your witness pack, recording your political activities, had.**

207. A: As I said in my book at p.293: *"We knew full well that phones were tapped, mail was opened, and there were Special Branch infiltrators in the VSC. This was part of the routine functioning of capitalist democracy."* Is it any different nowadays? No. Will it be different after this Inquiry? No. Will the Police and Security Services get a clean bill of health? Of course. The impact on my political activity has - I believe - been negligible, unless MI5 and Special Branch know something I do not, in which case they should tell the Public Inquiry. If they have indeed had no impact on my political activity, then I question the wisdom of providing such massive resources for agencies that therefore serve no purpose, except the prurient interest of spies and their paymasters.

## **Other**

**Q30: Please set out any other factual evidence that you can provide about the conduct of "Rick Gibson" and "Gary Roberts" to assist the Inquiry get to the truth.**



208. A: I have no idea who they are. I note from the Inquiry website that "Rick Gibson" is said to have been deployed from 1974-76 into Troops Out and Big Flame; "Gary Roberts" is said to have been deployed from 1974-78 into the IMG and IS. When the Inquiry is able to provide me with proper witness statements and photographs then I may be able to assist.

**Q31: Is there anything else that you wish to add that may be of assistance to the work of the Inquiry?**

209. A: Not at this time. Please provide me with more information, witness statements and photographs concerning the officers who spied on me, and I will then see if I can assist.

### **Documents**

**Q32. Do you have any documents that may be potentially relevant to the work of the Inquiry, eg. photographs, diaries or other contemporary documents? If so please explain what they are.**

210. A: There are numerous archives around the country and abroad but the Inquiry and the Met Police and the Home Office alone have access to the full Special Branch files. These files will mainly remain under lock and key forever, or the most incriminating may well be destroyed. Fortunately they are not the only people to be able to write history.

### **Diversity**

**Q33. What is your racial origin?**



A Born in Lahore Punjab

Q34. What is your gender?

A Male

Signed

Dated 2 March 2020

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