

Request pursuant to Rule 9 of the Inquiries Act 2005 for a witness statement from Lindsey German to the Undercover Policing Inquiry.

1st Witness Statement of Lindsey German

14th February 2022

This statement is provided to the Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI) further to the Rule 9 request on the 10th December 2021.

It is noted that the documents that are referred to here only cover my involvement in the Socialist Workers Party during the period from the 1970's to early 1980's (tranche 1 phase 3) because that is the period being considered by the Chairman in oral hearings at present.

Personal Details

1. Please give your full name and date of birth.

1. Lindsey Ann German and my date of birth is 29th May 1951.

Political Activism

2. The Inquiry understands that you have a lengthy history as a member of the International Socialists ("IS"), later renamed the Socialist Workers Party

(“SWP”), having joined in 1972 and you have held a number of positions within the party from national student organiser to member of the Central Committee. Your application for core participant status also alludes to an involvement in political activism which predates your membership of IS. Please outline your political activities which led to your membership of IS and explain how you became a member of IS.

Background and early years

2. I was part of the generation born after the Second World War. My parents like those of my friends had lived through war and the displacement it caused. The memory of war was ever present in our upbringing. My primary school still had its air raid shelters, there were many bomb sites in London, and adult conversation often turned to the war. While my generation enjoyed many advantages not experienced by our parents, including more extensive education, free health care, and rising living standards, we also became aware as we grew up of inequalities and injustices which still stood out.

3. I was born and grew up in West London. My father worked as a salesman and my mother was a typist. I was the middle of three sisters. I attended a local grammar school, which I left in 1969 with 3 A levels and 7 O levels. As I grew up I noticed a number of issues, from quite a young age, which concerned me, including nuclear weapons, racism and apartheid. The shadow of the bomb and nuclear war affected me. When the Cuba Missile Crisis took place in 1962 my aunt in Suffolk rang my mum and told her to hitch a lift on a lorry to get away from London because there was going

to be a war. At school one of the older girls wore a CND badge, and a neighbour had Aldermaston marchers staying in her house. She told my mum she had had a breakdown when the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

4. It was also obvious to me from an early age that race was an issue of conflict in west London and I remember the Notting Hill riots being discussed by my family. One of my uncles lived in Southall, which had a large Asian population, and I was fully aware of the racial tensions and divisions, and the very widespread racial prejudice against Asian and black people. The issues began to come together in my mind.

5. I first became more actively interested in and aware of politics in the mid 1960s when I was a teenager. The dominant issues of the time included the campaigns against apartheid in South Africa and white minority rule in Rhodesia. In addition the civil rights movement in the United States was also a source of interest and inspiration. We watched the television news night after night with scenes of violence in the southern states like Mississippi and Alabama, and saw the inspiring protests against segregation. The injustices underpinning the lack of civil rights in the US southern states were connected to the racism felt by black and Asian migrants to Britain. Apartheid South Africa was an extreme version of colonial rule which many of the African countries were only beginning to overthrow.

6. As the 1960s developed the Vietnam war dominated not just the media headlines, but also those involved in the socialist and trade union movement. I was inspired by the movement of people against the war, particularly young people. The Vietnam war seemed a completely unjust and unequal conflict against a people

wanting their national independence. Again the television reports played a big role in showing the reality of Vietnam. In addition, an older student at my school whose family had emigrated to the US was killed in Vietnam and that really brought it home.

7. There were many domestic issues as well – for example the housing crisis so brilliantly highlighted in Ken Loach’s play *Cathy Come Home*. It was for these and many other reasons that I and so many of us who came of age in the 1960s turned towards a politics which rejected the status quo and which campaigned against war, nuclear weapons, colonialism, apartheid, and racism. Looking at these issues many years later, it is clear that our campaigning worked, at least over some issues. Not only that, there are few today who would justify apartheid South Africa, white minority rule in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, the Vietnam war or colour bars and segregation. Yet at the time all of these and more were defended by governments, media and the establishment generally. The fact that opposition to them came from below, from organisations with few resources except for the activism of their own members, should indicate to us that change has very often come despite our rulers, rather than because of them.

8. Of course the legacy of these injustices is still with us, in the grossly unequal world in which we live. Despite the lip service paid to opposing racism, it remains a central part of British society not least through its very institutions. This provides fertile ground for the ideas of the far right and fascists who seek to set one section of society against another. So the issues which made me a socialist well over half a century ago are still with us, albeit in different forms. I am very proud of the role that I and many other tens of thousands of socialists have played – and continue to play – in trying to

eradicate these and other injustices. Socialists like me were at the forefront of organising mass campaigns against war, racism and fascism, apartheid, and many other issues, at a time when governments were justifying the unjustifiable.

9. We joined groups like the International Socialists to organise collectively for our aims. These organisations were not proscribed or illegal. It is a basic right to be able to join an organisation that you choose. Selling papers, giving out leaflets, holding meetings and being active in trade unions are legal acts. Demonstrating against fascists is a completely justified and indeed necessary aim, and has a long tradition going back to Cable Street in 1936, where the pro Hitler Mosleyites were defeated by mass mobilisation.

10. These rights have been fought for by our ancestors – we would not have the vote for most men or any women without fighting and campaigning, nor would we have trade union rights. Police infiltration of such organisations is not new, but it is not acceptable in a supposedly democratic society. I reject the accusations and attempts to slur people whose aim was to create a better world, the apportioning of blame for violence where time and again we have seen that violence coming from the police themselves or the fascists that they have spent so much time protecting.

11. When I look back over my activity for the past 50 years, there is very little that I would change. I was involved in a movement to defeat the fascists back in the 1970s which I believe was seminal in weakening their organisation and the wider racism in society, in helping to create a society where in the words of Darcus Howe young people like his own children could grow up 'black with ease'. I have always opposed

wars and nuclear weapons and helped to organise the biggest demonstration ever in British history, against the Iraq war. It was also one of the most multicultural ever. I have supported strikes, justice campaigns, fights against oppression, national liberation for former colonies - including demonstrating in Lisbon during the Portuguese revolution which was a mass uprising against fascism and colonialism. People engaged in these important campaigns should not have been spied on, blacklisted, arrested, assaulted or even killed as a result. I hope that this inquiry will take into account the fact that great injustices have often only been rectified by the actions of campaigners – and that they deserve credit, not harassment.

12. When people ask do I want to change this society from the bottom up, and do I think this will take revolutionary change against the owners of capital, those who hold power in government, and those who have a vested interest in protecting the status quo, then the answer is yes. It is because we have seen too many examples in history where those with power have used it against the majority to prevent change, often in the most violent ways. It is however also because I believe that we all have the right to imagine a better world, and to try to achieve that better world. This belief can be traced back to Thomas More with his *Utopia*, to Robert Owen and to William Morris. This belief should not be criminalised or marginalised, nor should its adherents be subject to spying and surveillance by police or security services. That whole process is an affront to democracy and to civil liberties.

Stop the 70s Tour

13. My first political activity was through the 'Stop the 70s Tour.' (STST) I had a place at Leicester University to read English and American Studies and soon after I arrived saw leaflets and posters about a demo at the local rugby ground. There was widespread disgust that an all white rugby team was being allowed to represent South Africa. As the Inquiry will be aware the STST was formed in 1969 by among others Peter (now Lord) Hain and was the catalyst in generating and inspiring a mass movement from below of international solidarity. That movement included mass non-violent civil disobedience and non-violent direct action on a scale, in the world of sport, that had never been seen before in Britain.

14. A STST demonstration took place in Leicester at the rugby union stadium. The Inquiry will be aware that the protest centred on the fact that an all-white South African rugby union team had been allowed to tour the UK. It is important to recall that not only was this tour sanctioned by the Rugby Football Union, but also sanctioned by the Government of the day.

15. I would estimate that the demonstration attracted 5000 people. I do not recall whether protesters attended the match and managed to get onto the pitch to disrupt the match. If they did I would have supported them, and indeed if I could I would have been one of them. I was part of a large demonstration outside which was subject to police violence.

16. I was only at Leicester University for two terms. I left as my mum had been knocked down by a car and suffered serious brain damage. This obviously had a major effect on my whole family. She was in a coma and then in hospital for months. We

then tried to keep her at home, but this was only possible for a short time given her needs. She remained in hospital and care homes permanently after that.

London School of Economics (LSE)

17. In 1972 I was offered a place to study law at the LSE. I had been working in local offices for the previous two years and was politically aware but not so active. Prior to going to the LSE I wanted to become more active politically, I was inspired particularly by the industrial events in 1972 and supported the workers involved in industrial action. During 1972 there were three major industrial disputes, although there were also many smaller official and unofficial ones. There was the national miners' pay strike which started in January 1972 in response to restructuring of the industry. The turning point in that dispute was the Battle of Saltley Gate. The success was due partly to the solidarity action of Midlands engineering workers gave the miners. Within 6 weeks the Conservative Government was forced to back down and award a significant pay rise to the miners.¹

18. The Dock Strike is really the story of the jailing and dramatic release of the 'Pentonville Five' in June and July of that year. The industrial action was originally against containerisation. When dockers at the Chobham Farm container depot East London defied an injunction from the National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC)² and picketed the site, warrants were issued by the court for the arrest of five dockers³ for

¹ "The 1972 miners' strike: a rank-and-file strike" Tony Cliff (published as an excerpt from from Tony Cliff's Patterns of Mass Strike which describes the impact of the 1972 miners' strike) see <https://www.counterfire.org/articles/history/22882-the-1972-miners-strike-a-rank-and-file-strike>

² This was created further to the National Industrial Relations Act

³ The Pentonville 5 were the trade unionists - Conny Clancy, Tony Merrick, Bernie Steer, Vic Turner and Derek Watkins

contempt. They were imprisoned on July 21, 1972. I recall that there was anger across the country to this and lead to a series of rolling strikes began to spread across the Britain.⁴

19. Within 7 days of their arrest, the Pentonville Five were released in response to the growing strike movement. The victory of the Pentonville Five dealt a major blow to the Industrial Relations Act.⁵

20. The third major dispute that definitely influenced my growing political awareness at that time was the national Building Workers Strike. The thirteen-week building workers' strike spanned July, August, and September 1972. This was propelled by the rank and file and is an example of militant trade unionism – which I am aware the Inquiry distinguishes from the term 'subversion.'

21. However, what struck me at the time is how ordinary workers had been the driving force behind these events. It was rank and file militant industrial action that had secured significant victories. Something I have no doubt the Metropolitan Police, Special Branch and MI5 were concerned about – effectively ordinary people power.⁶

LSE Socialist Society (before joining the International Socialists)

⁴ The rolling strikes forced the TUC to call for a national general strike on 31 July 1972. I would strongly recommend that the Chair of the Inquiry read 'Glorious Summer' by Ralph Darlington (Bookmarks 2001) for a background to these events.

⁵ 'After Pentonville: The battle is won but the war goes on' Tony Cliff *Socialist Worker* 6th January 1973

⁶ See '1972 - A Great Year for the Workers' – Tony Cliff (at <https://www.counterfire.org/articles/history/22880-1972-a-great-year-for-the-workers-tony-cliff>)

22. In 1972 I joined the Socialist Society when I arrived at LSE. The Socialist Society organised meetings on a weekly basis where socialist politics were discussed. Those subjects ranged from domestic issues such as workers' and trade union rights to broad socialist issues. We campaigned on international issues including Chile, further to the election of the socialist government of Allende, the subsequent coup, the apartheid regime in South Africa, wider anti-colonial struggles and of course the situation in Ireland.

Thalidomide Justice Campaign and the Distillers Company

23. I also recall campaigning against the Distillers Company. The company was also responsible for the manufacture of the drug thalidomide in the United Kingdom. The drug had been prescribed to pregnant women who were suffering from morning sickness. However it caused severe deformities. This campaign called for a boycott of the company because it refused to acknowledge or pay compensation to women who had been prescribed the drug. We campaigned through leaflets and activity to get people not to buy Distillers' products and the bar not to stock them. I remember the issue was featured throughout the early 1970s in the Daily Mirror and featured heavily in the work of the campaigning journalist John Pilger.⁷

International Socialists - from 1972 to 1975

24. When attending the Socialist Society I became friendly with a fellow student who was a member of the International Socialists. I had become involved in the writing

⁷ <http://johnpilger.com/videos/thalidomide-the-ninety-eight-we-forgot>

and editing of the student newspaper at the LSE, as was she. We discussed politically all of the time, and she began to convince me of the need to get involved in a socialist organisation. Prior to joining the International Socialists I had already been involved in a number of campaigns. Alongside my course work, I was already reading a lot of political material. Initially my reading centred on law and its political impact, but then I began to read politics, economics and Marxist theory. The aim was to develop myself politically. The atmosphere at the LSE was such that political discussion took place on a daily basis.

25. The first meeting I attended of the International Socialists was in Hillingdon at the end of 1972. It was a public meeting where Paul Foot spoke. The public meeting was around the case for socialism. The meeting was attended about 40 people and coincided with a by-election in the Uxbridge Constituency.

26. I recall that the by-election followed the death of a Conservative MP Charles Curran. It is notable, and particularly reflects the time that with the growth of far-right, racist and fascist ideas that the by-election attracted three far right candidates, including the National Front, the Union Movement and National Independence Party. I recall the most vile racist leaflets being distributed during the course of the by-election. I attended a demo in Uxbridge during the election against the fascists, organised in part by the IS people. Although the Conservative Party held onto the seat, the National Front and the far right parties secured nearly 13% of the vote.

27. By the end of 1972 I had joined the International Socialists. I became active in the Hillingdon branch. As all geographical branches did at that time we engaged in

routine political activity in our local area. We sold *Socialist Worker* on a Saturday in the town centre. We also sold it across various council estates, and when leafleting local factories. The newspaper was an important tool for getting people interested in socialist ideas and it was the foundation on which we built the party.

Joining the International Socialists

28. At the same time as being active in my Hillingdon branch of the International Socialists, I continued my political activity at the LSE. However it was now as a member of the International Socialists. At that time the Socialist Society encompassed a range of other groups. However, because there were about 15 students at LSE who were members of the International Socialists we began after a time to meet separately. As the International Socialists we organised meetings and campaigns inside the LSE but also crucially linked with campaigns off campus also. These included solidarity with South Africa and Zimbabwe; opposing the coup against the Pinochet government in Chile in September 1973; and solidarity with the jailed trade unionists further to the events at Shrewsbury.

Red Lion Square

29. As was demonstrated by the Uxbridge by election, the 1970s were also marked by a growth in fascist organisation and support. The leading organisation at that time was the National Front. It was established in 1967. It grew in prominence throughout 1968 and particularly gained support following Enoch Powell, then a Conservative MP, after his infamous and racist 'Rivers of Blood' speech calling for the repatriation of

black workers. It was able to stand ten candidates in the 1970 General Election, reaching an average of 3.6% of the vote. Under the Conservative Government it grew, and claimed 14,000 members in 1973.⁸

30. The National Front also exercised its influence on the streets. There was a growth in fascist presence such as posters and graffiti and the membership grew. The organised fascists helped create a climate of violence including serious assault and killings. Between 1975 and 1981 51 black and Asian people were killed in suspected racist murders.⁹

31. Incredibly as it seems now, the fascists were allowed to meet in public buildings, especially during elections and there were a number of protests against them doing so. In June 1974 the National Front planned a big meeting in Conway Hall. This was allowed on the basis of 'free speech' a concept we did not think should apply to fascists, who wanted to deny that right to so many. Their meeting was due to take place on a Saturday. Due to the proximity of the venue to the LSE, all members of the International Socialists were heavily involved in publicising and mobilising for the protest against the meeting. Alongside anti-fascist and anti-racist campaigners we hoped to stop the meeting taking place through a mass mobilisation. It is important to remember the context, our concerns were the rise of fascists and racist, and the increase in racist attacks across the country and particularly in London, which was directly linked to their increased influence.

⁸ Benjamin Bowling 'Violent Racism' p.59 (Oxford University Press 1998)

⁹ Ibid

32. I attended the protest, but I could sense there was going to be trouble. There were police vans parked in every side street around the venue. There were hundreds of Metropolitan Police officers there. My colleagues from the LSE International Socialists were not near the front, but certainly after the event it was common knowledge that the police were absolutely determined to protect the fascists and attacked the counter demonstration. The whole event descended into chaos. I do recall that I was on the main road by Red Lion Square¹⁰ – and being chased by the police. When protesters tried to re-group in a side street in an attempt to organise a united attempt to move away – we were attacked by the police. I remember, for instance, that on Theobalds Road there was an underpass and people were being pushed over railings by the police officers.

33. When we heard that a young student from Warwick, Kevin Gately, was killed I was not surprised. The only conclusion I can draw is that the state and the police were prepared to defend a small number of members of the fascist National Front to meet, but were quite happy to attack those who sought to demonstrate against the fascists. I want to make clear I would defend most organisations' right to meet and discuss, from Conservatives to Labour Party activists. But the fascist National Front, and fascists historically, are organised to crush the workers movement and democracy and in my opinion have foregone the right to organise.

34. Our collective right to demonstrate was attacked by the police on that day, and no doubt it is a theme the Inquiry will want to look at. The police were not there to keep order, but actually they caused disorder.

¹⁰ Proctor Street London WC1

Haggerston School Hall occupation.

35. Another instance where the National Front was allowed the use of public halls was during election times. In the London local elections of spring 1974 the fascists planned a Friday night meeting in Haggerston School, south Hackney. Hackney was home to many ethnic minorities including Jews and Afro Caribbeans, and there was a sizeable protest outside the school. There was quite a large group of us who got through the doors and into the hall which we then occupied for the next two hours to prevent the fascist meeting. It was a very good example of non-violent direct action which prevented the fascists from disseminating their hate speech.

International Socialists from 1975 to 1979

Full time student organiser.

36. I left the LSE in 1975 with a degree in law. Initially my plans were to go to Middlesex Polytechnic to begin a postgraduate course in Trade Union studies. However, I did not stay there because I became the full time student organiser for the International Socialists. My job involved travelling around the country, setting up new branches, and recruiting people into University and College groups.

37. It helped to recruit to the International Socialists because by then we had launched the National Organisation of the International Socialist Society (NOISS) and began to build branches across the country. NOISS was involved in campaigns such as against overseas students fees which were first introduced in the late 1970s under

a Labour government. There was also a major campaign against the closure of teacher training colleges. In both cases these involved very widespread student occupations of university and college buildings. Some of our activists were faced with injunctions for occupying, with one in particular spending some days in Pentonville prison for refusing to obey it. I was involved in their defence and in helping to support the occupations. We also campaigned against cuts in education and over a range of student issues. In addition we built international solidarity campaigns. For instance campaigns to support refugees from Chile following the Pinochet coup. Also building direct links with organisations in South Africa fighting against apartheid. We also worked inside the National Union of Students with many of our members elected to attend the national conference as delegates. We had two members elected to the national executive each year and one of my responsibilities was to work with them. We would also organise fringe meetings at the conference and move resolutions there.

38. Another example of our international solidarity work was in support of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). We campaigned to highlight the situation in Angola – the fact that the liberation movement was under attack from forces backed by the United States. This led to great outcry at the time, as Angola had already suffered years of colonial wars with the far right Portuguese regime. I organised my first demonstration in 1976 in support of the MPLA which went to the American embassy where we handed over a letter of protest. Over a thousand students attended.

39. I was the National Student Organiser for about two years. Through the work we did numerous campaigns and occupations were not only successful, but it helped to

spread socialist ideas. It also built the International Socialists as an organisation. It was important through all our work that we linked this with the trade unions to show our solidarity and worked to spread the ideas of revolutionary socialism and Marxism. So for example both while I was a student and when I was student organiser I attended demonstrations in support of the Shrewsbury building workers who had been unjustly imprisoned.

Socialist Workers Party – district organiser

40. In 1977 I became the district organiser on a full time basis for Central London. By a conference decision in 1977 the International Socialists changed their name to the Socialist Workers Party.¹¹ In this role my main work involved:

- i. organising local branches: I would be central to organising and supporting a number of branches across the district, including geographical, workplace and student branches, ensuring they held meetings, sold the paper and related to strikes and other activity. We had organised groups of civil servants, health workers, local government workers and print workers in the district.
- ii. strikes (Garners steak houses): I went to picket lines during strikes and was heavily involved in the strike for union recognition at Garners' steak houses in central London which went on for over a year.
- iii. relate to different groups of members: I talked to members in different branches about the best way to organise and also about tactical questions to do with working in trade unions and campaigns.

¹¹ 'Why we need a socialist workers party' Tony Cliff, *Socialist Worker* – 8 January 1977

- iv. responding to strikes/demos: I would ensure that the district had a good turnout on demonstrations of which there were many in the area, and related to strikes.
- v. public meetings: we held regular public meetings which I would organise
- vi. internal meetings planning: every week we would discuss our plans for different aspects of work on the district committee and sometimes on branch committees.
- vii. new members: one of our main aims was to recruit to the party and we spent quite a lot of time talking to these members, developing their ideas and encouraging them to become more active.
- viii. educational series: to this end, we organised meetings aimed at educating members and those around them about the various aspects of Marxism and socialist history.

41. In the Central London District there were about 12 branches of the Socialist Workers Party during this period. At this time there was a growth and interest in revolutionary socialist ideas. This was reflected in a disillusionment in the Labour Party who at that time were in government, and also we had benefitted as an organisation from our consistent work in the trade unions. It reflected a real growth in socialist ideas during this period. The Callaghan government was increasing its attacks on working people, there was a growing threat of fascism, real wages were being cut and this disillusion with Labour meant they wanted to become involved with a socialist organisation.

Socialist Workers Party – Central Committee member

Women's Organiser 1979

42. I had always been involved with the magazine *Women's Voice*. This had been launched in 1972 (it was at different times in magazine and newspaper format) and was seen as a way for socialists to reach out to working class women and women trade unionists. It was launched to raise general and specific issues relating to women's experiences. The newspaper dealt with issues as diverse as equal pay, childcare, abortion rights and women in the workplace. I was involved in the editorial board when I was a student. From I think 1977 under its then editor the format changed so it became a high quality socialist magazine for women. This was also the time when we launched the *Women's Voice* organisation, which organised women both in and outside the SWP in local groups and in national meetings, and who used the publication as a means of organising.

43. I became the National Women's organiser for the Socialist Workers Party in 1979. The main responsibilities were to edit and produce the national magazine *Women's Voice* and to organise the groups. I was also responsible for convening the national women's committee of Party members, and I spoke at meetings both nationally and locally to explain the relationship between Marxism and women's liberation.

44. The nature of the organisation and the magazine became strongly contested, even from the time that I became women's organiser. There were those like me who felt they had to be closely aligned with socialist organisation and other who felt they should be much more autonomous from the Socialist Workers Party. This was a fairly acrimonious argument, which eventually ended with a number of people leaving the

Socialist Workers Party and the eventual winding up of Women's Voice as an organisation.

United Front Work and its importance in the 1970s

a) Introduction.

45. I want to spell out a bit about our understanding of the united front and how we worked because it seems to me that a number of the questions, in the way they are framed, show a misconception of the tactic. The united front is a tactic which stems from the recognition that the working class is divided into different parties but that working class interests cannot simply be fought for on party lines. Demands such as fighting fascism, or in contemporary examples stopping the cost of living crisis and raising energy prices, are ones which are supported very widely across the working class. The united front aims to bring these different sections of the working class together on specific issues, thus advancing working class interests concretely. It is not a trick or a recruiting tool for the left but a genuine fight for unity which if it succeeds helps advance the ideas and hopefully organisation of the left. A repeated misunderstanding expressed in some of the questioning here is to suggest that it is simply a means for recruitment. The main aim of the united front is to win its demands.

46. The Socialist Workers Party from the early 1970s launched a number of campaigns around single issues with this theory in mind. Those campaigns and

organisations can broadly be described as in the tradition of Trotsky's theory of the 'united front.'¹² Some of the broad reasons for developing a United Front are that:

i) A united front looks to draw together a wide range of working people — those who would consider themselves revolutionary socialists, and many who would not consider themselves socialists at all in common struggle. These struggles can range from the basic defence of workers' conditions under capitalism (Rank and File Organising Committee) to the fight against fascism (Anti-Nazi League.)

ii) A united front organises around a set of demands acceptable to those sections of the working class but may have a whole range of other political ideas. It can encompass organisations that may not consider themselves socialist, but who agree to the aims and objectives of the organisation. The aim of forming this united front is to demonstrate in practice the best tactics and strategy to succeed in — for example — fighting the fascists, or stopping hospital closures. It is from this success, not any short term trickery, from which any increase in the size and influence of the revolutionary left would come.

iii) The formal groups that do become involved in a united front will remain independent themselves. For instance in the Anti-Nazi League we had many trade unions who affiliated and agreed with the general policy of fighting fascism, but would march under their own banner. At the same time socialist organisations such as the Socialist Workers Party would still be able to organise in their own way independent of the united front, and articulate their wider political vision.

¹² See <https://www.counterfire.org/theory/18195-key-texts-trotsky-on-the-united-front>

iv) A united front also provides a forum to discuss and debate the best tactics and strategy to take the campaign forward. Therefore within a united front, reformist and revolutionary ideas can be debated out, and the best strategy and tactics can be agreed democratically.

b) Rank and File Organising Committee

47. The 1970s saw a growth of industrial militancy amongst the working class. I have already mentioned the miners strikes, the Pentonville 5 and the national builders strikes in 1972. There was a general discontent in society as the improved wages and conditions in the late 1950's/1960 gave way to economic downturn and austerity. There was rising inflation, there was a squeeze on pay, and after the years of full employment, unemployment was growing significantly. The factories were becoming very radicalised across the country. In particular a layer of younger workers were becoming shop stewards and fighting for more radical policies from below inside the unions.

48. Conscious of this, and as a way to begin to organise that radicalism the Socialist Workers Party organised a national industrial conference. This took place in the major conference centre at Belle Vue in Manchester in 1973. The event attracted over a thousand trade unionists, and the platform speakers were from across all sectors of industry and the country. I attended and would say that the majority of the attendees were either shop stewards, or were active on the shop floor. It illustrated a willingness to get organised and to take militant industrial action for better pay and conditions.

49. We believed that the strength of organisation lay in the workplace and centrally among the major networks of shop stewards. Our aim was to build the confidence and organisation of the rank and file of the trade unions, particularly the shop stewards. We had several rank and file newspapers directed towards different workplaces from the health service to the construction industry.¹³

50. The approach was to seek, through the Rank and File Organising Committee, united action not just with factory floor workers, and shop stewards but also with left officials. To agree unity in action with all those in the working class willing to fight around agreed objectives. Those objectives were often in the defence of jobs, or for better pay.

51. Of course this was not the first time that workers became organised in their trade unions because they felt their official national leadership were not responding to the real events on the ground. The history of the trade union movement has numerous examples of this. First, the unskilled workers became organised because the 'craft unions' would not allow them to join. The likes of Eleanor Marx and Tom Mann – both Marxists - both contributed to founding trade unions. Eleanor was one of the founders of what is now the GMB¹⁴ and helped organise the Gas Workers' successful movement in 1889 for the eight-hour day.¹⁵ Tom Mann helped organise the dock strike of 1889. Marxism and Marxist ideas are not only woven within the fabric of the history of trade unionism, but in the fabric of the history of Britain.

¹³ See UCPI0000018503 – P.28 (also here - <https://www.marxists.org/history/etoj/writers/callinicos/1982/xx/rfmvmt.html>)

¹⁴ <https://www.gmb.org.uk/long-read/international-womens-day-celebrating-gmbs-co-founder-eleanor-marx>

¹⁵ See <https://www.marxists.org/archive/mann-tom/biography.htm>

52. Second, the Minority Movement was in the 1920s a crucial development within the trade union movement. It once again reflected the desire of ordinary workers for a more militant approach. The purpose of the Minority Movement was to organise the most militant workers and to decide on a programme of demands across the their trade unions, and in response to the crisis that working class people were facing. It was pioneered by members of the Communist Party of Great Britain. However, it was not just them – it required as much of the working class as possible to push for better pay, jobs, and a radical response from the national trade union leadership to the crisis in the conditions faced by the working class.

53. The Rank and File Organising Committee in my view stood in that tradition of organising the most militant workers to push the trade union organisations to the radical left. At the time, we read a number of important histories about the Minority Movement and the General Strike which helped develop our theory.

c) Right to Work Campaign

54. By the autumn of 1975 the official figure for unemployment was over one million, but the real figure failed to include many non-registered women. The real figure set the national unemployment level to at least one and a half million. This unemployment came as a real political shock within the working class as it marked the first such levels of joblessness since the Second World War and brought back memories of the 1930s and the depression and slump.

55. From the start the Right to Work Campaign made it clear that the key emphasis was on uniting unemployed with employed workers. We could see no future in a distinct and solely unemployed workers' movement. Rank and file organising remained intact in most workplaces and it was possible to make links through the Right to Work Committees with workers and the unemployed to build some small but viable local committees.

56. I recall the first march we organised I think started in Manchester and marched to London in 1976. There was a permanent group of maybe forty people on it – mostly young people. As they marched through the country trade unionists hosted meetings and rallies in their towns. The political situation surrounding this demonstration meant that the Right to Work Campaign was able to establish itself nationally as the body fighting seriously against unemployment. As the Right to Work Campaign grew we were able to organise one or two marches per year. Often they would go to Conservative Party conference to protest. The campaign received support of trade union branches all over Britain.

57. I recall that in 1981 the Right to Work Campaign organised a march from Liverpool, via Manchester to Blackpool. I was one of the main organisers, and attended every day of the demonstration. I recall that Colin Clarke was on this for much of the time and I worked closely with him because of his role as treasurer and money was tight.

58. The Right to Work Campaign was in my view a great initiative. It was an initiative from the Socialist Workers Party, but was adopted by many unemployed people, some

who joined the party during the course of the Campaign and others who didn't. But what the Campaign was able to do was focus on the desperate plight of unemployed workers and particularly unemployed young people. It was crucial to politicise the issue, to make unemployment not about the failure of people who lost their jobs, or the young people, but the failure of Government and the wider issue of neo-liberal monetarist policies that was causing the closure of thousands of factories across Britain.

d) Anti-Nazi League

59. The victory of the Labour government in 1974 was significant. The Heath government had been defeated by the miners. There was a level of optimism amongst working class people that things would change. However, the oil crisis of 1973 caused major difficulties for the incoming Labour Government. The response from the Labour Party from 1974 until 1979 deepened that crisis. Wage control and control of the trade unions by way of the 'Social Contract' was massively unpopular as it resulted in wages not keeping up with inflation, and it effectively forced working class people to pay for the crisis.¹⁶ On the back of this disenchantment and disillusionment the National Front organised and grew.

60. The National Front was an avowedly Nazi party. Its foundation was racism, anti-Semitism and white supremacy. It was set up in 1967 and grew in prominence throughout the late 1960s and into the 1970s. In 1970 it stood in ten constituencies reaching an average of 3.6% of the vote. It really took off from the mid 1970s as the

¹⁶ See 'The Crisis: Social Contract or Socialism – Tony Cliff (Pluto Press, 1975)

economic crisis hit Britain, mass unemployment grew and disillusionment set in with the Labour Government. By 1976 the National Front received 15,340 votes in Leicester. The following year in Hackney South and Bethnal Green it achieved 19% of the vote and 200,000 votes nationally. These local votes were reflected in many places at that time across Britain.

61. However, like all Nazi organisations the real strength of the National Front was on the streets. It developed its support by attacking black and Asian communities, trying to intimidate trade union, socialist and other progressive organisations. I recall that their graffiti, leaflets and posters were visible across London – particularly in the poorer neighbourhoods. I moved to south Hackney in 1977 and a number of council estates, including my own, had NF graffiti.

62. It is also important to note that the National Front members waged a violent race war across Britain, in the cities and in London particularly. I have referred to the number of racist murders above, but there were also very frequent physical attacks on black and Asian people (and on identifiable left wingers.) The National Front effectively gave a political excuse to go out and attack the black and Asian community.

63. I would also add at this stage that two crucial ingredients aided the growth of the National Front. The media throughout this period repeatedly provided hostile reports on immigration. This reporting was overwhelmingly racist, reporting about 'bogus immigrants,' the fear of being 'swamped' and jobs being taken. At the same time they ignored the increase in racist attacks. The other was the approach of the

police themselves. Very rarely did they arrest let alone prosecute those who carried out racist attacks.¹⁷

64. The Anti-Nazi League was formed in 1977. It did not come out of nowhere. Already there were significant numbers of working class people, activists, trade unionists and socialists who were beginning to organise against the National Front. From the beginning of 1977 the pace of protests against the National Front grew. On 23rd April 1977 a demonstration in Wood Green, North London, of about 1500 members of the National Front were faced with a counter demonstration of 3000 anti-fascists made up of members of the Indian Workers Association, Socialist Workers Party, trade unionists and Labour Party members. It was a confident and angry counter-demonstration that protested against the National Front. I think eggs and flour were thrown at them to show they were not welcome.

65. The most significant event and a turning point in the movement was the protest in Lewisham in south east London in August 1977. This involved a march by the National Front, and a counter march by anti-fascists. It is however important to note that roots of the events in Lewisham go back to the actions of the police against young black people. Indeed in July 1977 protesters supporting those arrested were attacked by the National Front at a peaceful picket.

66. On 13 August 1977 around 6000 anti fascists, and including large numbers from the local community prevented about 800-1000 National Front members from

¹⁷ At that time under the Public Order Act 1936, amended by the 1976 Race Relations Act, it was a criminal offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting words in a public place or at a public meeting where racial hatred is likely to be stirred up.

marching. The National Front march was advertised as an anti-mugging march in order to tap into the controversy caused by the arrest of the Lewisham 21. In the event they were stopped from marching. It was a tremendous mobilisation of anti-fascists, trade unionists and large numbers of young black and Asian people who prevented the march from succeeding. It was a significant victory for the anti-fascists generally, and the Socialist Workers Party had been a significant part of that success. The police played the role of protecting the fascists and prioritising allowing them to march through areas with a very large number of ethnic minorities. That was unacceptable and why there was such a large mobilisation against the fascists.

67. The response from many in authority should have been to welcome this defeat of the fascists. However the police attitude was to try to criminalise the anti-fascists and local community. Michael Foot, a leading Labour politician, denounced them as 'red fascists'. This suggested a false equivalence between those who were attacking ethnic minority communities and those whose aim was to defend them and defeat the fascists. It was one which I and fellow socialists totally rejected.

68. However it also became clear that there had to be a wider movement built which could express the very strong sentiments against the NF which existed within sections of society, and at the same time mobilise much wider forces, aimed at both defeating the fascists on the streets and also showing up the NF and other groups for what they were, refusing to allow them to pose as respectable politicians.

69. What became apparent among members of Socialist Workers Party was that we needed to organised a broader united front type of organisation with one main aim

to 'Stop the Nazis.' We became involved in discussions about building such a broad based organisation with this one aim. Those discussions lead to Paul Holborow from the Party, alongside Ernie Roberts from the engineering union (AUEW) and Peter Hain becoming central to the leadership of the Anti-Nazi League.

70. I recall that a launch meeting was held in November 1977 in the House of Commons. At that stage about 40 left Labour MPs backed its launch, along with political figures such as Tariq Ali, and Arthur Scargill. However, its support went far beyond mainstream politics, with sponsors also including actors, footballers, and of course musicians. Dave King, who was a graphic designer at the Sunday Times, developed our artwork and the distinctive Anti-Nazi arrow imagery. Its most identified slogan was 'Never Again', a reference of course to fascism and the Holocaust. This was at a time when this period was much closer in time and many people had directly experienced the consequences of Nazi terror.

71. The focus of the Anti-Nazi League was to highlight the fascist and Nazi part of the National Front policies, and to use that as a rallying cry. The Anti-Nazi League was deliberately broad based. Its aim was to organise all those who opposed the Nazis on that simple basis. The impact of the Anti-Nazi League was profound on the left and in the wider movement. It had a number of offshoots: School Kids Against the Nazis, Football Fans Against the Nazis, Teachers against the Nazis. It spread throughout the unions, with groups against the Nazis springing up in workplaces. Eye catching literature publicised its basic ideas. It aimed to dig deep roots in society. It insisted that the fascists and the National Front had to be confronted physically on the streets, in order to prevent them gaining support from the very beginning. A much used quote

was one from Hitler where he said that his opponents should have defeated the Nazis when they were still small, and we were determined not to allow them to grow. The Anti-Nazi League worked closely with Rock Against Racism.

2.1 What were the aims of IS/SWP? Did it seek to overthrow the State as it was in the 1970s/1980s? If so, in your view, how realistic was the realisation of the same in the 1970s and early 1980s?

72. There seems to be a fundamental misconception about revolutionary organisation in Britain which runs through so much of the questioning here. It is based more on a stereotypical view of 19th century anarchism than on an approximation of the role of revolutionary socialists in Britain in the late 20th century. In order to understand the aims of the International Socialist / Socialist Workers Party it is important to understand the theoretical basis of the ideas, and also how the organisation grew based on those ideas.

73. There are in fact two very different questions involved here. The first is, did the Socialist Workers Party think that there was a revolutionary situation in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s? The answer is no, it did not. In fact the Party became well known for arguing that the prospects for revolutionary socialists were becoming harder as the 1970s came to an end because the working class struggle was moving away from large scale, successful confrontations with employers. The second question relates to an overall judgement about whether it is possible to transform capitalism into a socialist society without defeating the existing state machine. The answer to this, in

the 1970s, the 1980s, or for that matter in any decade since the publication of the Communist Manifesto in 1848, would have been no.

74. Let me just elaborate the second part of that answer. The International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party stood in the tradition of socialism from below. That tradition emphasised the idea that the self-emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class. We rejected the idea that socialism could be enacted on behalf of the working class. Marx and Engels were very much against the idea that revolution could be any sort of putsch against the state. Instead it had to be the culmination of long periods of campaigning over a range of issues to help develop awareness and class consciousness and to strengthen socialist ideas within the working class. So the practice of revolutionary socialists for much of the time is day to day organising.

75. By revolution socialists mean the act of the vast majority to take power from the minority that holds it. It is by definition democratic and inclusive or it cannot succeed. Marxists who adhere to it attempt to organise a revolutionary party within the working class, with the aim of organising and developing socialist ideas. This is based on Marx's idea that 'the self-emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself.' The monopoly of violence in our society lies in the hands of the capitalist class and revolution is therefore a challenge to that violence, and to the wars, greed, rape of the planet, super exploitation and mass disparity of wealth and poverty. These are the main perpetrators of violence.

76. The outlined history above illustrates the central aim of the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party was to advance the class struggle and to popularise the ideas of revolutionary socialism. Our aims were to build amongst the working class, to build the trade unions, in working class communities and through public activities. We did that by publicly organising locally, nationally and through international solidarity campaigns. None of this was secret – it was a public organisation.

77. As the disclosure illustrates nearly all our events were public: our annual 'Marxism' event, of which I organised the first in 1977 was held to discuss Marxist ideas and their impact politically, in society and also culturally. Our annual rally in Skegness was a public event that welcomed party members and a wider periphery of supporters and sympathisers. Our weekly branch meetings were advertised in our weekly newspaper. District and regional meetings of the organisation took place in a completely open way.

78. I have also argued that socialism is the attempt to imagine something better than capitalism – as the Utopian socialists argued – but also to engage in material struggle to bring that transformation closer, as Marx and Engels argued. There are no shortcuts in bringing about the socialist transformation of society. The party was immersed in the issues of the day, but also had a clear socialist critique of the major issues facing the working class and marginalised communities. This involved a serious analysis of capitalist economics, a serious critique of the permanent arms economy and a Marxist understanding of the state, the latter involving how the state uses war, the military, the police and racism to divide and rule.

79. Building the Socialist Workers Party at this time did not mean conspiratorial theories about taking state power but serious organisation within the existing democratic structures of society including unions and sometimes elections. Crucial to that was selling our weekly newspaper 'Socialist Worker.' The paper was our voice to the world.

80. It was central as it was the main vehicle to discussing politics with workers, young people and the community as a whole. This is something that HN354 confirmed when he gave his evidence.¹⁸

2.2 Did the IS/SWP use violence to advance its aims?

81. No. Further, I believe the real violence at that time came from employers and the state in order to prevent or weaken working class organisation. We have seen that through support for anti-union employers, protection of fascist demonstrations, attacks on the poorest and most vulnerable and on the oppressed such as women and black people.

82. The state was built on the foundation of the exploitative economic system. The police, the courts and the military are used to keep the working class in check, to the benefit of the ruling class. Exploitation has increased dramatically in my life time, so

¹⁸ See transcript p73-75 https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/20210511-ucpi-t1_p2-evidence_hearings-transcript.pdf

that today just over 2,000 billionaires, have more wealth combined than 60% of the planet's population.¹⁹ That is the real violence of this world.

83. I would stress that the International Socialist / Socialist Workers Party did not seek violence, however we are not pacifists. If attacked we would defend ourselves. If picket lines were attacked by police, or communities attacked by organised fascist gangs or racists we would not stand by.

84. In the first instance and in the broadest sense, violence comes from the state. It does so in part by creating inequality which disproportionately affects the working class, in the form of poverty wages, poor housing and inequalities of life chances. It also comes in the form of violence towards those who fight for better conditions. For instance the demands of women workers for trade union recognition was met with the full force of the police at Grunwick. The police were content to support not only the employer, but also the far right National Association for Freedom who actively intervened in the strike in order not only to break it, but also the democratic right to be a member of and organise in a trade union.

85. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s the far right carried out acts of horrifying violence against black and Asian communities.²⁰ It is noticeable that whilst the officers from the Special Demonstration Squad targeted us, the National Front and the far right were barely targeted. Instead, there have been many references in statements / transcripts by officers who have mentioned violence from members of the

¹⁹ <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620928/bp-time-to-care-inequality-200120-en.pdf>

²⁰ See appendix to this statement.

International Socialists/ Socialist Workers Party and Anti-Nazi League members, forgetting the context in which any violence may have occurred. The police fail to mention the serious nature of racist attacks by the National Front.

86. We were often the subject of violence by the far right. For instance during 'Paul Gray's' deployment, Column 88 were threatening to burn down the homes of Socialist Workers Party members.²¹

2.3 Did the IS/SWP foresee a time when violence would, or might be, necessary, to realise its aims?

87. We foresaw that there could be times when workers became so powerful that the state would use force against them on a general scale, as it had done across Europe during the rise of fascism, or as the British state had done in the General Strike of 1926, in Ireland repeatedly, in its empire continually

88. We certainly foresaw the possibility that the state could use violence against a democratically elected socialist government, as we had seen in Chile. We thought that in such circumstances working class organisations would have to defend themselves as they had done in Chile in 1973, and in Spain in 1936 following Franco's fascist coup. Workers took up arms to prevent the rise of fascism and were right to do so. Their defeat led to one of the bloodiest periods in Spain's history, and was aided and abetted by Hitler and Mussolini. Their failure to do so successfully in Chile led to the bloody suppression of the workers movement and to decades of dictatorship.

²¹ See UCPI0000011244

2.4 Did the IS/SWP advocate, provoke or approve of public disorder in order to advance its aims?

89. The question assumes a conspiratorial mindset in which public disorder is deliberately provoked to encourage recruitment or some such. No one in the Socialist Workers Party would have encouraged such talk which would have been regarded as dangerous putschist nonsense. Our aim above all others was to advance and strengthen the working class movement and in the process to increase the influence of socialists. In doing this we hoped to win people to our ideas, and to join our organisation.

90. My experience of where there was public disorder was repeatedly that it was due to the actions of the far right (particularly the National Front) at that time or the forces of the state itself, primarily the police.

91. Taking those points in turn – the National Front would attack members of the Socialist Workers Party. In addition, and more importantly they would terrorise the black and Asian community. In his evidence HN304 advises that National Front members were involved in intimidating the Hackney Community Relations Council – which was typical of the far right at the time. HN304 also gave evidence that the National Front attacked left activists in Brick Lane, resulting in a member of the Socialist Workers Party having his teeth knocked out. He was also aware of a member of the Socialist Workers Party who was a teacher being attacked outside their home

address. The evidence provided by HN354 confirms the approach that we had taken which was very much acting in self-defence.²²

92. HN304 says this was “very typical” of the way the National Front behaved towards members of the Socialist Workers Party at the time. There was also a threat by a member of Column 88 (a far right combat organisation) to burn down house of a Central Committee member, and was at the “very extreme end of how they behaved but doesn’t surprise me.”²³

93. The actions of the police in causing public order were either overt, that is mass policing that was out of control – partly as a result of a canteen culture that accepted racism and misogyny as part of the job. Or covertly, by way of police officers infiltrating, and derailing legitimate protest. In addition by acting as agent provocateurs.

94. For instance at Southall the actions of the police in defending the right of the Nazi National Front to march led to disorder. As is well documented in their report at the time the National Council for Civil Liberties noted:

“...the decision (by the police) to cordon off the centre of Southall, and the way that decision was carried out was the worst possible alternative open to the police. It alienated the police from the local community, depriving the police of the benefit of assistance from stewards and community leaders and leading many of the protesters to feel that they were being

²² HN354 transcript p144

²³ pp80-82 - https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/20210507-ucpi-t1_p2-evidence_hearings-transcript-AM.pdf

confronted by a force of hostile and sometimes racist outsiders. It divided the protesters into a number of confused, disorganised, leaderless and frustrated crowds, making communications between protesters and between the stewards virtually impossible.”²⁴

95. Their strategic actions then lead to confusion, and ultimately to the police attacking the counter protesters. In doing so they seemed to have a ‘blank cheque’ as to what they were prepared to do.

2.5 Did the IS/SWP consider it necessary to break the law to advance its aims if so please explain.

96. There are times that unjust laws need to be challenged and broken. This is a view shared by Martin Luther King, Jefferson, Gandhi, Thoreau and many others. Let us remember that apartheid in South Africa was the law. Segregation in the United States was the law. Women not having the vote was the law. In these instances bad laws need to be broken. In 1921, 30 Labour councillors in Poplar stood against central government. They refused to impose an unfair rate system and went to prison rather than make local people worse off.

97. We do not advocate breaking the law per se. But as part of an organised mass movement, bad laws will need to be broken – and indeed history has been on the side of those who have broken bad laws. The Suffragettes are rightly praised for their

²⁴ See p175 ‘Southall 23rd April 1979 – The Report of the Unofficial Committee of Enquiry’ – published by the NCCL 1980.

actions of securing women the right to vote. The communists, socialists and members of the Jewish community who fought against Mosley's fascists in Cable Street, are now even lauded by the establishment for their actions. We would have supported them at the time. In a more modern sense we supported the mass campaign of non-payment against the regressive poll tax. I refused to pay my poll tax and was taken to court but I believe I was totally justified in doing so. Laws have been passed preventing us from demonstrating within a mile of parliament . I have been involved in breaking those laws and they have now become effectively inoperable. I believe that was totally justified too because they denied our democratic right to protest.

98. So, whilst breaking the law is not our purpose, or is it front and centre in what members of the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party were about, we would strategically take a political decision that where bad and unjust laws exists we would be prepared to break them. We certainly felt that it was completely wrong for the police to protect the fascists on demonstrations and in meetings, and that this was obviously a matter of policy, and that we were justified in protesting against them

2.6 Did the attitude of the SWP in relation to the use of violence, or to public disorder or law breaking change over time?

99. I was a member of the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party from 1972 and throughout the period of Tranche 1. Our approach remained the same throughout.

100. During 1976 there was an increase in racist attacks. The National Front had won 40 per cent of the votes in the spring elections in Blackburn. In May of that year, there were vile racist articles in the Daily Mail and Daily Express over expelled refugees from Malawi. In June of 1976 Gurdip Singh Chaggar was murdered by a racist mob (most likely linked to the National Front) in Southall.

101. In the wake of this racist murder, the fascist and former chairman of the National Front John Kingsley Read reportedly said: "One down, a million to go." This was followed in August of 1976 by vile racist comments by Eric Clapton from the stage in Birmingham. At the same time we saw the first massive cuts from the Labour government at the behest of the International Monetary Fund, and a real fall in wages as the 'Social Contract' between the Labour government, and the trade union leaders began to really hit home amongst ordinary workers.

102. It is essential for the Inquiry to understand the context of the times. The National Front were attacking Bengali shops in Brick Lane, smashing up reggae record shops and graffitiing mosques.²⁵ They were burning down Indian restaurants and murdering young men like Altab Ali and Ishaque Ali in Whitechapel and Hackney.²⁶ We were determined to stand up against this and mobilise in as effective a way as possible. After they smashed up the Brick Lane shops, for several weeks every Saturday overnight we occupied the NF sales pitch at the top of the Lane on Bethnal Green Road in order to stop them selling. The local community certainly did not feel it could rely on the police for justice over this and other instances.

²⁵ See UCPI0000011814

²⁶ See UCPI0000011380

2.7 Did the IS/SWP vet its members?

103. Obviously in the light of these revelations not enough. The International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party was an open organisation. As part of being a member there was a shared perspective and a standard of behaviour that was expected. We believed that open recruitment was important given the upsurge of political activity and awareness. If you consider that upwards of 35 officers from the Special Demonstration Squad joined the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party over the years – then clearly we did not vet members. Indeed as conceded by HN304 when he gave his evidence, “...in general terms, only that they were a relatively simple organisation to infiltrate, they were not politically paranoid about infiltration, and therefore quite easy to – relatively easy to infiltrate and they were present on the streets.”²⁷

3. Please provide an outline of your political activities within the IS/SWP and any affiliated organisations and any other activism of relevance to the Inquiry, with dates. When doing so, if not already covered in your answers to the above questions, please include a summary of what the aims of the groups that you joined or supported were and the methods that they used to try and achieve these aims. It is known that you held the following positions within IS/SWP within a time period currently under consideration: National Student Organiser; Central London Organiser; Women’s Organiser; Editor of Women’s Voice; member of the Central Committee.

²⁷ See UCPI transcript https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/20210507-ucpi-t1_p2-evidence_hearings-transcript-AM.pdf

104. I have outlined the positions held whilst a member of the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party.

105. All of the information regarding these positions are mentioned in my introduction with relevant detail as to the responsibilities and tasks. In addition to the above I was one of those responsible for the Right to Work Campaign nationally in 1981. I also involved myself in the work of the Anti-Nazi League on a day to day basis as the organisation grew. This was true of all members of the Socialist Workers Party: I held meetings in my flats of local activists, attended meetings, carnivals, RAR events and demonstrations against the fascists. However I was not part of its central leadership.

4. As a member of the SWP in a senior position can you provide an overview of the structure of the SWP and internal party discipline during the period currently under consideration.

106. The Socialist Workers Party is a democratic centralist organisation. The principle idea of democratic centralism is that it allows for the maximum discussion and debate within the ranks of the organisation, and once a collective decision is taken on a particular issue that the decision is carried out. In reality debate on particular tactical issues and decisions on a range of questions occurred on a regular basis.

107. The International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party was a grassroots organisation. Its weekly activity and growth depended upon branches being organised in the towns and cities across Britain. For a period of the early 1970s we also had

workplace branches but these faded as industrial militancy subsided. We also had student branches.

108. The Branch would meet weekly. There were various positions in a local branch, including secretary, Treasurer, and others to do with for example education or recruitment. I would say the two most important were the secretary, who was central to booking speakers, organising the weekly meetings, and separately the branch committee meeting. The secretary was key to the political direction of the branch.

109. The other key position was the paper organiser. Our weekly paper 'Socialist Worker' was the central building block. It set out our general political perspectives, and also it reported and commented on the weekly news from a Marxist perspective. It was used on the weekly street sale – usually on a Saturday. It was also sold at factories, and workplaces in order to discuss with workers our policies. It was sold often on a weekly estate sale – on a council estate, to discuss with working class people about the political issues of the day.

110. A district may include several branches. The District Committee was elected. The role of the District committee is explained adequately in UCPI0000013228.²⁸

111. Every year the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party would hold an annual delegate conference.²⁹ Delegates would be elected from the branches.³⁰ Resolutions, and positions papers would be discussed and voted upon.

²⁸ "The District Committee which is elected by an aggregate meeting of the members in the district...directs the work of the branches and cells in the district within the framework of national policy."

²⁹ See for instance UCPI0000016752 & UCPI15994

³⁰ See for instance UCPI0000013464

112. From this Conference a National Committee and Central Committee would be elected. In addition a Disputes Committee would be elected that would investigate personal behaviour or political behaviour that may fall short of what was to be expected as a member of the organisation.

113. The National Committee was an elected body from the Conference and involved upwards of 80 people. This would meet several times a year It comprised both rank and file members of the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party. It would also involve members of the Central Committee and some who worked full time for the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party

114. The Central Committee elected by the Conference was the leading body. It would set national policy, and national campaigns and was full time. However, it was very much a body that was in touch the grass roots of the party and set tasks and campaigns based on that information. The Central Committee was responsible for ensuring that the newspaper, review and theoretical journal was published. It set the political policy of the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party between conferences and set the political tasks on a day to day level.

115. As part of the building the Party it was also necessary for other groups to meet. An editorial Board would be convened to discuss contents of 'Socialist Worker.' There would also be an Industrial department and there was a Women's Committee.

116. All of this political activity would be reflected in our National Conference, other national events, such as *Marxism*³¹ and the *Easter Weekend* in Skegness.³²

5. Did you use an alias or aliases in relation to any of your political activity? If so, what was it/what were they and what did you use as an alias?

117. No. Ironically the only people who used aliases were the police who infiltrated the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party

Intelligence Reports

6. Please consider the intelligence reports which the Inquiry has obtained and include in your witness bundle, all of which contain a reference to your name. Are the details that have been recorded accurate? If not please identify any inaccurate reports and set out the respects in which the report is inaccurate.

118. Some of the documents are of very poor quality. They are extremely difficult to read, and I have done my best to understand them. The problem with the documents is that they do not have any context.

7. The first document in the possession of the Inquiry which refers to you is that dated 21 November 1977 [UCPI0000011563] which contains an account of a meeting of the London District of the SWP on 15 October 1977. You are referred

³¹ UCPI0000018898

³² See for instance UCPI0000018879

to at paragraph 8 as the *'new Central London Organiser.'* The report refers to the talk you gave on *'Recruitment and Cadre and Branch Building'* in which you made recommendations for the education of the *'great influx of new recruits'* including that recruits should be *'taken to the picket line etc. to gain experience.'* Was your suggestion acted upon?

119. Whilst I have no specific recollection of this meeting I would have almost certainly spoken at that or other meetings under the same heading. It was around the time that I became the Central London Organiser.

120. Certainly at that time there was a lot of interest in the politics of the Socialist Workers Party. (I think at this point we had changed our name from the International Socialists). I had been very involved for a period of time during the industrial dispute at Grunwick. I had visited the picket line nearly every day during the summer of 1977. There were of course during this period many industrial disputes occurring around Britain. The Labour Government had brought in wage control and cuts in wages, and there was a general growth of militancy in workplaces, with many not only disillusioned with Labourism, but looking for a socialist alternative.

121. As a result of that changing political objective situation we had many new members in the Socialist Workers Party I have hopefully already explained that the revolutionary socialist ideas that the Party stood on meant that we would automatically show solidarity to workers, support their industrial dispute (whether around pay, redundancy or health and safety issues) as a way of securing an audience for our revolutionary socialist ideas.

122. However, 'gaining experience' was not just about going to a picket line. It was discussing political ideas; understanding the ideas of Marxism; selling 'Socialist Worker;' attending meetings and even speaking at meetings. We saw going to the picket line as not only a way of supporting those workers in solidarity, but discussing with them and also learning from them.

123. Was my suggestion acted upon? Generally, I would say yes – for the reasons outlined above. Attending picket lines and showing solidarity to workers was for any socialist organisation the abc of becoming an active socialist and revolutionary.

7.1 If so to what extent did this increase the presence on picket lines? Did this increased presence result in any increased public disorder that you can recall?

124. With regard to the first question - I would hope that there was an increase of attendance to support workers on the picket line. I think given the amount of growing industrial disputes at the time, it would be inevitable that local branches of the Socialist Workers Party would attend picket lines to show solidarity. Going to a picket line was a routine activity for members of any left organisation, and that would also include members of even the Labour Party. There were many picket lines at this time, especially in central London with the Garners strike plus civil servants and public sector workers in 1978-9 in the 'winter of discontent'.

125. I can understand that many of the judiciary have never had the opportunity to attend a picket line. They are actions by workers to maintain and solidify their strikes and they are usually fairly routine activities. Much of the time is spent chatting generally with pickets, if it is winter you would stand around a brazier trying to keep warm, and hopefully discussing with those on strike. In many cases we would organise a collection for the workers because they were not getting strike pay and needed solidarity. It can be interesting, and it can at times be great – because you sell papers or recruit or have good political discussions. But invariably it is a fairly mundane time. Given this, public disorder was not in the pickets' minds, and it certainly would not be our reason for attending the picket lines.

126. As I hope that the Chair and the Inquiry Legal Team will discover over the course of their investigations, nearly all public disorder occurs through overzealous policing.

127. In any event during the course of giving evidence a number of officers accept that the aims of Socialist Workers Party were political and not to cause public disorder. 'Graham Coates was concerned that the Socialist Workers Party were "very dull." I am assuming he means "dull" from a policing perspective.' 'Mike James' said that the Socialist Workers Party were not engaged in subversive activities, that most of our members were "entirely peaceful" and the Party did not promote violence.

8. The report on the National Delegate Conference in 1978 [UCPI0000013228 tab 2] contains reference to a number of security measures undertaken: at paragraph 5.2 *'the necessity for the absolute secrecy in relation to the date and*

***the venue of the event'*; at paragraph 7 the means by which opportunities for Special Branch or other government agencies to plant bugging devices at the venue where thwarted is set out; at paragraph 12 statistics in relation to membership, finances, trade union membership and publication production and distribution is said to be considered *'highly secret and much too delicate for publication in any journal'* and so copied by the National Secretary and his staff at the conference venue 'under strict secrecy for distribution to delegates for individual sessions only' and *'the enforcement of rigid security measures'* prevented their removal from the conference area [para 13]; paragraphs 26-33 set out the extensive security measures in place for the conference. What was the purpose of these security measures?**

128. In the 1970s the left became very concerned about state surveillance. There was a lot of talk on clamping down on left wing activists and trade unionists. There was a real fear that the secret state was actively manoeuvring against the Labour government, and a military coup was not entirely out of the question.³³ For instance in March 1981 the Sunday Times³⁴ carried an article which indicated that discussions were held to prepare for a military coup d'état in Britain in 1968 at the time of the first Wilson government. The possibility of a plot to overthrow the Labour government were seriously investigated by MI5, but Wilson himself apparently only found out the full details in 1975. However, Lady Falkender, formerly Marcia Williams, Wilson's political secretary, told the Sunday Times that she and Sir Harold "...had a suspicion that something was going on."³⁵

³³ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7368529/Queen-talked-Lord-Mounbatten-1968-plot-overthrow-Labour-government.html>

³⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/03/30/world/68-plot-in-britain-verified-by-wilson.html>

³⁵ Quote from the Sunday Times article in March 1981.

129. However, this fear was not just a UK issue it was an international concern for the left. In 1973 we had seen the overthrow on the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende. As stated earlier that coup was inspired by the CIA, and lead the Pinochet regime to bring in a vicious military junta which lead to thousands of socialists and communists being killed, and thousands more going missing. The CIA was also seriously involved in de-stabilising the left across Europe from the Communist Party in Italy,³⁶ which had a real chance of being elected into power, and also undermining the French Communist Party, and other lefts in France further to the General Strike in 1968.

130. There was also a the subsidiary issue of the National Front getting hold of the details of the venue and attacking it. This was a real concern given by that time the Anti-Nazi League had been launched and was popularising the cause of anti-fascism under the slogan of 'Never Again!'

131. Finally there were also sensible reasons for this information not to be available as it was for the delegates to consider, debate and discuss.

8.1 Who were the focus of these security measures: the police or the government agency; the general public?

132. Hopefully the answer above gives the wider political reasons for the need for security.

³⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/jan/14/sporchitrucchi>

133. Of course another overriding factor was a fear of the information getting into the wrong hands, it had the potential that the names mentioned and the issues discussed would be used for purposes of blacklisting.

134. Further to the above – our other concern was that information should not be passed onto the security services. Again, the reasons above should illustrate the concern there was at that time. As I now know, those security measures counted for very little because not only was the conference reported on, but documents were provided to the Metropolitan Police, and those documents were passed to MI5 in any event.³⁷

8.2 Were the security measures indicative of the general security consciousness of the SWP? If so, why did the SWP require this level of security?

135. Nearly all of our events were open. There was a general openness for branch meetings and district wide public meetings. All our public meetings were advertised in 'Socialist Worker' along with our branch details and the subjects and topics for discussion on that week.

136. In terms of security at the conference, for all the reasons outline above it was necessary to ensure that there was security. In other political parties, discussions

³⁷ See statement from Witness Z – security services <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/UCPI0000034350.pdf>

about membership, finances, publishing etc would probably be subject to a special internal committee, and for internal discussion amongst the leaders of that political party at the time. For the Socialist Workers Party that discussion was far more open, for the benefit of elected delegates, so that they could question and challenge the leadership of the Party if necessary. However, like other political parties, both mainstream and left political organisations this information was for the benefit of delegates.

8.3 Were the SWP concerned about infiltration by the police or others? If so please explain why?

137. Yes. Given this Inquiry, we were clearly correct to be concerned. As we now know the Metropolitan Police, signed off by the Home Secretary³⁸ every year, sent agents into political organisations to spy, to take positions in them and to destabilise them.

138. We were concerned for many reasons – but mainly to protect our membership. We were concerned about how information on the Party or individual members would be used, particularly around the issue of blacklisting. Individual members of the Socialist Workers Party were losing their jobs for often spurious reasons. This was a serious risk. We know that members faced problems at work, would face extra scrutiny and would even lose their jobs. The papers disclosed by the Inquiry indicate that one

³⁸ UCPI0000034308, Paragraph 56; MPS-0730742 and HN354 statement paragraph 175.

member of the Socialist Workers Party was sacked from a Government body simply because of her political opinion.³⁹

139. In the evidence provided by the Inquiry so far there are countless examples of civilians having the details of their employment passed up the chain to MI5. Each time, their political affiliation is included next to the note of their employment, union memberships are also regularly noted. People targeted are those in the public sector or public service jobs, such as working for local council, NHS doctors, hospital workers, a senior priest, post office workers, a job applicant with HM Customs and Excise, a social worker, a probation officer and numerous teachers.

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

140. Yes and No.

141. Yes. The Socialist Workers Party has never been a proscribed organisation, and nor have other socialist groups. It is perfectly legal to join such organisations and tens of thousands of people in Britain have done so at various times. It is to me quite wrong that major financial and person power resources of the state have been directed towards surveillance of people with whom they do not agree – it is a kind of thought police. The scale of it is also quite Orwellian. We were a revolutionary socialist organisation that campaigned on a host of issues – as already outlined. Crucially we were making an impact on many issues from militant trade unionism, to rising

³⁹ See UCPI0000029219

unemployment, to fighting racism and fascism. We were exercising our democratic rights to organise, protest, campaign and educate. This should not have been a reason to be treated as criminals.

142. No. At the same time we were aware of not only the climate we operated in, but also the history of how the state operated. In the UK throughout the 1960s and onwards the Economic League was active in blacklisting workers. It has been reported that the Metropolitan Police often visited their offices and took from the Economic League files about trade unionists.⁴⁰

143. Internationally it is well documented that a leading Bolshevik was a police agent. That MI6 used the 'Zinoviev letter'⁴¹ to smear the Labour Party and cost it the election. The state is not neutral and will use all kinds of techniques and strategies including undercover officers to destabilise those who organise against the system.

9. The report of the 1978 Delegates Conference [tab 2 as above] details discussion of the use of the Anti-Nazi League (“ANL”) to attract the non-aligned political left (*“an excellent way of cementing a relationship with these new non-aligned members”* [paragraph 66]). Although these groups were attracted by a “softer political alternative” and would need to be gradually won over to revolutionary politics. The ANL is described as a *“nursery for recruiting new members”* [paragraph 107] which had been able to attract members of the anti-racist movement without direct reference to *“driving the National Front from the*

⁴⁰ See Chapter 2 ‘Conduct which kills freedom’ in Blacklisted – Dave Smith and Phil Chamberlain (New Internationalist 2016)

⁴¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/1999/feb/04/uk.politicalnews6>

streets physically, opposition to the immigration controls or the need for a socialist alternative” [paragraph 105]. What was the ANL and how was it affiliated to the SWP?

144. The Anti-Nazi League was not affiliated to the Socialist Workers Party. There were leading members of the Socialist Workers Party who played a key role in the establishment and formation of the Anti-Nazi League. However they were not the only ones. People like Ernie Roberts⁴² and Peter Hain⁴³ for instance played a major role in its development. In every locality there were many anti racists who joined or supported the ANL who were Labour Party, trade unionists, in community or religious organisations or having no affiliation at all but just recognising the importance of fighting fascism. At the same time the Socialist Workers Party was important to the Anti-Nazi League politically and organisationally: arguing for a broad based campaign focused on defeating fascism as the main challenge; and in terms of activists on the ground, ensuring that events took place and were stewarded effectively.

145. The Anti-Nazi League had one aim: to set itself against the rise of organised fascism and Nazism. It was established to expose the fact that the leaders of the National Front were out and out supporters of Nazi ideology. The Anti-Nazi League set itself the task of building a broad based mass organisation - a united front against the National Front and its fascist ideology.

⁴² Ernie Roberts was an official from the AUEW trade union.

⁴³ Peter Hain was a member of the Liberal Party at the time.

146. The membership and supporters of the Anti-Nazi League comprised socialists, trade unionists, communists, Labour Party members, Liberal Party members, school kids, black and Asian community organisations, young people, Jewish activists, and everyone from doctors to housewives to nonaligned – it really was a broad based energised movement.

147. The Anti-Nazi League's sole purpose was to stop the National Front organising. Why? Because if the fascists come to power, history shows us that democracy is crushed. That those who do not fit with their white supremacy ideas would be crushed. That is why for that and many other reasons we said 'Never Again!' The organisation was open to all those who agreed with this aim.

148. If the ANL was a single issue united front organisation, the Socialist Workers Party was something quite different - a political party with its own set of ideas and demands, a much broader and wider programme., which campaigned on the whole range of socialist issues.

149. In the course of any 'single issue' campaign, it is of course natural that members and supporters would be open to considering wider political issues. They would begin to get a better grasp of not just the wider political ideas, but a sense of their own power and a role they could play. This was also a time when people were very politicised over a range of issues including racism and fascism and wanted to develop their ideas further. Some of them joined the Socialist Workers Party or other left organisations, as happened throughout that decade as a result of a whole number of campaigns. Of course members of the Socialist Workers Party wanted those they worked with in the

ANL to join and some did. Many others did not but were happy to work with us over that one issue. There was nothing secret or sinister about that – it was a natural progression for some.

150. Overall that approach was successful. The Socialist Workers Party quite rightly won credit for being some of the most committed and active anti fascists. Not only did new members benefit from being part of a socialist organisation, we benefitted from a better understanding of the experience of the Black and Asian communities during that period.

9.1 What were the aims of the ANL?

151. This is outlined above. The main aim of the Anti-Nazi League was to defeat the National Front politically and organisationally. Under the slogan 'Never Again' we sought to explain the history of Nazism and fascism. The way that when Nazi or fascist organisations come to power they crush democracy and workers organisations.

152. The aim was to build a broad based mass movement against the Nazi National Front.

9.2 Did the ANL share any aims with the SWP?

153. Yes. One obvious aim: to build a mass movement that could defeat the National Front, fascism and their racist ideology. However I must stress that the Anti-Nazi League was not a political party. Its aims and objectives were limited as I have

explained. Those aims were nonetheless essential, and the way it organised and set out its limited programme was crucial in defeating the National Front on the estates, schools, workplaces and the ballot box.

9.3 If so how did it differ from the SWP in the advancement of these aims?

154. The Socialist Workers Party was committed to supporting and building the Anti-Nazi League. We argued for it to be a broad based organisation and it was, we supported the Rock Against Racism events as a way of attracting young people to the anti-fascist cause. However, the Socialist Workers Party went further. The racist and Nazi ideals that the National Front sought to grow was built on, poverty, despair and division. The Socialist Workers Party understood that ultimately to defeat fascism once and for all we needed to build a socialist society for the many.

9.4 Did the ANL use violence to advance its aims?

155. No. The violence overwhelmingly came from the fascists and the police. The key way of organising for the ANL was to involve large mass forces where possible to defeat the National Front, and this often meant whole communities mobilising to defeat the Nazis.

156. The police unfortunately and repeatedly allowed and granted the National Front the right to march – often through areas where a high percentage of the population were from Black and Asian backgrounds. It was deliberately provocative and the local population did not want the fascists in their areas.

157. Our aim was to build mass protest movements with communities, to assist in organising the response, to work with those such as the Black and Asian Youth Movements or the Indian Workers' Association to stop the fascists marching. This was not on the basis of small numbers attacking the National Front march, but on the basis of the mass mobilisation of the community, and the trade union movement.

158. If you examine the reports or look at pictures from the events of Southall and Red Lion Square, and many other demonstrations such as Lewisham, what took place was a police force determined to attack the counter protests. Violence when it did occur was overwhelmingly from the police against the counter demonstration. It resulted in the deaths of Kevin Gateley and Blair Peach

159. We should remember as well the very high levels of violence carried out by the fascists against black and Asian people, but also against socialists. From the mid-1970s the National Front went on the offensive on the streets. In parts of London such as Stratford or south Hackney, socialists would get attacked on the tube or on the street if they wore anti racist or anti-fascist badges. The NF would attack Anti-Nazi League public activity, or people selling 'Socialist Worker' – therefore we had to organise to protect our events. Stewarding was essential to protect ourselves from physical attack from the National Front. Make no mistake those attacks were very real, and on occasion lead to serious injury. I remember people near me in south Hackney having their homes attacked or being physically attacked on the street. We had no faith in the police as they were all too often politically on the right, and often sympathetic to the ideas of the National Front.

160. As an extension of our stewarding of our own events, or those of the Anti-Nazi League we also worked in conjunction with particularly local Black and Asian organisations, communities and individual families against racist attacks or provocation from the National Front.

9.5 Did the ANL foresee a time when violence would or would be, necessary to realise its aims?

161. As already advised the Anti-Nazi League was a broad based mass campaign. It relied on mass politics and support. Please see above answers.

9.6 Did the ANL advocate, provoke or approve of public disorder in order to advance its aims?

162. I think I have adequately answered this question above.

9.7 Did the ANL consider it necessary to break the law to advance its aims? If so please explain.

163. The Anti-Nazi League sought to first popularise the message of anti-fascism and anti-racism, second to educate and to build a mass movement. Finally we sought to organise against the National Front and one of the ways was to stop it organising and demonstrating. The counter-demonstrations we organised, we always attempted

to steward, and to work with other organisations in the community. Unfortunately we very often met police hostility and this is reflected in many of the reports.

164. Is a counter demonstration against an avowedly Nazi organisation against the law? If it is then in my opinion the law is wrong. Many would agree with me today and I am proud to say that both my comrades in the Socialist Workers Party, the many trade unionists, and people that joined us from the Black and Asian communities were on the right side of history.

165. In campaigning against the National Front we pointed out that the Nazi ideology that they and their co-thinkers hold is to crush the trade unions, and all political parties when they came to power. The Anti-Nazi League stood in the tradition of the Jewish workers, communists and socialists who fought Mosley's British Union of Fascists in Cable Street in the 1930s, something that at the time was condemned by the British media – and is now venerated by parts of the establishment. We stood in the tradition those many workers from Britain who fought in Spain as part of the international brigades against Franco. The working class has a proud history of standing for democracy, and fighting fascism. It is the establishment that is often suspect, as we know from the history of appeasement in this country.⁴⁴

166. I am proud to have played a role in the building of the Anti-Nazi League. I am proud of its achievements in popularising a key message, and organising anti-fascists under the slogan of 'Never Again!' I think the situation in Britain would have been

⁴⁴ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/how-britains-nazi-loving-press-baron-made-the-case-for-hitler/>

much worse without the existence of the ANL and its determination to take on the worst forms of racism in a radical and highly effective way.

9.8 Did the ANL vet its members?

167. No – it was designed to be a mass popular united front encompassing socialists, trade unionists, liberals, non-aligned individuals, progressive organisations and black and Asian organisations.

9.9 Was the use of the ANL as a means of recruiting new members to the SWP a covert or overt tactic?

168. The ANL was not created to recruit new people to the Socialist Workers Party. It was created to defeat the fascist and Nazi ideas of the National Front.

169. The vast majority who joined the Anti-Nazi League, came to meetings, carnivals, street activities did not join the Socialist Workers Party. However, inevitably given that many Socialist Workers Party members were active in the Anti-Nazi League as campaigners and key organisers some people who joined the Anti-Nazi League would have joined the Party. They could see that the fight for a better society did not begin and end with the fight against the National Front.

170. Many who involved themselves in the Ant-Nazi League also joined a multitude of other organisations, from trade unions, to the Labour Party from the International Marxist Group to the Communist Party.

10. Paragraphs 113 to 121 of the report of the 1978 Delegates Conference reflect a discussion on youth and school students during which it was asserted that *'young people are becoming increasingly disenchanted with the oppression by the state machinery in its many forms and we are in a correct frame of mind to instigate militant action at all levels against those persons and organisations whom they consider 'enemies.'*" The speaker goes on to urge the SWP to 'relate to this militant energy and harness into effective political activity' [paragraph 113]. School Kids against the Nazis, Rock Against Racism, the Right to Work Campaign and flame were *'excellent ways in which the initial barrier between youth and political activity had been broken down.'* SKAN was declared to be of considerable utility to the SWP because a few politically aware anti-fascist students would have access to captive audiences in their schools. The Inquiry understands that SKAN was the youth wing of the ANL. Is this correct? Did it share the ANL's aims and methods?

171. It is not correct to describe School Kids against the Nazis as the youth wing of the Anti-Nazi League – at least not in a formal sense. However, the issue of racism and fascism was a big issue in the schools. There was certainly a fear amongst many of the members of the Ant-Nazi League that National Front could cause divisions and problems in schools, particularly where the school roll was multi-cultural with many Black and Asian kids in schools particularly in London and the large cities across London.

10.1 What affiliation, if any had Rock Against Racism and the Right to Work Campaign with the SWP?

172. Rock Against Racism was developed from a small group of people. It involved members of the Socialist Workers Party, and also non-aligned people. It predated the Anti-Nazi League as it saw the threat of fascism growing especially among young people. The people central to it were all music enthusiasts but also committed socialists and anti-fascists. The main aim was to use music to popularise the campaign against the Nazi National Front and fascist ideas. The initiative of Rock Against Racism was prompted by the racist comments delivered by Eric Clapton on 5th August 1976 and directed at his audience at a concert in Birmingham.⁴⁵

173. The first concerts sponsored by Rock Against Racism took place in November 1976. The impact of the organisation then grew with artists such as The Clash, Aswad, Burning Spear and the Tom Robinson Band appearing at the Carnivals that Rock Against Racism organised alongside the Anti-Nazi League. The first of these took place in April 1978 in the run up to local elections. Tens of thousands marched from Trafalgar Square to Victoria Park in East London for a huge concert. It was a huge success. I remember particularly that day how good it felt to be on those streets, where there was still considerable fascist organisation in the late 70s. I lived in a tower block in London Fields and remember when I got in and looked across the fields from the balcony I saw streams of people who obviously lived locally coming back from the event. That was really heartening because I knew then we were turning the tide. For

⁴⁵ For the full quote see 'Babylon's Burning: Music, subcultures and Anti-Fascism in Britain 1958-2020' – Rick Blackman (Bookmarks – 2021) pp117-118

some months after that I held ANL neighbourhood meetings in my flat. In the build-up to the 1979 General Election, where the National Front were standing hundreds of candidates, Rock Against Racism organised the Militant Entertainment Tour. In total forty different groups played 23 concerts. While Rock Against Racism was actually formed prior to the Anti-Nazi League, both organisations were closely linked.

174. But Rock Against Racism was a platform that built cultural resistance to the National Front. It supplemented the work of the political campaign of the Anti-Nazi League. They were independent organisations, but the members of the Socialist Workers Party were involved.

10.2 Was the use of SKAN, Rock Against Racism and the Right to Work Campaign as a means of recruiting new members to the SWP a covert or overt tactic?

175. The question should not be framed in this way. These organisations were not 'used' by the Socialist Workers Party as a means of recruiting new members. They were organisations with particular purposes – fighting racism and fascism, organising the unemployed – because they were seen as important political priorities. The Socialist Workers Party helped initiate them and some of their supporters joined the Party. All recruitment to the Socialist Workers Party was overt and there was nothing secretive about it. But you are getting things the wrong way round if you see it in the way the question does. Other than that I have answered this above.

11. Paragraph 212 of the report of the 1978 Delegate's Conference reference SWP support for the provisional IRA on the basis that *'the PIRA forces were fighting British Imperialism and therefore were entitled to unconditional support.'* The report goes on to say that *'however to concur with the party line and the topic he [Jerry Fitzpatrick the Irish Organiser of the SWP] added that the membership could not agree with the methods and tactics used by the "freedom fighters" and reserve the right to criticise their actions.'* The resolution later passed refers to this position as *'unconditional but not uncritical support to all those fighting British Imperialism.'*

Does this accurately describe the SWP position with regards to PIRA activities in the 1970s?

176. The Socialist Workers Party supports a united Ireland and believes that Ireland has been dominated by British imperialism for hundreds of years. To avoid full independence Britain created the northern Ireland statelet at partition 100 years ago. This state was based on sectarian discrimination against the minority Catholic/nationalist population. This discrimination has taken the form of housing, jobs and police repression. The Civil Rights Movement in the north of Ireland which emerged in the late 60s to counter this discrimination faced brutal repression from the state in the north of Ireland particularly, and the British state on a general basis.

177. It is important to remember that the British state propped up a Unionist government that ran Northern Ireland as a sectarian, one party state. When troops were sent into Northern Ireland in 1969 this marked a determination on the part of the

British state to help maintain that state. In 1971 internment without trial was introduced targeted at young male Catholics. Hundreds of Catholics were rounded up, detained and tortured. These arrests without trial or charge were opposed both in the north and south of Ireland but also by people in Britain. The Provisional IRA grew at this time because it was seen as defending the Catholic community against the British army, the Northern Ireland police and Loyalist gangs who were often abetted by the security forces. The deaths of 14 men in Derry on Bloody Sunday in January 1972 at the hands of the British army only strengthened feeling. By April 1972 the infamous *Widgery report* concluded that the soldiers from the Parachute Regiment were justified in shooting marchers. It concluded that shots were first fired at soldiers from the crowds on the streets in Derry and implied that those killed had been in close contact with weapons. The Widgery Report was not only a whitewash it helped drive many young working class men and women into the Provisional IRA. The armed struggle against the British state gained quite widespread support.

178. It is from this context that the position on Ireland must be understood. We stood for a united Ireland as a socialist republic. We opposed the continued presence of British troops in the north. We unequivocally supported the victims of British state violence. We supported the right of the PIRA and the nationalist community to fight back against this. That is the 'unconditional support'. The 'not uncritical' part means that we were not nationalists nor engaged in armed struggle and we had differences with the PIRA about some of their tactics and strategy and we did not always agree with their methods. We support those who were campaigning for a united and free Ireland. We supported the right for the PIRA to act. Indeed, we said their actions were no different to that of the ANC fighting apartheid. However, our support was not

uncritical because we did not support bombing or terrorism as a tactic. The armed struggle could not succeed in defeating the British army, but neither could the British army defeat the PIRA. This has proved to be correct.

11.1 What does unconditional but not uncritical support mean in practice?

179. It means campaigning for example in TOM to get the troops out, supporting the hunger strikers and the campaign for political status, protesting at state collaboration in Loyalist killings, shoot to kill by the British army, and many other issues, and defending the IRA demand for a united Ireland.

11.2 Whether those within the SWP who supported PIRA'S methods as well as their aims? (You may want to consider the contents of UCPI0000019543 at tab 46 which reports Privacy sympathies and connections with PIRA).

180. This is a leading question as again it fails to take into account the wider political context that I have described above. In addition it fails to take into account the report which has been drafted by the undercover officer to impress the author's managers.

181. It is important to remember that in the late 1960's and early 1970s many left wing groups developed links in Ireland, and activists in the north. Privacy was involved in the anti-internment campaigns and against the H-blocks. Given this it is inevitable that he would know people in the republican movement and in Irish politics. There is absolutely nothing unusual in that.

182. The Socialist Workers Party had a real understanding of the complex situation in the north of Ireland. We had numerous meetings at branches throughout Britain, and built up contacts in Ireland itself and built a section in that country also. Members of the Socialist Workers Party would be clear as to our views, policies and practice as it relates to Ireland.

12. Report at tab 7 [UCPI0000013464, tabs 8 [UCPI0000013643 and 17 UCPI0000015444] refer to your role as women's organiser and editor of 'Women's Voice' in which Women's Voice is reported to be a separate organisation to the SWP but a means to recruit SWP members. What was the nature of the connection between Women's Voice and the SWP?

183. Again the question displays a wrong premise. It was not a 'means to recruit' members to the Socialist Workers Party. It was an organisation which was clearly separate organisationally, in structure etc, but was as I recall known as the 'sister organisation' of the Socialist Workers Party. Indeed, it was set up in part because the belief was that some women *would not* join the Party and wanted to be in a women-only organisation. There was therefore a close and open connection. This was not hidden.

184. *Women's Voice* was set up in 1978 to be a vehicle for socialist feminist ideas. We recognised at that time that there was a pool of women who were beginning to get interested in feminist ideas and the women members of the Socialist Workers Party felt that it was important to be in a socialist voice within that growing feminist

movement. We wanted to stress the class nature of women's oppression and the way in which it affected working class women differently.

185. The organisation was built around the publication, and we would cover issues such as the equal pay strikes of the 1970s; health and safety in the workplace, and wider issues such as the right to abortion; women's history. There were *Women's Voice* groups around Britain. They would organise around a whole range of issues. Many of the key activists were members of the Socialist Workers Party, but many were not.

12.1 What were Women's Voices' aims and objectives?

186. Ultimately the aims of *Women's Voice* were to outline socialist ideas of women's liberation. The objectives of *Women's Voice* were to campaign against sex discrimination in all its forms, highlighting issues such as domestic violence, sexual abuse and rape, abortion, women's issues in trade unions and equal pay. *Women's Voice* would approach issues from a women's perspective. It would cover international issues, relating all this back to socialist ideas.

12.2 Was the use of Women's Voice to recruit new members to the SWP a covert or overt tactic?

187. It was not used to recruit to the Socialist Workers Party but to advance women's issues. The main point was to organise around a set of socialist feminist theories and activities and to build them into campaigns.

13. The report dated 4 August 1982 at tab 29 [UCPI0000018503] concerns a meeting of the shop stewards school *'to discuss means of causing industrial disruption and combating the present recession.'* This theme is picked up at para 12 of the report of the 1983 National Delegates Conference [MPS0735900 at tab 47] in which the SWP has said to utilise a tactic of escalating industrial intervention with the purpose of recruiting party members. Did the SWP take an active role in escalating industrial disputes for the purpose of recruiting SWP members?

188. No. The Socialist Workers Party supported workers involved in industrial disputes because we wanted them to win and so advance the interests of working class people. It was one of our central aims as a socialist organisation to support workers during strike action. There is a persistent misunderstanding about industrial action and strike action. For workers agreeing to strike it means losing pay which is going to impact their lives, therefore industrial action is usually taken as the 'final straw' because workers feel are underpaid, or for health and safety reasons, or in solidarity because a fellow worker has been sacked.

189. There is in my experience not a single strike that happens because socialists want it to. They happen because of grievances which cannot be otherwise resolved. The role of socialists is to support those strikes, looking to provide financial solidarity, and seek support from other workplaces or industries.

190. We would go to picket lines, discuss with workers, sell *Socialist Worker* and often feature that dispute in the paper. It was about supporting workers in struggle. Sometimes strikers would join the Party, because the strike changed their view of the world and they came into contact with socialists. In the majority of cases not.

191. It is of course noticeable that since the late 1970s the membership of trade unions has gone down dramatically. At the same time the growth and excess in wealth between workers and bosses has also become an epidemic.⁴⁶ That situation is highly regrettable and in my opinion society would be in a much better place with stronger trade unions and more successful industrial action.

13.1 In your view how successful were the SWP in escalating or instigating industrial disputes?

192. The vast majority disputes were not instigated by the Socialist Workers Party. Strike action is often the last resort of workers. Usually negotiations have broken down. Anyone who has been involved in industrial action will understand that there has to be a desire and a mood for strike action it does not appear out of thin air. It can be caused by a build-up of grievances, or because of the threat of immediate pay cuts or redundancy.

193. All members of the Socialist Workers Party would be members of their trade union. In many cases members of the Socialist Workers Party were elected as shop

⁴⁶ 'Tackling Inequality: The Role of Trade Unions' – Centre for Labour and Social Studies (September 2018)
http://classonline.org.uk/docs/TU_and_Inequality_for_print_18th_September.pdf see p.9

stewards – that is because they had the confidence of their fellow workers to represent their interests. I think it is fair to say that for most of the time in the vast majority of cases, industrial action was an exceptional event.

194. Our political perspectives were that in terms of winning concessions from bosses they were best achieved collectively, and so we would as part of any strategy in the workplace, look to collective solutions. Those solutions would inevitably include strike action. But, the skill of being a socialist shop steward is to know when to raise this, and the best time to take collective action - this assessment and action is true of all the best shop stewards.

195. If a strike did occur the Socialist Workers Party believed that where possible strike action should be escalated. I have already referred to the major industrial events of 1972. As an example the miners were successful because their dispute was escalated. They were supported by engineering workers at Saltley Gate – which was crucial to winning better pay and conditions. The Pentonville 5 were released from prison because of escalated solidarity action from workers across Britain. The national building workers strike secured better pay and health and safety because of escalated action. It makes absolute sense to escalate industrial action if you want to win.

13.2 How successful was this tactic in recruiting new members to the SWP?

196. Throughout the early 1970s the working class was very much on the offensive. There was a radicalisation of workers, and the trade unions shifted to the left because of rank and file pressure. There is no doubt that the Socialist Workers Party grew

significantly during this period. This was due to the radicalisation of the workforce as they struggled with low pay and poor conditions reflecting the problems within British capitalism. There was also a growing confidence among working people that they could win. We also grew as a result of the attacks by the Conservative Government on working class people.

197. The 1970s were a radical time in society. The attacks of the Conservative Government were beaten back by the organised working class, the promise of the Labour Government failed to deliver, there were massive industrial struggles and added to this by the end of the decade there was a growth in unemployment. Additionally we saw the growing wider demands of the time - the striving for women's rights and separately the demands for race equality. As society was radicalised the Socialist Workers Party took an active part in these events and there was a significant growth in our membership.

14. The document at tab 38 your witness pack [UCPI0000016977] is a report of a closed meeting of the National Committee during which it is reported that you addressed the meeting on the SW views on the activities of the campaign for nuclear disarmament (CND) and how best that organisation could be utilised (see paragraph 8 and following). In paragraph 10 it is reported that the SWP would appeal to the CND supporters "at meetings demonstrations at Greenham Common, Faslane Naval Base and elsewhere to revert to militant rather than passive action." What is meant by "militant action"?

198. During this period the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament was a mass organisation. There was a genuine concern about the risk of nuclear war stemming out of the 'Cold War.' There was also concerned about Britain being used effectively as an airstrip and launching pad for US nuclear weapons. Finally, ordinary people could not understand why billions was being spent on these genuine weapons of mass destruction, and at the same time the welfare state was facing cuts, and unemployment was growing.

199. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament had hundreds of thousands of members. It was important to be involved. The stationing of Cruise missiles was a huge issue and the campaign against them grew, most famously with the Greenham Common women's peace camp. I recall being on the Trans Pennine march with other members of the Socialist Workers Party over several days in Easter 1981. We attended and supported lots of demonstrations around the issue of nuclear weapons and nuclear power. We went to the Greenham Common Peace Camp, particularly on the huge day of action when we surrounded the base.

200. The point made in the meeting, was that we felt that the tactics of passive resistance were not enough. At that time the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament focused much of its energies on 'sit-down' protests. We felt that the power of the collective membership – which had very big demonstrations at various points – and the organisation needed to link itself more with the trade union movement and the organised working class. We felt that such an orientation would not only build the movement, but from our perspective the trade union movement had an important role to play in becoming involved.

15. The report at tab 12 [UCPI0000013961] lists the names of some of those in attendance at a Blair Peach demonstration on the 27 April 1980. Your name is included in that list can you recall this demonstration?

201. Yes I do recall the demonstration it was on a Sunday and was approximately one year after Blair Peach was unlawfully killed by the Special Patrol Group.

202. I am frankly shocked at the level of surveillance with literally 100+ people who are as having been on the demonstration to show their respects are named as having Special Branch files. Why was a peaceful march of remembrance under so much surveillance. What was the point of this surveillance?

15.1 If so can you describe the scale, duration and mood of the demonstration?

203. From recollection it was a large demonstration. We were determined that he should not be forgotten. Blair was a friend and comrade, we were determined to honour his memory and to continue to press for justice for his killing. It was a demonstration that was both determined and from recollection also sombre to respect the occasion.

15.2 Can you recall any public disorder?

204. I recall that there was no public disorder, and neither would I expect there to be. The demonstration was an act of respect and remembrance.

15.3 What is your reaction to the recording of the names of attendees at a Blair Peach demonstration by the SDS?

205. I am appalled but frankly not surprised. The type of surveillance that I have seen, and the files that have been opened by Special Branch, is on a par with the Stasi. The level of surveillance on a peaceful demonstration / commemoration should appal everybody.

16. The document at tab 33 of your witness pack [UCPI000001588] deals with the organisation and financing of a picket on the 8 October 1982 outside the Conference Centre in Brighton, the venue of the Conservative Party, during which an anonymous phone call was made to a conservative headquarters warning of an explosive device at the Conference Centre. This prompting an evacuation of the building and a confrontation between conservative delegates and those who made up the picket (see paragraph 16 (involving '*verbal abuse and attempted physical assault ... which resulted in 4 arrests for threatening behaviour*'). The picket appears to have been organised by John Deason a member of the Central Committee and National Secretary of the Right to Work Campaign. Was the false report of a bomb threat a tactic sanctioned by the Central Committee of the SWP?

206. Of course not. That is ridiculous. It would not have been anyone from the Socialist Workers Party who would have sanctioned that, or would have done that. As I have already made clear the Socialist Workers Party was about building a mass movement, and broad based campaigns. It would not be sanctioned by anyone on the Central Committee it is simply something we would not do.

16.1 Was any ensuing violence towards Conservative Party delegates sanctioned by the Central Committee?

207. There was no ensuing violence. Surely by now the Inquiry Legal Team and the Inquiry Chair can see that the undercover officers exaggerate their reports. I can only guess these reports are exaggerated for two reasons. First, they need to show their central role is an important one and that they are 'close to the action.' Second, these reports further justify the importance of the SDS and secure its funding.

208. The officers exaggerate and in doing so attempt to show their own importance. The reality is that nearly all the information was publicly available. If there was a concern about public disorder, couldn't ordinary policing deal with it?

209. With regard to this event protesters who were on this march and lobby were unemployed. Some of the young people had never had a job, some older protesters had recently been made redundant all as a result of Conservative Party economic policies. Understandably, there was anger – all were living on poverty benefit payments and understandably wanted to vent that anger. There would have been shouts directed at the Conservative Party delegates who were quite rightly shouted at.

However, we would not have sanctioned physical violence – nor do I think there was any beyond shouts and anger from the unemployed people present.

17. The report at tab 44 [UCPI0000019408] and 46 [UCPI0000019543] refer to your private domestic arrangements what is your reaction to these reports?

210. My initial reaction is that it is nobody's business where I live and who I live with. It is a massive invasion of privacy. I do not see why anyone would want this information. I don't see why public money is wasted on this kind of information. It is also a matter of record where I live as I was always on the electoral register.

18. "Colin Clark" was an SDS officer between 1977 and 1982 and became District Treasurer of the Lea Valley Branch of the SWP and the National Treasurer of the Right to Work Campaign in 1980. Can you recall any contact with a "Colin Clark" during this period? If so please set out any recollections that you have of this individual.

211. I have a lot of clear recollections of Colin Clark as I worked with him closely particularly in relation to the Right to Work Campaign. I would say for a whole period of time I had day to day contact with him. In particular I was one of the organisers of the Right to Work march in September 1981 which he was on. I discussed with him about the logistics of the march, everything from financing, route, accommodation for the marchers, and liaising with the police. In particular he was the national treasurer of the organisation, and was trusted with all the monies, contacts of organisations and individuals who made donations to the campaign.

212. I am disturbed that the national treasurer for the Right to Work Campaign was an undercover officer. It appears to follow a pattern of these officers seeking status and positions in the Socialist Workers Party, the Right to Work Campaign and the Anti-Nazi League.

213. I am also disturbed that this officer had access to our national office. He busied himself providing details of the layout of the building and also details of finances to his superiors, and also the security services.⁴⁷

214. In 1981 Colin Clark states he was not on Right to Work Campaign national march. That is untrue. This march went from Liverpool to Blackpool. It went through Manchester, and the small towns of Lancashire. This was to not only raise the issue of mass unemployment in Britain, but to build solidarity through the trade unions with those in work. It was designed to build solidarity between the unemployed and the employed. Colin Clark has distanced himself from this, or attempted to minimise his role but he was on that march from Liverpool to Blackpool for the majority of the time. I know because I was there with him and that was how I got to know him.

215. During that march we would discuss logistics for the next day's events and finance for the March. He was trusted with monies – obviously because he was the National Treasurer. It was a major breach of trust.

⁴⁷ See MPS-0730700/1; UCPI27529/1; UCPI 29029/1; UCPI27532/1 and UCPI28782/1-2

216. Prior to reaching Blackpool and the Conference of the Conservative Party, while we wanted the young unemployed to protest, I recall having discussions with 'Colin Clark' about taking steps to ensure that no one did get arrested. So that would include discussing with the young people why we were there, what the demonstration sought to achieve and to ensure the safety of everyone through good stewarding. 'Colin Clark' was a part of those discussions. I think we even discussed the possibility of this 'Right to Work' march had been infiltrated. His actions are such a breach of trust that I am actually angry about it.

217. During his time on the march I worked very closely with him. He was keen to play a role and no job was too small – he always wanted to be helpful. We now know why he wanted to appear like this.

218. The Right to Work Campaign relied on donations. These came by way of solidarity and affiliations from trade unions. It also came through bucket collections. Individually, people would also make donations. All that time 'Colin Clark' was monitoring the generosity of all these people and organisations, recording it, and sending it through to his bosses, and then this was passed onto the MI5. It is appalling, that the state firstly knew about who made donations, and the fact it was an organisation that was highlighting the blight of unemployment, and ultimately poverty. It is absolutely appalling.

219. I know that 'Colin Clark' would have been invited to attend the Socialist Workers Party National Committee and the Party Council. He would have listened into all of our discussions, debates, and plans for action. This is such a breach of trust and the right

to organise. Undoubtedly he would have taken these opportunities to speak to members of the Socialist Workers Party and no doubt this would have led to hundreds of people having individual files opened on them. This is a shocking level of deception and it concerns me because of the breach of trust. It also angers me because many members of the Socialist Workers Party we now know had problems at work. They were identified as targets by management and this threatened their employment and livelihoods.

19. “Phil Cooper” was an SDS officer who reported on the SWP between 1979 and 1984 becoming treasurer of the Right to Work Campaign in 1982. Can you recall any contact with “Phil Cooper” during this period? If so please set out any recollections that you have of this individual?

220. I had less contact with ‘Phil Cooper’ on a day to day basis. He was very personable like ‘Colin Clark.’ He worked in the national office of the Socialist Workers Party. This meant he would have mixed with me and many others in the same or nearby buildings, would have attended many meetings including in the printshop where many worked, social events and party internal meetings. He acted in the same way as ‘Colin Clark.’ He worked in a largely administrative job. He would handle money and would have in that job had access to membership and finance. I am aware that the national membership list and finance details of those who paid subs to the Socialist Workers Party, were copied and handed to MI5. I am just appalled.

20. To what extent was the information contained in the intelligence reports in your witness pack that relates to the IS/SWP a matter of public knowledge?

221. A lot of it. The Socialist Workers Party was an open revolutionary socialist organisation. It held weekly branch meetings. We published a newspaper *Socialist Worker* every week which published the details of those meetings and the theme for discussions. Our politics and what we stood for were very clearly published every week. The Party produced a number of theoretical publications – where the ideas of Marxism were discussed further. Those journals, *Socialist Review* and *International Socialism* served the purpose of debate and discussion in a much more theoretical way. All of these publications were available publicly, and I am sure Metropolitan Police even had subscriptions to them.

222. The campaigns that the Socialist Workers Party were involved in – particularly the Right to Work Campaign and the Anti-Nazi League would have been featured in all of our publications. Industrial disputes would also be featured calling for support and solidarity. Pickets and Demonstrations would be featured and there would be a call for people to attend. There really was no secret to our policies, organising and campaigning.

223. We did have internal meetings to discuss strategy, tactics and organisational issues relating to the Party, but this is the case of all political parties and campaigns. There was nothing clandestine about these meetings.

224. Also, during that period we were in contact with international socialists from countries where activists faced imprisonment and torture. We had to be very careful with this to protect their security.

General Context

21. The Inquiry are aware that the IS/SWP lent their support to the Troops Out Movement (“TOM”). Please can you describe how closely affiliated the SWP were with TOM? Did the SWP seek to influence the ways in which TOM sought to advance their aims? Did the SWP seek to use TOM to recruit members to the SWP?

225. We supported the Troops Out Movement (TOM) from the outset. Our members attended TOM branch meetings, and we helped set up branches of TOM. We discussed and debated our politics openly inside TOM. We always tried to stress the political question, and the political solutions to the problems in the north of Ireland. Those problems were caused by the British state creation of this statelet, and the laws that institutionally discriminated against the nationalist / catholic minority community.

226. Generally TOM played an important role in highlighting the continued negative and imperialist role of the troops being in Ireland. TOM also highlighted the excesses of the Prevention of Terrorism Act which appeared to us as a recipe to harass the Irish community in Britain. It is worth looking back on this period because the PTA resulted in very substantial miscarriages of justice against completely innocent Irish people.

227. We played a role in TOM – but I do not think at any point it was central to what we were doing.

22. The Grunwick Strike took place between 1976 – 1978. Did you attend the pickets at any time during this time?

228. The Grunwick strike was one of the most important in British labour movement history. It is the story of how a small group of workers, mainly Asian women, defied their exploitative employer and his far right backers in the National Association for Freedom and gained the support of the whole working class. Wages were low, and overtime was compulsory and imposed at short notice. Turnover of staff was extraordinary – in the mail order department (which gave birth to the strike) there was a 100% turnover annually.⁴⁸ The workers faced down the boss at Grunwick, George Ward, and the National Association for Freedom. Scabs were bussed into the workplace to avoid unionisation. It is an obvious thing to say but right from the beginning of the strike the police were on the side of the employer, and regularly attacked the picket line and arrested strikers.

229. Over the summer of 1977 I attended the picket line every day. Alongside others in the trade union movement the Socialist Workers Party were involved in solidarity support. We hosted the strikers at our meetings and ensured that they were invited to trade union branches where we had an influence.

230. Over the days I attended I would estimate that there were large numbers – maybe between 100 to 200 there showing support and this number got much bigger when there was a national call out for support.

⁴⁸ 'Grunwick – Bravery & Betrayal' – Brent Trades Council p11

22.1 Did you witness any disorder or violence if so please describe it?

231. Yes. On the many large pickets the police behaved very badly. They seemed intimidated by the ranks of black and white working class people who attended to support the strikers. The police worked in conjunction with and very closely with the employer. The police were not there to keep the peace, they were there to disrupt and cause problems for the pickets and their supporters. The police were used politically and the violence came from them with the strikers and supporters generally defending themselves.

232. The Grunwick strike committee called for mass pickets—the first of which, I think was in June 1977. Police punched, kicked and dragged pickets across the road by their hair. The workers' ongoing militancy, and determination to see the strike prevail meant that the police actions actually swelled the mass pickets to 1,500 later that week. The following week miners from Yorkshire and Kent led thousands to the Grunwick picket line. They overwhelmed police and successfully blocked the plant.

22.2 Did you or others you were with participate in any violence or disorder?

233. As I have stated there was disorder at Grunwick (see the events I witnessed above). But the pickets, and the solidarity mass pickets were always peaceful – or at least that was the intention. Violence when it did happen was instigated by the police, and in my mind it was in an attempt to tarnish the pickets and the support of the wider trade union movement. Thankfully that did not work.

22.3 Do you know whether the SWP participated in any violence or disorder as part of the demonstrations at Grunwick?

234. We actively supported the strikers by arranging meetings, and ensured that were invited to as many trade union branches that we could. We acted in the way that all socialists and trade unionists would act – showing solidarity.

235. That solidarity inevitably meant attending the pickets on a daily basis. It also meant building support for the mass pickets and attending the mass pickets. We wanted not only peaceful protests but mass picketing to stop the scabs breaking the strike. There was disorder but this was caused by the police clearing the protesters, attacking the strikers, and trying to prevent trade unionists supporting the strike.

22.4 Was violence or disorder at the Grunwick site sanctioned by the SWP?

236. The Socialist Workers Party were part of the solidarity protests to support the pickets in their demands. The idea of the mass pickets, when most of the disorder occurred, was to stop the scabs going in. The strikers and all trade unionists wanted a peaceful picket. However, the police played an increasingly violent role during the course of the dispute. In those instances we believe the strikers, trade unionists showing solidarity and members of the SWP have the right to defend ourselves. That is what people did when under attack from the police. We were demanding a basic human right – to join a union and be treated with dignity. The police acted to support a far right organisation in denying that right. They were responsible for anything that happened as a result.

23. Did you attend the demonstration later named the Battle of Woodgreen on the 23 April 1977?

237. No.

23.1 If so did you or others you were with witness any violence or disorder? If so can you describe it?

238. See above

23.2 Did you participate in any violence or disorder?

239. see above

24. Did you attend the demonstration later named the Battle of Lewisham on the 13 August 1977?

240. On that day I was in fact in Handsworth, Birmingham. The Socialist Workers Party were standing in the by-election there and I was there helping to organise the campaign for several weeks. As the National Front was also standing in that election there was also a demonstration against the fascists there on that day which I helped organise and participated in.

24.1 What role did you play in preparations for the day?

241. See above

24.2 What role did you play in the day and where on the scene were you during the course of the day?

242. See above

24.3 Can you describe the events that you witnessed? Did you witness any violence or disorder?

243. See above

24.4 Did you or others you were with participate in any violence or disorder?

244. See above

24.5 Did you or any one you were with take part in any planning of violence or disorder?

245. See above

25. Did you attend the demonstration in Southall on the 23 April 1979 which led to the death of Blair Peach?

246. No I did not attend the events at Southall as I was unwell on the day. My partner at the time went and came back describing how violent the police had been. It was only early the following morning that we heard Blair Peach had been killed. I was absolutely horrified that he had been killed – he lived round the corner and we would see him in the pub locally. He was a comrade and friend of mine. He had very gentle looks and manner.

247. I have had the benefit of reviewing the report of the National Council for Civil Liberties Report on the events at Southall. On the 23rd April 1979. There are many issues and aspects about the policing on the day, and the subsequent events flowing from that day. What is striking is the violence carried out by the Metropolitan Police and the Special Patrol Group and the subsequent cover up. Noteworthy is the investigations led by Commander Cass who in the course of his investigations found a number of weapons in the lockers of the SPG who had been in Southall on duty in Southall on the day (23 April 1979). Those weapons included:

“Four police issues truncheons; one brass handle; one leather encased truncheon, approximately one foot long with a knotted thong at the end; one metal truncheon which was encased in leather about eight inches long in length with a flexible handle and a lead weight at the end; one wooden pick axe handle; one sledge hammer; one American type beat truncheon which was almost two feet in length; one leather whip which was described as ‘rhino whip;’ two case openers or jemmies; one white bone handled knife with a long blade case; one

black plastic handled knife; one crowbar about three feet in length; one piece of wood about three feet in length, two inches in diameter and one further crowbar.”

248. This list was in an affidavit read to the Court of Appeal on 15 December 1979. According to the NCCL report this list “...included evidence of weapons at the scene and Police.”

249. Although the report into the SPG at Southall in 1979 by Commander Cass was never made public, newspaper reports point to the fact that the officers who were involved in the events, were also involved in obstructing of justice. Cass’s report also pointed to one officer responsible for Blair Peach’s death, but there was a veil of silence from the SPG units involved.

250. It is appalling that whilst the police can provide time and energy to monitor a peaceful demonstration, that they fail to investigate their own to the fullest extent.

251. Alongside the Metropolitan Police, the DPP failed to pursue prosecutions. Yet seemingly resources, and time were spent to identify literally hundreds of people on a peaceful remembrance demonstration – it really is appalling.

25.1 Can you describe the events that you witnessed? Did you witness any violence or disorder?

252. My partner at the time was at the protest. He summed it up very succinctly at the time. The National Front were not only afforded protection from the police, but the

whole of the area was cordoned off in order to allow them to march – this despite objections from the community. The violence on the day came solely from the Police and was directed solely at those who were there protesting about the National Front. He saw people thrown over walls, attacked and battered by the police. He described it as an extremely violent event where the police were determined to protect the fascists – which meant attacking trade unionists, socialists, and people from the local community.

25.2 Did you or anyone you were with participate in any violence or disorder?

253. No.

Impact

26. If you recall “Colin Clark” and “Phil Cooper” please explain the impact each had upon you, including how you felt when you found out:

- (a) Neither was who he said he was; and**
- (b) That both were undercover police officers.**

254. As a socialist campaigner you work with other people who have the same goal: the transformation of society and the fight for a better world. This common purpose helps to form a bond of solidarity with like-minded people. They may not be the same as you, and they may not be your closest friend, but you form this bond of trust and solidarity. It is based on shared beliefs and also the fact that you are working for a campaign, for a trade union or for a political party, against the stream and in the

interests of wider society. People demonstrate against war in Iraq, even though they know no Iraqis, or the protest at racist attacks even though they are not suffering them themselves.

255. The notion that someone can lie and mislead you by pretending to share these aims while actually believing the opposite is difficult to accept. The fact that the likes of 'Colin Clark' and 'Phil Cooper' were able to do this illustrates the depths of their deceit. That complete dishonesty is sickening, and the fact that it was done by agents of the state makes it even worse. Of course it is disturbing to find that someone whose salary is paid for by your taxes is operating as a professional liar who sets out to deceive you.

256. I worked closely with 'Colin Clark' for a period. I later had suspicions that he might have been a police spy because he disappeared 'abroad' without trace. But that wasn't true at the time. We were both working on the Right to Work Campaign, a campaign whose demands were reasonable – to end the scourge of unemployment. It seems abhorrent that the state felt it necessary to spy on that campaign. I feel a real sense of betrayal of trust at both a political and personal level.

257. It is also worth noting that I was a young woman, I was between relationships at that time. Given what we know about undercover officers' behaviour towards women in socialist organisations, this makes the recollection even more disturbing. Being with someone who was a professional liar, so close to an undercover police officer, working together, is deeply unsettling.

258. Much of the disclosure I have seen in my witness pack reports on events that were public and might seem trivial. This itself is an indictment of the whole practice. But reporting about my living arrangements and my relationships, as was done, actually disgusts me.

259. Worse though is the breach of trust towards a socialist organisation whose aim was to help create a better society. I am now aware that both 'Colin Clark' and 'Phil Cooper' once they had the trust of the Party, worked in our national office. They stole information from us. They stole bank statements, membership lists and bank details of our members and supporters. This was passed on to MI5 – this sends a shudder down my spine, and is reminiscent of the worst sorts of secret surveillance in dictatorships. Treating political activists as if they were spies for a foreign power should be absolutely unacceptable in a democratic society. The very least that the report that from this Inquiry should do is condemning this surveillance here.

260. Everything we did as the Socialist Workers Party – organising as a political party, campaigning, raising issues, discussing politics, publishing newspapers and journals, was legal and above board. We campaigned in the best traditions of radicals in this country from the Levellers to the Suffragettes, from the Cable Street anti-fascists to the poll tax campaigners. All of those of course were subject to state surveillance and repression -unjustified then as now. At that time however organised:

- i) the Right to Work Campaign against the scourge of unemployment – **legal.**
- ii) we campaigned in the trade unions through the Rank and File Organising Committee for a more militant approach for pay and conditions – **legal.**

- iii) we organised a mass campaign against racism and fascism in the Ant-Nazi League and defeated the National Front – **legal**.

261. It is staggering that the Special Demonstration Squad spent their time spying on these activities. Meanwhile, unemployment was blighting the lives of working class people across Britain. More starkly, the National Front were carrying out racist attacks and murders, and the combined total of 3 officers were directed at that organisation, one of which was at the behest of the Workers Revolutionary Party who inadvertently asked an undercover officer to attend far right meetings on their behalf.

262. This last point I would expect the Inquiry to focus on. In the context of the Metropolitan Police's own institutional racism, it seems that the SDS was terrified of the 'reds under the bed' but was content to allow black and Asian people to be killed by far right thugs. We have seen in more recent times that surveillance of far right organisations has been very limited compared to that of left and ethnic minority groups, and that the threat of far right terrorism has long been downplayed or ignored. We know that there was support for NF type ideas among the police. But this was not just at the level of individual police – the whole method was skewed towards seeing the left as a much greater enemy than the right, and that extended to protecting and I'm afraid enhancing their ability to organise.

27. Colin Clark's occupation of senior roles in the SWP effectively undermine the extensive security measures undertaken by the SWP. What impact if any do you think this had on the SWP's ability to advance its aims?

263. There are three types of damage that 'Colin Clark' and 'Phil Cooper' could cause:

i) **Political Damage:** Colin Clark had access to our national office. He was the national treasurer of the Right to Work Campaign and was in a trusted position. He attended national meetings, and was in a trusted position. It is clear that he abused that trust. Although he would have been in attendance at those meetings, at a national level I doubt, given the nature of the Party and its organisational methods, that he would have been able to cause trouble in the way that 'Rick Gibson' was able to in the Troops Out Movement. He did not have any political profile, to the best of my recollection, in speaking or writing. It is possible that locally he could have had a political impact of maybe derailing the work of the branch and district he belonged to. But given we do not have his reports from those meetings it is difficult to say.

ii) **Operational Damage:** As can be seen from the photocopied cheques that had been kindly donated by union branches to sustain the Right to Work Campaign.⁴⁹ It is hard to know given the passage of time whether he destroyed cheques, or where there had been cash donations whether he took them. I am sure the legal team representing the officers would refuse to accept this, no doubt talking about the 'integrity' of these officers. However, given what we now know, lying, and scheming was part of the role. Having sexual relationships with women, using dead children's names, forming relationships with women, who knows what happened to those cheques or cash donations. It is entirely possible that he could have caused operational damage to the Right to Work Campaign. He may, have caused damage to the finances and operations of the Socialist Workers Party by sending membership / bank details

⁴⁹ See UCPI0000015888-8to45

through to the security services. It is really difficult to quantify because of course at that time we did not suspect he was an undercover officer and so had no way of assessing it.

iii) **Personal Damage:** There is the personal damage that I think 'Colin Clark' and 'Phil Cooper' may have caused. You will note that within the disclosure about the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party literally hundreds and possibly thousands of individual files were opened by Special Branch. These registry files covered Central Committee members, full time organisers and rank and file members. We know further to the limited information we have that many of our members faced disciplinary action at work. We know that members lost their jobs as a result of this level of surveillance [include civil service job and fords job]

Other

28. Please set out any other factual evidence that you can provide about the conduct of "Colin Clark" and "Phil Cooper" to assist the Inquiry get to the truth?

264. There is nothing else I can add to what I have tried to advise in the previous answer.

29. Is there anything else that you wish to add that may be of assistance to the work of the Inquiry?

265. Yes. I am aware that in their Opening Statement to the Inquiry my legal team highlighted a really important development and change in how the undercover officers operated.

266. Prior to 'Rick Gibson' infiltrating the Troops Out Movement the rule for those officers 'in the field' is that they must not take 'positions of responsibility.' For the record my legal team highlighted the many undercover officers who took positions in the International Socialists / Socialist Workers Party at a local, district and national level. The questions I have been asked here have mainly been about public disorder. I am surprised the Inquiry has not spent more time considering and examining the role of those officers in positions of influence, and potentially asked questions around those issues also.

267. I want to add a few comments about issues around public disorder and violence. I have stated here that the Socialist Workers Party were engaged in building mass campaigns, and to popularise the ideas of revolutionary socialism. I am aware that some officers have stated that public disorder was a theme of the Party. For instance, officer 'Paul Gray' refers to levels of subversion and public disorder. They are plainly untrue. First, they are contradicted by his own officers. Second, they are unsupported by evidence. He gives a grossly exaggerated account of the demonstration at Grosvenor Square when he was a uniformed officer. Then he asserts that he experienced the same level of violence in the course of his undercover deployment. In the hundreds of pages of his reports, there is no reference to him witnessing any violence. 'Paul Gray' claims that his lack of reported violence is because the SDS only provided advanced intelligence. He says they did not provide reports on violence or

disorder that they had witnessed, only on violence or disorder that they were expecting. That is a very convenient explanation for a total lack of such evidence, and it is not borne out by the fact that SDS officers did give retrospective intelligence about public order events – for example with the Blair Peach demo. We can see that from officers who did witness such events. It is also clear that despite his denials, ‘Paul Gray’ did give retrospective intelligence. From a policing perspective it is common sense. It would be valuable intelligence if targets were actually involved in violence or disorder. The difficulty that ‘Paul Gray’ faces, is that his retrospective reports show no violence or disorder at all. Indeed, the only time this officer reports on violence is when ‘Child 1’ had a fight with his brother and left home.

Documents

30. Do you have any documents that may be potentially relevant to the work of the Inquiry e.g. photographs, diaries or other contemporary documents? If so please explain what they are. If you are content to provide copies to the Inquiry for use as evidence please do so. Alternatively, if you are concerned about providing copies now please set out your concerns briefly and the Inquiry will contact you to discuss them.

268. Any of the books and documents that I have listed I am happy to loan to the Inquiry and the Inquiry Chair.

Diversity Information

31. What is your racial origin?

269. White British

32. What is your gender?

270. Female

I believe that the content of this statement to be true

Signed: Lindsey German.....*Lindsey German*.....

Date: 14th February 2022