

Wednesday, 28 April 2021

(10.00 am)

MR FERNANDES: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the third day of evidential hearings in Tranche 1 Phase 2 at the Undercover Policing Inquiry. My name is Neil Fernandes and I am the hearings manager.

For those of you in the virtual hearing room, please turn off both your camera and microphone unless you're invited to speak by the Chairman, as Zoom will pick up on all noises and you will be on screen.

I now hand over to the Chairman, Sir John Mitting, to formally start proceedings.

Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. As at the beginning of every evidential session, a recording made last year is going to be played. For those listening to it for the first time, please listen carefully.

I am conducting this Inquiry under a statute, the Inquiries Act 2005, which gives me the power to make orders regulating the conduct of the Inquiry, including its hearings. In the exercise of that power, I have made a number of orders which affect what you may and may not do in the hearing rooms and after you leave them. Breach of any of the orders is a serious matter and may have serious consequences for you.

1           If I am satisfied that a person may have breached an  
2 order, I have the power to certify the matter to  
3 the High Court, which will investigate and deal with it  
4 as if it had been a contempt of that court. If  
5 satisfied that a breach has occurred and merits  
6 the imposition of a penalty, the High Court may impose  
7 a severe sanction on the person in breach, including  
8 a fine, imprisonment for up to two years and  
9 sequestration of their assets.

10           Evidence is going to be given live over screens in  
11 the hearing rooms. It is strictly prohibited to  
12 photograph or record what is shown on the screens, or to  
13 record what is said by a witness or anyone else in  
14 the hearing rooms. You may bring your mobile telephone  
15 into the hearing rooms, but you may not use it for any  
16 of those purposes. You may use it silently for any  
17 other purpose. In particular, you may transmit your  
18 account of what you have seen and heard in a hearing  
19 room to any other person, but only once at least  
20 ten minutes have elapsed since the event which you are  
21 describing took place.

22           This restriction has a purpose. In the course of  
23 the Inquiry, I have made orders prohibiting the public  
24 disclosure of information, for example about  
25 the identity of a person, for a variety of reasons.

1           These orders must be upheld. It is inevitable that,  
2           whether by accident or design, information which I have  
3           ordered should not be publicly disclosed will sometimes  
4           be disclosed in a hearing. If and when that happens,  
5           I will immediately suspend the hearing and make an order  
6           prohibiting further disclosure of the information  
7           outside the hearing rooms. The consequence will be that  
8           no further disclosure of that information may be made by  
9           mobile telephone or other portable electronic device  
10          from within the hearing room, or by any means outside  
11          it.

12           I am sorry if you find this message alarming. It is  
13          not intended to be. Its purpose is simply to ensure  
14          that everyone knows the rules which must apply if I am  
15          to hear the evidence which I need to enable me to get to  
16          the truth about undercover policing.

17           You, as members of the public, are entitled to hear  
18          the same public evidence as I will hear and to reach  
19          your own conclusions about it. The Inquiry team will do  
20          their best to ensure that you can.

21           If you have any doubt about the terms of this  
22          message or what you may or may not do, you should not  
23          hesitate to ask one of them and, with my help if  
24          necessary, they will provide you with the answer.

25

1 MR PIERS CORBYN (called)

2 Mr Corbyn, do you wish to be sworn or to affirm?

3 I think you may be on mute.

4 Mr Corbyn, can you hear me?

5 A. I can.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Splendid. Do you wish to be sworn or to  
7 affirm?

8 A. To affirm, Sir.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Then may that happen, please.

10 (Witness affirmed)

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Warner.

12 Questions by MR WARNER

13 MR WARNER: Thank you, Sir.

14 Mr Corbyn, you have given us a 79-page statement,  
15 dated last year, I believe.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Before I ask you some questions, can you just confirm  
18 please that the statement that you have given us is true  
19 and correct to the best of your knowledge and belief?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Thank you.

22 Starting at the beginning of your political life, if  
23 I can, please --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. -- it's right, I think, that your political activism

1           began as a student in the late 1960s in London; is that  
2           right?

3           A. That is correct, yes.

4           Q. And in fact, the first march that you can recall  
5           attending was a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament march?

6           A. Yes. I did attend such marches when I was at school,  
7           actually, just before going to university, but those  
8           were quite limited in my activities. Most of my  
9           activities developed in university after the first two  
10          years at university.

11          Q. I see.

12                   And I think it's also right that you became  
13          the president of the Imperial College Student Union?

14          A. That's right. I was elected president for 1969 to 1970.

15          Q. And as part of that role and your political activities  
16          at that time, you were involved in a number of  
17          anti-nuclear campaigns and campaigns against chemical  
18          and biological warfare?

19          A. Yes, yes. The campaigns against chemical and biological  
20          warfare were -- were very important, sir, to me and  
21          Imperial College and to all scientists. A -- Dr Stephen  
22          Rose, later Professor Stephen Rose, was in  
23          the biochemistry department, and he brought in a lot of  
24          information about these things, which was very useful.

25          Q. You've told us in your statement as well that you

1           attended both of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign marches  
2           in 1968.

3       A.   Yes.

4       Q.   You've described that as the main issue of the day at  
5           that time.  Were you a member of the VSC?

6       A.   Well, insofar as I was actively supporting it, yes, but  
7           I wasn't -- if -- I don't think -- well, if it had  
8           a membership structure, I wasn't part of that.  I was  
9           just an active campaigner for VSC, the Vietnam  
10          Solidarity Campaign.

11      Q.   So you didn't attend local or branch meetings or  
12          anything of that nature for the VSC?

13      A.   Yes, there would have been one or two local meetings,  
14          yes, yes, but it wasn't like a membership organisation,  
15          if you see what I mean.

16      Q.   I see.

17      A.   The International Marxist Group was a membership  
18          organisation though.

19      Q.   Yes.  We'll come on to that --

20      A.   Of course.

21      Q.   -- in a moment.

22                 Just focusing on the VSC marches, were you involved  
23                 in organising them at all, or were you more of an  
24                 attendee at them?

25      A.   I was more of an attendee and a mobiliser.  I would

1 bring people along, bring along banners; and sometimes  
2 I might have been involved in stewarding, but that would  
3 have been of the people I brought along, essentially.

4 Q. On either of the marches in March or October of that  
5 year, do you recall witnessing any violence or disorder?

6 A. No, although there was a big crowd around the American  
7 Embassy in Grosvenor Square which the police tried to  
8 disperse; they tried to prevent demonstrators getting to  
9 Grosvenor Square. But I wouldn't say any violence was  
10 initiated by demonstrators, it was the police trying to  
11 stop people going there.

12 Q. Is this the October demonstration in --

13 A. Yes, I think that was October either 1968 or 1969.  
14 Probably October 1968.

15 Q. Were you yourself in Grosvenor Square in October '68?

16 A. I was, yes.

17 Q. And were you aware of any weapons being used in  
18 the course of --

19 A. No.

20 Q. -- that demonstration?

21 Mr Corbyn, you've also said in your statement that  
22 the IMG, the International Marxist Group, of which you  
23 were a member --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. -- had been active within the Vietnam Solidarity

1 Campaign.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. How did the two groups interact? Were they inextricably  
4 linked or were they separate?

5 A. No, they were separate, because the VSC had a number of  
6 different political groups operating in it and  
7 supporting it, so it was what you might call a united  
8 front of different groups, and I think individual --  
9 individuals who just joined in and became organisers,  
10 but I wasn't one of those.

11 Q. So is it fair to say the IMG was just one of these  
12 groups that were --

13 A. Just one, but probably the most influential.

14 Q. I see.

15 And can I take it from that that there was a lot of  
16 crossover in terms of people supporting the VSC and  
17 the IMG?

18 A. Yes, well, everyone in the IMG would have supported  
19 the VSC, I would say, yes.

20 Q. Right.

21 Mr Corbyn, are you able to say whether the IMG were  
22 involved in any of the disorder that happened in the VSC  
23 demonstrations in 1968?

24 A. No. I mean, the IMG's role always, historically, was to  
25 mobilise people and make -- from that, make propaganda



1 to a wider public on what was the nature of world  
2 conflict, the nature of US imperialism, and so forth.

3 Q. I see.

4 In terms of your political life, did you become  
5 involved in the IMG and Spartacus League through  
6 the VSC, or were you involved before or at the same  
7 time?

8 A. I was interested in the VSC because -- actually, at that  
9 time, you have to think, that was the thing going on in  
10 the world; and I remember at school we would have  
11 discussions about Vietnam, you know? It was a formative  
12 crisis for tens of thousands of young people at the  
13 time, and I was one of them.

14 Yeah, the reason why I joined the IMG wasn't  
15 specifically that, although of course I noted that  
16 the IMG was close -- was an important force in the VSC.  
17 I became editor of the University of London student  
18 newspaper "Sennet" after being president of the student  
19 union. And it was around that time I noticed the IMG  
20 and they got involved in helping doing some of  
21 the things I was doing, and then I joined them in about  
22 1970. It was after I was president of the student union  
23 that I joined them, it wasn't during that time.

24 Q. I see.

25 Is it right that you became involved in

1 the Spartacus League at around this time as well?

2 A. Yes, that's right. The Spartacus League. It was  
3 originally misstated as something else in the evidence,  
4 but we put it right in my statement here.

5 Yes, the Spartacus League was part of the IMG.  
6 A sort of recruiting youth section, if you like. And  
7 I was an active member of that.

8 Q. So, just so that we can understand how it interacted  
9 with the IMG, was it run by the IMG?

10 A. Yes, it was, it was run by them.

11 Q. And it was -- you described it as a "youth section".  
12 Can I take it from that --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. -- it had a large student membership?

15 A. Yes, yes, that's correct.

16 Q. Could you be a member of the Spartacus League without  
17 being a member of the IMG, or were the two --

18 A. You could. No, you could. In fact, quite a number of  
19 people were, and I was that initially. And then, if you  
20 proved your worth, the IMG would ask you if you wanted  
21 to join the IMG as well.

22 Q. Right.

23 So, can we take it from that that not all of  
24 the members of the Spartacus League necessarily went on  
25 to become IMG members?

1 A. That's correct. Some of them might have not been  
2 interested in that. Some of them might have lost  
3 interest in politics all together, but most  
4 Spartacus League members would have become IMG members,  
5 yes.

6 Q. I see.

7 Can we just have a look at a report that we have  
8 recovered on the Spartacus League, and it will come up  
9 on the screen.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. It is --

12 A. Well, I've got a very thick file here, so I don't need  
13 to look through that then; that's useful.

14 Q. Don't worry too much about that. I'll just read  
15 the number out for the technician. It's {MPS/732360}  
16 and it's page 2 when it comes up, please,  
17 {MPS/732360/2}.

18 A. Okay, thanks very much.

19 Q. Thank you.

20 Now, Mr Corbyn, you can see this is a report from  
21 January 1972?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Of a meeting of the Notting Hill Spartacus League at 17A  
24 Rendle Street; that was your home address, wasn't it?

25 A. That was my home address, yes, and we had a number of

1 meetings of the Notting Hill Spartacus League there.

2 And of course, I didn't realise at the time, but some of

3 the people in the Spartacus League were police agents,

4 and I was entertaining them in my flat unknowingly.

5 Q. Were you the organiser of the Notting Hill branch?

6 A. I was, yes.

7 Q. And --

8 A. Due to my recollection. Yes, yes. Yes, I am.

9 I remember a lot of detail actually in the past, but

10 there will be some gaps, I think. But yes, I was

11 the organiser of Notting Hill Spartacus League, yes.

12 Q. And just in terms of what that would have entailed, are

13 we talking about sort of keeping minutes and agendas and

14 things like that?

15 A. Yes, that type of thing. Lists of -- lists of members

16 and contacts, telling people when there were meetings,

17 and then organising newspaper sales of -- of the IMG

18 paper.

19 Q. I see.

20 A. Which was called -- well, it kept changing its name,

21 actually. I was -- it might have been Red Mole,

22 something like that, but it did change its name at

23 various stages.

24 Q. We can see at the end of the second paragraph that eight

25 persons were present at this particular meeting. Was

1           that a common attendance number for this group at this  
2           time?

3           A. Yes, yes. Yes, half a dozen to a dozen, that sort of  
4           numbers, yes, yes.

5           Q. All right.

6                     I'm just going to read the third paragraph out for  
7           the transcript. It reads:

8                     "The meeting was chaired by Piers Corbyn and was  
9           concerned with the future activities of the Notting Hill  
10          Spartacus League Branch. [Privacy] briefly outlined  
11          the activities of the Notting Hill Red Defence Group and  
12          this was followed by a deep and involved discussion of  
13          SL ..."

14                    Spartacus League:

15                    "... Assistance to the Group. Although [Privacy]  
16          took great pains to point out that the majority of  
17          people involved in the Group were not members of  
18          the International Marxist Group and were completely  
19          non-sectarian and had no wish to be otherwise,  
20          the discussion centred around how the Notting Hill  
21          faction of the IMG could take over, run and use  
22          the organisation for recruitment to the IMG."

23                    Can you recall, Mr Corbyn, what the Notting Hill Red  
24          Defence Group was?

25           A. I think that was an idea that we wanted -- I might be

1 wrong, but I think it was the same thing as what we  
2 later called -- this is -- "People's Defence Group",  
3 where, you see, because of the way the police behaved at  
4 times in Notting Hill, in clearly a racist fashion  
5 towards some of the population, that there should be  
6 kind of independent people's policing and be called  
7 that, the Red Defence Group. That's as far as  
8 I remember. But otherwise, I -- yeah, I can't think  
9 what the purpose of Red Defence Group was other than  
10 that.

11 Q. Just in terms of the last section of that paragraph,  
12 that "the IMG could take over, run and use  
13 the organisation", was this something that the IMG  
14 frequently did with other groups?

15 A. Well, no. I mean, you see, this, of course, is written  
16 by a policeman, who was presumably reading into  
17 a situation something which he might have wanted to  
18 present to his superiors to confirm what they may  
19 believe. I mean, I myself, when I was involved in these  
20 things, was interested always in getting people to join  
21 in and stay active and make propaganda. The idea of  
22 taking over groups wasn't something that I thought was  
23 something that ought to be done, because independent  
24 groups acting together, in my view, is a better way than  
25 having a sort of -- well, takeovers, as you describe

1           there.

2           So I would say on that that it's likely  
3           the policeman was -- or woman, whatever, was reading  
4           into it too much.

5       Q. I think we know that this was a policeman

6           -- (overspeaking) --

7       A. Yeah, yeah, okay, we do, but -- well, I think we do, but  
8           sometimes there were women involved in -- in these  
9           groups, so -- and the identity of the infiltrator has  
10          not been revealed to me.

11      Q. Mr Corbyn, can I ask this document --

12      A. If I saw the names of all the people that were present  
13          at those meetings, I would probably be able to identify  
14          which one was the policeman. However, we've got a lot  
15          of redacted information on this -- these reports, which,  
16          you know, I mean, if you're trying to have an inquiry  
17          into what was going on in 1968, one needs to have  
18          maximum information not limited information.

19      Q. Can I ask that this document's taken down, please. And  
20          we're going to have a look at another report, please.

21      A. Okay.

22      Q. It is {UCPI/15694}.

23      A. You've got a lot of documents in here. A lot of work  
24          has been done.

25      Q. Yes, it has.

1 A. I haven't got diaries anything like -- in fact, I don't  
2 even have diaries of these things, so this is a useful  
3 diary of activities I was doing, even if through  
4 the eyes of a policeman.

5 Q. Mr Corbyn, this is what's described as an International  
6 Marxist Group and Spartacus League conference.

7 A. Yeah. Can I move this screen a bit further forward so  
8 that I can see it a bit better? Because the printing on  
9 these things are not -- not really good. Yeah, that's  
10 better. Okay.

11 Q. It was held in May 1972.

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. And at the top of page -- sorry, of paragraph 3, which  
14 we can see there, it reads:

15 "Persons attending the conference were classified as  
16 either Delegate, Consultative Delegate, Observer or  
17 Visitor."

18 A. Mm-hm.

19 Q. And if we just scroll down to the bottom of that  
20 paragraph, please.

21 A. Do I scroll -- oh, I see, someone else does. Yeah,  
22 okay.

23 Q. Thank you.

24 A. So we're to be reading paragraph 3 or 2?

25 Q. Just 3.



1           So what we have there is four categories of people  
2           who attended this conference.

3       A. Yeah.

4       Q. Are you able to recall which category you would have  
5           fallen into?

6       A. Ah, let's have a look. So a delegate -- let's go  
7           through these again.

8           So you can be a delegate -- oh, here you are, here  
9           you are: delegate, consultative delegate, observer or  
10          visitor. And that was 1972. Actually, I can't  
11          remember. I don't think I was an observer or visitor,  
12          I was either a delegate or a consultative delegate.

13      Q. Thank you.

14           The last sentence of this paragraph reads:

15           "The last category, Visitor, was any person, not  
16           a full member of either organisation ..."

17      A. Yeah.

18      Q. "... who was sympathetic to the politics of  
19           the organisation. Such persons could attend open  
20           sessions only and had no voting rights whatsoever."

21      A. Yeah.

22      Q. Can we take from this, Mr Corbyn, that a member of  
23           the public could have attended this conference but in  
24           that capacity?

25      A. Well, they weren't public conferences. They'd have to

- 1           be invited.
- 2       Q.   Right.  Even as a visitor?
- 3       A.   Yes.  Yes, definitely.  It wasn't advertised as a --
- 4           you know, a "come and join in" thing.  It is -- I think
- 5           what would happen is that you -- any of the groups or
- 6           any of the part of the IMG, any of the branches, would
- 7           have contacts.  And they would say to contacts --
- 8           you know -- that is people who were showing some sort of
- 9           interest in what was going on -- "Do you want to come
- 10          along to the conference" and "you can be there as an
- 11          observer."  That's what would happen.
- 12       Q.   I think, can we also take from that sentence that there
- 13          were both closed sessions and open sessions?
- 14       A.   Oh yeah.  There were indeed closed sessions and open
- 15          sessions, yes.
- 16       Q.   So even within the group of people who were present at
- 17          the conference, only some could attend closed sessions;
- 18          is that right?
- 19       A.   Yes, that's right.  I mean, it is a bit like the London
- 20          boroughs.  They have council meetings where they have
- 21          closed sessions and open sessions depending on what
- 22          they're talking about.
- 23       Q.   I see.
- 24       A.   So it's a normal process in a lot of organisations in
- 25          the United Kingdom.

1 Q. Can we scroll to page 2, please, and paragraph 5 of that  
2 page {UCPI/15694/2}. Thank you.

3 Halfway through this paragraph, Mr Corbyn, you'll  
4 see that I think Bob Purdie opened the proceedings.

5 A. Ah, I remember the name.

6 Q. He then called for an immediate vote on three items,  
7 the first being the ratification of the fusion of  
8 the IMG with the Spartacus League.

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. That's a vote that was then carried?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. So can we take it from that, Mr Corbyn, that from this  
13 point onwards, the Spartacus League became part of  
14 the IMG?

15 A. Yes, that's right. Well, I think the idea was that  
16 the Spartacus League, as a youth section, wasn't  
17 necessary anymore and one would just have the IMG.

18 Q. Thank you.

19 I just want to ask you a couple of other questions  
20 about things that happened at this conference.

21 Could we move to page 6, please, {UCPI/15694/6}.  
22 Thank you.

23 And it's paragraph 24 that we're interested in.

24 A. Okay, that's a bit small on my screen.

25 Q. Don't worry, it will get bigger --

1 A. Oh, okay.

2 Q. -- if you just bear with us a moment.

3 This is a topic that was raised at the conference.

4 I'm just going to read it out again:

5 "Surgitt's speech reiterated the now standard  
6 clichés of Women's Liberation, oppressed women in  
7 society, the struggle for equal rights,  
8 the establishment of the woman as an accepted member of  
9 society and the fight against sexist male chauvinism.  
10 Her speech contained little that was constructive and  
11 confined itself almost entirely to an attack upon  
12 the men at the conference. This attack brought squeals  
13 of delight from most of the other female members of  
14 the audience."

15 Mr Corbyn, can you help us with whether that's an  
16 accurate description of something that happened?

17 A. I -- I don't remember. Surgitt of course is a kind of  
18 cover -- a party name, obviously. So I'm wondering  
19 who -- it's a long time ago -- who that could have been.  
20 There were that sort of thing said, but I think perhaps  
21 that description of it is a bit over the top.

22 Q. How --

23 A. I mean, there were certain, you know, criticisms from  
24 women of the attitudes of men, but it was all in  
25 the context of we all being in the IMG together. But

1           yeah, those type of things were said, yes. The way that  
2           is put forward perhaps is a bit over the top.

3       Q. All right.

4       A. So far as I remember. I mean, you know.

5       Q. Yes. Well, that's quite understandable.

6           Can we move to page {UCPI/15694/4}, please.

7           Thank you.

8           And it's paragraph 16 I was just going to ask you  
9       a question about.

10          It reads as follows:

11          "The conference ... took fraternal greetings from  
12       a Peruvian member of the FI."

13          And I think that's the Fourth International?

14       A. Yes, it would be the Forth International.

15       Q. "His speech ... was brief and delivered through an  
16       interpreter, was exceptionally well received. No doubt  
17       this was due to its revolutionary content for  
18       the speaker called for revolutionary support for  
19       the armed struggles throughout the world such as in  
20       South America and Ireland and contained such stirring  
21       phrases as 'the revolution will not be won until Marxist  
22       blood is spilled in the street'. He ended with shouts  
23       of 'Viva la revolution' and the audience duly rose to  
24       its feet and applauded."

25          How seriously were statements like this taken for

1 the IMG, Mr Corbyn?

2 A. Well, I mean, there were numbers of statements like  
3 this, but I took them as being -- well, there used to be  
4 this phrase around, the IMG would say, "If you care to  
5 struggle, we will solidarise with you". Which would  
6 mean that either the IMG organisation would support --  
7 support: it doesn't mean endorse everything -- support  
8 many things going on, because they were against world  
9 capitalism, or in particular US imperialism. But if  
10 you're leading to a thinking, well, because people were  
11 applauding this group whatever they were doing,  
12 therefore the IMG would want to do the same in  
13 the United Kingdom, I think that would be a completely  
14 wrong conclusion.

15 Q. I see.

16 This document can come down now. Thank you.

17 A. Mm-hm.

18 Q. Mr Corbyn, moving on to the IMG more generally, you've  
19 described in your statement that the IMG considered  
20 itself a revolutionary organisation. What was meant, in  
21 your mind, by that?

22 A. Well, it means that the idea of the IMG and the -- well,  
23 the IMG in particular, would have been that  
24 the capitalist way of running things had to end; and  
25 capitalism was in crisis, and therefore there had to be

1 a revolution into a socialist, or socialistic of some  
2 sort, society, where the open market didn't determine  
3 how things happened, ie the strength of different  
4 capitalists didn't determine how things happened, and  
5 you had a sort of more democratic process. But that's  
6 what it meant, yes.

7 The word "revolution" doesn't necessarily mean  
8 violence at all. It means a revolutionary change, a big  
9 change, a fundamental change, a change in the basic way  
10 in which society was organised.

11 Q. Did you consider this was -- at the time, I'm interested  
12 in. Did you consider this was likely to happen  
13 immediately, or quickly, or was this a longer term --

14 A. Well, I myself, I do recall at some point having  
15 discussions with people. So I sort of believed, yeah,  
16 it was all going to happen somewhere within five or ten  
17 years. Now, looking back, I think this was just  
18 delusional nonsense, but that's what I thought.

19 Now, people in the IMG, I think they'd have  
20 a variety of views. Probably most people believed in  
21 a slow sort of process; because we recognised we were an  
22 infinitesimal group of a few hundred people, and putting  
23 forward ideas which we hoped would catalyse people into  
24 a better understanding of things.

25 You know, you have to think, in terms of groups on

1 the left, "the left" in the sense used in those days,  
2 the IMG was the one which did a lot of kind of  
3 theoretical work and kind of analysis of the way --  
4 the way world history was -- was developing.

5 I mean, in terms of any groups promoting violence,  
6 the IMG wasn't -- wasn't that. There were groups out  
7 there maybe which, you know, would have had different  
8 views, but they weren't -- they weren't the IMG. I was  
9 in the IMG, not in other groups, I mean.

10 Q. Did the IMG consider that this change should come about  
11 through democratic means or otherwise?

12 A. Well, I would say democratic means. I mean, that would  
13 involve demonstrations and protests, but democratic  
14 means, yes. You know, you have trade unions, you have  
15 tenants' organisations, you have all sorts of groups  
16 which will bring together people.

17 You see, to me, in my mind, change is -- involves  
18 numbers, and that is the key. Whereas there will be  
19 some people that might have believed you had to kind of  
20 manipulate situations in a paramilitary fashion. This  
21 wasn't my view, or, as I understand it, the IMG's view,  
22 which is why the IMG was the IMG, as opposed to some  
23 other groups, which might have had entirely different  
24 ideas.

25 Q. Could we have a look please at {UCPI/10944}, please.



1           Mr Corbyn -- thank you -- this is a report by  
2 a police officer of a meeting held between the IMG and  
3 a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

4           If we could scroll down to paragraph 4, please.

5 Thank you.

6           Tariq Ali, who no doubt you'll be familiar with --

7 A. Yeah, it's normally pronounced "Tariq Ali".

8 Q. Sorry, Tariq Ali, spoke at this meeting and said as  
9 follows:

10           "Tariq Ali then thanked Anthony for coming along to  
11 explain the ideas of the [Communist Party], but added  
12 that he disagreed with the basic concept that Parliament  
13 must survive, since it had shown only too clearly that  
14 it merely represented the interests of big business.  
15 What was needed, he continued, were workers' councils  
16 set up during the period of change which followed  
17 the revolution (opposition ideas would be allowed, but  
18 control would remain with the great mass of workers  
19 through their councils)."

20           Would you have agreed with Mr Ali in advocating for  
21 councils and the abolition of Parliament, Mr Corbyn?

22 A. Yes, insofar as the way forward. Yes, I would agree  
23 that you had to have accountability of society run by  
24 the people from below. So you'd have these committees.  
25 Which is obviously modelled in the Russian Revolution

1           idea of "soviets", ie all the people in one area would  
2           represent that area or the interests of the -- of  
3           the workers or trade unionists in that area, and that  
4           would then feed up to a more democratic control.

5           It doesn't mean Parliament would disappear  
6           instantly, I would say, but you see, Parliament as it is  
7           -- or then certainly -- well, now even more so -- is  
8           controlled by external forces, largely. And I don't  
9           need to tell you that there is a lot of corruption in  
10          modern Parliament and conflicts of interest. And if  
11          conflicts of interest were removed from the modern  
12          Cabinet, then it would be an empty room, which would  
13          probably be better.

14          Anyway, we're digressing into the now. But, you  
15          see, I think you can understand from the now why then --  
16          and I don't believe Parliament then was much better, but  
17          probably was a bit better then, Parliament nevertheless,  
18          its function, is essentially to carry out the wishes of  
19          those who have the main controlling interest in modern  
20          society, ie capitalists of various types.

21        Q. Mr Corbyn, thank you. Can we take this document down,  
22        please.

23        A. Yeah.

24        Q. One of the officers who reported on you, HN353, whose  
25        cover name was "Gary Roberts", has stated that "the IMG

1           were strong on words but in hindsight I think they were  
2           not really likely to act on them".

3       A. Well, yes, that's true. Well, that's true of most  
4       politicians, indeed. Although, IMG members didn't think  
5       of themselves as politicians. Yeah, I think that's  
6       a fair statement. So they would make big rhetorical  
7       things about revolution and class struggle and  
8       everything, but partly they were, I would say,  
9       theoreticist armchair socialists. Perhaps I was one of  
10      those at the time, although I was always very keen on  
11      activity and talking to people and communicating, and  
12      getting people involved in demonstrations of various  
13      sorts against injustices of the time, like the Irish  
14      issues, the various workers' struggles going on, tenants  
15      issues, housing issues, and so forth.

16     Q. Well, we'll come on to some of those --

17     A. Yes, of course.

18     Q. -- Mr Corbyn.

19                I think it's right that you later, in 1972, became  
20      the organiser for the Notting Hill branch of the IMG  
21      rather than the Spartacus League?

22     A. Correct, yes, because the Spartacus League then had  
23      disappeared anyway, so -- or had been merged, so yes.

24     Q. And these meetings again took place at your home  
25      address; is that right?

- 1 A. Yes, they did, generally speaking.
- 2 Q. And we can see an example of one of these reports. Can  
3 we bring up {UCPI/8948}.
- 4 A. You've done a lot of work to get all these things  
5 together, I'm impressed, because I couldn't remember all  
6 this stuff.
- 7 Q. This, again, you see in paragraph 2, that's the same  
8 address in Rendle Street, so your home address?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. If we turn to page 4 of this document, {UCPI/8948/4},  
11 and just zoom in on the middle -- if we just scroll down  
12 a little, please. Thank you.
- 13 This is a document that I think you prepared?
- 14 A. Ah, did I indeed?
- 15 Q. That has been appended to the report.
- 16 A. So that must have been my typewriter at the time, okay.
- 17 Q. What I'm interested in, Mr Corbyn, is this is  
18 a prospectus for --
- 19 A. I'm going close to the screen to have a look. There's  
20 some sort of -- oh, okay. What's that "of the ..."?
- 21 Q. I think it reads:
- 22 "The initial plan -- adopted by  
23 the working group after many discussions -- was to  
24 undertake the following activities ..."
- 25 A. Okay.

1 Q. So what I'm interested in, Mr Corbyn, is what  
2 the Notting Hill branch of the IMG were doing with their  
3 time.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. The first is "Red Circle".

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Can you just tell us briefly what Red Circle was,  
8 please?

9 A. Yeah, Red Circles were public events which were  
10 advertised, and it involved people sitting around in  
11 a circular fashion in a room, usually a hired room above  
12 a pub, and it would have speakers along on issues of our  
13 time. Like, a speaker would come along about Vietnam,  
14 for example; a speaker would come along about  
15 the miners' strike. Although then there wasn't  
16 a miners' strike, but there were later on. A speaker  
17 might come along about the situation in students --

18 Q. I see.

19 A. So they were quite lively discussion groups, completely  
20 open to the public. So you'd give all leaflets, people  
21 would come along, and you would talk.

22 Q. And the second thing we can see is "Mole Sales". That  
23 I think might be a reference to Red Mole, the IMG --

24 A. Correct, that was the Red Mole sales. And we sold those  
25 often in Portobello Road on what is now Portobello

1 Green, a place I was visiting only a few days ago  
2 campaigning for my election as Mayor of London, and  
3 other candidates from for the Let London Live campaign.

4 Q. The third thing we can see mentioned is "People's  
5 Association". Could you just help us what that was, if  
6 you can?

7 A. Yes, yes, yes. I think this referred to what  
8 I mentioned earlier about Red Defence. The people's  
9 association I think was some IMG contact, whose name  
10 escapes me, wanted to have sort of grassroots community  
11 things which would kind of become community police, to  
12 prevent the police, or -- or as an alternative to  
13 the police in their sometimes racist -- well, often --  
14 normally, I would say, racist approach to the area. And  
15 there was a people's association set up by these guys,  
16 who were not IMG members but were sympathisers,  
17 I suppose.

18 Q. And --

19 A. And it says "the PA collapsed in October". Yeah,  
20 I remember that, but I don't know why it collapsed. It  
21 might have been that the principal people moved out,  
22 I don't know.

23 When they say "intervention ... was successful",  
24 I think that meant that people had listened to what we'd  
25 said and, you know, the organisation, the people's

1           association managed to make some impact on its  
2           alternative policing ideas. But clearly it didn't last.

3       Q. Were these associations controlled or run by the IMG, or  
4           were they --

5       A. No.

6       Q. -- entirely separate?

7       A. No, no. I remember the guy. I can sort of almost  
8           picture him in my mind. No, he was an interesting guy  
9           and would -- you know, said he was doing these things,  
10          would we help and join in. So we did. It was --  
11          I would say the IMG's role was essentially supportive.

12                I would say, it's important to understand the IMG  
13           did often support things without trying to control.  
14           I mean, whereas some other revolutionary groups were  
15           only into control. And I do remember the phrase "We  
16           should set up a support committee for this" or "support  
17           committee for that", you know, some strike or protest,  
18           you know, that sort of thing.

19       Q. Just, finally, the last thing that was on there -- we've  
20           just lost it -- but it was the Claimants Union. What  
21           was the IMG's involvement in the Claimants Union?

22       A. I think again it was supportive. You see,  
23           the Claimants Union then was just people who were  
24           claiming benefits and were not getting their just  
25           benefits, so they would form together and put pressure

1 on the -- the social security offices.

2 No, I remember some of the activists there, who were  
3 -- they weren't IMG members but they were very dedicated  
4 -- dedicated people.

5 Q. Was the IMG involved in the Claimants Union, or just  
6 members thereof?

7 A. Well, in a supportive way. It says there, "initial work  
8 totally unproductive". I don't -- I don't really  
9 remember all the details, but it's something about their  
10 anarco-hippy blah blah blah. I don't know. But there  
11 were some good people involved in the Claimants Union.  
12 That's in my personal assessment. But they were really  
13 into one thing, that is making sure people got their  
14 benefits, rather than wider issues, I think.

15 Q. Could we just turn to the first page of this document,  
16 please, {UCPI/8948}, and paragraph 5, when we get there.  
17 Thank you.

18 Now, this is the report of the officer who has  
19 appended the document we've just looked at. And  
20 the officer's written:

21 "The meeting then moved to item eight on the agenda,  
22 a discussion on the perspectives document, produced by  
23 Piers Corbyn, on the proposed merger of the Notting Hill  
24 and West London IMG groups. In that document ... Corbyn  
25 used various coded initials in many instances,



1           apparently to confuse the identification of persons if  
2           the document happened to fall into the hands of  
3           Special Branch."

4           Then the officer goes on to say:

5           "(An appendix giving the identification of  
6           the majority of such coded initials is attached ...)."

7           A. Okay.

8           Q. To your memory -- the best of your memory, Mr Corbyn,  
9           did you use coded initials when preparing documents like  
10          that?

11          A. Yes, yes, that was the norm in the IMG. The theory was  
12          that if you had these coded initials or party names,  
13          then the Special Branch, if they were around  
14          infiltrating, or anyone who got these documents,  
15          wouldn't know who was what. However, of course,  
16          the Special Branch were infiltrating us anyway, so they  
17          knew everything.

18          A bit like modern mobile phones: people might be  
19          trying to keep themselves secret, but frankly, you know,  
20          if Bill Gates wants to know what you said yesterday, he  
21          can find out.

22          Q. How concerned were you as a group about material like  
23          this?

24          A. Well, I took it seriously, to -- to use these party  
25          names, or -- or initials. Although, sometimes

1 I couldn't remember who was who myself. So then maybe  
2 rather than a party name, I'd put some initials, which  
3 then people would know, you know, what -- if "PC" was  
4 down there, it might stand for Piers Corbyn. Although  
5 I had a different party name, which was not "PC".

6 Q. Your party name, I think, was "Annual", wasn't?

7 A. It was. I think I had more than one party name. Most  
8 people started off with one or another. But I was  
9 called "Annual", yes, yes.

10 Q. I think there is a report, which we don't need to bring  
11 up, which confirms that.

12 A. Yes, it came from a nickname in a -- in an  
13 NUS conference. I was described as a "hardy annual"  
14 that always turned up. And actually, if you think  
15 about it, it should be a perennial. But anyway, that  
16 became my party name because the general public  
17 considered me a sort of an annual person who turned up  
18 to every National Union Of Students conference there  
19 was.

20 Q. Just so that we can understand how widely used this was,  
21 did you know, for instance, the real names of most of  
22 the members of your local branch of the IMG?

23 A. Oh yes, yes. I would know them by their real names and  
24 have to try and remember their party names at times,  
25 and, you know, it might have given the impression that

1 all these organisations were twice as big as they were,  
2 but anyway, that's ...

3 Q. Thank you. And this report can come down now.

4 How concerned, can you remember, were the IMG  
5 leadership about surveillance and possible infiltration?

6 A. Oh, I think they took it seriously. Although possibly,  
7 looking back, to an extent, it was something which made  
8 members feel part of something bigger, something more  
9 important than -- than perhaps it was, because we were  
10 quite a tiny group really.

11 Q. Did you take any other steps, other than party names and  
12 occasionally coded initials, to protect against this?

13 A. No, I don't think so. Well, obviously you don't leave  
14 documents lying around, you know, that sort of thing;  
15 don't talk to people about who your members are, or talk  
16 to non-members about who your members are, yes.

17 Q. Just so that we can understand the motivation behind  
18 this, why were you concerned personally about other  
19 people or the police being able to be aware of what you  
20 were doing at your meetings?

21 A. Well, it was not anyone else's business, I would say, so  
22 we had a right to privacy. That's -- that's all --  
23 that's all I would say.

24 Q. I see.

25 You've said in your statement that you assumed that

1           you were under surveillance, which would certainly fit  
2           with what you've told us.

3       A. Well, yeah. In the IMG, generally people believed that  
4           we were. And I think there had been some evidence of  
5           that, which I didn't know about. But of course now  
6           I knew it was true, and much more extensive than  
7           I imagined possible.

8           You see, having -- it seems to be three officers who  
9           were pursuing me for -- well, various officers, but at  
10          any one time there seemed to be three -- two or three  
11          pursuing me. And this went on for ten years. That is  
12          a massive use of police time, for what? For what,  
13          you know? I didn't do anything dangerous. Nor did  
14          anybody, to my knowledge, in -- in the parts of the IMG  
15          that I knew.

16       Q. Mr Corbyn, if we can turn to a slightly separate topic.

17           Can we please bring up document {UCPI/8130}.

18           And, Sir, that's at your tab 13.

19       A. You want me to look at tab 13?

20       Q. That's just for the Chairman, Mr Corbyn. It will come  
21          up on the screen.

22           This is a meeting of the London aggregate of  
23          the IMG, and I'm interested in the top of page 2,  
24          please. {UCPI/8130/2}.

25       A. Mm-hm. Can you make it a bit bigger? Ah, good.

1 Q. Now, this reads as follows, for the transcript:

2 "However, the main part of his speech was the seven  
3 point plan as given on page 11 of the attached document  
4 which deals with the way in which members of  
5 the organisation could become more deeply involved in  
6 the tribunal field, especially engineering, local  
7 government, building trades and the Post Office."

8 Mr Corbyn, what was the IMG's relationship with  
9 trade unions, as far as you can recall?

10 A. Well, the idea then was -- well, the idea was to recruit  
11 trade unionists; or even members of the IMG would start  
12 working in certain fields and then build trade union  
13 branches or associations with the IMG, with a view to  
14 supporting trade union struggles and protests, or  
15 whatever, in different industries.

16 It was termed an important thing to do, rather than  
17 doing "student work", as it was called. Student work  
18 wasn't being dropped, but it's -- the point was that  
19 the IMG wanted to develop more into a wider field.

20 Q. Were the IMG --

21 A. To change society, you see? Trade unions being the --  
22 essentially the producers of wealth, so therefore  
23 potential to change society into something more  
24 democratic and accountable.

25 Q. Were the IMG trying to gain control of trade unions?

1       A. Well, I suppose, if they ever got enough members or  
2       supporters in a trade union, then they -- they might  
3       become leaders thereof. But this stuff here was just at  
4       least to get a presence of that all, I would say.

5       Q. I think we can possibly infer from this that the IMG,  
6       certainly at this point, was trying to get more  
7       involved --

8       A. Yes.

9       Q. -- with trade unions. Is it fair to say that you would  
10      support trade unions on specific strikes?

11      A. Oh, generally speaking, yes. Well, as I said, there was  
12      a joke in the IMG, "If you care to struggle, we will  
13      solidarise with you." So the IMG would go around  
14      supporting all sorts of things, not necessarily  
15      the detail. You know, we have this phrase of  
16      conditional -- sorry, "unconditional but not uncritical  
17      support for X, Y, Z." So you'd say to these workers  
18      doing some strike or occupation, "Great, we support you  
19      completely." And that protest or action might do  
20      something that we wouldn't have agreed with, but we'd  
21      say, "Well, okay, maybe you should have done this or  
22      that," but it doesn't mean we'd stop supporting  
23      the general project of this strike or occupation, or  
24      whatever.

25      Q. I see.

1 A. So it wasn't about control, it was about support.

2 Q. Could we please take this document down and replace it  
3 with {UCPI/7940}.

4 And, Sir, you'll find that at tab 3 of your bundle.  
5 Thank you.

6 Now, I'm interested in the third paragraph, and I'm  
7 afraid it's a pretty poor quality document, so I'll try  
8 and read the second sentence.

9 It reads:

10 "Piers Corbyn and [Privacy] emerged as the leading  
11 personalities, advocating a strong militant approach to  
12 the student protest march."

13 This is, I should say, a report proposing a march  
14 against a miners' strike -- sorry, supporting a miners'  
15 strike --

16 A. To support the miners' strike, yes.

17 Q. And the report suggests that you and other IMG members,  
18 in the face of opposition from International Socialists  
19 members, proposed a march to the National Coal Board  
20 headquarters, and there is some suggestion later on that  
21 an occupation was envisaged --

22 A. Really? Okay.

23 Q. Do you consider this a fair characterisation, Mr Corbyn?

24 A. Yes, I do remember this -- this, actually. It was quite  
25 fascinating. I think there was a -- some sort of

1 student rally in Trafalgar Square, or some -- I think it  
2 was mostly students -- maybe even called by the NUS --  
3 supporting the miners. And we thought -- or I thought,  
4 and my supporters, that we ought to march from there to  
5 the National Coal Board, to call upon the Coal Board to  
6 give in to the miners.

7 And that we did by a tactic of a group of IMG  
8 supporters marching round Trafalgar Square approximately  
9 twice, chanting things like "March to the Coal Board",  
10 if I'm remembering the right thing. And then the crowd  
11 in Trafalgar Square just joined in. They thought,  
12 "Well, that's something to do, let's go there." And  
13 there was a great big crowd went off to the Coal Board,  
14 and I remember being lifted on somebody's shoulders to  
15 speak with a megaphone about supporting the miners.

16 But, frankly, I don't remember anything about trying  
17 to occupy the National Coal Board. I -- I suppose  
18 people might have thought of such things. But we were  
19 there to make a point that the whole country should be  
20 supporting the miners.

21 Q. Now, Mr Corbyn, you'll see the top of paragraph 4 --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. -- it reads:

24 "The IMG/SL ..."

25 So I think that's the Spartacus League at this



1 point:

2 "... members were obviously furious at  
3 the 'wishy-washy approach', by the IS ..."

4 And I think that's International Socialists?

5 A. That is, yeah.

6 Q. "... members who [I think it might say] contrived to  
7 gain support from the uncommitted members present."

8 A. Mm-hm.

9 Q. Now, evidently, from that, there was both IMG and  
10 International Socialists --

11 A. Yes, yes.

12 Q. -- at this meeting. To what extent did you tend to  
13 interact and cooperate with  
14 the International Socialists?

15 A. Well, I think the general idea of the IMG was to  
16 cooperate as much as we could on joint activities. But  
17 on some occasions the IS, for their own reasons, didn't  
18 want to co-operate. That's how I saw it going on. And  
19 this was an example.

20 I can't, for the life of me, see why the IS wouldn't  
21 want to also march to the Coal Board, but anyway ...

22 Q. The tenor of this report, Mr Corbyn --

23 A. That's what seems to have happened.

24 Q. -- certainly suggests that the IMG group in this meeting  
25 wanted to go further than the IS group?

- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 Q. You know, marches rather than -- directed marches rather  
3 than other things.
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. Was that what tended to happen between the different  
6 outlooks in the two groups? Was that --
- 7 A. Yeah, I would say so. I would say so, at that time.  
8 Only all these groups evolved in different directions.  
9 But mostly that would be the case, yeah.
- 10 Q. If we could move to the second page, please, and  
11 paragraph 9? {UCPI/7940/2}.
- 12 A. It's quite interesting remembering all this stuff.  
13 Thank you for -- well, I don't know if I should thank  
14 you or not, frankly, but it's fascinating remembering in  
15 detail these little events, which -- well, I think they  
16 were important at the time. I think they were important  
17 to do these things.
- 18 Q. So paragraph 8, just before we go on to paragraph 9:  
19 "[Privacy] also suggested that, if possible, members  
20 should attempt to occupy the Coal Board offices ..."
- 21 A. Oh right.
- 22 Q. "... although he was none too hopeful of this as he  
23 anticipated the building would be heavily protected ..."
- 24 A. Well, I think that's pretty obvious. Yeah, okay.
- 25 Q. Paragraph 9 says this:

1            "[Privacy] then called for 'three volunteers to take  
2 part in a special task during the demonstration which  
3 could involve breaking the law'. Three unidentified  
4 members readily volunteered and were told by [Privacy]  
5 that he would later give them private instructions  
6 regarding this task. He assured the volunteers that if  
7 they were arrested and prosecuted any resulting fines  
8 would be paid by the IMG."

9            Can you recall, Mr Corbyn, if this was accurate --  
10 an accurate description?

11        A. Well, I just don't remember that. I don't remember it.  
12        But I suppose your question might be -- I mean, that  
13        could happen. I wouldn't rule out this. I don't think  
14        it's been made up by a policeman; something must have  
15        been going on. But you see, when it's something  
16        breaking the law, I mean, it might be as simple as  
17        writing a slogan on a building or hoisting a banner over  
18        something, you know what I mean? I don't know -- unless  
19        we know what actually happened, I can't really comment  
20        further on that. But I was not one of these three  
21        volunteers, if indeed the volunteers came as described  
22        there.

23        Q. Were things like this commonly discussed at IMG meetings  
24        or wider meetings, plans to break the law --

25        A. No --

- 1 Q. -- in whatever capacity?
- 2 A. No, no, mostly it was pretty mundane sort of stuff. But  
3 as I say, what they mean by "breaking the law" here,  
4 is -- I think you have to find out what that is.  
5 I mean, did the policeman report on what was happening  
6 later on? That's what we need to know. Or you need to  
7 know for this Inquiry.
- 8 Q. I am just interested to know whether something like this  
9 would have been a common occurrence or, you know,  
10 a memorable, rather extraordinary thing to have come up  
11 at a meeting?
- 12 A. Well, I would say it's memorable and rather  
13 extraordinary, because it's -- it's, you know, making  
14 promises about fines being paid or something, which is  
15 -- well, it suggests it's something risky. But mind  
16 you, of course, then you could easily get arrested for  
17 just doing a bit of flyposting. So the actual activity  
18 might not be such a big deal. I'd like to -- I'd like  
19 to know what it was, I mean, if they did this. I don't  
20 remember any dramatic thing happening. Maybe it just  
21 didn't work. Maybe the people involved dropped out.
- 22 Q. More generally, Mr Corbyn, you've said in your witness  
23 statement that --
- 24 A. Mm-hm.
- 25 Q. -- and I'm quoting -- that "an unjust law will

1           inevitably be broken".

2           A.   Mm.

3           Q.   What was your attitude towards breaking the law at that  
4           time?

5           A.   Well, yeah, at that time I believed there were -- well,  
6           I still believe there's just laws and unjust laws.  
7           Unjust laws get introduced by the powers that be in  
8           order to impose things which may be incorrect.

9                    Now, at the time, I might have been concentrating on  
10           housing issues.  And we could talk about squatting  
11           later, although you don't mention much of it,  
12           surprisingly, in these reports.

13                   But unjust laws are things whereby people are put in  
14           a position where they have to agree something when  
15           really they don't want to but they're kind of  
16           blackmailed or -- not bribed but blackmailed, and told,  
17           you know, if you -- you can become a tenant or  
18           a licensee if you agree to leave when the owner wants  
19           you.  But, you see, this is a kind of -- I would say  
20           that's not a just -- just law of treating people's  
21           housing rights, for example.

22           Q.   We'll come on to that --

23           A.   Okay.

24           Q.   -- aspect and your involvement a little later.

25                    I'm just interested to know, is this your view or is

1           this a view that was widely held amongst the members of  
2           the IMG at around this time?

3       A. Well, that's my view that I describe. What would  
4           the IMG think about laws? Well, I think they would  
5           think something similar in that you ask  
6           the question: where does law come from? You know, laws  
7           are agreed by -- well, a parliamentary process, but then  
8           who is instigating things in this parliamentary process?

9           You see, right now, we have Parliament agreeing to  
10          allow the police to have even more spycops powers than  
11          in the past, you know. And this Inquiry has happened  
12          precisely because of spycops, ie policemen infiltrating,  
13          overstepping the reasonable mark in their personal  
14          relationships between male policemen and women; and,  
15          you know, consequent children, which was horrific. And  
16          that's the main reason why this Inquiry is happening,  
17          I think.

18       Q. Mr Corbyn --

19       A. Yeah, okay.

20       Q. -- just going back to --

21       A. -- perhaps I'm rambling a bit.

22       Q. -- back to the 1970s -- sorry to take you back there --

23       A. No, I don't mind. That's fine.

24       Q. Would the IMG, in your view, have been open in calling  
25          for what was considered to be an unjust law to be broken

1           by its members? Would that be something that was  
2           encouraged?

3       A. Well, I think it would be a specific thing, I would say,  
4       I think -- well, you'd have to give an example. And  
5       I can't think of any specific example other than in  
6       the housing movement, when in fact it wasn't so much  
7       laws but rules introduced by short-life housing  
8       organisations. And I said, well, you have to break  
9       these agreements, because housing rights were more  
10      important than the interests of these housing  
11      associations.

12           Now, you're looking for a law, some sort of law  
13      where the IMG said, "break this because it's unjust".  
14      Well, I don't know. But there were trade union laws.  
15      There were laws introduced against trade unions, yes,  
16      where the government at the time were trying to limit  
17      the powers of trade unions, the right to strike and so  
18      on. Now, those -- things like laws against the right to  
19      strike -- were considered, yes, definitely, as unjust  
20      laws, and therefore should be challenged and broken,  
21      yes.

22      Q. Could we just --

23      A. And they would be specific. It wasn't like a -- it  
24      didn't mean that it would be right to rob people,  
25      you know? So they would be quite specific. Like,

1 I would describe them as politically-motivated laws, if  
2 you like.

3 Q. Can we just turn to another report on a slightly  
4 different subject, please.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. It's at {UCPI/8798}. And, Sir, this is behind your  
7 bundle at tab 10. Thank you.

8 This is a report which attaches a leaflet produced  
9 by you on behalf of the Notting Hill IMG, regarding  
10 something called the Metro Youth demonstration, which  
11 was held in June 1972. Now, this demonstration I think,  
12 Mr Corbyn, was in relation to the Metro Youth Club,  
13 which was in Notting Hill and was popular within  
14 the black community at that time.

15 A. Right.

16 Q. And I think the march was concerning the police's raids  
17 and arrests --

18 A. Mm-hm.

19 Q. -- at that club.

20 At paragraph 2 it says:

21 " ... the assessment Corbyn urges that the next time  
22 such a demonstration ..."

23 I think that should say "occurs":

24 "... less attention (no attention) should be paid to  
25 police who 'helped' formulate the route."



1           Why was that something that you advocated,  
2           Mr Corbyn, to not engage with the police for  
3           a demonstration?

4           A. I -- I don't know. I'm just thinking. You see -- well,  
5           it depends what the police wanted to do and what  
6           the Metro Youth wanted to do. I mean, it -- it --

7           Q. If we look at the second page --

8           A. Yeah, I mean, you see, sometimes the police would be  
9           trying to not help us, obviously --

10          Q. Okay, thank you -- (overspeaking) --

11          A. -- (inaudible) so I can't remember the details, I'm  
12          afraid.

13          Q. Well, if I just read paragraph 3, under the heading of  
14          "Assessment". This is a document that I think you  
15          produced, so this might help --

16          A. Really?

17          Q. -- to jog your memory. The turnout was about --

18          A. I can't remember if my typewriter looked like that. It  
19          looks like a different typewriter.

20          Q. "The turnout was about 60 people ..."

21          A. Where are you? Oh down there. Assessment 3, yes.

22          Q. "... 40 people at the start of the march, and 30 when it  
23          reached Portobello Road after returning from Harrow  
24          Road. The turnout was not very good but the numbers are  
25          not at all important in any critical sense for this type

1 of demo. The tactic of taking the demo down  
2 Portobello Road was proved to be absolutely correct.  
3 Many leaflets were given to people there, a lot of  
4 people talked about the matter -- because of the focus  
5 the 30 or so marchers created -- the police completely  
6 foiled (they could not follow with their van)."

7 A. Oh, it means were completely foiled.

8 Q. Sorry, were completely foiled.

9 A. Yeah, I see that. I typed that --

10 Q. And the next sentence which has been quoted in  
11 the report says:

12 "Next time less attention (no attention) should be  
13 paid to the police who 'helped' to formulate the route  
14 which in part went via empty streets (in which it is  
15 not ..."

16 I think that should say "possible"?

17 A. Yeah, I think it was "possible to present ideas to many  
18 people."

19 Yeah, you see, the IMG's idea was presenting ideas  
20 to people. So marching down an empty streets, which is  
21 what the police were advising, was not helpful. No,  
22 I can say that I'm glad we did go down Portobello Road.  
23 It didn't cause any people any trouble. And our  
24 leaflets, whatever they were about at the time, got more  
25 traction.

1 Q. Just in terms of the interaction with the police --

2 A. You see, the police can't -- they act as if they're in  
3 charge of people's right to protest. And of course,  
4 they're still doing that, and I think --

5 Q. -- (overspeaking) --

6 A. No, but there have been occasions recently, to be fair,  
7 the police have said, "Okay, okay, Mr Corbyn," or  
8 whoever, "You guys want to go that way, all right," and  
9 they'll just say "yes". But this time in Notting Hill,  
10 the police were anxious to prevent us getting our  
11 message across, I would say.

12 Q. As a result of that, did you --

13 A. And it was a peaceful message. There wasn't anything  
14 dangerous or violent, to my recollection, involved here.

15 Q. Did you refuse to interact with the police as a result  
16 of that, Mr Corbyn?

17 A. Well, I didn't seek to interact with the police, but  
18 when it became necessary or they asked me questions,  
19 I would -- I would interact. I mean, later on in  
20 the squatting movement, it was sometimes necessary to  
21 interact with the police. But that's what I would say.  
22 We were running our own show, as far as I was concerned,  
23 and if the police wanted to advise, sort of tell us  
24 where we should go, we would listen to what they say.  
25 But, you know, we had to maintain that we had the right

1 to protest and demonstrate where we wanted, subject to  
2 not endangering life and limb or whatever, of course,  
3 obviously.

4 MR WARNER: Sir, is this an appropriate point for a short  
5 break.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

7 Mr Corbyn, the shorthand writers need a rest, and  
8 they have 15 minutes.

9 A. Yes. Well, that's fine, Sir John. Thank you very much.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

11 MR FERNANDES: Good morning, everyone. We will now take  
12 a break. May I remind those in the virtual hearing room  
13 to remember to join your break-out rooms, please.

14 The time is now 11.15 am, so we shall resume at  
15 11.30 am.

16 Thank you.

17 (11.15 am)

18 (A short break)

19 (11.30 am)

20 MR FERNANDES: Good morning, everyone, and welcome back.

21 I will now hand over to the Chairman to continue  
22 proceedings.

23 Chairman.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

25 Mr Warner.

1 MR WARNER: Thank you, Sir.

2 Mr Corbyn, I'd like now to turn to a report, please,  
3 which deals with your proposal as an election candidate.  
4 It's {UCPI/17814}.

5 That's at tab 39, Sir.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

7 MR WARNER: Thank you.

8 This is a meeting of the South London branch of  
9 the IMG. I'm interested in paragraph 6 on page  
10 {UCPI/17814/2}. Thank you.

11 I'll just read this paragraph for the transcript:

12 "[Privacy] introduced the second major item on  
13 the agenda -- the GLC elections -- and said that the IMG  
14 intended to stand four candidates. The proposals put  
15 before the aggregate were that Piers Corbyn should be  
16 the IMG candidate for Lambeth Central and that the great  
17 majority of South London resources should be devoted to  
18 his electoral campaign."

19 Mr Corbyn, can you remember how you came to be  
20 proposed as a GLC candidate?

21 A. I -- I do remember the meeting, yes, and I was there and  
22 people just said that I should do it. And I thought  
23 about it and said, "Well, okay, that will be an honour."  
24 So I did.

25 Q. And presumably, in this election campaign you did

1 the usual things that a candidate does, leaflets,  
2 canvassing, thing like that?

3 A. Yes, that's right, standard sort of stuff.

4 Q. Right.

5 And if we look at another report, please. It's  
6 {UCPI/17335}.

7 It's at tab 40.

8 It's paragraph 4 we're interested in for now,  
9 halfway down. Thank you.

10 This is a slightly later report, about just over  
11 a month later --

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. -- in the run-up to the election.

14 Paragraph 4 reads:

15 "[Privacy], the campaign manager, reported that  
16 the majority of proposed public meetings would be  
17 cancelled because they appeared unlikely to attract any  
18 sizeable audience. It was also evident, he said, that  
19 there was insufficient time and resources to canvass  
20 the whole of the constituency, although it was essential  
21 to distribute Corbyn's electoral manifesto as widely as  
22 possible. The plan of activity was that during  
23 the forthcoming week all available comrades would  
24 distribute leaflets throughout the day, canvass from  
25 6 pm until 9 pm and afterwards go 'flyposting' in teams

1 of three."

2 Is that reference to "flyposting", Mr Corbyn, likely  
3 to be illegal flyposting, or not?

4 A. Well, I don't know. It depends what they decided to do.  
5 But there was a fair amount of corrugated iron around  
6 those -- in the area, and I think often people would put  
7 flyposting on corrugated iron. Would they put it on  
8 places which would -- where it might be -- well, I don't  
9 know about illegal, but possibly unlawful. I -- I don't  
10 know.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Flyposters would just put flyposting around, as in -- as  
13 they do in these days.

14 Q. More generally, Mr Corbyn, how do you feel -- how did  
15 you feel learning that information like this was being  
16 reported on your activities, to the police?

17 A. Well, you mean learning now that this is reported?

18 Q. Yes.

19 A. Well, two things. One, it's pretty innocuous what we  
20 were doing, flyposting.

21 Am I concerned about these ongoing reports? Well,  
22 yes, because they're an intrusion in -- into privacy  
23 without justification, because if you can, you know,  
24 spend this effort looking at election campaign groups  
25 flyposting or not, then -- well, on us, then what about

1 all the other candidates? I mean, there would have been  
2 Labour Party, Conservative Party, Liberal at the time,  
3 I suppose, all sorts of people. All of whom might have  
4 done flyposting but were, I think, not being spied upon  
5 by the police. I mean, why was that? Why not spy on  
6 all of them? There aren't the police resources to do  
7 this. You know, I'm not quite sure what the spying  
8 purpose was for here, because it's unimaginable that in  
9 an election campaign we would be doing anything  
10 dangerous, you know?

11 Q. Thank you, Mr Corbyn.

12 I'd like, please, to look at the paragraph above  
13 the one we've just read, which is paragraph 3. It's on  
14 a different topic, but it's contained within the same  
15 report.

16 Thank you.

17 I'll just read that paragraph:

18 "The agenda of the meeting, which was chaired by  
19 [Privacy], comprised two items, namely a report and  
20 discussion on Piers Corbyn's electoral campaign ..."

21 Which we've just considered:

22 "... with allocation of comrades for tasks in  
23 the coming week, followed by a discussion on  
24 the anti-fascist demonstration to be held in Haringey on  
25 Saturday 23 April ..."



1           Now, if we turn to page 2, please, {UCPI/17335/2}.

2           Thank you. Just the top of page 2.

3           We can see here that this is the second item being  
4           discussed:

5           "... IMG intervention in the anti-fascist  
6           demonstration to take place on Saturday 23 April, 1977  
7           at Duckett's Common, N8. He explained that some  
8           twenty-five political and anti-racist organisations were  
9           joining to form a united front to oppose  
10          the National Front march and implement the IMG policy  
11          of 'no platform for fascists'."

12          Mr Corbyn, the events that are being discussed there  
13          were what came to be known as, "The Battle of Wood  
14          Green" --

15         A. Ah, okay.

16         Q. -- on 23 April 1977.

17         A. Was I there?

18         Q. That was going to be my question.

19         A. Oh, okay.

20         Q. Do you remember -- (overspeaking) -- Wood Green in  
21          April 1977 for that demonstration?

22         A. I don't know. Was Tariq Ali a leading light in this  
23          event?

24         Q. I'm not sure, Mr Corbyn. It was an event which took  
25          place, as I say, in April 1977 --

1 A. Well, it was on St George's day 1977, as you can see.

2 Q. A large demonstration by a number of groups opposing  
3 the National Front.

4 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, I think I would have been there.  
5 And I remember vaguely -- well, that or another event up  
6 there, I remember Tariq Ali speaking from the back of  
7 a truck or lorry, and me also speaking from the back of  
8 a truck or lorry. Probably a number of people speaking.

9 I don't remember what you would describe as  
10 "The Battle of Wood Green", though. I mean, I think  
11 the idea was that just sheer numbers of this united  
12 front against facism, sheer numbers of people like that  
13 present would ensure that the National Front wouldn't be  
14 able to pass through whatever they had in mind, because  
15 the police obviously would make sure that the two groups  
16 stayed apart, the consequence of which would be that --  
17 well, quite likely the -- well, I said IMG, but I mean  
18 this -- you know, this united front wouldn't be able to  
19 go anywhere beyond wherever they were, but the  
20 National Front wouldn't be able to either, which was  
21 the intention, to stop them spreading racist propaganda.

22 Q. Well, thank you, Mr Corbyn.

23 The incident that did occur in April --

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. -- of 1977 at Wood Green resulted in some disorder.

1 A. Mm-hm.

2 Q. Do you remember violence or disorder of any kind  
3 happening at the march that you went to?

4 A. No, I don't. The thing that comes to my mind was me --  
5 me speaking with Tariq Ali and others from the back of  
6 a lorry. There was a big crowd around, but I don't --  
7 I don't remember disorder.

8 I mean, it could be that disorder was -- occurred  
9 and was then the only thing reported in the media, as  
10 like the end of this gigantic 500,000 rally that's just  
11 happened last weekend, and at the end of it the police,  
12 I have to say, attacked a music -- a music sub-event in  
13 Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, and that got reported in  
14 the media as if that was what the 500,000 -- possibly at  
15 least -- demonstration was about, which of course it  
16 wasn't.

17 So, you know, this report here might be partly from  
18 media, or possibly the eyes of a policeman who was  
19 concentrating, as he would naturally, I would say, on  
20 any disorder that took place.

21 But no, honestly, I don't remember. I don't  
22 remember disorder at the event I am remembering, which  
23 sounds familiar, because there were these united fronts  
24 of action to oppose fascistic or fascist groups.

25 Q. Thank you, Mr Corbyn.

- 1                   There was another march in August of 1977 in  
2                   Lewisham.
- 3           A.   Okay.
- 4           Q.   Which was a similar march against the National Front.
- 5           A.   Okay.
- 6           Q.   Are you able to remember whether you were at that event?
- 7           A.   No.  I mean, I didn't go to every event, you know,  
8               because --
- 9           Q.   Did you attend many events/marches opposing  
10               the National Front?
- 11          A.   Quite a lot, yeah.  I would have turned up at most  
12               anti-NF rallies, or perhaps half of them.  I -- I --  
13               I don't know.  I don't remember Lewisham, but I do  
14               remember this -- something definitely happening in  
15               Haringey that I was at.  Lewisham, I don't know, you'd  
16               have to tell me which part of Lewisham it was and it  
17               might -- might come to mind.
- 18          Q.   It was a big march through the centre of Lewisham in  
19               August 1977.  It doesn't matter if you can't remember  
20               that one.
- 21               I'm interested in --
- 22          A.   Oh, okay.
- 23          Q.   -- more generally, did you have much involvement with  
24               the Anti-Nazi League at around this time?
- 25          A.   Well, yeah.  I -- I went along to Anti-Nazi League

1 events, which were a kind of combination of united  
2 fronts against what was thought to be fascistic  
3 tendencies, ie Nazi tendencies, which were propagated by  
4 people like the National Front Party. But I didn't have  
5 any -- any key involvement, no. I just went along as  
6 a -- an active supporter of the Anti-Nazi League.

7 Q. I see.

8 And did the IMG have a particular policy on  
9 confronting or opposing right-wing groups at this time?

10 A. Yeah, I think so. I mean, it would have been -- well,  
11 I remember we supported the Anti-Nazi League, but  
12 I don't think the IMG was the main force in  
13 the Anti-Nazi League. I think there were a lot of  
14 groups involved in the Anti-Nazi League, and it became  
15 something which had a lot of happy music and did events  
16 on Clapham Common, for example, which were, you know,  
17 I think good creative events. In fact, irrespective of  
18 the politics, they, you know, got young people,  
19 you know, involved in -- in things.

20 Q. Thank you, Mr Corbyn.

21 Just finally on this subject, you told us a moment  
22 ago that you went to a number of these marches. Did you  
23 witness any disorder or violence at any of these marches  
24 that you went to?

25 A. Well, actually, no. You see, I think these ANL things

1 and other anti-fascist demos, they were meant to be just  
2 largely large groups of people getting in the way of  
3 whatever the National Front wanted to do.

4 Now, there may well have been confrontations,  
5 indeed, or mostly they were confrontations between  
6 the police and the NF or the police and  
7 the Anti-Nazi League, because both sides would be trying  
8 to do something, ostensibly to get to the other, but  
9 really it was this kind of symbolic fracas, in my  
10 opinion. But I don't remember being -- I was never  
11 personally involved in those sort of fracas.

12 Q. Thank you, Mr Corbyn.

13 Can we turn to a separate topic, please, and bring  
14 up report {UCPI/21485}. That's at tab 36. Thank you.  
15 And if we just zoom in on paragraph 1.

16 This is a report, Mr Corbyn, submitted by -- thank  
17 you -- a police officer, with a copy of a Fare Fight  
18 internal document listing the active supporters of  
19 the campaign.

20 Can you just tell us briefly please what the Fare  
21 Fight campaign was about?

22 A. Yes, certainly, with pleasure, actually. I would say at  
23 the outset, Fare Fight was a kind of absolutely totally  
24 passive protest about fare rises. Why this should  
25 involve, you know, police surveillance like this, I've

1 no idea.

2 But the "Fare Fight" campaign happened because  
3 Bromley Council had been to court to prevent the GLC --  
4 well, London Transport, but it was then the GLC's  
5 involvement in that -- reducing fares, and  
6 Bromley Council made the fares go up. So then a "Fare  
7 Fight" campaign was formed, which was to fight these  
8 fare increases and make them go down.

9 What we were doing was we issued -- I mean, not me  
10 personally, but I was part of the setup which did  
11 this -- issued little booklets of what were  
12 called "deferred payment slips", whereby, if you  
13 travelled on the Tube or the bus, you would hand in --  
14 you would buy a 10p ticket -- that was the smallest  
15 ticket you could do -- and you would say on it, "I today  
16 travelled from A to B and tendered a 10p ticket, and if  
17 you wish to recover the sum due, please contact me at"  
18 and you give your name and address.

19 So these were handed in in tens of thousands, or  
20 hundreds of thousands. Now, of course, it's up to  
21 London Transport then to chase people who hadn't paid  
22 what they said then should be the fare. And that was  
23 how the protest took place, and it was designed to cause  
24 disruption to the payment systems of London Transport,  
25 and therefore, hopefully, get fare reductions.

1           Now, without going into the details, I ended up  
2           being the test case for this in the High Court in -- it  
3           was called "Corbyn v Saunders". And we didn't win that  
4           case, and these deferred payment slips were not allowed.  
5           But the consequence of the campaign was that actually  
6           the fares -- did go down again.

7           Q. Thank you --

8           A. I could go into the legalities of what happened in  
9           the High Court, but it was all about whether or not  
10          there was a comma present -- (overspeaking) -- and  
11          the law should be read as if there was not a comma  
12          present when there was a comma present in  
13          the sentence "travelling on the Tube without having paid  
14          the sum due, and with intent to avoid payment thereof".

15          Q. Thank you, Mr Corbyn. We don't need to go into  
16          the legality.

17          A. Oh, okay, all right. It's just that I remembered in  
18          detail and I was quite surprised that I did, so  
19          I thought I would tell you.

20          Q. We've got plenty of detail on that from your statement.

21          A. Okay.

22          Q. I am just interested in knowing, this campaign, what  
23          sort of methods did you use? Did you protest? Did you  
24          produce leaflets? What sort of things did you do?

25          A. No, the only thing we were doing was -- we might have



1 had some placards and leaflets -- yeah, we did have  
2 leaflets. We had leaflets. Well printed leaflets,  
3 I remember, which everybody read. And I think you had  
4 a deferred payment slip on the bottom of each leaflet  
5 which you could tear off and use. And we handed out  
6 little booklets of deferred payment slips as well. That  
7 was the sum total of the campaign. Very focused, very  
8 specific. Completely passive.

9 Q. Is it right, Mr Corbyn, that the campaign had quite  
10 a wide support base from other groups?

11 A. Oh, absolutely, it was hugely supported. I remember  
12 giving out leaflets on the Tube train, and everybody who  
13 took a leaflet read it instantly, as if it was -- well,  
14 you know, the readership of our leaflets was much higher  
15 than newspapers.

16 Q. Could we just turn to page 5 --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- of this report, {UCPI/21485/5}. I think some of  
19 the groups may be mentioned there.

20 I'm afraid this is the wrong way round, but the  
21 bottom half of this page we can see --

22 A. There we are.

23 Q. They've solved it for me. Thank you.

24 You can see reference to the Young Liberals,  
25 East London Libertarians, other groups -- thank you --

1           like Waltham Forest Trades Council?

2       A.   Yeah.

3       Q.   Claimants Union, the Socialist Worker,  
4           International Socialists.  It's right that this campaign  
5           attracted quite a lot of wide support --

6       A.   Absolutely.  It was mass support, mass opposition to  
7           these fare rises which had been imposed unjustly --  
8           I would say this was an unjust law, by the way --  
9           unjustly by Bromley Council, by some -- something they  
10          did in the -- in the courts.

11      Q.   Thank you.

12      A.   -- and thanks to democratic decision by the GLC and  
13          London Transport to hold fares down.

14      Q.   Thank you.  This report can come down now.

15                I'd like to ask you, please, about a slightly  
16          different topic.

17      A.   Okay.

18      Q.   It's correct, isn't it, that you became involved in  
19          a number of groups concerned with the situation in  
20          Northern Ireland in the 1970s; is that right?

21      A.   Yes.

22      Q.   And was that through the IMG or was that entirely  
23          separately?

24      A.   It was mostly through the IMG, but I was always  
25          slightly -- or certainly interested in Ireland, because

1 I remember as a child visiting Ireland, visiting Galway  
2 with my parents. So I -- I was interested anyway in  
3 Ireland, yes.

4 Q. There are three groups which we'll talk about.

5 The first is the ISC. I think it's right, isn't it,  
6 that the IMG --

7 A. ISC is Irish Solidarity Campaign.

8 Q. Irish Solidarity Campaign.

9 It's right, isn't it, that the IMG had quite some  
10 influence within the ISC?

11 A. Yes, that's true. Anything the IMG was involved in or  
12 initiated would often have the word "solidarity" in it.  
13 So it's like Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, Irish  
14 Solidarity Campaign.

15 Q. I see.

16 This influence, was it an attempt to try and control  
17 the ISC, or was it more based on a similar support --

18 A. I think it was a similar support thing. I mean,  
19 I wasn't very involved, but I did go to -- to events.  
20 You see, the IMG idea in my mind then was to support or  
21 organise or initiate the most effective groups in order  
22 to present ideas to a wider -- wider layer, wider  
23 population. So, that didn't necessitate the IMG  
24 controlling things necessarily --

25 Q. I see -- (overspeaking) --

1       A. -- although some people liked controlling things.  
2           I think the important thing was to build these groups so  
3           that they would gain traction.

4       Q. Just in terms of the IMG's policy towards  
5       Northern Ireland, could we bring up {UCPI/8129}.

6           That's behind tab 7, Sir.

7           It's paragraph 13 on page 2, please, {UCPI/8129/2}.

8       I should say, this is a pre-conference meeting for  
9       the All London Members of the IMG.

10          Just in terms of this issue, paragraph 13 reads:

11          "After this Peter Gowan spoke on the question of  
12          Ireland and the IMG's attitude towards the situation  
13          there. He said the political committee of the IMG  
14          intended changing their official slogan on Ireland  
15          from 'Victory to the IRA' to 'Solidarity with the IRA'.  
16          This measure was being taken as it was felt the former  
17          slogan was ambiguous."

18       A. Mm-hm.

19       Q. Can we take from this, Mr Corbyn, that the IMG supported  
20       the IRA within the conflict in Northern Ireland at the  
21       time?

22       A. Well, I think from that you can say that the support --  
23       if you want "support" to mean literal support for what  
24       they do -- as it was ambiguous.

25          Now, I remember Peter Gowan. He was a great guy,

1 a fantastic historian, and he's passed away,  
2 unfortunately. But he was, you know, a really wonderful  
3 fellow. And very, very knowledgeable on history. So,  
4 you know, he would have been saying things which people  
5 would listen to.

6 I think the solidarity with the IRA would mean we  
7 support the right of -- or the campaign for a united  
8 Ireland. Although -- well, obviously lots of things  
9 the IRA were doing, or appeared to be doing, which I  
10 think we would not support. But the word "solidarity"  
11 here means a kind of general support for the aims,  
12 that's what I would say, or my understanding of it.

13 This phrase, I'm not sure if that "victory to the  
14 IRA" sort of slogan was around for a long time or not,  
15 but it clearly could be misunderstood by all sorts of  
16 people. So it was right to change it, if in fact it had  
17 existed as a significant thing anyway.

18 Q. Mr Corbyn, just so we're clear, you've said that the IMG  
19 would support some aspects of the IRA's policy?

20 A. Yeah, ie the aims. That is there should be a united  
21 Ireland, and that the division of Ireland in the --  
22 was it 1921 division of Ireland was wrong, and,  
23 you know, the whole of Ireland should have stayed as  
24 Ireland. But, you know, that's, of course -- it wasn't  
25 the case. I mean, there was a -- you know, we still do

1           have a divided Ireland.

2           Q.   Would the IMG have supported the tactics used by the IRA  
3           or not?

4           A.   I would say no.  Well, it depends which tactics you  
5           mean, because, you see, the IRA, or their political wing  
6           Sinn Fein, Sinn Fein did all sorts of things which  
7           no one would disagree with.  Like, they built community  
8           groups to help people who were unemployed, and all that  
9           sort of stuff.  So, you know, they covered a broad front  
10          of activities.  And I would have thought really that  
11          when they talked about solidarity with the IRA, it meant  
12          they would be, in reality, having solidarity with Sinn  
13          Fein, which was the political angle of the struggle for  
14          a united Ireland.

15          Q.   I see.

16                 Turning, please, to the ISC -- and we can take this  
17          document down.  You've told us in your statement  
18          the ISC was established to provide a network for  
19          the nationalist community in the UK.  What was your  
20          involvement in the ISC?

21          A.   Well, small.  When there were meetings -- you see,  
22          I think the ISC probably coordinated things like the --  
23          or coordinated with the anti-Nazi -- sorry, not  
24          the Anti-Nazi League, the Anti-Internment League, AIL,  
25          which was -- and that did interest me.  And they would

1 work with other things. The Troops Out Movement was  
2 another thing. So they were all different groups which  
3 were mobilising on the Irish question. And  
4 I personally, and I think most IMG members, would  
5 definitely go along to things involved with  
6 the Anti-Internment League; because of course -- I don't  
7 know if you know yourself, but at that time, the British  
8 Government were arresting people in Ireland who they  
9 deemed to be dangerous and interning them, imprisoning  
10 them, without trial. And this, you see, is against all  
11 democratic processes under English law. So we were just  
12 campaigning for very basic human rights.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 Is it fair to say you attended meetings of all three  
15 of these groups, so that's the ISC, the AIL and TOM?

16 A. I might have, but not in any large role. I mean,  
17 the Anti-Internment League would have been the main  
18 thing I would have gone along to.

19 Q. So can we take it from that you weren't involved in any  
20 management or organisation?

21 A. No, no, not involved in any management or organisation  
22 of these -- these -- these campaigns.

23 Q. And in terms of their activities, what would they do?  
24 Are we talking about marches and leaflets, and things  
25 like that?

1       A. Yes. Yeah, they'd have marches and leaflets in Kilburn.  
2       I remember marches and leaflets in Shepherd's Bush  
3       Green, because it's a big kind of green triangle is  
4       Shepherd's Bush Green, and that would be a good place  
5       for meeting quite a lot of Irish -- Irish people living  
6       around there.

7               And there were quite a few Irish people -- because  
8       at that time, you see, 19 -- well, it depends what time  
9       this was. But between 1972 and 1975, I was squatting in  
10      Elgin Avenue, Paddington. And they were quite a number  
11      of Irish people squatting as well. Some of whom were  
12      undoubtedly Republicans, in the sense they supported  
13      the Republican cause. That doesn't mean they were  
14      involved in the IRA in any way, but that sort of factor.

15              The label "republican" can lead to confusion. I  
16      mean, a "republican" means supporting the republic of  
17      all Ireland. That's what it meant in those days anyway.

18      Q. I think what may be obvious is that all three of these  
19      groups are Republican groups in one way or another?

20      A. Yes, absolutely, absolutely.

21      Q. In terms of their aims, did any of these groups advocate  
22      for the use of violence in furtherance of those --

23      A. No, not to my knowledge.

24      Q. Did they support the use of violence by others in  
25      Northern Ireland on either side of the divide?



1       A. Well, I don't think so, no, no. I mean, you see, the --  
2       I mean, the violence from both sides was -- was in the  
3       end, I would say, counter-productive. And in the end,  
4       of course, we have police now in Northern Ireland, or  
5       relative police, which has got rid of "The Troubles", as  
6       they call them.

7       Q. In your memory of being involved in these groups, did  
8       many of the people who were members or at meetings  
9       advocate individually for the use of violence in  
10      furtherance of the causes they supported?

11      A. No. I remember when Bloody Sunday happened going on  
12      a big demonstration at Trafalgar Square, or it must have  
13      been the day after or something, Trafalgar Square and  
14      down Whitehall and down Downing Street. And the police  
15      tried to break it up, and then there were various  
16      scuffles with the police, but that's all they were. And  
17      I was arrested, in fact, for something. And I think  
18      I got a minor thing, a conditional discharge or  
19      something, so it wasn't -- wasn't a big deal.

20             But then, you have to realise what was happening.  
21      I mean, the British army had shot at defenceless people,  
22      and so there was a huge amount of anger. And that was,  
23      you know, a big -- a big demonstration. But that was --  
24      the anger was against what the British Army had done,  
25      and the British Army was effectively suppressing

1 the people's rights, which included interning --  
2 internment of people, in a totally undemocratic fashion.

3 Q. Thank you, Mr Corbyn.

4 I'd like to move on to something you mentioned  
5 a moment ago, please. You mention that you were  
6 involved in the squatting movement from -- I think it's  
7 from about 1972 onwards.

8 A. Correct, yes.

9 Q. You've said in your witness statement that this was  
10 perhaps through the IMG that you became involved in  
11 this?

12 A. Ah, no, it wasn't through the IMG. At that time, I was  
13 a member of the IMG.

14 Q. I see.

15 A. I became involved in squatting because I lived in  
16 Notting Hill at 17A Rendle Street, and I took  
17 the landlord to a rent tribunal and got the rent halved,  
18 and then the landlord gave me a notice to quit, because  
19 we did not have furnished tenancy security. And my  
20 elder brother who was sharing the flat with me -- not  
21 Jeremy, who's younger than me -- elder brother, called  
22 Andrew Corbyn, who has unfortunately since died, but he  
23 said to me, he said, "Why don't we squat? Piers, why  
24 don't we squat?" And I said, "Don't be silly, only  
25 hippies do that." But anyway, nevertheless, we did

1 squat. And the IMG view of this was that maybe this was  
2 -- well, it's okay, you're squatting. But when  
3 I started saying, "Oh, we should organise things in  
4 squatting, because we have to stop evictions," some of  
5 the people in the IMG were opposed to this and said, no,  
6 we should do things which they described as "the real  
7 tenants' struggle" in Notting Hill.

8 Q. Oh, I see.

9 A. But I did convince them that they should actually  
10 support what I was doing, and they did in the end. And  
11 which we achieved very great things there.

12 Q. We'll come on to those.

13 A. Yes, of course. Yes --

14 Q. But just --

15 A. The answer to your question is, no, I got involved  
16 because of my housing needs.

17 Q. I see.

18 We can take it from that, can we, that certainly  
19 the IMG involvement, the faction, I think you said in  
20 your statement, was quite small, at least --

21 A. Well, yeah, it was -- we set up an IMG squatting faction  
22 to sort of explain to the IMG people what was going on;  
23 and also get practical support for when we did things.  
24 And that, actually, was a good thing to do, because in  
25 the end, we were very successful and the IMG or other

1 left groups realised the importance of this form of  
2 action to help house the homeless.

3 Q. I see. Can we please bring up {UCPI/9509}, please.

4 It's at tab 27, Sir.

5 Mr Corbyn, this is a report submitted by a police  
6 officer with a copy of Easy 111, which is a document  
7 we'll look at in a moment, published by the Maida Hill  
8 Squatters and Tenants' Association, and I think this was  
9 produced after what's described as "the successful  
10 campaign of the Elgin Avenue Squatters"?

11 A. That's right.

12 Q. Which led to them all being rehoused. And this is  
13 a campaign that you were involved in --

14 A. Well, I was the key organiser, I would say.

15 Q. Key organiser, yes.

16 Just in brief, it's right, isn't it, that this was  
17 a squat that you had become involved in, in vacant  
18 houses due for demolition?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And after a campaign by you and others, the council  
21 agreed to rehouse you all, and so you left.

22 Can we turn, please, to page 9 of this document  
23 {UCPI/9509/9}. Thank you.

24 I'm interested in the section that  
25 reads "Demolition" in the bottom left of the page.

1 A. The bottom left.

2 Q. Don't worry, it will come up.

3 A. Oh, it will come up, okay. Ah, right.

4 Q. This is a document that you produced, possibly with  
5 others. And the part under "Demolition" --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- says:

8 "On the dawn of Thurs Oct 16, 200 police were in  
9 Elgin Avenue outside the empty houses. They had been  
10 booked for the eviction if we had not ... gone ..."

11 Can we take it from that, Mr Corbyn, that in  
12 the process of the attempted eviction, the police had  
13 attended in some numbers, if you hadn't agreed to  
14 leave --

15 A. Well, I think, yeah what happened, October 15, at noon  
16 or thereabouts, the GLC and police agreed that we would  
17 all be rehoused and the police would, if you like,  
18 supervise and assist our leaving. And we went to South  
19 London in vans, or whatever, organised by the GLC.

20 Now, we didn't know, but in fact the police had  
21 a plan that if we hadn't left, there would be a mass  
22 eviction on the following day, probably -- well, they  
23 liked doing these things at 6 am, so probably it would  
24 have been at dawn on the next day. But curiously -- and  
25 that's when the demolition began -- the police carried

1 out their exercise anyway and all turned up. But which  
2 was obviously completely unnecessary because nobody was  
3 going to try and get back in there because we'd all been  
4 successfully rehoused. But, you know, these things have  
5 a life of their own, don't they.

6 Q. Could we turn to page 2, {UCPI/9509/2}, please.

7 A. But I remember turning up there at dawn, because I got  
8 a phone call to the effect that -- or some call -- how  
9 did I know to be there?

10 Q. Thank you --

11 A. Anyway, we knew the demolition was going to happen, so  
12 we went there to watch.

13 Q. Thank you, Mr Corbyn.

14 I'm just going to read a small section out, then  
15 I'll ask a question or two about it. It's the very  
16 bottom part of this page, that says:

17 "Our collective organised strength and support meant  
18 we could physically resist and in a confrontation human  
19 justice would be on our side. So whatever happened  
20 the GLC had to lose and we had to win."

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Now, in your witness statement you've told us that an  
23 announcement which was made in this case to defend  
24 the squat against eviction often led to rehousing.

25 A. Mm-hm.

1 Q. Was an announcement to physically resist the eviction  
2 therefore a tactic, or was this something that was  
3 realistically going to happen if they hadn't --  
4 A. Well, I think realistically, a crowd of people standing  
5 around outside a building, even though we'd built  
6 barricades, would not prevent the -- the police or  
7 the bailiffs gaining control. So, our barricades  
8 were -- although physical, in their effect they were  
9 largely -- or in fact, primarily symbolic and political,  
10 to say, you know, what's behind the barricades is right,  
11 and the police trying to -- or the bailiffs trying to  
12 remove people is wrong.

13 And we put forward clear demands about the right to  
14 housing for everybody, and the need to use up empty  
15 properties which the GLC had. And GLC councillors, to  
16 give them their credit, accepted our argument, only  
17 after we had projected this idea across people and got  
18 support from local tenants' associations and Westminster  
19 Trades Council. And then they gave in, and  
20 Richard Balfe, the chair of the housing management  
21 committee, organised adequate rehousing. I remember  
22 having a meeting with him and others in the town hall,  
23 where he had to basically shout at GLC officers to tell  
24 them they had to find this housing for these people by  
25 a certain time. Which they did, because the GLC had

1           huge resources of empty properties.

2       Q.   Thank you, Mr Corbyn.

3           Could we look at the bottom of page 3 of this  
4       document, please, {UCPI/9509/3}.

5       A.   Yes, I hope so. I remember typing this. This was  
6       a long time ago. But anyway, there you are.

7       Q.   Right.

8           Now, this page has what appears to be a quote from  
9       you at the bottom.

10      A.   Yes.

11      Q.   I'm just going to read out -- I do apologise that it's  
12      not that clear. I think it reads:

13           "Even though we had more than average for London's  
14      homeless of desperate, disoriented people, our  
15      organisation and policies won. At the end, people were  
16      more ready to physically confront the police and State  
17      than I expected. The Streets Meets were  
18      the pooling ..."

19      A.   Pooling, oh pooling, yeah.

20      Q.   "... and creating of all our strength. Our victory  
21      proves the indomitable spirit of humanity. The lessons  
22      of Elgin and other struggles before it everywhere will  
23      be used in a thousand struggles to come in housing and  
24      workplace until Capitalism is finally smashed and our  
25      world will be OURS."



1           Now, Mr Corbyn, I'm just interested in that, where  
2           it says that "people were more ready to physically  
3           confront the police and State than I expected".

4           A. Mm-hm.

5           Q. That seems to suggest that there was at least  
6           a realistic prospect that there could have been some  
7           violence --

8           A. Well.

9           Q. -- (overspeaking) -- if anything happened; would you  
10          agree with that?

11          A. Well, wherever the violence comes from. You see, what  
12          it meant was we would call upon people in the buildings  
13          to stay put, which they did. In the weekend before, we  
14          had, what, 200 people in the street. Only three people  
15          left. Only three people left. Despite the fact they  
16          knew that there was an eviction imminent. At that  
17          point -- because we hadn't got our offer of housing at  
18          that point, the weekend before, it came on the Monday  
19          morning. What that meant was you wanted people to stay  
20          in the buildings and be in the way of any police or  
21          bailiffs who would try and come in. So any violence  
22          would have to come from the police and bailiffs.

23                 And there would be a crowd outside from local  
24                 squatters. There were hundreds of squats in the area.  
25                 And they indeed turned up, and stood outside on the --

1           on the day when we were rehoused. In that case it was  
2           for solidarity, ie I get, you know, moral support, if  
3           you like.

4           That's what that means. It doesn't mean that people  
5           were ready to take up armed struggle or anything  
6           approaching that against the -- the state. As I said,  
7           the purpose of these things was political persuasion of  
8           those in power so that it became politically necessary  
9           for them to do what we wanted, ie house the homeless.

10          Q. Could we just have a quick look at the top half of this  
11          page, please?

12          A. Yeah, sure.

13                 Crumbs, I'm remembering these people now I'm seeing  
14                 them. Heathcote Williams, he's died now. Now, he  
15                 wasn't a squatter -- well, he was, but not there, he was  
16                 a supporter.

17          Q. You'll be able to see that in fact the second person who  
18                 is mentioned on this leaflet is listed as "25 single"?

19          A. "Michael Johnstone, 25 single".

20          Q. I'm interested in what he says towards the end of  
21                 the paragraph --

22          A. Okay.

23          Q. -- ascribed to him. It says:

24                 "If they hadn't given us rehousing and let us  
25                 inspect it, and if the Sheriff and Police had tried to

1 break the barricades without our consent I would have  
2 thrown rubbish and ..."

3 "Card" I think that possibly says?

4 A. No "sand", I think.

5 Q. So sorry, "sand", you're quite right:

6 "... I was ready to meet their violence with  
7 violence. If it meant prison it meant prison."

8 How does that fit with what you have just told us,  
9 Mr Corbyn?

10 A. Well, I'm telling you what I thought and how we  
11 initiated -- or how I organised the struggle. It's an  
12 individual there who's saying he would have been ready  
13 to commit -- well, to meet their violence with violence.  
14 That's what he says. So I wrote down what he said,  
15 that's all. It doesn't mean that we were putting  
16 forward such a thing.

17 Q. But certainly that members --

18 A. "We" meaning me writing this newspaper, this newsheet,  
19 and the sort of small committee of immediate active  
20 supporters, some of whom might have been in the IMG, but  
21 it's -- we were a self-organised democratic setup in  
22 Elgin Avenue. I don't remember this guy. I think "25"  
23 means not his age but the house he lived in.

24 Q. I see.

25 A. So it's number 25 Elgin Avenue.

1 Q. You've said in your statement you were surprised at  
2 the readiness of people to confront?

3 A. Mm.

4 Q. What did you mean by that? Why were you surprised by  
5 it?

6 A. Well, a threat of eviction is a very fearful thing. And  
7 what had surprised me was, the weekend before I said to  
8 everybody, "Look, we're going to build barricades.  
9 We're still trying to make the GLC rehouse us all. They  
10 may come evict us next week. Please stay put." And  
11 people did, despite how fearful it was. If you think  
12 about it, you know, because people had seen evictions in  
13 other places; they'd seen the police storming in, or  
14 the bailiffs storming in backed by the police, and on  
15 occasions there might be arrests. But it's a scary  
16 thing. And I said, "Well, it is a scary thing, but if  
17 we stay put, they may indeed rehouse us." Which is what  
18 happened.

19 So the resilience, if you like, was people deciding  
20 to risk, you know, an unknown, potentially hurtful  
21 situation. You know, as I said, only three people left  
22 the street in that previous weekend. And that really --  
23 you know, I knew at that -- I knew at that point we'd  
24 win. That Monday morning I knew we'd win, because only  
25 three people had left the street, and the GLC could see

1 us. They could see the banners, they could see  
2 the barricades. And they thought, "Well, okay, they're  
3 actually right, these squatters are actually right."

4 So this thing about risking things wasn't about  
5 violence, it was about people being ready to -- well,  
6 face violence from the police and bailiffs, if you like.  
7 I mean, I would regard breaking down the door with  
8 a sledgehammer as a violent act. Okay, it's maybe not  
9 against a person, but it is a violent act, I would say.

10 Q. Thank you, Mr Corbyn.

11 Just lastly on this, the very last thing you've said  
12 at the bottom of the page is about smashing capitalism.  
13 Can we take it from that that your involvement in  
14 the squatting movement was linked to your political  
15 activities at that time and that --

16 A. No, I was in the IMG, so I would tag on these sort of  
17 things. But, you know, that wasn't my motive for being  
18 involved in squatting. My motive for being involved in  
19 squatting was to, 1, house myself and, 2, house others.  
20 And the consequence in the end of this victory in  
21 Elgin Avenue was that the GLC revised its whole policies  
22 completely. There were 10,000 squats in GLC properties.  
23 And two years later, the GLC gave tenancies to all  
24 10,000 GLC squats. And that followed on from our  
25 struggle. And that was a fantastic -- fantastic

1 victory. And achieved without any violence, or even  
2 a single arrest -- or a single arrest at the barricades.  
3 I mean, people did get arrested for sometimes entering  
4 other -- entering squats, or whatever. But, you know,  
5 in terms of our campaign, we were totally peaceful.

6 And the IMG went along with what I was doing. There  
7 wasn't any attempt to make us more anything, or  
8 whatever. They said, "Yeah, that's fantastic, Piers,  
9 you know, you've achieved a lot of things here."

10 Q. Thank you, Mr Corbyn. You, I think shortly after, also  
11 became involved in a similar issue at the Huntley Street  
12 squat.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Could we please bring up {UCPI/21215}. Thank you.

15 This is a report of a meeting at which you spoke  
16 I think on behalf of the Huntley Street squatters  
17 campaign?

18 A. Mm-hm.

19 Q. It's a meeting held in Conway Hall in March 1979. And  
20 it was held under the auspices of the People's  
21 Commission, and was concerning persons unknown. And  
22 I think that was connected to the Persons Unknown trial  
23 which was around at that time.

24 The report --

25 A. Right.

1 Q. -- notes that:

2 "The majority of those presents were from Persons  
3 Unknown and Friends of Astrid Proll."

4 And says:

5 "Among the other groups represented were  
6 the Anarchist Black Cross, the London Workers Group,  
7 the Gay Activists Alliance the 'Sus' Campaign,  
8 the Huntley Street Squatters Campaign ..."

9 A number of these groups are anarchist groups,  
10 Mr Corbyn.

11 A. Mm-hm.

12 Q. What connections did you have, other than speaking at  
13 meetings like this, with anarchist groups?

14 A. Well, I knew some of these anarchist group operatives,  
15 but I'm trying to remember. I do remember meetings in  
16 Conway Hall, but what was this --

17 Q. Well, if we scroll down -- (overspeaking) --

18 A. (inaudible) -- commission, what was that?

19 Q. If we scroll down to the second half of the page, that  
20 might help. Paragraph 4 -- thank you -- if we could  
21 just go up a little. Thank you.

22 I'll read out what it says?

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. "Dave Morris acted as spokesman for the Persons Unknown  
25 and said that the purpose of the 'People's Commission'

1           was to examine evidence of the ways in which the laws  
2           were enforced by the police and to hold a demonstration  
3           against the police later this year."

4           A.   Okay.

5           Q.   You've told us that you went to some meetings with  
6           anarchist groups.  Did you share any of their aims or  
7           objectives?

8           A.   Well, the aims and objectives here were about organising  
9           some sort of tribunal which was aiming to get the police  
10          to presumably not do certain things they were doing.  
11          They said "have a panel of judges".  I suppose these  
12          were judges which were like people judges, as opposed to  
13          getting a judge from a court, I suppose.  "Should  
14          liberal types be invited to ..." who -- is this  
15          a document I'm meant to have written, or this is  
16          a document from the police?

17          Q.   It's from the police.

18          A.   Special Branch, who were posing these questions,  
19          I understand, yeah.  Obviously, yeah.

20          Q.   It's a meeting at which you spoke.

21          A.   Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

22          Q.   Your name is on the --

23          A.   Sure, no.  No, I'm sure I would have spoken, saying,  
24          "Look, we have to call the police to account."  Which is  
25          something which applies now as well as then.  And ...



1           Well, I mean, as you know, I'm standing as a Mayor  
2 candidate in the coming elections. And I think  
3 the police do have to be more accountable.

4           That's what my involvement in this would have been  
5 about. It wouldn't have meant that I would -- you see,  
6 I wouldn't have known all of these groups anyway. I'd  
7 know some of them, that's for sure. But -- oh, you  
8 suddenly lost that thing. It doesn't matter, does it?  
9 Can you hear me?

10 Q. Yes, yes, Mr Corbyn.

11 A. Well, I'm just saying that, to my mind, when I was  
12 speaking there, that was about holding the police to  
13 account, so they didn't do things which were illegal or  
14 -- or unjust. The fact that there were -- the meeting  
15 included anarchists is really neither here nor there,  
16 for my attendance. I mean, I don't come or go to  
17 meetings based on who's there, I come or go to meetings  
18 based on what needs to be said to people -- well, which  
19 could be there or people who could be perhaps not there,  
20 but hear what was said.

21 Q. So is it fair to say this is, as far as you can recall,  
22 a meeting at which you shared a common cause with other  
23 people who were there?

24 A. A common cause in terms of calling the police to  
25 account, yes. But beyond that, I don't remember any

1 common cause.

2 Q. Can you remember other meetings with similar groups,  
3 anarchist groups, on different causes? Or is this a --

4 A. No, I don't. I mean, within the squatting movement,  
5 there were -- there were all sorts of political groups  
6 operating. Quite a lot of religious groups operating,  
7 you know? Hare Krishna's operating, Children of God  
8 operating and different anarchist groups operating. So  
9 I just regarded them as people who were operating, and  
10 hoped they would cooperate when we needed numbers to --  
11 to make a -- make a point. Like, you know, getting  
12 someone's gas reconnected if the gas company had  
13 disconnected them, for example.

14 Q. Thank you very much, Mr Corbyn.

15 There's just one more issue I wanted to ask you a --

16 A. Sure.

17 Q. -- question on briefly.

18 Could we please bring up a copy of your witness  
19 statement. It's {UCPI/34186}, and it's page 59,  
20 paragraph 173, {UCPI/34186/59}.

21 A. Ah, right. So I've got it in front of me anyway.  
22 I thought you were going to show it.

23 Q. It will appear on the screen.

24 Now, it's about a section of your statement where  
25 you were asked whether you recalled Colin Clark, who was

1 a --

2 A. Ah, yes.

3 Q. -- a UCO, HN80. You say there that you remember him  
4 selling Red Mole every Saturday morning.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Now, I think, Mr Corbyn, you have in fact seen  
7 a photograph of HN80 before you gave evidence today.  
8 Now, I just want to ask you this, please. Red Mole was  
9 an IMG publication, wasn't it?

10 A. It was.

11 Q. And I think we know that HN80 reported on the SWP  
12 exclusively. Would it have been very unusual for  
13 a member of the SWP to be selling the Red Mole every  
14 Saturday morning?

15 A. Oh, it would, it would. That would have been not  
16 a thing they would do. So perhaps I've got confused  
17 about who I saw. You see, I've been shown some photos,  
18 but they aren't photos I recognised. But I do remember  
19 the name "Colin Clark".

20 Now, he could have been a policeman infiltrating in  
21 the IS, the International Socialists, who -- who  
22 would -- could easily turn up at things we were at, but  
23 he wouldn't have sold -- sold Red Mole. So, perhaps my  
24 memory is confused, I don't know.

25 But I do remember a "Colin Clark", and he was quite

1 an intelligent, knowledgeable guy, you know? And  
2 I didn't suspect him of being a policeman at the time.  
3 Well, as I said here, he was a good conversationalist.

4 Q. Mr Corbyn, thank you very much. Those are the only  
5 questions --

6 A. So, I -- so, perhaps you can refresh my memory. I mean,  
7 have I actually been shown a picture of "Colin Clark",  
8 or of somebody else?

9 Q. You have --

10 A. Then, I didn't recognise him, so perhaps -- perhaps this  
11 wasn't then "Colin Clark" who was long auburn hair. But  
12 I think I'm describing "Colin Clark" accurately.

13 Q. Mr Corbyn, it may not matter, I just thought it was  
14 important that you had an opportunity to know --

15 A. No, no. Thank you. I just would say that I don't --  
16 I mean, you know, looking back, I'm kind of staggered to  
17 think, my God, these people in front of me, helping or  
18 whatever, including in my flat and so on, were actually  
19 -- actually policemen.

20 And of course, you know, these policemen involved  
21 would be deemed to have assisted in the things we were  
22 doing, which, if what we were doing was illegal or  
23 dangerous, then of course it must be questionable as to  
24 the police's role.

25 I do remember specifically infiltrators in

1 the Huntley Street squad. They were called "Nigel" and  
2 "Mary", and we suspected these people were police agents  
3 or something. And indeed, at the eviction -- because  
4 there was an eviction in the case of Huntley Street, and  
5 there was rehousing in the end as well. But this  
6 "Nigel" and "Mary" were police agents, because in the  
7 subsequent court case, because some of us were  
8 arrested -- it's curious there's not a report about this  
9 in these documents -- I asked in court to Michael Ellis  
10 Harris, the Undersheriff of London, who were "Nigel" and  
11 "Mary", and he said, "They worked for me." And  
12 the whole court -- it was the biggest court in  
13 Marylebone Magistrates Court -- went totally silent.

14 And the magistrate went berserk. He said, "You mean  
15 to tell me that you had police agents working for you  
16 but helping the squatters go around London collecting  
17 corrugated iron and building barricades against  
18 the law?" And the magistrate was very angry.

19 But it seems to me now that since you haven't  
20 mentioned this "Nigel" and "Mary", perhaps they were  
21 working directly for the Undersheriff of London, not for  
22 the police and not part of Special Branch, I don't know.  
23 But I think that's something which Sir John Mitting  
24 might want to look into, that there was other things  
25 going on involving other branches of the state, not just

1 Special Branch.

2 MR WARNER: Thank you very much, Mr Corbyn. I don't have  
3 any further questions.

4 A. Thank you.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Corbyn, the remit that I have --

6 A. Yes.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: -- occupies my time and that of the Inquiry  
8 team without extending it any further.

9 A. I guess that's a fair comment. It's just that I'm a bit  
10 fascinated that -- you see, my main activity then was,  
11 you know, loads of stuff in squatting, but this  
12 concentrated on all these things about Irish issues and  
13 so on, when there was a lot going on in squatting,  
14 including infiltration. So who were "Nigel" and "Mary"  
15 apart from being linked with the Undersheriff? Okay,  
16 you can't extend the Inquiry, I don't know. But it's an  
17 issue anyway.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

19 One of the things I'm going to ask you to do is to  
20 wait for a quarter of an hour. At the end of every  
21 witness's evidence, time is allowed for  
22 core participants to propose questions to  
23 Counsel to the Inquiry.

24 A. Yes.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: And if you wouldn't mind coming back in

1 a quarter of an hour, I'd be grateful.

2 A. Okay.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

4 A. Thank you.

5 MR FERNANDES: Good afternoon, everyone. We will now take  
6 a break. May I remind those in the virtual hearing room  
7 to remember to join your break-out rooms, please.

8 The time is 12.30 pm, so we shall resume at  
9 12.45 pm.

10 Thank you.

11 (12.32 pm)

12 (A short break)

13 (12.46 pm)

14 MR FERNANDES: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome back.

15 I will now hand over to the Chairman to continue  
16 proceedings.

17 Chairman.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

19 Mr Warner, I understand there is one question that  
20 you are going to ask Mr Corbyn at this stage.

21 MR WARNER: Yes, sir.

22 Mr Corbyn, can you hear me all right? Mr Corbyn?

23 I think you might be on mute.

24 A. Got it.

25 Q. Right.

1           Mr Corbyn, I've just got one follow-up question, if

2           --

3           A. Sure.

4           Q. -- you don't mind.

5           You told us earlier this morning that the IMG did  
6           try to support other groups without controlling them.

7           A. Yes.

8           Q. And you went on to say that some other groups,  
9           revolutionary groups, did join others in attempts to try  
10          and control them.

11          A. Yes.

12          Q. Drawing a distinction between the IMG and these other  
13          groups.

14          A. Yes.

15          Q. Could you help us, please. Can you remember what other  
16          groups used to do that?

17          A. Well, the impression I had -- or I think it was  
18          accurate, from my memory -- is that the IS,  
19          International Socialists, were normally very intent on  
20          controlling whatever they were doing. So, they would  
21          have things which we would describe -- or I would  
22          describe as "fronts". So, you know, they would have  
23          some campaign or other called something, but really it  
24          was just being controlled completely by the IS.

25          The IMG did, I suppose -- well, yeah, the IMG



1           would -- would have a less controlling way of doing  
2           things.  Although, of course, in all these groups there  
3           are people who would be intent on control because it's  
4           easier to manage, possibly.  But you see, it's not  
5           necessarily more effective.  You know, I think  
6           the important thing is to get more participation.  And  
7           I think that was generally the IMG view.

8           Q.  Is it just the IS that you were thinking of, or any  
9           other groups?  Or is it them in particular?

10          A.  Well, there would be other groups, like anarchist  
11          groups, who would really just be very self-contained and  
12          wouldn't want anybody interfering with them, if you  
13          like.  And would probably -- they might indeed set up  
14          campaigns, or front campaigns, but they would indeed be  
15          totally in charge of them.  But the anarchist groups, to  
16          be fair, would also just turn up at meetings and join  
17          into anything.  So there wouldn't be a consistent  
18          pattern with them.

19          MR WARNER:  Thank you, Mr Corbyn.  That was the question  
20          I had for you.

21          A.  Okay.

22          THE CHAIRMAN:  Thank you.  That concludes your evidence now.  
23          May I thank you for bringing to light --

24          MR MENON:  Sir, excuse me.  May I ask for permission to ask  
25          a few questions?  I thought I had an automatic right,

1 given I represent Mr Corbyn.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry, I do apologise. You wish to ask  
3 questions in re-examination?

4 MR MENON: If I may.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: I apologise, I had overlooked that fact.

6 MR MENON: No, it's not a problem.

7 A. Okay.

8 MR MENON: I'll just use a small part of my allotted time,  
9 if I may.

10 Questions by MR MENON

11 MR MENON: Mr Corbyn, just a few matters.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Looking back at over 50 years of activism, have you, in  
14 your opinion, ever engaged in any political activity  
15 that you consider was subversive in that it threatened  
16 the safety or wellbeing of the state and was intended to  
17 undermine or overthrow parliamentary democracy by  
18 political, industrial or violent means?

19 A. No, I haven't. Neither then, nor since then, nor now.  
20 I mean, obviously things happened which could be  
21 misinterpreted in those vein(?), but you see -- no, I  
22 would say the answer to that is no.

23 Q. Now, amongst the intelligence reports that have been  
24 disclosed to you, there are a number of that indicate  
25 that a particular SDS officer who uses the nominal

1 "HN338", an officer who's no longer alive, attended at  
2 least three small political meetings at your home in  
3 1972?

4 A. Well, I want to know who this HN338 was.

5 Q. Yes, I understand.

6 I mean, the position is that we don't know his cover  
7 name and you haven't been shown a photograph of this  
8 particular officer from the 1970s, and my question is  
9 this: if you were given his cover name and if you were  
10 given a photograph of him from the early 1970s, might  
11 that assist you in remembering more about this  
12 particular officer and the nature of his spying on you?

13 A. Oh, it certainly would. It certainly would. I mean,  
14 you know, seeing a face brings forth memories.

15 You see, I remember "Colin Clark". I'm slightly  
16 puzzled that I didn't recognise his photo, but on  
17 the other hand, you know, photos and memories can be  
18 confusing. But I do remember this "Colin Clark", who  
19 was, you know, a friendly sort of guy.

20 I remember a Paul Pearsall being active in  
21 Imperial College and also sometimes coming to my flat.  
22 Could he be HN338? I -- I don't know. I don't know.

23 Q. Thank you.

24 Could I please ask for the following document to be  
25 put on the screen {UCPI/10850}.

1           And Sir, I think it's at tab 34 of your file.

2           But, Mr Corbyn, you'll get it on the screen.

3       A.   Okay.

4       Q.   You can see from the top that it's a Special Branch  
5           document, and if you look at the first three lines, it  
6           reads as follows:

7           "The following has been received from a reliable  
8           source and is based on twelve months acquaintance with  
9           the squatting field in London."

10          And you can see it's dated --

11       A.   Yeah.

12       Q.   -- 12 August 1976.

13       A.   Okay.

14       Q.   And unless I'm missing it, we don't know the author of  
15           this particular document; it doesn't appear, either by  
16           number or by name, anywhere.

17          Have you had the opportunity, Mr Corbyn, to re-read  
18           this document?

19       A.   I have, yes.   I have.

20       Q.   In your opinion, does it accurately portray  
21           the squatting movement in London in 1976?

22       A.   Well, partly, but in its, you know, general view,  
23           I would say no.   You see, the squatting movement then  
24           was hugely diverse, and this document, although it's  
25           got, you know, geographical and organisational things

1 correct, like people were meeting at St Paul's Road and  
2 campaigning against the Criminal Trespass Law, those  
3 things are correct, but it seems to have in it quite  
4 a lot of political interpretation, which I think --  
5 I don't know if they're trying to please someone who  
6 this report was -- was written for.

7 It's -- it sort of implies things were a lot more  
8 anarchistic than they were -- although anarchists were  
9 important -- and suggests that squatting appeared to be  
10 more of a political thing than it was. Although  
11 squatters became political, you know, people -- people  
12 squatted through desperation. That's what happened in  
13 Elgin Avenue, they were desperate people.

14 Q. You've --

15 A. I'm just flashing through this thing in front of me, in  
16 the printed version, because it's ...

17 You see, this thing here -- yes, there's one he says  
18 on page whatever -- page 2, he says -- which is --  
19 they're not numbered paragraphs -- he said:

20 "The truth is that over 80% [this is the squatters]  
21 do not want council housing because it would require  
22 that meet certain obligations."

23 You see, that's just not true. I mean, in  
24 Elgin Avenue, everybody that was offered housing took  
25 it, nobody turned it down, and it did involve

1 obligations, obviously, of paying the licence fee and  
2 eventually, when people were rehoused, it was -- it was  
3 the rent.

4 Now, there were anarchists in the movement who said  
5 we shouldn't accept any rehousing, we should squat on  
6 forever, because that's like a new future. And I just  
7 said, "Look, that's ridiculous". I mean, people have  
8 come here for housing and that's what they want, and if  
9 it means paying rent, then they'll pay rent and they'll  
10 want to, and that's exactly what happened.

11 So, you see, this document is written, I don't know,  
12 from the point of view of somebody who was anarchistic  
13 and wanted to believe certain things. You see, we don't  
14 know who wrote this. Was it a sort of anarchistic  
15 person who sent it in hoping to convince the police of  
16 something? I don't know. What is the origin of this  
17 document? But I would say as it is it's an  
18 oversimplification of the -- the reality.

19 And I've got another mark here. Ah yes, about  
20 the police. It says on page -- well -- ah, the bottom  
21 of the page -- it's all the same numbers here. It says:

22 "The general attitude towards the police is one of  
23 complete non-cooperation."

24 Well, that isn't true either. I mean, attitudes  
25 towards the police was just a practical matter. I mean,

1           it's -- as most people's attitude towards the police is.  
2           And indeed, in Elgin Avenue, we didn't seek cooperation  
3           with the police, but when we wanted -- when we needed to  
4           discuss things, or when they wanted to discuss with us,  
5           we did.

6           And I remember a specific case, very illustrative,  
7           of we -- there was somebody who had been making trouble  
8           in the street, you know, living in there and harassing  
9           women and serious, serious, stuff. So we told him -- we  
10          had a street meeting and told this guy he had to go and  
11          we removed him from the squat. We told him somewhere  
12          else he could go and live, but he wasn't going to be  
13          allowed in Elgin Avenue any more.

14         Q. Thank you.

15         A. When the police turned up, when there was this -- they  
16          could hear arguments in the street, because the police  
17          station wasn't far away, and the police said to me, they  
18          said, "Well, okay, he stays on that side of the road and  
19          you people stay on your side of the road". So they  
20          actually endorsed what -- what we had done.

21         Q. Mr Corbyn, can I ask you a follow on question from this?

22         A. Yes.

23         Q. Which is this. You mentioned when you were answering  
24          questions earlier that you were surprised, given  
25          squatting activism was such a major part of your

1 political activity in the 1970s, that there are so few  
2 intelligence reports disclosed to you that actually deal  
3 with your squatting activism. Why is that? Why are you  
4 surprised about that?

5 A. Well, given that they put so much effort into following  
6 my detailed activity, Irish or whatever, and when  
7 I moved from Rendle Street to Elgin Avenue, I'm  
8 surprised there wasn't -- looking back, there logically  
9 should have been police who would move into the squat,  
10 because they could completely spy on me easily that way  
11 by squatting in Elgin Avenue. And if they had done  
12 that, they would have produced a report, but we don't  
13 see any reports from them, so far as I can see, which is  
14 puzzling, because in the mind of the Special Branch,  
15 surely our squatting activity was -- well, I don't know.  
16 They might think us and me going to a Troops Out  
17 Movement meeting was dangerous, but surely a squatting  
18 activity would be equally dangerous if the Troops Out  
19 Movement thing is deemed dangerous. So I don't know why  
20 they weren't there. It's -- or perhaps they were and we  
21 haven't had any reports of it.

22 Perhaps Sir John would like to look into that.

23 I mean, do they have reports which are no use, or that  
24 put us in -- put me into an embarrassingly good light?

25 I mean, I just don't know. I'm mesmerised. Mesmerised,



1           yes.

2           Q. Mr Corbyn, finally this. Is there anything else that  
3           you would wish to say to the Chair of the Inquiry to  
4           assist him in his search for the truth, as far as  
5           the police spying on you is concerned?

6           A. Yes. If we want more search for the truth, I would say,  
7           well, we should ask them point blank: did you have any  
8           police agents in Elgin Avenue? This "Nigel" and "Mary"  
9           who turned up in Huntley Street, who were they actually  
10          working for? Were they in fact some employees of  
11          the Sheriff of London, or was it another Special Branch  
12          link which they don't want to tell us about? Certainly  
13          those things.

14          Also, what was the aim of the Special Branch in all  
15          this activity? Because, you know, I've been surveilled  
16          for a decade. I mean, for what? I mean, they haven't  
17          accused me of doing anything dangerous in the sense of  
18          these reports. I would have thought there's better use,  
19          frankly, of police time than -- than this sort of thing.

20          MR MENON: Thank you, Mr Corbyn.

21          That's all I ask, Sir. I hope I've used my  
22          ten minutes and no more.

23          THE CHAIRMAN: You have indeed done. Thank you.

24          Mr Corbyn, can I say two things to you.

25          A. Yes, sir.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: First of all, thank you very much for  
2 eliminating the various groups and activities in which  
3 you were involved in the late 60s and 70s. It is  
4 refreshing to hear an account by someone who  
5 participated as widely as you did.

6 A. Oh good. Well, I'm glad you found it useful.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: And it paints a side of the picture that I  
8 don't get from the documents and always from the former  
9 undercover offices and their managers' evidence.

10 Now, you say in response to the last question of  
11 Mr Menon, for what reason were you surveilled -- I'm  
12 looking not so much at surveillance overall but at  
13 the infiltration of groups predominantly in which --

14 A. Yes.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: -- you participated by undercover officers.  
16 That is one of the very basic questions that I'm going  
17 to attempt to answer.

18 A. Good. Your Honour, thank you.

19 I mean, it was quite exciting to be able to read  
20 a sort of diary from certain eyes of what I was doing,  
21 and I'm astounded that I remembered so much. But,  
22 you know, the whole purpose of it needs clarification,  
23 absolutely. And I wish you every success in getting  
24 clarification, Sir.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you for that. Your evidence is now

1 over and Mr Fernandes will announce the closure of this  
2 morning's session.

3 I intend that we should resume at 2.05, because  
4 we've overrun slightly.

5 A. Thank you.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

7 MR FERNANDES: We will now take a break for lunch. May  
8 I remind those in the virtual hearing room to please  
9 remember to join your break-out rooms.

10 The time is 1.05 pm, so we shall resume at 2.05 pm.

11 Thank you.

12 (1.03 pm)

13 (The short adjournment)

14 (2.05 pm)

15 MR FERNANDES: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to  
16 the afternoon session of today's evidential hearings.  
17 For those in the virtual hearing rooms, please remember  
18 to turn off both your camera and microphone.

19 I will now hand over to the Chairman,  
20 Sir John Mitting, to continue proceedings.  
21 Chairman.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

23 Mr Rodker's son is now going to read his witness  
24 statement. The usual video will not be played because  
25 this is being transmitted live, and anyone is free to

1           Tweet or transmit what is going on at any time.

2           Mr Rodker.

3                               Statement of MR ERNEST RODKER

4 MR RODKER: Thank you. Good afternoon.

5           I'm actually going to be reading just the most  
6           salient parts of Ernest's statement, so not every word.  
7           Stop me if you're losing track. That's just to save  
8           time. I will be reading obviously all the most relevant  
9           parts.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Forgive me for interrupting a moment.

11           If you are not going to read the whole statement, it  
12           may be that you can complete this task by about 3.30.

13           If you're going to do that, then we won't take a break.

14 MR RODKER: I haven't sort of read it out, out loud, but I'm  
15           not predicting it will take more than an hour. So yes,  
16           I would hope we would be finished by 3.30.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

18 MR RODKER: I believe there's a photo, document 050  
19           {DOC/50}. If I could just show that. So a photograph  
20           of my father, Ernest, to show the Inquiry to begin with.  
21           Is that there? Would I see it if it was there?

22 THE CHAIRMAN: It has not yet appeared, but --

23 MR RODKER: I can --

24 THE CHAIRMAN: It's coming. Here it is.

25 MR RODKER: No, that's definitely not it.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: You're quite right.

2 MR RODKER: That's it.

3 Okay, so that's my father, Ernest. Thanks very  
4 much.

5 So, to start the statement.

6 My full name is Ernest Rodker. On 20 December 2019,  
7 I was provided with a Rule 9 request to provide evidence  
8 to the Inquiry. It relates to some of my campaigning  
9 activities over a period of 30 years, from the late 60s  
10 to the late 1990s; and poses questions relating to my  
11 interaction with a number of undercover police officers,  
12 including "Jim Pickford", "Michael Scott",  
13 "Phil Cooper", "Jim Sutton", "Andy Davey" and  
14 Mike Ferguson.

15 I have been provided by the Inquiry with a bundle of  
16 about 53 documents, with a Rule 9 request posing 22  
17 questions.

18 The Stop the Seventy Tour campaign.

19 I'm asked what my political activities as a member  
20 of the Stop the Seventy Tour were, including my  
21 positions of responsibility and the dates held.

22 I was active in Stop the Seventy Tour throughout its  
23 existence. It started in 1969 until it was disbanded in  
24 May 1970 with the cancellation of the planned 1970  
25 cricket tour of the UK by the white-only South African

1 team.

2 The campaign against sports connections with South  
3 Africa continued beyond the 1970s in other forms, and  
4 I remained involved in those campaigns. I did not have  
5 a formal position within Stop the Seventy Tour, as far  
6 as I can recall. I was active in a much smaller group  
7 of activists, a direct action group, "DAG" for short,  
8 which I also describe below.

9 I am asked what were the aims of  
10 Stop the Seventy Tour. Its immediate and principal aim  
11 was to stop the white-only South African cricket team  
12 from touring the UK in 1970. More broadly, its aim was  
13 to make a very strong political point that people  
14 representing apartheid were not welcome in the UK.

15 I'm asked about its methods. We sought to impress  
16 on the South African teams the fact that as an all-white  
17 team effectively promoting the apartheid regime, they  
18 were not welcome. We wanted them to know the level of  
19 opposition there was to what they stood for, and for  
20 them to reflect on whether it was the right thing,  
21 practically and ethically, to tour the UK.

22 We used all classic forms of non-violent direct  
23 action, NVDA -- pitch invasions were the most prominent.  
24 We understood and sought to follow the well known  
25 principles of NVDA and civil disobedience learned from

1 recent history, such as the struggle for Indian  
2 independence by Mahatma Gandhi, and for black civil  
3 rights by Dr Martin Luther King.

4 I personally had already absorbed and applied these  
5 principles as a result of my earlier involvement in  
6 the Committee of 100, which was referred to below. So,  
7 for the Stop the Seventy Tour, it was clearly understood  
8 by anyone who came across the Stop the Seventy Tour or  
9 participated in its demonstrations that we would only  
10 engage in peaceful campaigning. This was made known  
11 openly and explicitly regularly at meetings. It was  
12 a common understanding for all those involved.

13 This comment applies to all other campaigns I was  
14 involved in, such as the direct action anti-apartheid  
15 group I was involved in below and the Committee of 100  
16 below.

17 I am asked if Stop the Seventy Tour vetted its  
18 members.

19 My comments relate principally to  
20 the Stop the Seventy Tour, but I was also involved in  
21 a smaller group involved in direct action. I cannot now  
22 remember what name this direct action group was known  
23 by. These activities included things like going to  
24 a team hotel to carry out demonstrations there.

25 For example, in the campaign against the white-only

1 South African rugby team in 1969, I booked into a hotel  
2 in an affluent part of Central London overnight where  
3 the team was staying. I sat among the players in  
4 the lounge eavesdropping on them and getting their room  
5 numbers. While they were still in the lounge or having  
6 supper, I may myself have glued their door locks and  
7 certainly shared the room numbers with other campaigners  
8 who did so. Only a couple of doors were affected in  
9 this way, but I understand it had an impact on  
10 the South Africans. They were unhappy about this,  
11 I learned later from a journalist connection of  
12 Peter Hain.

13 On other occasions, we waited outside the team's  
14 hotels for them to get on their coaches. We then got on  
15 the coaches as well and refused to leave. We had to be  
16 carried out. This both delayed the team and caused them  
17 inconvenience.

18 It is worth underlining that we were effective in  
19 the sense that, in the short term, the rugby team was,  
20 we learned, keen to stop the tour, and wanted to go home  
21 as a result of our actions. In the medium term, we  
22 contributed towards the decision to abandon the 1970  
23 cricket tour plans, and in the long term, we contributed  
24 to the isolation of apartheid South Africa from  
25 international sport, a factor in its eventual downfall.



1           I note I am not asked about my knowledge or  
2 interaction with Mike Ferguson. I can say that I don't  
3 remember this person. I understand, in any event, that  
4 this is the officer's real name, as opposed to his cover  
5 name, the name I might have known him by. And if I am  
6 said to have come across him, it would obviously help to  
7 know his cover name. If I were asked to comment on him,  
8 I would also be assisted by seeing a contemporaneous  
9 photograph of him and other information about what he  
10 looked like and what his involvement with me was.

11           I'm asked about the Stop the Seventy Tour First  
12 National Conference on 7/3/1970, and a report on it  
13 dated 9/3/1970. Specifically, I am asked if this  
14 meeting was open to the public in the morning and  
15 private delegates only in the afternoon. I cannot  
16 remember if this was public in the morning and private  
17 in the afternoon.

18           I am asked by reference to paragraph 8 at page 3 of  
19 the report about Stop the Seventy Tour's attitude to  
20 violence. I agree that we were committed to non-violent  
21 direct action. I would not accept that it was right or  
22 accurate to describe our tactics, as the report does,  
23 as "militant", particularly given the connotations of  
24 that word in that era.

25           Yes, we were committed to disrupting the apartheid

1 South African sports teams. But it was always very  
2 clear and frequently said that our opposition to them  
3 would not include acts of personal violence towards  
4 them, for example punching them. It involved peaceful  
5 civil disobedience. It also included relatively minor  
6 damage to property, for example gluing door locks, but  
7 nothing more significant than that.

8 Anyone attending any of the meetings or  
9 participating in the campaign generally would have been  
10 made aware of this and, by continuing to be involved,  
11 would be understood to have committed to these  
12 principles. The common and the fundamental principle it  
13 kept to was NVDA: no violence to people, and only minor,  
14 proportionate damage to property.

15 This is paragraph 47 now.

16 I am asked how concerned we were generally about  
17 the risk of reporting by undercover officers.

18 There was an awareness that it would almost  
19 certainly be the case that there would be infiltrators  
20 within the movement and that, more generally,  
21 the authorities were trying to monitor what we were  
22 doing, by the use of phone tapping and such like, and  
23 the placing of people covertly at meetings.

24 Our principal concern was that the UK police were  
25 the ones monitoring and infiltrating us, and this

1 included the possibility of there being the likes of  
2 undercover police officers in our midst. I assumed that  
3 the apartheid South African authorities and  
4 Security Services also had an interest in, may have  
5 monitored or infiltrated, and may even have taken action  
6 against, the Anti-Apartheid Movement. I assumed that  
7 they were particularly interested in the high profile  
8 organisers, those who were central to the national  
9 campaign.

10 Our overriding response to this was that none of  
11 this should deter us doing what we planned to do. And  
12 of course, some actions were planned outside the wider  
13 group, to keep them secret and guard against the risk of  
14 them being known to anyone monitoring us.

15 I am asked if I was surprised to learn that  
16 undercover officers reported on my STST activities --  
17 that's the acronym for the Stop the Seventy Tour. I am  
18 not surprised that they monitored my activities. This  
19 is partly because, before I was involved in the campaign  
20 against apartheid, I was involved in  
21 the Committee of 100. This was a British anti-nuclear  
22 group of the 1960s. It had come to the attention not  
23 only of the media but also of police, the prosecutors  
24 and the courts as a result of a high profile campaign  
25 and campaigning methods involving non-violent direct

1           action.

2           For example, through my involvement in  
3           the committee, I and many others in the committee,  
4           including the philosopher Bertrand Russell, had been  
5           sent to prison as a result of our campaign of  
6           non-violent direct action against US nuclear bases.  
7           This came about when a number of us were prosecuted for  
8           planning disruptive demonstrations and civil  
9           disobedience. We appeared at, I think, Bow Street  
10          Magistrates Court, and were found guilty of a breach of  
11          the peace, or some similar wrong. We were given  
12          the option of agreeing to be bound over to keep  
13          the peace, or to go to prison for three months or more.  
14          Most of us chose to go to prison.

15          I seem to remember that some of the evidence used  
16          against us included evidence from the police of covert  
17          surveillance of our plans and discussions for action.

18          I'm asked to what extent did Stop the Seventy Tour  
19          break the law in order to further its aims. I'm asked  
20          this question in the context of a report on a meeting of  
21          the London Region Conference of  
22          the Stop the Seventy Tour, a meeting I am said to have  
23          chaired on 5 April 1970 in St Pancras London, which  
24          mentions the possibility of conspiracy charges.

25          The direct action group -- I'll just drop down to

1 paragraph 55.

2 The direct action group was about planning actions  
3 rather than for organising public events or publicity in  
4 the conventional sense. Certainly a direct action group  
5 cannot be described as delicate to the Stop the  
6 Seventy Tour in the way the planning committee was  
7 apparently seen in this report.

8 But, yes, we were aware that conspiracy or other  
9 criminal offences might be used against us. I have no  
10 legal training, but I understand at this time the now  
11 discredited conspiracy charge could be used to prosecute  
12 as a criminal offence the planning of what might  
13 otherwise amount to civil wrongs, such as trespass. And  
14 further, in those days, the use of conspiracy charges  
15 took on a political aspect.

16 We were involved in civil disobedience. We were  
17 putting our bodies in the way of apartheid South African  
18 tourists. We were not planting bombs. We were not even  
19 carrying out wanton acts, like going into  
20 South African's rooms and trashing belongings. We were  
21 doing nothing on the scale of what the South African  
22 state regime was doing to its majority black citizenship  
23 under apartheid, systematically and repeatedly, under  
24 cover of the law.

25 I note that at paragraph 11 of page 3 of this report

1 it is recorded that Stop the Seventy Tour noted the:

2 "... necessity for ... the maintenance of strict  
3 discipline within these groups who would be  
4 participating in the demonstrations."

5 This is correct. What we did not want was for  
6 people to get over-excited and, say, punch  
7 a South African cricketer, or try to rip their clothes,  
8 or throw a bomb. We were keen to keep away from violent  
9 actions.

10 The main tactic of Stop the Seventy Tour and  
11 the actions of the majority of those taking part in its  
12 demonstrations was to run onto cricket and rugby pitches  
13 to disrupt the play. I think I am right in saying that  
14 this was seen as a trespass, and trespass was not at  
15 that time a criminal offence. I don't know, for sure,  
16 if getting on a bus and stopping it from moving was  
17 a criminal offence. I think it was not. But I did all  
18 these things.

19 I sat on a cricket pitch at least once, at Lords,  
20 and may have attempted something similar at the Oval.  
21 I cannot remember what happened to me in terms of  
22 the law, but I do remember being carried out by security  
23 or police and being kicked by spectators.

24 I also painted slogans on Lords, on the walls  
25 outside along St John's Road. I wrote a message like

1 "stop the tour", "go home", something along those lines.  
2 We did not write offensive, swearing messages.

3 I did not put tik-taks on pitches. I would have  
4 considered that as violence. This was not part of  
5 Stop the Seventy Tour's or my direct action group. We  
6 disapproved of this sort of action and this was well  
7 known.

8 I do not recall digging up pitches myself. I may  
9 have but weedkiller on the pitch. All this, though,  
10 I would have considered marginal in terms of  
11 justification within NVDA, as it was non-harmful of  
12 people, so I may have considered it.

13 The test against how we measured our actions was not  
14 whether it broke the law but whether it was consistent  
15 with non-violent direct action principles. These were  
16 observed by those involved in the campaigns I was  
17 involved in. It was understood by those taking part.  
18 It was frequently discussed. It was implicitly  
19 understood as a core value of those engaging in  
20 the campaign against the apartheid South African regime.  
21 We did not want our principal message to be confused by  
22 adverse publicity about violence. One factor in our  
23 thinking was that we wanted to set ourselves apart from  
24 the extreme of violence which the apartheid  
25 South African regime was showing to its black citizens.

1           Section 8, Pavement.

2           I'm asked to summarise my political activities as  
3 a member of the Pavement Collective.

4           The Pavement Collective ran from about 1970 for  
5 about 20 years, certainly for many, many years. I was  
6 one of the main motivators behind setting it up and  
7 running it throughout. There were others involved too,  
8 though they may not have been involved throughout.

9           Some of the meetings were held at my house. I think  
10 I was still living in Fulham, an address on  
11 Rumbold Road, at the beginning of Pavement's lifespan.  
12 I later moved to an address in Wandsworth. Most  
13 meetings were at the People's Aid and Action Centre.  
14 Meetings were also held at the home address of one of  
15 the others who were active.

16           I was on the Pavement Collective's editorial  
17 committee throughout its existence.

18           Its aim was to report on local activity and  
19 the actions of local community groups. We sought to  
20 publicise the actions of those who defended their local  
21 community and to encourage campaigns by local  
22 communities on issues like housing, on race, jobs and  
23 similar. We also sought to challenge the council on  
24 some of its policies around housing and redevelopment,  
25 and this brought us into opposition with developers.



1           We also received support. For example, on the 18th  
2 birthday of Pavement we received letters of support from  
3 the likes of Michael Foot MP, the former Labour leader,  
4 and Donald Trelford, the editor of The Observer, and  
5 the team at the Wandsworth Law Centre.

6           I am asked about its methods.

7           The Pavement Collective was a grassroots, community  
8 initiative, based mainly around a publication, Pavement.  
9 This was circulated on the streets, in sympathetic  
10 newsagent outlets, in local housing estates and in  
11 community centres. We sold it and it came out about  
12 once a month.

13           We also took action. For example, by having  
14 a presence outside Wandsworth Town Hall on the evenings  
15 of council meetings and similar. The numbers ranged  
16 between just a handful and hundreds, depending on what  
17 the council was discussing.

18           On one or two occasions we also intervened in  
19 council meetings, either full council meetings or  
20 committee meetings, and we did so by standing up in  
21 the public gallery and putting questions to  
22 the councillors.

23           In one or two cases, we held a demonstration near  
24 a councillor's home address. The demonstration would  
25 take place in the road outside, and we would not seek to

1 enter their homes, which were all set back from  
2 the road.

3 We wrote letters to the local and sometimes national  
4 papers with our concerns about issues we thought  
5 important. And where there were issues affecting  
6 the local community, we also leafletted and organised  
7 public meetings, challenging what the council was doing.  
8 These meetings were on issues like the development of  
9 Battersea Power Station, there were one or two very big  
10 meetings on that, and the sale of council houses and  
11 the cuts in council services.

12 I'm asked if Pavement vetted its members. We did  
13 not go through the kind of vetting process a large group  
14 would need. The core group was roughly about ten of us.  
15 I wouldn't call them "members", and we knew each other.

16 I am asked if we were concerned about infiltration  
17 by police or others. And we were concerned in  
18 principle, but we were also a small group of people,  
19 most of whom had known each other over a long period of  
20 time and therefore trusted each other.

21 I believe that "Jim Pickford",  
22 the undercover officer, had infiltrated Pavement,  
23 the editorial committee, by late 1976. I refer to  
24 minutes I have of a Pavement editorial committee meeting  
25 in November 1976. I would like to know more about what

1 "Jim Pickford" did within Pavement and when and why.

2 It appears that another undercover officer, "Michael  
3 Scott", was also active in Pavement. I refer to a box  
4 file entry of mine, "Michael Scott" -- describes  
5 "Michael Scott" -- there's a document reference. On  
6 that entry I record that he is connected with Pavement  
7 sales, as well as Young Libs. This suggests to me that  
8 the UCO "Michael Scott" was involved in selling  
9 Pavement.

10 I would like to understand why Pavement was,  
11 seemingly, targeted by a number of undercover officers;  
12 for example, whether it was used as a way of building  
13 undercover officers' credibility within other movements  
14 and campaigns.

15 I'm going forward to section 10: the Battersea  
16 Redevelopment Action Group, which is paragraph 96. And  
17 I believe you have a photograph, reference 051, DOC051  
18 {DOC/052}, which shows my Dad campaigning in Battersea  
19 at that time. I wonder if that could be put up, please.

20 That's the one.

21 That was trying to stop a development in Battersea,  
22 and there was a demonstration at the development. And  
23 that's Ernest standing above a billboard.

24 Okay, thanks very much.

25 So, paragraph 96.

1 I was asked to summarise my political activities as  
2 a member of Battersea Redevelopment Action Group.

3 That's "BRAG" for short.

4 I was active in setting up BRAG in about 1972, and  
5 remained active until it was disbanded after many years,  
6 at least a decade later.

7 I would not give myself a formal title within BRAG,  
8 and others did not have formal positions either. I was  
9 one of the group of people taking decisions. That group  
10 fluctuated in numbers. The core group was no more than  
11 ten in number, and it was even smaller than that at  
12 times.

13 I'm asked what BRAG's aims were and whether they  
14 were accurately reflected in a report I have been shown  
15 dated 23 December 1974. The report I refer to does not  
16 accurately reflect BRAG's aims.

17 Paragraph 102.

18 The BRAG campaign was much broader than this. Our  
19 main activity revolved around what was happening at  
20 Battersea Power Station. The council and private  
21 developers wanted to transform it into luxury housing.  
22 If the power station was to be developed, BRAG wanted  
23 there to be affordable council housing and community  
24 projects and facilities. This was BRAG's overarching  
25 objective. We also campaigned against the council

1 selling off other property -- selling off council houses  
2 in the area. These were the sorts of general concerns  
3 we had and campaigned on.

4 I am asked if BRAG subscribed to a particular  
5 political doctrine.

6 There was no party political doctrine. The politics  
7 we espoused were based on the principle that council  
8 developments and initiatives should be public and for  
9 the community, rather than private and for commercial  
10 interests. It was a typical community project campaign,  
11 founded on localism.

12 I am asked what methods BRAG used to advance its  
13 aims.

14 We were committed to conventional campaigning  
15 methods, and of course the principle of non-violence.  
16 Within that framework we considered any appropriate  
17 action: leafletting an area, organising public meetings  
18 in local areas, door-knocking on certain issues.

19 In a wider sense, we would go to council meetings  
20 and put questions to the council, intervening from  
21 the public gallery if that's what was needed, to ensure  
22 our questions were asked and that answers were given.

23 And we were also active in public inquiries and  
24 planning applications around the development of  
25 Battersea Power Station and the area around it,

1 particularly along the riverfront.

2 I am asked if BRAG vetted its members. We felt that  
3 we did not need to vet anyone. But suspicions  
4 concerning one person did lead us to a confrontation at  
5 one of our committee meetings, and that person was  
6 excluded. I recall it was quite an unsettling incident.  
7 Our concern may have been whether that person was an  
8 undercover police officer. And I would like to know  
9 from this Inquiry whether that person was an  
10 undercover police officer, or similar.

11 More broadly, I would like answers from this Inquiry  
12 on the following issues.

13 I would like to know if any other undercover police  
14 officer, beyond those already disclosed to me, was  
15 involved in any of the campaigns I have been involved  
16 in. I would like to know what information UCOs obtained  
17 from those campaigns, and what was done with that  
18 information.

19 I would also like to know whether, and if so how,  
20 any UCO sought to disrupt the campaigns. Did any UCO  
21 seek to have a genuine campaigner ejected from  
22 the campaign, for example? I am concerned about UCOs  
23 interfering in the organising of political groups such  
24 as the ones I was involved in. And it is worth bearing  
25 in mind that these were often small groups run by their

1 members, all of whom were volunteers, and I would be  
2 very concerned to learn if UCOs were participating in  
3 the political decision-making of those groups. I hope  
4 that the Inquiry will address these issues.

5 I'm going to go forward to paragraph 123.

6 I'm asked how frequently I experienced violence  
7 during my time at BRAG, or any other group.

8 And going forward again to 127.

9 There was police violence against  
10 the Committee of 100. When there were demonstrations at  
11 the American Embassy or a nuclear base, we were knocked  
12 about by the police when we were arrested, or even moved  
13 from the base. Sometimes the physicality was quite  
14 severe. They dragged people by the hair, "accidentally"  
15 stamping on people -- sorry, so they dragged people by  
16 the hair and "accidentally" stamping on people when  
17 trying to move them. I was occasionally stamped on.  
18 I witnessed others being stamped on or pulled by their  
19 hair. All of our actions were passive forms of civil  
20 disobedience, such as lying in the road.

21 As to the Stop the Seventy Tour and the direct  
22 action group, I also experienced or witnessed violence.  
23 When I was involved in a demonstration at the centre of  
24 Lords cricket ground, I remember the stewards or even  
25 members of the public roughed us up unnecessarily when

1 dragging us off the pitch. They also surreptitiously  
2 punched us. I remember being dragged past the seated  
3 spectators and the crowd kicking me on the way, causing  
4 me bruising. I remember similar things happening to  
5 other campaigners.

6 During the anti-nuclear campaign in the late 1960s  
7 onwards, we occupied Grosvenor Square and  
8 Trafalgar Square, Whitehall and other sites in Central  
9 London on various occasions. These were mass  
10 demonstrations, peaceful sitdowns, with some campaigners  
11 linking arms and others using padlocks and chains to  
12 attach themselves to each other. It was clear to me  
13 that the police, frustrated by the task of having to  
14 remove us, lost control and used unnecessary force  
15 against us. They punched, often surreptitiously,  
16 dragged people violently out of the way, stamped on  
17 people who were in the way of another person they sought  
18 to remove. And this happened to me -- on several  
19 occasions, I was pretty violently removed from peaceful  
20 protests, including being stamped on.

21 Similar things happened at weapons bases. I recall  
22 being stamped on, dragged across fields, generally  
23 knocked about by the police who were removing me. It  
24 was unnecessary violence because I was passive and  
25 peaceful.



1           I do not recall the police ever taking action  
2 against those responsible for violence against me or  
3 against other campaigners. I don't recall them taking  
4 action against stewards, or members of the public, or  
5 fellow police officers.

6           I would like to know if undercover officers ever  
7 experienced such violence while posing as activists;  
8 whether they witnessed violence against other genuine  
9 activists; whether there was any incentive to record or  
10 report this and; whether they ever did so; and whether  
11 they could have given, or indeed ever did give, evidence  
12 against those responsible for violence against  
13 activists.

14           I am sure that undercover officers could have done  
15 all of these things.

16           Looking back on the basis of what we know now, it  
17 seems logical to conclude that there was a policy of  
18 allowing aggressive and violent behaviour towards  
19 activists to go unchecked. Undercover officers would  
20 have known what we were experiencing and probably  
21 reported it to their handlers, yet it was still being  
22 allowed to happen.

23           Just going forward again a bit, to paragraph 139.  
24 This is section 12, "Jim Pickford" and a report on  
25 the Wandsworth branch of the Anarchist

1 Workers Association.

2 I'm asked about this group, in the light of this  
3 report of a meeting of that association on 8 January  
4 1976.

5 The only comment I can make is that it appears that  
6 in November 1976, he used his role in Pavement and in  
7 the circulation of this publication as a bridge to being  
8 involved in and perhaps gaining credibility within  
9 the AWA. That's the Anarchist Workers Association.

10 I do not know if this, my own understanding of what  
11 may have happened, accords with what the Inquiry knows  
12 from its own records and investigations.

13 Section 13: personal information on me obtained by  
14 UCOs.

15 I am asked about two Special Branch reports dated  
16 1976 and containing very personal information about  
17 the birth of one of my children and a health condition  
18 of mine.

19 The first thing to say is that the information in  
20 the first report about the birth of my son is accurate.  
21 I did have a health problem of the sort described in  
22 the second report at the time reported. However,  
23 I cannot be confident that it was as serious as is  
24 reported and the name of the hospital treating me may be  
25 wrong, too.

1 I am asked if this information was widely known.  
2 The information about the birth of my son was of course  
3 known to close friends and family. But it was not  
4 reported formally, publicly anywhere or of wider  
5 interest. And, similarly, my health condition would  
6 have been known among my friends and family, and there  
7 would have been some concern. But it was not more  
8 widely known than this, or of wider interest.

9 I am asked my reaction on learning that information  
10 of this nature was reported on by undercover officers.

11 This has surprised me. I find it sinister and  
12 invasive, and it troubles me greatly to learn of it,  
13 even after all this time.

14 It is not a surprise to me that the police were  
15 monitoring some of the activities I was involved in, but  
16 it is a surprise to me that they were taking a note of  
17 the birth of my son and of my health. Those things were  
18 unconnected with political activity, and were of  
19 a particularly personal nature.

20 Although I am not asked this, I am particularly  
21 surprised that these records have been kept for over  
22 40 years. This is also quite sinister. It is not as if  
23 I was an international criminal. It is reminiscent of  
24 the behaviour of authoritarian states. It has no  
25 legitimate justification.

1           It reinforces me in my view that I would like to  
2           have from the police, through the Inquiry,  
3           all information that all UCOs and Special Branch have  
4           recorded and stored about me at any point. I would also  
5           like to know which officers were monitoring me at any  
6           time in my life, and what they did in order to gain this  
7           information, and what use they put this information to.

8           Section 15 is events at a hotel in Richmond. There  
9           are two photographs that relate to this that I think you  
10          have. They're the UCP references ending "072". There's  
11          two photographs. You could show them in turn. Just  
12          photos 2 and 3 in the list. {UCPI/34072/1}.

13          I can carry on reading if -- no, here we go.

14          So, that is Ernest with a camera. And the following  
15          one, Ernest with a notebook, {UCPI/34072/4}. Okay,  
16          thank you very much.

17          So paragraph 153.

18          I'm asked to set out a factual account of my  
19          involvement at this demonstration, including planning in  
20          advance, my arrest and prosecution in the light of  
21          a number of reports.

22          It was a demonstration at a Richmond hotel on  
23          the occasion of the British Lions rugby team's departure  
24          to the airport for their tour of apartheid South Africa.

25          At the time of the incident, I understand that

1 the hotel was called the Star & Garter.

2 I do not recall this incident or what followed very  
3 well, but I have had my memory refreshed by reading  
4 the documents provided by the Inquiry. The following  
5 broad points which come out of the report and documents  
6 do seem broadly accurate.

7 I was a main organiser of the demonstration. And  
8 we, those who were going to be involved in it, met on  
9 the day of the demonstration at my home, before  
10 the demonstration, to plan and prepare for the action.

11 I see that "Michael Scott", a UCO, attended  
12 the planning meeting for the demonstration, having,  
13 supposedly, been told of it by Peter Hain's mother on  
14 the phone. This sounds unusual and out of the ordinary.  
15 She, Ad, is unlikely to have told someone she did not  
16 know about something so delicate on the phone. I knew  
17 her and what she was like. She would have been very  
18 careful about giving out this sort of information,  
19 particularly given her experience of South Africa and  
20 surveillance. It is therefore possible that "Michael  
21 Scott" may have got involved in the planning for  
22 the demonstration in another way, other than the one  
23 described in the report.

24 In attending the meeting before the demonstration,  
25 the UCO may have added his voice to the decision to take

1 direct action before the action took place. Our plan  
2 was to blockade the UK rugby team's coach at  
3 the Star & Garter hotel in the hope that the players  
4 would miss their flight to apartheid South Africa for  
5 the forthcoming tour there. These plans included  
6 ordering skips to the hotel and cars being parked in  
7 the way of the coach and protesters getting in the way  
8 of the vehicle, all in order to block or delay  
9 the coach's departure from the hotel to the airport.

10 I cannot now remember precisely what I did, or  
11 where, or the order of events, but I do remember being  
12 arrested outside the hotel. Before that, I may have  
13 parked my car, a maroon Renault 4 with a roof rack, in  
14 the car park at the entrance to Nightingale Lane to  
15 cause a blockage there. I may then have sat down to  
16 block the coach, possibly in the car park, as the coach  
17 left the car park. I cannot remember what others did.  
18 Some may only have taken action in the car park.

19 I have found and now produced six photographs which  
20 appear to date from the incident. Two of those  
21 photographs are the ones we have just seen. I can see  
22 in those photos.

23 Going forward to paragraph 167.

24 I have now found a letter in my paperwork from PT to  
25 me dated 14 June 1972. Attached to it is what

1 PT describes as "my rather uninformative account of  
2 the events" at the hotel. He signs the letter off by  
3 wishing me "best of luck with the trial", and I produce  
4 this letter and account. He describes the incident, his  
5 role in it, and he also describes what "Mike Scott" did.

6 Paragraph 171.

7 A lot of this tallies with my own independent  
8 recollection of events.

9 Going forward to 173.

10 I was arrested and prosecuted. It is almost  
11 certain -- confirmed by the intelligence reports -- that  
12 there was discussion between the activists who were  
13 defendants about our case, preparation for a trial  
14 including possible defences to the criminal charges. It  
15 would not have been common for defendants to have shared  
16 with other activists, who were not defendants,  
17 information about, say, their discussions between  
18 themselves about their case. Nor would it be common to  
19 share with those others the views of their lawyer or  
20 discussions held with the lawyers by their defendants.  
21 There would only be some sharing of information with  
22 non-defendants if there was a particular reason for  
23 doing so, for example to try to find witnesses, or to  
24 get wider support for the case. One possible defence to  
25 the charges we faced was that relevant events took place

1 in the car park and that this was not part of  
2 the highway, the relevant road being Nightingale Lane.

3 It seems, from the intelligence reports I've been  
4 referred to, that "Michael Scott", or those who recorded  
5 information he provided, could have given relevant  
6 evidence, some helpful to the defence, in the criminal  
7 proceedings, and I note in particular these references  
8 in the intelligence reports which appear to show that  
9 "Michael Scott" and those receiving the reports knew  
10 that most of those arrested were not guilty.

11 "Michael Scott" could have given evidence about  
12 the location of the demonstration, about whether it took  
13 place in the car park, or in the road, or the highway  
14 beyond the car park. The police UCO records contain  
15 a report dated 16/5/1972, and the report-writer does not  
16 suggest that this is in any way a false defence, at  
17 least for the majority of the defendants. The defence  
18 is consistent with the account of events at the hotel  
19 provided by HN298 earlier in his report.

20 There is no attempt by Special Branch to inform  
21 anyone involved in our prosecution that any of us may  
22 have been innocent, though I note that  
23 the Metropolitan Police report was sent to  
24 the Solicitors Department and to Special Branch.

25 Evidence from "Michael Scott", supportive of



1 the defendants' account and contradicting uniformed  
2 police officers' evidence, would, coming from a serving  
3 police officer, have been more credible than had it come  
4 just from protesters.

5 I normally plead not guilty in protest-related  
6 prosecutions -- going forward to paragraph 189 --  
7 but the approach I took to my defence would have been  
8 different had I known that "Michael Scott" was an  
9 undercover officer. It would have been different had  
10 I been aware of the contents of the intelligence reports  
11 now provided to me by the Inquiry. The account of  
12 PT would have been much more significant had I known  
13 that the "Mike Scott" he referred to was an  
14 undercover police officer.

15 I understand that the offence of obstruction of  
16 the highway contrary to section 121 of the Highways Act  
17 required the prosecution to prove that there was an  
18 obstruction of the highway and that it was not  
19 reasonable. The actions and evidence of the UCO  
20 "Michael Scott" would have been relevant to both of  
21 these issues and whether I had defences based on them.

22 I am asked if I recall "Michael Scott",  
23 the undercover police officer apparently involved in  
24 the protest and court proceedings, and I do not recall  
25 a "Michael Scott" being involved in the protest and

1 court case. I do not remember him at all, on  
2 the information provided to me by the Inquiry. I would  
3 be assisted if I were to be shown contemporaneous photos  
4 of him and some other description of him and his  
5 appearance and other interactions I may have had with  
6 him. I note, however, that his name and details appear  
7 in my box file of contacts from that time, and I note  
8 that the first address for him on these box files is  
9 the one he gave to the court, 16 Wetherby Gardens, SW5.

10 I am asked if I am surprised to learn that one of  
11 the 14 people arrested that day was an  
12 undercover police officer and I am surprised that  
13 the police used its resources to place an  
14 undercover officer in a peaceful demonstration, part of  
15 a wider campaign to contribute to the isolation and  
16 collapse of the apartheid South African regime.

17 I am asked about my reaction to learning that  
18 "Michael Scott" was an undercover police officer.

19 I was very concerned to learn, many decades later,  
20 that an undercover officer was involved in  
21 the demonstration, was arrested with me, and stood in  
22 court with me and others. I am concerned that he did  
23 this in his false identity, that he may have given  
24 the court a false name and that he may have given  
25 evidence in that false name. Furthermore, that

1           undercover officer was convicted and sentenced under  
2           that false name, and I would like to know whether that  
3           individual accepted that he was a criminal when living  
4           later under his true identity and whether he declared  
5           this conviction when asked about his previous criminal  
6           convictions.

7           Paragraph 200.

8           I am concerned that this officer appears to have  
9           been involved in discussions with the group of activists  
10          and defendants about how to deal with the prosecution.  
11          "Michael Scott" may also have been privy, either  
12          indirectly from what people told him or directly by  
13          attending meetings to private legal discussions between  
14          activists and defendants and their lawyer, and he may  
15          even have influenced or had the opportunity to influence  
16          those discussions. These discussions may have been  
17          about fundamental questions, the evidence --  
18          the prosecutions and ours -- and what defences we might  
19          have and whether to plead guilty or not guilty, and he  
20          may have reported -- directly or indirectly -- to  
21          the prosecution what was discussed, supposedly  
22          confidentially, between the activists and/or their  
23          lawyer.

24          And I note that there is a reference to the police  
25          being conscious of the "potential of embarrassment to

1 police" if "Michael Scott" were to have been involved in  
2 the protest and in the criminal prosecution in his cover  
3 name and then for a later to come out that he was a UCO.  
4 This seems to highlight a failure to have procedures and  
5 criteria for the oversight of the UCOs in this  
6 situation. There is no mention in the note of more  
7 important concerns that the other defendants in  
8 the criminal proceeding should have a fair trial, that  
9 innocent demonstrators should not be convicted of  
10 offences that they have not convicted. The only  
11 concerns expressed seem to be for institutional damage  
12 to the police, and the failure to the activists as  
13 individuals with their own legitimate rights and  
14 interests and the decision to place those second to  
15 the unfettered gathering of information on them may be  
16 a precursor to some of the more gross abuses of  
17 activists that, I note, happened in later periods of  
18 undercover policing of campaigners.

19 Going forward to paragraph 209, section 19.

20 I am asked if there is anything else of assistance  
21 to the work of the Inquiry that I want to add.

22 We were aware that there must have been some plant,  
23 an authority-placed figure, within  
24 the Stop the Seventy Tour. I was pretty sure at  
25 the time that I, personally, was of interest to

1 the authorities. This is because, before the incidents  
2 and campaigns I am now asked about, I had been involved  
3 in more direct action as part of other campaigns. I was  
4 one of the Committee of 100, which campaigned against  
5 nuclear weapons and took action at military bases and  
6 elsewhere. This was in the 1960s. And indeed, before  
7 that, I was involved in CND too. I took part in and was  
8 very involved in publicising the first Aldermaston  
9 marches, popular marches that were, from 1958 onwards,  
10 against nuclear weapons, particularly those stored at  
11 AWE Aldermaston military base.

12 It seems to me that my political activities before  
13 1968 and the intelligence held on me by the police  
14 during this period are relevant to this Inquiry. For  
15 example, I refer to these comments in page 1 of  
16 the report surrounding my involvement with other  
17 protesters in the hotel protest in May 1971. The group  
18 of protesters is referred to as "a group of  
19 anarchist-orientated extremists under the control of  
20 Ernest Rodker", and it then describes me as follows:

21 "This man has been a thorn in the flesh for several  
22 years now, having had no fewer than 14 court appearances  
23 prior to 1963 for offences involving public order. He  
24 was considered to be a menace at the time of the protest  
25 demonstrations taking place in this country concerning

1 the Springboks rugby tour in 1979 and  
2 the Stop the Seventy Tour in 1970."

3 Now, I do not accept this characterisation of me,  
4 the other protesters or our actions. For example, from  
5 memory, our arrests were for acts of NVDA and civil  
6 disobedience on nuclear weapons and the apartheid  
7 South African regime. The intemperate language in this  
8 report suggests a lack of judgment on the part of  
9 the police and a lack of respect for the right of  
10 peaceful protest. But the point I make here is that  
11 Special Branch and the undercover police they worked  
12 with had access to much more material and intelligence  
13 -- albeit incorrect and dating back before 1968 -- than  
14 has been disclosed to me, and this appears to have  
15 informed their decisions on how I and the campaigns  
16 I was involved in should be monitored and policed from  
17 1968 and I wish to see all this material and  
18 intelligence.

19 I challenge the legitimacy of the police spying on  
20 me at all, and to such an extent, and then retaining  
21 these records for such a long period of time. I will be  
22 very interested to learn what else the UK authorities  
23 may have recorded about me and my activities.

24 Paragraph 218.

25 I am aware from what I have seen in the public

1 domain that Special Branch collated more information on  
2 me and the campaigns I was active in, beyond what has  
3 been disclosed to me by the Inquiry.

4 Paragraph 222.

5 I would like this information not only to understand  
6 the extent of state surveillance on me, but also, more  
7 practically, in order for me to be in a position to  
8 provide further and fuller comments of assistance to  
9 the Inquiry. For example, I have been made aware of  
10 the following police records, not provided to me by  
11 the Inquiry but obtained by my solicitors from materials  
12 in the public domain.

13 There is a Metropolitan Police Special Branch report  
14 dated 7 April 1970. It is supposedly the "first of  
15 a series of fortnightly reports and comment regarding  
16 the proposed actions of persons and organisations  
17 opposed to the cricket tour due to take place in 2 June  
18 to 28 August 1970", and its reference to me appears at  
19 paragraph 12 as follows:

20 "Some of the leading personalities in  
21 the Stop the Seventy Tour and allied organisations are  
22 ... Ernest Rodker, Stop the Seventy Tour  
23 ex Committee of 100."

24 Now, this, the reference to "Committee of 100",  
25 suggests that Special Branch, in 1970, were aware of and

1 had a record of my time in the Committee of 100 and this  
2 tallies with what I knew when I was active in  
3 the Committee. When I and others were taken to Bow  
4 Street Magistrates Court, found guilty and sentenced,  
5 I recall that the prosecution produced evidence that  
6 the police had observers and infiltrators at  
7 the Committee of 100 meetings recording what was said,  
8 and they were therefore able to prove that we were at  
9 those meetings and the part played by the defendants in  
10 those discussions. That was part of the evidence at  
11 the trial.

12 Paragraph 228.

13 Secondly, there is a 10 April 1970  
14 Metropolitan Police Special Branch report which  
15 includes, at paragraph 4, this reference to me, in  
16 the context of the second conference of  
17 the Stop the Seventy Tour and a discussion about the use  
18 of mirrors to shine into players' faces during sports  
19 matches:

20 "Ernest Rodker, the chairman of that meeting, was  
21 overheard to remark to those present that the mirrors  
22 had sharp edges and in order to obviate the possibility  
23 of those found in possession of them at cricket matches  
24 being charged with possession of offensive weapons  
25 the edges should be bound with adhesive tape."



1           Now, this is the sort of responsible thing I would  
2           have done to reduce the risk that, by using mirrors at  
3           Stop the Seventy Tour demonstrations, we might  
4           inadvertently cause damage and run the risk of arrest  
5           for a more serious offence. I do not understand why  
6           this report, which names me and casts me in a good  
7           light, has not been disclosed to me by the Inquiry.

8           Finally, paragraph 231.

9           This makes me question whether the police have  
10          provided all information to the Inquiry and/or whether  
11          the Inquiry has disclosed to me all relevant materials.  
12          I feel I should be entitled to see all Special Branch  
13          and undercover officer material and intelligence on me.  
14          I would like this for its own sake; so I can contribute  
15          fully to the Inquiry; to have some reassurance that  
16          the Inquiry is canvassing fully the views of activists  
17          such as me who have been victims of undercover policing  
18          activity; and to have some level of reassurance that  
19          the inquiry's examination of the evidence and its  
20          conclusions can attract the confidence of the victims of  
21          the undercover policing.

22          I'll finish there. Thank you very much.

23          THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for bringing your  
24          father's words to life.

25          May I raise two things with you. First of all, your

1 father can be reassured that the Inquiry has done its  
2 best to provide to him all of the documents that it has  
3 in which he is mentioned, or which refer to him. That  
4 does not include all of Special Branch reports such as  
5 there may be upon him, because I am only investigating  
6 one small unit within Special Branch,  
7 the Special Demonstration Squad, and that may well be  
8 why he has been able to obtain Special Branch documents,  
9 but the reason is they weren't produced by  
10 the Special Demonstration Squad.

11 The second thing is this, a question to you, to  
12 which I suspect I know the answer. If I were to  
13 conclude that your father's conviction arising out of  
14 the Star & Garter demonstration was, at least arguably,  
15 a miscarriage of justice and I therefore am required by  
16 my terms of reference to refer it to a panel which will  
17 consider what to do, am I right to assume that you and  
18 your father would like that to occur promptly rather  
19 than to wait until the end of the Inquiry?

20 MR RODKER: I think that would be his position. I mean,  
21 the reason I'm speaking is because he's unwell,  
22 he's elderly and in ill-health, and it would certainly  
23 ease his mind to know that things were proceeding as  
24 promptly as possible.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, subject to something unforeseen



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