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Wednesday, 10 July 2024

(10.00 am)

Opening remarks

THE CHAIR: Good morning and welcome to the third day of evidence in this phase of Tranche 2.

We are having a short day today, and the evidence is being live streamed with a ten-minute delay. That means that anyone in the room may use any mobile electronic device that they have to transmit silently to the outside world what they have seen and heard in the Inquiry, but only ten minutes after the event being described. That is to coincide with the video stream which is subject to a ten-minute delay.

You may not use electronic devices for recording the proceedings or for taking photographs.

I think we are going to begin, are we not, with evidence that is going to be summarised?

MR SAVILLE: Yes, sir. Beginning with the summary of HN 12's evidence.

THE CHAIR: Yes, Mr Saville. Would you like to do that?

Oral summary HN~12

MR SAVILLE: Sir, HN 12 is deceased. There is a restriction order prohibiting the publication of his real name. The Inquiry does not have a witness statement for HN 12. Instead it will publish accounts of his deployment from

1 meetings in the Inquiry's risk assessment process and
2 made in an application for anonymity. This summary will
3 summarise and supplement them with details from HN 12's
4 reporting.

5 HN 12 states he joined SDS from December 1981 and
6 deployed in his undercover identity from April 1982 into
7 the revolutionary communist group, the Revolutionary
8 Communist Group, and later the Socialist Workers Party.
9 Until July 1985, when he withdrew after his deployment
10 was compromised for a second time.

11 He used the name Michael Hartley, based on the
12 identity of a deceased individual. The real
13 Michael Hartley was tragically killed at sea aged 18 and
14 his death is recorded in the foreign registry of deaths.

15 HN 12 noted the similarity of Mr Hartley's name and
16 age to his own. HN 12 indicated to the risk assessor
17 that he used some true elements about the real
18 Mr Hartley's life in constructing his legend, noting
19 that Mr Hartley's father's name and separation from
20 Mr Hartley's mother were elements incorporated.

21 He received instruction from the SDS office about
22 the research for his cover name. He believed the use of
23 the name was "according to the practice at the time".

24 HN 12 used the cover employment as a van driver for
25 a small metalworking company in Battersea. He used

1 a driving licence in his cover name, and having obtained
2 Mr Hartley's birth certificate. Other documentation he
3 had included a local library card.

4 HN 12 noted the only training he received in
5 preparation for his deployment were the informal
6 conversations he had with undercover officers attending
7 weekly meetings. He described the tasking of his
8 deployment as being:

9 "To infiltrate the Revolutionary Communist Group,
10 and later the Socialist Workers Party, to acquire
11 details, names, addresses and occupations of members of
12 the Revolutionary Communist Group and supporters ... to
13 assess [their] total numbers, to assess their threat
14 from public order and/or the state/national security, to
15 report the details of political actions and to report on
16 public and private meetings."

17 A detailed overview of HN 12's reporting is in
18 annex C of Counsel to the Inquiry's written opening. In
19 short, that analysis shows that HN 12 gave an overview
20 of his first target group, the Revolutionary Communist
21 Group, in a report from December 1982. He stated the
22 group's purpose was:

23 "Opposing imperialism primarily in Britain, but also
24 elsewhere in all ways possible."

25 A further report from January 1984 comments that the

1 group's members were:

2 "Still active and committed to the philosophy of
3 communism and the overthrow of British democracy."

4 In practice the group provided support and direction
5 to several campaigns that HN 12 identifies as "fronts".
6 The daughter organisations, the Irish Solidarity
7 Committee and the Stoke Newington and Hackney Defence
8 Campaign. The Revolutionary Communist Group meetings
9 attributed to HN 12's reporting are described as
10 co-ordinating support to these smaller groups and
11 managing recruitment.

12 He reported on planned demonstrations by the
13 Revolutionary Communist Group's subcampaigns until his
14 first compromise. Examples of this reporting include
15 HN 12's description of plans for the Irish Solidarity
16 Committee to picket several prisons in March 1984,
17 providing an estimate that 10 to 20 people were due to
18 participate in each picket. Plans for the
19 anti-apartheid movement's central London branch in
20 September 1982 included HN 12's assessment that "no
21 disorder is planned". In another report on a planned
22 picket outside South Africa House on the Strand he
23 commented that:

24 "The more strict the policing, the more opportunity
25 the Revolutionary Communist Group will have to cause and

1 exacerbate disorder."

2 The Stoke Newington and Hackney Defence Campaign,
3 SNHDC, was identified by HN 12 as another Revolutionary
4 Communist Group daughter group. He stated it intended
5 to influence the Colin Roach family justice campaign and
6 recruit members from the black community into the
7 Revolutionary Communist Group. In addition to attending
8 pickets and public meetings with the group, he states
9 lectures on communism held by the SNHDC would be
10 supplemented with encouragement to attend other
11 Revolutionary Communist Group campaigns.

12 HN 12 gave his conclusion that this was:

13 "An attempt to continue their indoctrination."

14 The group was reported by HN 12 to have
15 approximately 15 to 20 regular members. He described
16 the interactions of the group with the Roach Family
17 support campaign, and in April 1983 a report described
18 the group being deliberately disavowed by a person
19 connected to the Roach Family.

20 He continued to follow the group's progress when he
21 alleged that its focus had shifted to concentrate on
22 campaigning for a group of black activists arrested as
23 members of the Roach Family's support campaign.

24 HN 12 was promoted to full membership of the
25 Revolutionary Communist Group in September 1983. Before

1 that date, he is recorded as speaking at meetings in
2 connection with the Irish Solidarity Movement and in
3 a report dated August 1984 he is identified as having
4 responsibility is for correspondence and publicity for
5 "POWs" in the campaign. On another occasion HN 12 also
6 chaired a special meeting of the Revolutionary Communist
7 Group in March 1983, where the Revolutionary Communist
8 Group in London were divided into two separate entities
9 in line with a central party directive on the subject.

10 In January 1984, he was arrested alongside another
11 Revolutionary Communist Group member bill posting for
12 the group. The next day he attended Highbury Corner
13 Magistrates in his cover identity to enter a guilty
14 plea. A contemporary note records Detective Inspector
15 Short was aware of the proceedings and present in court
16 to observe. HN 12 recorded in the aide-memoire for the
17 risk assessment:

18 "That at my insistence, under orders from Detective
19 Chief Inspector Short, I pleaded guilty, [his
20 co-defendant] agreed to do the same. We were both
21 fined."

22 Both defendants were recorded as being fined £5 on
23 that occasion.

24 In September 1984 the focus of HN 12's deployment
25 shifted after he was compromised. He was accused by

1 three senior members of the Revolutionary Communist
2 Group of being a police informer. A contemporaneous
3 Security Service memorandum records he came under
4 suspicion for circumstantial reasons, being absent for
5 periods from his group, and of smelling of alcohol
6 despite his cover work as a driver. HN 12 remained in
7 his cover address and began attending meetings of the
8 Socialist Workers Party's Holloway branch. He reported
9 on public and private meetings of the Socialist Workers
10 Party, including in the private homes of members. He
11 reported on educational talks on subjects such as South
12 African apartheid, the Troubles in Northern Ireland as
13 well. In May 1985 one address to the branch discussed
14 the number of paper sales of the Socialist Worker and
15 criticised sales in the Holloway branch, as just one
16 example.

17 He reported on individual activists and his reports
18 contain examples of biographic details often including
19 any positions of responsibility within the group and
20 an individual's employment. HN 12 also assessed and
21 reported on the ideology of individual members.

22 His second compromise came in June 1985, after his
23 then girlfriend showed to a colleague, who happened also
24 to be a Socialist Workers Party member, who recognised
25 HN 12, photographs of her and HN 12 in his real identity

1 on holiday together. HN 12's girlfriend had on
2 a previous occasion told her colleague that HN 12 was
3 a policeman, and there is also a suggestion that HN 12
4 had previously met the woman in his real identity at
5 a firework party. An SDS note for file dated July 1985
6 records HN 12's plan to inform the Socialist Workers
7 Party of his intention to leave the group following his
8 confrontation by one of the group's senior members.

9 HN 12 admitted to the risk assessor that he had
10 a brief sexual liaison with an individual from the
11 Revolutionary Communist Group. Notes from the interview
12 on 21 November 2017 suggested he had two sexual
13 encounters with the activist. HN 12 stated it was the
14 woman who initiated the relationship and on the first
15 occasion the pair kissed before being interrupted. On
16 the second, he suggests the pair went to her flat and
17 had oral sex. He stated that no long-term relationship
18 developed and shortly after their encounters she formed
19 a relationship with somebody else and left the group.
20 HN 12 stated he did not plan the liaison to develop or
21 gain intelligence.

22 Reflecting on his time in the SDS to the Inquiry,
23 HN 12 commented:

24 "Whatever I did in the SDS I believe to have been
25 justified and proportionate."

1 His accounts describe the impact of his undercover
2 deployment had on his welfare. He stated that during
3 his deployment he was in a relationship and he
4 attributes its end:

5 "Because of my alcohol abuse and stress."

6 HN 12 commented on the welfare effect as such:

7 "I strongly believe that my tour of duty in the SDS
8 was the major factor in my life and career being damaged
9 by periods of stress and alcohol abuse."

10 The risk assessment aide-memoire records that HN 12
11 believed that the support for his deployment was well
12 meaning. He suggests that there was a lack of input
13 from experienced undercover officers and a divide
14 between those in the field and the office. He
15 illustrates his point with the following example:

16 "After one weekly meeting, and a drink taken,
17 I found myself with a good friend who was sitting in my
18 car sobbing his heart out from stress. He felt he
19 couldn't go to the DS, DI or DCI, because they would not
20 understand ..."

21 He experienced illness during his remaining career.
22 The Inquiry is publishing his sickness record that
23 describes his treatment for depression and alcoholism
24 prior to retirement. He was treated in the Metropolitan
25 Police Nursing Home in Hendon and NHS rehab facilities

1 and received public and private consultations during his
2 treatment. HN 12 stated that in the course of treatment
3 he:

4 "Felt unable to speak openly about the SDS."

5 And had felt that being unable to talk about his
6 deployment precluded discussion on the possible causes
7 of his alcoholism.

8 Sir, that conclude the summary of HN 12's evidence.

9 THE CHAIR: Yes. Your summary, helpful and accurate though
10 it is, excludes one incident of potential importance to
11 the Inquiry.

12 On 2 March 1985, eight members of the Socialist
13 Workers Party Holloway branch travelled to South Wales
14 to donate £450 to the Miners' Strike Fund just as the
15 strike was ending. His report about the incident is
16 dated 6 March 1985 and contains a detailed description
17 of what occurred during the visit. Although he's not
18 named in it, it would appear to be a report written by
19 someone who was present.

20 MR SAVILLE: Indeed it does, sir.

21 THE CHAIR: Yes, thank you.

22 Mr Hudson.

23 Oral summary HN~82

24 MR HUDSON: Thank you, sir. Sir, what follows is an oral
25 summary of the deployment of HN 82. HN 82 is deceased

1 and as a result has not provided a witness statement to
2 the Inquiry. The only retrospective account he has
3 provided of his deployment is a debrief with the
4 Security Service immediately upon the conclusion of his
5 deployment.

6 Sir, there is a restriction order prohibiting the
7 publication of HN 82's real name. His cover name was
8 Nicholas Peter Green, and he went by Nick. His cover
9 identity was based on that of a deceased adult. His
10 widow has stated that she went with HN 82 to Edinburgh
11 to research the cover identity and build the legend and
12 that she understood this to be common practice at the
13 time.

14 HN 82 joined the SDS in the second half of 1982 and
15 had been deployed undercover by the end of August 1982.

16 There are many reports attributed to HN 82
17 concerning the Finsbury Park branch of the Socialist
18 Workers Party between the start of his deployment and
19 September 1984. Some of his reports are of meetings in
20 private homes. Several weeks after he was deployed,
21 HN 82's deployment is mentioned in a Security Service
22 note dated 12 November 1982:

23 "Having got HN 82 into Finsbury Park Socialist
24 Workers Party, SDS realised that they are over-committed
25 to Socialist Workers Party at branch level."

1 However, HN 82 is said to have "reacted very
2 unfavourably to the idea of a move." He was to continue
3 to report on the Finsbury Park branch of the Socialist
4 Workers Party until 1985.

5 From September 1984, HN 82's reporting focused on
6 the group Red Action, founded by former Socialist
7 Workers Party members, and later its connection with the
8 coalition organisation Anti-Fascist Action.

9 HN 82 reported that those groups had an interest in
10 physical confrontation with far-right groups.

11 In common with many other SDS undercover officers,
12 throughout his deployment HN 82 reported on individuals'
13 personal details: examples include employment,
14 particularly employment by public bodies, physical
15 features, addresses and personal relationships.

16 His reporting on the Socialist Workers Party
17 includes reporting on plans for public demonstrations,
18 including discussion of the hurling of "abuse and,
19 hopefully, rotten tomatoes", when the Conservative
20 education minister was due to visit a local school.
21 HN 82 also reported on a "Socialist Workers Party
22 inspired picket", outside Newberry Magistrates' Court,
23 where Greenham Common peace movement campaigners were
24 due to appear, and he reported on plans to intervene and
25 heckle during an event at which Labour MP Ted Heath was

1 due to speak.

2 HN 82 reported on Socialist Workers Party
3 involvement in industrial action, including appearance
4 on the picket lines in support of teachers and water
5 workers. He reported on Socialist Workers Party support
6 for the Miners' Strike, and internal discussions as to
7 the purpose of supporting the Miners' Strike. Was it
8 supported as an end in itself or as a means to expand
9 the reach of the Socialist Workers Party message and
10 drive up its membership? According to HN 82's
11 reporting, this was an enduring debate within the
12 Socialist Workers Party.

13 HN 82 reported that the general opinion within
14 Finsbury Park Socialist Workers Party was that imminent
15 revolution was unlikely and no practical preparations
16 were being made for its arrival.

17 Sir, he attended the annual Easter rally of the
18 Socialist Workers Party in Skegness, Lincolnshire, on at
19 least two occasions. In 1983, the booking form
20 indicates he is "Skegness organiser" although what this
21 role entailed is unclear. He also attended in 1984 and
22 may have reported on the rally that year.

23 HN 82 reported on antiracist campaigning within the
24 Socialist Workers Party. According to his reporting,
25 there was a tension within the Socialist Workers Party

1 about the approach to physical confrontation with
2 members of far right groups likes the National Front.
3 This led to expulsion of Socialist Workers Party members
4 who were keen on physical confrontation which would seem
5 to have led to the formation of Red Action. A Security
6 Service note dated 24 September 1984 records that:

7 "SDS are proposing to move HN 82 from Finsbury Park
8 Socialist Workers Party into Red Action. They suggest
9 that a new man will return the Socialist Workers Party
10 coverage to two in 1985. It was agreed that this was
11 a good idea ..."

12 Another Security Service note dated 26 November 1984
13 records that HN 82 is finding his move into Red Action
14 to be "slow progress", as they are "careful about
15 potential new-comers". On 28 January 1985, a Security
16 Service note records the following:

17 "[HN 82] is finding it hard work gaining the
18 confidence of members of Red Action. We agreed that it
19 is worth persevering if only to demonstrate whether the
20 group should or should not be taken seriously."

21 On 5 March 1985, HN 82 reported on a national
22 meeting of Red Action with 17 attendees. HN 82 put poor
23 attendance down to members being more interested in the
24 "physical and social" aspects of the group's activities.
25 In fact, HN 82 reported that the next day 40 members

1 gathered at a pub for a demonstration in support of the
2 Miners' Strike.

3 HN 82 reported that Red Action's ideology included
4 armed overthrow of the capitalist machine and collective
5 control of wealth. According to his reporting,
6 Red Action expressly did not limit itself to operating
7 within the law. He reported that Red Action lacked
8 funding and organisation.

9 The reporting of HN 82 references violence and
10 physical confrontation engaged in by Red Action members,
11 but it is not clear that he witnessed or became involved
12 in any of it himself.

13 He reported that Red Action was supportive of Irish
14 Republican groups. He reports that some members
15 travelled to the anti-internment rally in Belfast in
16 August 1985. HN 82 reported on the role played by
17 Red Action in the creation of a coalition of groups
18 determined to confront right-wing groups directly. That
19 coalition was named Anti-Fascist Action. The group had
20 members from around England, and HN 82 reported that
21 within the coalition Red Action was a group particularly
22 keen on direct physical confrontation. Anti-Fascist
23 Action, or AFA, planned formally to launch on
24 Remembrance Sunday 1985 at a rally in Victoria. HN 82
25 reported that that location was chosen to deny the

1 National Front their usual mustering point prior to the
2 Remembrance Day parade.

3 HN 82 reported on internal rifts referred to as
4 "birth pains" within the AFA, in particular involving
5 the anarchist group Class War and the involvement of
6 Unmesh Desai, of Newham Monitoring Project and formally
7 a Red Action member in the struggle for dominance within
8 the organisation.

9 These difficulties were seemingly resolved and HN 82
10 reported in June 1986 that the autumn campaign of AFA
11 was due to be "the first main initiative attacking
12 rather than responding to fascist groups."

13 He reported that the autumn campaign would be "the
14 obvious yardstick" of the future potential of AFA, but
15 his deployment ended around August 1986 before any
16 autumn campaign.

17 During his deployment, HN 82 reported on
18 core participants Lindsey German in her capacity as
19 speaker and Socialist Workers Party central committee
20 member, and Jeremy Corbyn, as a Member of Parliament and
21 speaker at an AFA meeting.

22 Sir, HN 82 was debriefed by the Security Service at
23 the end of his deployment. The Security Service note
24 records that HN 82 would not be replaced in Red Action.
25 It is noted that the membership was "very young, violent

1 and not essentially political". And in another note of
2 the debrief, that their political and ideological basis
3 essentially focused on "hard drinking and violent
4 confrontations with the National Front". The Security
5 Service note records gratitude to HN 82 and indicates
6 that his deployment filled a gap in its knowledge of
7 Red Action.

8 Sir, that concludes the oral summary of the
9 deployment of HN 82.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you. I think you are now going to move on
11 to HN 67, are you not?

12 Oral summary HN 67

13 MR HUDSON: I am indeed. Thank you.

14 Sir, HN 67 suffers from Parkinson's Disease and he's
15 not fit to give a written statement or oral evidence to
16 the Inquiry. In February 2013, HN 67 spoke to officers
17 attached to Operation Herne about his deployment and
18 late in 2017 a risk assessment was provided to the
19 Inquiry in support of his application for anonymity.

20 The accounts recorded by Operation Herne and the
21 risk assessor form the basis of much of this oral
22 summary.

23 HN 67 used the cover name Alan Bond, along with the
24 nickname "Bondy". This identity was based on that of
25 a deceased child who had died abroad. After some time

1 spent in the SDS back office he was deployed into the
2 Brixton branch of the Socialist Workers Party, around
3 April 1982, and his deployment ended in November 1985.
4 He returned to the SDS as a manager from 1991 to 1993,
5 and, sir, his time as a manager will be considered in
6 Tranche 3 of the Inquiry.

7 HN 67 had at least one sexual encounter during his
8 deployment, and I will return to this in more detail
9 later.

10 He received no formal training for his role, but did
11 speak to other undercover officers whilst he was in the
12 back office in preparation for his deployment, as well
13 as referring to a "book/folder of tried and tested best
14 practices."

15 He was visited by SDS managers before he formally
16 joined. They spoke to him and his wife about the nature
17 of the work, including the risks associated with "flesh
18 pots" females.

19 HN 67's cover address was in Brixton and he arranged
20 it himself through a letting agency. He used a van as
21 his cover vehicle and his cover employment was as
22 a kitchen fitter. He stated that the biweekly meetings
23 at the SDS safe houses were "an open discussion in order
24 that all undercover officers knew what was happening and
25 could then have an input into deployments."

1 He stated that he would hand his intelligence
2 reports in at these meetings.

3 HN 67 stated that he would attend the weekly Brixton
4 Socialist Workers Party branch meetings at which there
5 would be a political lecture and briefings on upcoming
6 events. Members would then go to the pub and discuss
7 the allocation of tasks.

8 Sir, there is a thorough review of HN 67's reporting
9 included in the annex to Counsel to the Inquiry's
10 written opening. But in short, it reveals the
11 following.

12 HN 67 reported on the routine business of the
13 Brixton branch of the Socialist Workers Party. That
14 branch was at times known as the Lambeth and Croyden
15 Socialist Workers Party. He reported on political
16 discussions as well as practical arrangements for paper
17 sales and other group activities. He reported on plans
18 to engage in flyposting in solidarity with striking
19 health workers, to register opposition at Labour Party
20 conferences and to demonstrate against the Police Bill
21 at Brockwell Park in January 1984.

22 HN 67 reported in February 1983 that he had been
23 elected to the committee of Brixton Socialist Workers
24 Party, and in May he chaired a meeting. In July 1983,
25 he took over as paper sales organiser and in August he

1 held the positions of assistant paper sales organiser
2 and representative for Tulse Hill, West Norwood and
3 Streatham. He resigned those positions in November 1983
4 and was moved by Socialist Workers Party to the Croydon
5 branch in February 1984. It is asserted in the risk
6 assessment, sir, that HN 67 was the "treasurer of the
7 Socialist Workers Party", but this is not borne out by
8 a review of the contemporaneous documents and it is not
9 an assertion repeated elsewhere.

10 HN 67 reported consistently that the directions to
11 members of Brixton and Croydon branches of the Socialist
12 Workers Party was to "withdraw" in the face of physical
13 confrontation by the National Front at paper sales.
14 HN 67 also reported on what he described as "entirely
15 peaceful" demonstrations organised by the Streatham
16 group of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

17 As his deployment progressed, HN 67 began to report
18 more frequently on the Socialist Workers Party as
19 a national organisation. He reported on a demonstration
20 in Warrington on the back of a "national call-out" at
21 which disturbances were reported and he attended the
22 annual Skegness Easter rally in 1983, 1984 and 1985.

23 In 1985, the national Socialist Workers Party
24 relocated its printshop and headquarters to Oval. On
25 30 August of that year, HN 67 provided a sketch-plan for

1 the new building. On 3 September, he met with managers
2 and the Security Service to discuss the new building and
3 they provisionally agreed to meet again. On
4 6 September, HN 67 provided a further sketch-plan, and
5 additionally, sir, on 11 September, he met again with
6 the Security Service.

7 On 8 October, he submitted further plans, details of
8 the electrical and computer set up, intended occupants
9 of offices, locks and access arrangements and the
10 details of contractors being used to install equipment
11 and alarms.

12 The Security Service appears to have been kept
13 informed of HN 67's deployment throughout, submitting
14 requests for HN 67 to identify individuals and provide
15 information about their activities. A meeting between
16 the Security Service and SDS managers on 24 September
17 1984 included a discussion of the merits of HN 67
18 reporting on Brixton Socialist Workers Party rather than
19 Croydon Socialist Workers Party. In addition, in May
20 1985, the Security Service appears to have warned the
21 SDS about a possible compromise to HN 67. He was
22 debriefed by the Security Service at the end of his
23 deployment.

24 Throughout HN 67's deployment he reported on
25 individuals' personal details including employment,

1 family heritage, pregnancy, sexual relationships and
2 sexuality. HN 67, sir, used inappropriate terms to
3 describe ethnicity, and he reported on the activities of
4 children in connection with the Socialist Workers Party.
5 In addition he reported on members of the Brixton and
6 Croydon branches of the Socialist Workers Party who were
7 employed by public bodies and on trade union
8 connections.

9 Sir, moving away from the summary of his reporting,
10 the risk assessment from 2017 records that in order to
11 effect his exfiltration, HN 67 told his Socialist
12 Workers Party branch that he owed too much tax and it
13 was time for him to move on. His withdrawal appears to
14 have proceeded without complication.

15 Contemporaneous documents reveal that on 20 December
16 1983, HN 67 was involved in a road traffic collision
17 whilst driving his cover vehicle. He reported the
18 incident to his insurer in his cover identity.

19 Sir, HN 67 has admitted that whilst in his cover
20 identity he engaged in a "one-night stand" with a woman
21 during the course of his deployment. There is
22 a separate allegation that HN 67 fathered a child to
23 a member of his target group, which HN 67 has denied.
24 On 20 February 2013, HN 67 was visited by police
25 officers attached to Operation Herne to take an account

1 from him which is recorded in notes of that meeting.
2 HN 67 is recorded as stating that he was warned by SDS
3 managers that he could be tempted by "flesh pots"
4 females. He stated that he "kept himself aloof and
5 tried to keep his distance", and that there was no talk
6 of sexual relationships with activists in the office.

7 On 16 March 2015, an officer from Operation Herne
8 spoke with HN 67 on the phone about a rumour that HN 67
9 had had a relationship with an activist and fathered
10 a child during his deployment. HN 67 denied the rumour,
11 but he did say this:

12 "I did have a one night stand about a year before
13 I left the field but that was it."

14 He later stated that he could not recall the name of
15 the woman. He said that he had given her and others
16 a lift home after a "week long educational meeting at
17 the University of London", and she asked him in for
18 a drink and he "ended up staying the night."

19 HN 67 stated that he was not on duty at the time and
20 that to his knowledge the encounter did not result in
21 pregnancy.

22 In addition, sir, the risk assessment records that
23 HN 67 stated that he reported this encounter to
24 Detective Inspector Mike Barber, and that the incident
25 was recorded.

1 Sir, officers from Operation Herne spoke to HN 19,
2 cover name Malcolm Shearing, from whom we will be
3 hearing tomorrow about HN 67 on 8 August 2018. HN 19
4 disclosed that he had a reasonable supposition that
5 HN 67 was in a relationship with someone from HN 67's
6 target group and that he had fathered her child.

7 HN 19 has provided a witness statement to the
8 Inquiry. He states that he encountered HN 67 by chance
9 during his deployment, whilst they were both deployed,
10 that is, and noticed a woman with a distinctive voice in
11 HN 67's target group. Some time later, HN 19 and HN 67
12 went to a pub together socially and HN 67 told HN 19
13 that he had fathered that woman's child. HN 19 later
14 saw the woman with a small baby.

15 The two officers spoke again, during which
16 conversation HN 67 gave HN 19 the impression that he had
17 fathered that same child. HN 19 recalls that HN 83 made
18 a comment that seemed to confirm he was aware that HN 67
19 had fathered a child whilst deployed. HN 19 assumed it
20 was known to more than just the three of them.

21 Sir, HN 83, who has real name and cover name
22 anonymity, has provided a witness statement to the
23 Inquiry in which appear he denies any knowledge of these
24 matters. He states that he would see HN 67 at the
25 biweekly meeting whilst their deployments overlapped and

1 that they would sometimes meet socially:

2 "I would not describe our relationship as close but
3 we were friends."

4 HN 83 states that the topic of sexual relationships
5 never came up between them and that if he had become
6 privy to such information he would have "had a quiet
7 word with management". HN 83 states that he believes he
8 became aware through the Inquiry risk assessment process
9 about the allegation that HN 67 had a sexual
10 relationship whilst deployed, but he knew nothing about
11 HN 67 fathering a child.

12 HN 83 was still in contact with HN 67 as of November
13 2018. HN 83 adds that he was shocked to read in the
14 press about Bob Lambert, who we know otherwise as HN 10,
15 having fathered a child and is "positive" that those
16 revelations about Bob Lambert would have triggered
17 a memory about HN 67 if he had ever been aware of the
18 allegation.

19 In 2002, sir, HN 67 appeared in the True Spies
20 documentary, using the pseudonym Richard, in which he
21 discussed a product contamination threat to Lucozade,
22 said to have been reported by John Dines, also known as
23 HN 5. HN 67 was John Dines' manager in the SDS at the
24 time when the Lucozade threat was reported on.

25 HN 67 has stated that he became aware that

1 John Dines was "involved in a relationship" with
2 Helen Steel before he returned to the SDS as a manager,
3 and that he approached John Dines to voice concern.

4 However, HN 67 did not take the matter any further
5 with police management owing to his close friendship
6 with Mr Dines.

7 Sir, that concludes the summary of HN 67's evidence.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you. We are now going to hear the live
9 evidence of Michael Chant.

10 MR MICHAEL CHANT (affirmed)

11 THE CHAIR: Yes.

12 MS BRUCE-JONES: Good morning, sir, good morning, Mr Chant.

13 A. Good morning.

14 Q. Could we start by having your full name, please?

15 A. My full name is Michael Harold Chant.

16 Q. My name is Aphra Bruce-Jones and I am going to be asking
17 you some questions on behalf of Counsel to the Inquiry.

18 Can I ask that document UCPI036660 is brought up on
19 the screen. Sir, that is A1 of your bundle.

20 Mr Chant, is it correct that you provided the
21 Inquiry with a witness statement dated 19 January 2024?

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. Can we move to page 56 of that document. Can you
24 confirm that that is your signature, Mr Chant?

25 A. Yes, I can confirm that.

1 Q. And is this statement true and accurate to the best of
2 your knowledge and belief?

3 A. It is.

4 Q. Thank you, Mr Chant. All of your witness statement is
5 now in evidence and will be considered by the chair
6 alongside the oral evidence that you give today.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. Mr Chant, is it correct that you are currently the
9 general secretary of the Revolutionary Communist Party
10 of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)?

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. If you don't mind, I am going to refer to the group as
13 the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
14 (Marxist-Leninist) throughout these questions, if that
15 is all right?

16 A. That's good, yes.

17 Q. When did you become the general secretary?

18 A. Well, actually, there is a question of leadership of
19 a party. We haven't always had a general secretary and
20 from our third Congress of the party, which was in 1999,
21 I increasingly took up leadership duties. So it was
22 formally consolidated that I should be general secretary
23 in a subsequent period.

24 And it is actually in the record when that was. My
25 recollection is that it was around -- it would be 2005,

1 something like that.

2 Q. Thank you. Would it be fair to say that you became
3 involved in the politics of the Revolutionary Communist
4 Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) as a young graduate
5 who had moved to London, I think as, a composer, to meet
6 and work with a man named Cornelius Cardew?

7 A. Yes, that's right.

8 Q. And it was through his experimental music class at
9 Morley College in the late 60s and early 70s that
10 a group called The Scratch Orchestra was formed, is that
11 right?

12 A. Yes. The Scratch Orchestra is famous or infamous for
13 its experimental music. It was ground-breaking for its
14 time.

15 Q. And were you a member of The Scratch Orchestra?

16 A. Yes. Anyone who turned up was a member.

17 Q. And is it right that The Scratch Orchestra joined with
18 the English Communist Movement (Marxist Leninist) around
19 1971?

20 A. Not strictly. There was no joining of the two
21 organisations. Members of The Scratch Orchestra blamed
22 aware of the English Communist Movement (Marxist
23 Leninist) through its experience of -- I mean, it's
24 covered, I think, but it had a tour of -- it was based
25 on taking music to village halls, and it took its music

1 to the north-east supported by funding from Arts Council
2 of England as it was then.

3 This coincided with certain orchestra members having
4 come into contact with English Communist Movement. So
5 there was no formal joining. It's just that quite
6 a large proportion of The Scratch Orchestra became
7 interested in the English Communist Movement (Marxist
8 Leninist), and that in fact the majority of the active
9 Scratch Orchestra musicians became very political at
10 that time. We are talking about 1971.

11 Q. And do you include yourself as one of those members who
12 became very political at that time?

13 A. Yes. I believe I was quite slow in gravitating towards
14 the politics, but once I had done, then I remained
15 pretty stalwart.

16 Q. You have set out in your witness statement at section 1
17 a very clear chronology and explanation of your movement
18 into the English Communist League. But can I ask
19 firstly, is it correct that you became involved in the
20 Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) in
21 1973?

22 A. Yes. I was quite an activist in 1973. In 1972, I think
23 I had attended meetings and so on and become interested.
24 There was the activities which I think I mention of the
25 Progressive Intellectuals Study Group, which was a

1 really exciting discussion group. So it was 1973,
2 I think, when I became what you would call an activist
3 at the party.

4 Q. At that time, that group was called the Communist Party
5 of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist). Is it correct that
6 in 1979 the group that we refer to today, the
7 Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
8 (Marxist-Leninist) came into existence?

9 A. Yes. It was -- we say that Revolutionary Communist
10 Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) was founded in 1979.
11 It was like a continuation of Communist Party of
12 Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist). So there was
13 a conference on March 16, 1979 at which Revolutionary
14 Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) was
15 founded.

16 Q. At the risk of oversimplifying the politics and the
17 history of it, is it correct that when you were involved
18 in the Communist Party of Great Britain
19 (Marxist-Leninist) in 1973, the party was based on Mao
20 Zedong thought alongside Marxist-Leninism, and that you
21 would be considered Maoist to those engaged in the
22 movement at that time?

23 A. Yes. That is a quite accurate assessment. We did --
24 like the way you put it, that it was based on Mao Zedong
25 thought alongside Marxism-Leninism is the way we would

1 characterise it. It is worth noting, I think, that the
2 activities of the party were not really to go around
3 saying everyone should follow Mao Zedong's thought. It
4 was taking up issues such as the national liberation
5 struggle in Ireland, various Afro-Asian solidarity
6 campaigns and so on.

7 Q. Thank you. When the party became the Revolutionary
8 Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) was there
9 a change in the thought? Were you still following the
10 Mao Zedong thought with Marxist-Leninism or was there
11 a change before that?

12 A. It dates before then, actually. I recall from some of
13 the disclosures, I think, that I believe there is one on
14 subversion which referred to Marxism-Leninism, the
15 groups formally known as Maoist were now known as
16 Marxist-Leninism. I don't think that's quite accurate
17 in the sense that it kind of suggests that there was
18 that continuity.

19 Whereas we were kind of aware of some of the issues
20 of Mao Zedong thought which didn't really coincide with
21 our thinking and how we saw Marxism-Leninism.

22 So that is, you can say, dating from 1978, so as
23 before the founding of Revolutionary Communist Party of
24 Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

25 Q. Thank you. That is helpful.

1 Can we bring up the document again, UCPI036660.
2 That's your statement, Mr Chant. Can we go to
3 paragraph 2.14.

4 So paragraph 2.14, Mr Chant. I will just read. You
5 describe here I think the aims of the Revolutionary
6 Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist):

7 "At its formation, the Revolutionary Communist Party
8 of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) saw its aims as building
9 an organisation that would be for and part of the
10 working class and oppressed peoples movement for
11 revolutionary change and the socialist transformation of
12 society. The Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
13 (Marxist-Leninist) had a membership and form consistent
14 with the Leninist principles of a Party of a new type."

15 Could you just explain for us what that last
16 sentence meant in terms of what the membership and form
17 of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
18 (Marxist-Leninist) would look like?

19 A. Yes. At that time, I mean first of all I think one has
20 to remember that this was a period when -- I mean, there
21 was a lot of political activity, when one could say that
22 the revolutionary movement was kind of recognised. So
23 they are all parties -- which have changed over time, it
24 has to be said, in terms of how they engage with their
25 membership and whether the membership decides

1 everything -- so it was important to us to reaffirm that
2 it was what Lenin had said, in this overall era of what
3 we would say was the era of imperialism and the
4 proletarian revolution, that a genuine Marxist-Leninist
5 party, as we insisted on at the time, should follow
6 that, those Leninist principles. So that means that
7 it's a party which had discipline, which had the
8 involvement of its membership in decision-making, which
9 was based on democratic centralism and so on.

10 So I think that that kind of covers what we were
11 concerned with when -- at the founding conversation of
12 Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
13 (Marxist-Leninist).

14 Q. Thank you very much. Can we now, please, bring up
15 document number MPS-0747710. Sir, this is at 82 of the
16 HN 19-bundle.

17 The Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
18 (Marxist-Leninist) was infiltrated and reported on by
19 undercover officer nominal HN 19, cover name
20 Malcolm Shearing. Do you remember Malcolm Shearing,
21 Mr Chant?

22 A. Yes, I do, yes.

23 Q. Can you tell us what sort of role, if any, did he have
24 in the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
25 (Marxist-Leninist)?

1 A. He became quite an activist. Mainly in south London.
2 And his reports tend to focus on south London. One can
3 say unduly in the sense that the party was a national
4 party, it was particularly active in east London as
5 well, for example.

6 So he was very active in south London. He mentions
7 Tom Graham as, I believe he uses the term "his mentor".
8 You know, he was a protégé in that sense of Tom Graham.
9 He joined the work of mainly selling the paper, Workers
10 Weekly, particularly as it was South London at Brixton
11 tube every week.

12 Possibly with -- and there was also a programme of
13 pub selling. He might have been involved in that, but
14 I can't be sure about that. Certainly he would sell the
15 paper at Brixton tube along with Tom Graham. But my
16 recollection is that he didn't really join in the
17 political discussion an awful lot. He was regarded as
18 quite useful in the sense that he had a vehicle and
19 I think he mentions at some point that in effect he
20 is -- it's like he became Tom Graham's driver. Tom
21 Graham was one of the older comrades in the party at
22 that time, but he was -- I mean, I can speak some more
23 about Tom Graham because it comes up in HN 19's witness
24 statement also.

25 Q. Perhaps you could just tell us, what was Tom Graham's

1 role within the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
2 (Marxist-Leninist)?

3 A. He was very much just an activist, and very active in
4 South London. His background was that he was born in
5 Edinburgh in 1918. As a young teenager, he'd found his
6 way to London. He tried to go to Spain in 1936 to
7 participate in the International Brigade's struggle
8 against Francoism, and so on. But his trade was as
9 a building worker but at his heart he was very much an
10 author, and a lot of his activities in the party were
11 along those lines.

12 He wrote a number of plays and some of the activists
13 of the party participated in them.

14 At the time we are talking about, I mean it's quite
15 interesting that in 1978, I think it was, when there was
16 a by-election -- Lambeth Central by-election, I think,
17 and one of our comrades stood on a democratic platform.
18 Tom Graham's address was used as the election
19 headquarters --

20 Q. I see. So it would be fair to say he was very active in
21 the group?

22 A. Indeed, yes.

23 Q. And therefore HN 19, Malcolm Shearing seemed to spend
24 a lot of time with him?

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

1 Q. I want to take you to part of Malcolm Shearing's
2 statement where he makes some comments about the reasons
3 for his deployment into the Revolutionary Communist
4 Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). Can I ask that we
5 go to paragraph 57, which is at page 22?

6 It is actually the sort of second half of that
7 paragraph. I will read out the section. He's talking
8 about why he had decided to target the Revolutionary
9 Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). He says:

10 "The Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
11 (Marxist-Leninist) was small and very extreme, used
12 petrol bombs and had taken up allegiance with Albania.
13 Without getting involved in political discussion it
14 seemed to be a very extreme organisation in their
15 behaviour. If taken seriously, their plans for how to
16 run British society were very extreme."

17 Firstly, Mr Chant, what do you say to the
18 allegation, I guess, in this part of HN 19's statement
19 that the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
20 (Marxist-Leninist) had used petrol bombs?

21 A. It's not true. And there was -- there was some other
22 parts of his statement as well which kind of indicate
23 that Tom Graham had suggested that the party had used
24 petrol bombs in the past. He doesn't give any -- any
25 evidence for this, apart from the hearsay. In fact, as

1 I recall, he says that he had no idea what this, the
2 context of this and what this referred to.

3 Our view has always been that these kind of -- one
4 could almost call them terrorist activities, this kind
5 of violence, we wouldn't engage in it. It wasn't
6 appropriate. And I think it might be said that, like
7 a couple of conversations with Tom Graham that he
8 mentions in the pub after activities doesn't amount to
9 evidence for that.

10 Q. What about the second suggestion that the party had
11 taken up allegiance with Albania? It is correct,
12 I think, is it, that the party had aligned itself with
13 Albania. Are you able to briefly explain why?

14 A. Yes, certainly. First of all, I would say that it's not
15 really allegiance we are talking about, in the sense
16 that we'd always as a party decided on our own path.

17 Q. Yes?

18 A. As part of our considerations, you could say, fraternal
19 relations with other parties, other countries and so on,
20 That we found that -- well, first of all this was our --
21 what we would call proletarian internationalism to say
22 that we fought on the same fronts for a new world,
23 for -- as we would have said then, for
24 socialism/communism.

25 In 1978, I believe it was, Enver Hoxha, who was the

1 leader of the Party of Labour of Albania, wrote a book
2 which was very influential, called "Imperialism and the
3 Revolution", which took issue with certain concepts of
4 what was known as Maoism or Mao Zedong thought or the
5 stand of the Communist Party of China. But it wasn't
6 that, if you understand what I am saying, it wasn't that
7 we then said "oh, we are going to have our allegiance
8 changed from China to Albania"; allegiance isn't the
9 word we would have used.

10 Q. I understand.

11 A. Does that explain it?

12 Q. Yes, thank you, Mr Chant.

13 Can we move, please, to paragraph 65 which is at
14 page 25. I'll just briefly read this bit:

15 "The justification for deploying into the
16 Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
17 (Marxist-Leninist) became clear to me initially as
18 a result of my research into the group within Special
19 Branch records. Although small in numbers, the Special
20 Branch records indicated a track record of conspicuous
21 violence on the streets and political extremism."

22 Mr Chant, you have already explained that the
23 suggestion in this statement that the Revolutionary
24 Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) had used
25 petrol bombs is untrue. What do you say to this

1 suggestion that there was a track record of conspicuous
2 violence on the streets?

3 A. Well, once again, I think what this is referring to was
4 our stand on the promotion of Neo-Nazi type
5 organisations. It was our stand that there was like
6 a campaign to try and make such parties like the
7 National Front into respectable legitimate political
8 parties. And I think as I mention in the witness
9 statement, I mean the -- it was 35 years, I think we
10 said, after the defeat of the Nazis and the Japanese
11 militarists, the Axis powers in World War II. It is
12 interesting that one could say looking at that history
13 leading up to the formation and promotion of the
14 National Front and similar organisations, that this
15 issue of extremes had been really promoted as a way of
16 looking at the world.

17 You see, I think we take issue with the fact that
18 there's an extreme left and an extreme right, as the
19 motive for our existence or motive for opposing the
20 National Front. It's much more what was happening in
21 society, in the world and particularly in politics in
22 Britain at that time.

23 Q. So --

24 A. Yes, so the question of extremism and violence on the
25 streets, yes, we took a stand that Nazis have no right

1 to organise, but the battles that took place were,
2 I mean, going back to an earlier time, but 1974 when Red
3 Lion Square took place, when the anti-fascist movement
4 in general took a stand that the National Front should
5 not be allowed to meet in Conway Hall, this was placing
6 ourselves as a block to them doing so. And in
7 confrontations, yes, I mean, in Red Lion Square it was
8 a student Kevin Gately that was killed. And I think
9 it's fairly recognised it was by police truncheons. So
10 I think that's, in terms of violence on the streets,
11 that is what is being referred to. But it wasn't --
12 unlike some of the other organisations on the left, it
13 may recall just confrontation with the so-called extreme
14 right, the far right for its own sake. I hope that
15 makes it clear.

16 Q. Yes, thank you.

17 The last thing I want to look at in this statement
18 is just a bit further down in this paragraph. HN 19
19 says the following:

20 "The Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
21 (Marxist-Leninist)'s motivation was subversive in that
22 they wanted to overthrow parliamentary democracy,
23 establish a dictatorship of the proletariat and so
24 establish a one-party state."

25 He goes on in that paragraph to say that towards the

1 end of his deployment it was his view that the
2 Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
3 (Marxist-Leninist) was diminishing and therefore his
4 deployment into the group was not the best use of
5 resource.

6 But just two things, would you agree with the
7 characterisation that the Revolutionary Communist Party
8 of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) wanted to overthrow
9 parliamentary democracy?

10 A. As I think I say in the witness statement, it's like
11 parliamentary democracy has kind of overthrown itself.
12 By going back to the sort of Leninist conception that we
13 talked about earlier, I mean it's useful kind of to
14 bring that up to date, if you like, when there is
15 a sense that the electorate, the people as a whole, are
16 kind of disempowered from decision-making, from the
17 influence on the political life of the country and
18 so on, by the very fact of this parliamentary democracy.

19 It's not a sort of new concept. One can date it
20 back to the English Civil Wars. The establishment of
21 the Commonwealth under Cromwell, the debates that -- the
22 so-called Putney Debates on the nature of democracy. So
23 it is not some peculiar conception of Revolutionary
24 Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

25 The document, I am not sure about the authorisation

1 of the document. The source of it, I mean. On
2 subversion. It kind of -- HN 19's testimony is in line
3 with that kind of definition, I think, of subversion.

4 Dictatorship of the proletariat, yes, I mean we --
5 it's of its time also. In late 1970s, the early 1980s,
6 that we would keep emphasising this necessity for
7 capitalism to be transformed into socialism, and you
8 have dictatorship of the proletariat.

9 We would not describe that process, that
10 accomplishment in the same way these days. I mean,
11 partly because the issue of dictatorship has other
12 connotations, especially after the 1930s with Hitler
13 coming to power and so on. And the issue of a one-party
14 State, this is HN 19's interpretation. We never talked
15 about a one-party state. In fact, our position became
16 elaborated in what we term is the guiding principle of
17 our party today, which is that of working for democratic
18 renewal. In other words, it is a stand that it is not
19 parties that should come to power, as it is under
20 parliamentary democracy; it is that people should be
21 empowered to have political control. Such divisions as
22 exist can be overcome if there are new forms developed
23 in order to empower the people and for them to speak in
24 their own name.

25 Q. Thank you, Mr Chant. That's very helpful.

1 Let me move on to a new document. Can we please
2 bring up UCPI017236. Sir, this is at tab B15. This is
3 an intelligence report dated 4 March 1982, which reports
4 on the first annual conference of the campaign for
5 diplomatic relations with Albania.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. I want to look specifically at paragraph 3. I am afraid
8 I will read it out:

9 "The conference was chaired by Dafydd Wigley, Member
10 of Parliament and president of Plaid Cymru. His brief
11 introduction including apologies for absence from
12 William Wilson MP was followed by a speech from
13 Professor [privacy] chairman of the CDRA who outlined
14 the current situation in which the United Kingdom and
15 Albania do not have diplomatic relations with each
16 other. The gist of the problem is that following an
17 incident in a minefield in Albanian coastal water during
18 which ships of the Royal Navy suffered casualties and
19 damage the Bank of England retains to this day
20 a quantity of Albanian gold, seized by the allies for
21 safe keeping during World War II. This unremarkable
22 speech was followed by a similar effort from Steven
23 Calder, secretary of CDRA, who laid more emphasis on the
24 activities of the campaign (which amounted to a small
25 number of demonstrations and much writing of letters to

1 newspaper). Finally [privacy] treasurer of CDRA,
2 delivered what was little more than his personal vote of
3 confidence for the efforts of the campaign."

4 Can we now move to paragraph 5? This paragraph
5 reads:

6 "The stated aims of the CDRA are ostensibly
7 straightforward and stem from legitimate commercial and
8 cultural aspirations, however it is of interest that
9 Steven Calder is identical with Michael Chant, south
10 London regional secretary of the Revolutionary Communist
11 Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and that
12 approximately half of the persons remaining for the
13 'business' part of the conference were current members
14 of the party or at least regular supporters of its
15 meetings. In addition to Chant, Bland [privacy] and
16 [privacy], these included [privacy] and Tom Graham."

17 Is it correct that Steven Calder was an alias used
18 by you?

19 A. That's correct, yes. It was like my persona within
20 the -- overall it was known as the Albanian Society.
21 The CDRA was a kind of campaign within the activities of
22 the Albanian Society.

23 Q. Was it common for those within the Revolutionary
24 Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) to adopt
25 an alias or a persona?

1 A. It was quite common at that time, yes.

2 Q. Can you tell us why?

3 A. Yes. It was a question of security concerns. In
4 adopting what were known as party names, we had the
5 conception of guarding our identities from the State.
6 And not from the people, you know, we were working with
7 politically. One of the reasons it kind of faded away
8 was we really realised that the State would know our
9 identities anyway, as has been proved after all this
10 time.

11 And it is quite interesting that our suspicions at
12 that time are sort of corroborating after all this
13 period, which is quite interesting. But anyway, and
14 that also the fact that generally speaking the
15 activists, the ordinary people we were working with,
16 simply knew our party names, our aliases. So it didn't
17 really achieve its objective.

18 Nevertheless, you know, I am not aware of kind of
19 anyone else that had such a developed alter ego, if you
20 like, profile, as myself in the Albanian Society.
21 I mean, that was the -- it wasn't the fact that I was
22 trying to conceal my allegiance or my involvement with
23 Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
24 (Marxist-Leninist), in fact that was known. It
25 developed over time that I would become very active

1 within the Albanian Society.

2 While we are on the subject, perhaps I could mention
3 also Tom Graham who was widely known as John Maharg.
4 Actually, HN 19 never mentions that name, but Tom was
5 widely known as John Maharg because that was his pen
6 name, it was a nom de plume. I can't remember if
7 I mentioned, but anyway he retired as a building worker
8 in 1955 actually to devote himself to writing, and it
9 was roughly the same time as he came into contact with
10 the party. So everyone knew him as John Maharg.

11 Q. I see. So there were other members of the party who
12 also used party names or alternative personas in their
13 work with the party?

14 A. Yes. Yes.

15 Q. Mr Chant, I want to ask you now a bit more about the
16 organisation of the Revolutionary Communist Party of
17 Britain (Marxist-Leninist). I am going to ask to bring
18 up your witness statement again. That is UCPI036660,
19 sir, at A1. Go, please, to page 38. Paragraph 12.6(i).
20 So it is the 12 of 6(i) that comes after 12.6, if that
21 makes sense. This is what you have written, Mr Chant:

22 "Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
23 (Marxist-Leninist) is a democratic centralist
24 organisation."

25 You mentioned that at the start of your evidence:

1 "Democratic centralism is an organisational method
2 applied by the Bolsheviks. In a nutshell it effectively
3 means democracy in discussion -- centralism in action
4 within a strategy of building a campaign and the party,
5 there cannot be democratic centralism without dealing
6 with the line of the party."

7 At paragraph (ii):

8 "Put simply, as a party we discuss campaigns,
9 strategy and tactics and then after the maximum
10 discussion a decision is made and the members follow
11 that decision and campaign accordingly. Democratic
12 centralism ensures the unit of the party and the full
13 participation of its members."

14 Can we now bring up a separate document,
15 MPS-0729245, which, sir, is at tab B32. If we just
16 scroll down, this is an intelligence report dated
17 17 August 1982. It is described as a review of some
18 aspects of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
19 (Marxist-Leninist).

20 I want to go to paragraph 3 specifically. Well, 3
21 and then I will move on:

22 "The Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
23 (Marxist-Leninist)'s recently published draft
24 constitution ... demonstrates that in order to achieve
25 the above aim it has attempted to model itself from

1 overall strategy to every day terminology on the Russian
2 Bolshevik party. To the impartial observer any
3 comparison between Russia of 1917 and present day
4 Britain may appear absurd, but whatever the
5 incongruities the Revolutionary Communist Party of
6 Britain (Marxist-Leninist) recognises the essential
7 similarities."

8 Paragraph 4:

9 "One such perceived similarity is the belief in the
10 ability of a small highly disciplined organisation faced
11 with the reality or the prospect of illegality to act
12 decisively at the right time to change the course of
13 a nation. Faint-hearts who remain unconvinced by the
14 Russian example are referred to the original 15 Albanian
15 'eagles' who developed into the early 200 strong nucleus
16 of the Communist Party of Albania. (Compared with those
17 200 the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
18 (Marxist-Leninist) is said to be 'quite large'.")

19 5:

20 "From their total conviction of the correctness of
21 the historical analysis and from the anticipated
22 persecution by the existing capitalist state, it
23 naturally follows that comrades feel vulnerable and are
24 highly security conscious. In practice their fears are
25 translated into a strict need to know policy which

1 conveniently complements the professed principles of
2 democratic centralism wherein central control all but
3 totally excludes any element of genuine democracy. Thus
4 it is considered unnecessary and undesirable for the
5 public, supporters and even the mass of ordinary party
6 members to know the identities of leading comrades or
7 particular details of the party machinery. Meetings
8 which are open to the public seldom attract participants
9 from beyond the familiar circle of members, supporters
10 and contacts but nevertheless it is understood that
11 there are certain comrades who, to avoid the risk of
12 exposure, seldom if ever attend such meetings."

13 Mr Chant, just that assertion at paragraph 5 that it
14 is considered unnecessary and undesirable for the public
15 supporters or ordinary party members to know the
16 identities of leading comrades or particular details of
17 the party machinery, would you say that is accurate?

18 A. Not really. As I have sort of mentioned in connection
19 with party names, it was never the -- any intention to
20 keep our identity from supporters and, as it says "the
21 mass of ordinary party members". These were security
22 concerns.

23 If I may comment on that. Those previous statements
24 in the witness statement about democratic centralism,
25 I mean, the tone is kind of meant to be quite

1 conversational in that witness statement. In
2 particular, my witness statement often talks about
3 campaigns. I think that, like just focusing as it were
4 on those two extracts on democratic centralism, it's not
5 entirely appropriate to talk about campaigns as such.
6 I mean, whether or not, you know, one would agree with
7 our party or not, it had a vision and still has a vision
8 for a different type of world. So campaigns, yes, but
9 it's not that we ever stood aside, as it were, from the
10 people and thought, well, this is a campaign we should
11 be involved in. Like in 1981, when we held the
12 Conference Against Racism and Fascism, in Conway Hall as
13 it happens, the hall was full.

14 The fact is that we were part of the people's
15 movement against racism and fascism and the fact that so
16 many people would come to a conference that the party
17 had organised, I think proved that. Could I also just
18 mention one other thing while I remember, which is on
19 this question of violence or terrorism or -- I just
20 remembered something else, which I meant to say in
21 connection with Tom Graham, if I may, which is that
22 I think I began to talk about the 1978 Lambeth
23 by-election.

24 Q. Yes?

25 A. Where we used Tom Graham's address as the base for the

1 party. In fact, in the middle of that campaign, there
2 was a fire precisely at that address. It wasn't just
3 Tom Graham that had to be rehoused, there were a number
4 of people living in that house, so it was very dangerous
5 and our supposition was always that it was an act of the
6 Neo-Nazis to attack our party.

7 The other connected point -- which is why
8 I remembered it -- about the campaigns about racism was
9 that we were part of the ordinary resistance, like it is
10 really important that the people are very -- are only
11 too willing to resist. Our slogan was self-defence is
12 the only way. There were many people in east London,
13 which is dealt with in an earlier tranche, but that were
14 part of this movement of self-defence. I noticed in
15 looking through HN 19's submissions that he -- I think
16 it is there -- includes a publication of, in the East
17 London People's Front, which specifically has an article
18 against terrorism and terrorist activities.
19 Specifically their organisation suggested that they
20 should set up vigilante groups against racists who were
21 conducting racist attacks. We never agreed with this.
22 We always said it is the people who need to be
23 mobilised.

24 Q. Thank you.

25 Just back to this document, Mr Chant. From your

1 helpful explanation would it be fair to say that you
2 often held meetings like, for example, the conference
3 you just referred to at Conway Hall which were open to
4 the public and attracted many members of the public, not
5 just members of the party?

6 A. That's correct. I mean, not just meetings like that.
7 But -- and HN 19 refers to the sports and cultural
8 festival in -- the sports events which were held in
9 Coventry where many thousands of people participated and
10 there were local sports and cultural festivals also. We
11 held a big cultural side of the festival in St Pancras
12 Town Hall.

13 Q. I will ask you some questions about that later,
14 actually.

15 A. Sorry.

16 Q. We will come on to that.

17 Just continuing with this briefly, I read earlier
18 paragraph 4 where HN 19 draws what he says is
19 a similarity between the Revolutionary Communist Party
20 of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and the Russian Bolshevik
21 party:

22 "The belief in the ability of a small, highly
23 disciplined organisation, faced with the reality or
24 prospect of illegality, to act decisively at the right
25 time to change the course of a nation."

1 Would you agree that that is a correct
2 characterisation of the Revolutionary Communist Party of
3 Britain (Marxist-Leninist) beliefs?

4 A. Well, I think I say somewhere that's not -- anyway, I am
5 saying it now -- it wasn't really a question of beliefs
6 in that sense.

7 We would say now that the October Revolution in
8 Russia was a crucial event. It opened the way for the
9 world's first worker's state and so on. And Lenin said,
10 you know, "now we proceed to build socialism".

11 So, yes, we took heart from that and also the
12 example of Albania. But I think it is worth saying here
13 also that I am sure there is an implication somewhere in
14 the documents that it shows that the party was committed
15 to violence if you like. But it doesn't even really
16 deal with the situation in 1917.

17 Q. So if we refer to the specific words where it says that
18 the circumstances where the party may have to act
19 decisively at the right time to change the course of a
20 nation, what would that decisive action look like? Are
21 you saying that that decisive action would not be
22 something violent?

23 A. Well, we are looking at the situation of the party at
24 that time and the world revolutionary movement at that
25 time.

1 The Leninist position was that for a revolution to
2 occur, you have to have a crisis and the fact that the
3 ruling class, the ruling elite, whoever that is at the
4 time, couldn't rule in the old way. So the party steps
5 in. And in 1917 it was the fact that, you know, Russia
6 was part of the First World War. We withdrew from that
7 slaughter after the Bolshevik Revolution. So it is that
8 type of important political intervention that's the
9 crucial aspect. You know, with the Bolshevik Revolution
10 it was the slogan of "land, peace and bread" that was
11 decisive. Now we would not necessarily pose the
12 question, I think -- or the answer -- in the same way.
13 In that we point out that the present political system
14 is undemocratic in the sense that the people have no
15 voice of their own in running the country. I think part
16 of the party acting decisively today we could
17 characterise as formulating this conception of the
18 necessity for new forms.

19 As I said before, we very much focus on the
20 necessity for democratic renewal. We don't necessarily
21 say we have a revolution and let's establish socialism.
22 It is the people's empowerment that is key.

23 Q. I appreciate that that's how you would explain it today.
24 But in the period of time of this document in the early
25 1980s, would you say it was broadly a similar idea?

1 A. Well, as I say in the witness statement I believe, that
2 you are looking at the prospect of illegality. Like it
3 was -- I don't know whether it remains a distinct
4 possibility. I think we give the example of Chile in
5 that. That it may be necessary, you know, if the party
6 is declared illegal -- I mean, there are other ways of
7 undermining the party. But it is envisaging that
8 situation where actually it's not us that declares we
9 are illegal, it's what happens from the State's point of
10 view.

11 Q. Thank you, Mr Chant. That is very helpful.

12 Sir, I wonder if now would be a convenient time for
13 a break?

14 THE CHAIR: I think the transcriber definitely needs
15 a break. We have lasted an hour and three-quarters and
16 we will adjourn for 15 minutes.

17 A. Thank you.

18 (11.42 am)

19 (A short break)

20 (12.00 pm)

21 THE CHAIR: Yes.

22 MS BRUCE-JONES: Mr Chant, I am going to move on to
23 a different topic now. I am going to refer you to your
24 witness statement again. Please could we have
25 UCPI036660, and at page, I think, 46, paragraph 13.1.

1 This page you are dealing with HN 19, Malcolm Shearing.
2 But I specifically want to look at paragraph (iv) and
3 (v). You say this:

4 "I recall that we [you are talking about the
5 Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
6 (Marxist-Leninist)] organised (along with others on the
7 left) a counter protest against a one-person march by
8 Martin Webster, a leader of the National Front. The
9 march was heavily protected by the police. It was
10 effectively a stunt by Webster to draw attention to the
11 National Front.

12 "I recall that the undercover officer
13 'Malcolm Shearing' provocatively suggested an attempt to
14 break through police lines to confront National Front
15 leader Martin Webster. Had we followed this strategy we
16 would have been brutally assaulted by the police. Those
17 who remember think this was out of character of Shearing
18 and his suggestion was not taken up. We considered the
19 suggestion adventurist and did not have any serious aim
20 to it."

21 Just very briefly to explore this. Do you recall
22 how many individuals were taking part in this counter
23 protest?

24 A. It is very difficult to be sure after this period of
25 time. I would say -- because it was -- I believe it was

1 a fairly local event so maybe a couple of thousand or
2 five or ten thousand, that kind of number.

3 Q. How about the members of the Revolutionary Communist
4 Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), were you all
5 together? Do you remember roughly how many there were?

6 A. No, I don't remember. I mean, one reason for recalling
7 the occasion at all actually is because of
8 Malcolm Shearing's remark. It's about the only
9 conversation, if you can call it that, that I recall
10 having with him. I mean, there must have been others
11 over the course of a couple of years, but it has stuck
12 with me. Because of considering was this really
13 a serious suggestion by, you know, one of our activists
14 or not. So that's the reason it stuck with me after all
15 this time. And it's now, you know, been shown that --
16 the reaction that it was provocative suggestion is
17 underlined, yes.

18 Q. Do you know how many people heard this? Was this
19 a conversation that you had one on one with
20 Malcolm Shearing?

21 A. Yes, it was just one on one.

22 Q. You say you considered was this really a serious
23 suggestion. Do you think it was really a serious
24 suggestion? Was it a throwaway comment? What was your
25 impression of it?

1 A. Well, my impression was it was meant seriously. You
2 know, it was meant as an option for me to -- and whoever
3 was there -- to take up. It wasn't serious in the sense
4 that it was obviously not a feasible, practicable
5 proposal.

6 Q. You say not feasible. Is it correct to assume that
7 Martin Webster, the leader of the National Front, was
8 surrounded by a large number of police officers on this
9 occasion?

10 A. Sorry, yes, that's why, yes.

11 Q. I see.

12 A. And my memory may be faulty. I haven't been able
13 necessarily to find a reference to this precise
14 demonstration. My recollection is it was in the
15 Kennington area but that may be faulty. It's just
16 I have this particular recollection of Malcolm Shearing.
17 And I have a kind of mental picture of the situation
18 when he mentioned it, with so many police officers
19 around.

20 I think it was simply Martin Webster on his own, but
21 I may be wrong on that.

22 Q. Thank you. If we move on to a different document, still
23 on the question of violence as we've discussed earlier.
24 You talked about the Revolutionary Communist Party of
25 Britain (Marxist-Leninist) having a slogan in reference

1 to antifascists, self-defence is the only way.

2 Can I turn up the document UCPI018237, which is at tab
3 B22, sir.

4 It is an intelligence report dated 4 June 1982.
5 Reporting on plans for protest activities concerning the
6 visit to Britain of President Ronald Reagan in June 82.
7 I just want to look at paragraph 4. I will just read
8 the paragraph:

9 "Attendances by party members and supporters at
10 recent demonstrations (eg May Day march, Bobby Sands
11 memorial and the Ad Hoc Committee for Peace in the
12 Falklands) indicate that a maximum of 40 persons may be
13 expected at any one event. Since the heady days of the
14 party's forerunner organisation, the Communist Party of
15 Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) there have been few
16 instances of involvement in overt violence and practices
17 such as assaulting overly inquisitive photographers.
18 However the official line regarding attacks by fascist
19 (which in this context includes police officers acting
20 as implements of state oppression) is that active indeed
21 pre-emptive self-defence is obligatory. Linking of arms
22 and similar passive tactics are considered as no better
23 than running away."

24 You told us earlier about the party's position in
25 terms of confronting or blocking Neo-Nazis and their

1 positions regarding antifascist activity and you have
2 told us about the slogan of self-defence.

3 Perhaps just specifically with this document, is it
4 correct that fascists in the context that HN 19 puts it
5 included police officers acting as instruments of State
6 oppression and that pre-emptive self-defence being
7 obligatory related also to police officers, is that
8 correct?

9 A. I don't recognise any of that really as a party
10 position. I don't think I have seen that. Or been
11 aware of that particular paragraph before. I think it
12 gives a misleading impression of our stand, yes.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 I want to move on to the topic of "front"
15 organisations. I know that the term "front" is
16 sometimes controversial. Can we turn up document
17 UCPI017057, which, sir, is at B1. This is an
18 intelligence report dated 5 January 1981. Reporting on
19 a New Year celebration held by the party.

20 A. Can I just interrupt there? Because the date is
21 obviously not correct. It should be 1982. I noticed
22 that before. It reports on something that happened in
23 December 1981.

24 Q. You are quite right. Yes. The event took place on
25 31 December 1981. So it follows that indeed the report

1 should be dated 5 January 1982?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Thank you. It says that this was a celebration, around
4 100 persons present. At paragraph 3 it goes on to list
5 a number of groups which are associated with the
6 Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
7 (Marxist-Leninist). Just briefly, at paragraph 3(ii),
8 it lists the People's Democratic Front, the PDF, a broad
9 basted antiracist antifascist organisation. At (iii),
10 the Preparatory Committee for a Revolutionary Women's
11 Union of Britain. The paragraph below, (iv):

12 "The Communist Youth Union of Britain."

13 Then at (v), other party organisations such as the
14 Trade Union Revolutionary Opposition and the Health
15 Workers' Association.

16 Paragraph 4 says the following:

17 "It is career from the above that the party is
18 continued its policy of launching quasi-autonomous
19 organisations to carry out its various projects rather
20 than forming committees or subdivisions within itself.
21 By this simple ploy it hopes to minimise the risk of
22 exposing its internal structure whilst attracting
23 significant numbers of useful helpers who may not
24 necessarily be potential party members, but whose
25 suitability may be considered at leisure and at

1 a distance. Inevitably, most active comrades combine
2 party membership with participation in such
3 organisations, for example, Michael Chant (alias
4 'Steve') is South London Regional Secretary of the
5 party, Secretary of the Albanian Society and a member of
6 PDF. [privacy] (alias [privacy]) is a spokesman for the
7 TURO and the HWA. The current record holder appears to
8 be [privacy] (alias [privacy]) and [privacy], whose
9 activities include the Party, the Progressive Cultural
10 Association, People's Democratic Front, Health Workers'
11 Association and Revolutionary Women's Union of Britain."

12 I am going to deal with some of these organisations
13 shortly but in general, would you say it is accurate to
14 describe these organisations as quasi-autonomous of the
15 Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
16 (Marxist-Leninist)?

17 A. Well, it's not a term I think we ourselves would use.
18 As I think I make clear somewhere, that these were mass
19 organisations for the party in the sense that they
20 represented various fronts of work. And in that sense
21 they were united fronts, or mass fronts. And so it's
22 not that, you know, they were sort of underhand channels
23 for recruitment to the party. I think that's the first
24 thing to be said.

25 So quasi-autonomous is a strange way of putting it.

1 Certainly it is correct to say that they were inspired
2 and initiated by the Party and Revolutionary Communist
3 Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) comrades were very
4 active in them. But they had their programme. And it's
5 fair to say, I think, that because of the death of two
6 of our leading comrades in 1981 and 1982 respectively,
7 and the fact that the 1980s were a period where the
8 world was going through a change which everyone can see
9 now, you know, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and
10 so on, these organisations didn't continue in, you know,
11 in the form of whatever quasi-autonomous organisations.

12 Which doesn't mean to say that the party stopped
13 organising on these fronts. But it concentrated on its
14 own work, on its own activities and so so on.

15 Q. I see.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. So what do you say about the suggestion made by HN 19
18 that the reason for having the organisations was to
19 conceal or minimise risk of exposing the internal
20 structure of the Revolutionary Communist Party of
21 Britain (Marxist-Leninist)?

22 A. I think this is speculation on his part. It doesn't, it
23 isn't borne out by the way the party and these
24 organisations developed.

25 Q. Can we now move on to a document UCPI016833, tab B9.

1 This is an intelligence report dated 11 December
2 1981. The report refers to a number of events held over
3 the weekend of 5 to 6 December of 1981, by groups
4 associated with the Revolutionary Communist Party of
5 Britain (Marxist-Leninist). Specifically the
6 Preparatory Committee for a Revolutionary Women's Union
7 in Britain, the Progressive Cultural Association and the
8 People's Democratic Front. Can we look at paragraph 5,
9 please?

10 A. Can I just say at that point that HN 19 continuously
11 refers to the women's organisation as the Revolutionary
12 Women's Union of Britain. It was simply known as
13 Women's Union of Britain.

14 Q. Yes. I did note that point. I was going to ask you.
15 Perhaps whilst we are on it in that case, Mr Chant. Was
16 it the case that the organisation was always called the
17 Women's Union of Britain, and never had revolutionary in
18 its name?

19 A. That's correct.

20 Q. Was it a conscious not to use revolutionary that you are
21 aware of?

22 A. It must have been a conscious decision, but not from the
23 point of view that -- I don't think -- not to -- in my
24 experience that someone suggested it and it was
25 overruled. It was always known as the Women's Union of

1 Britain.

2 Q. Thank you. So paragraph 5 of this document is referring
3 to a concert, which I think was organised by the
4 progressive cultural association:

5 "The evening concert which was attended by about 150
6 persons was a great success. The most remarkable
7 feature being the wide scope of entertainment offer.
8 The PCA gave a typical esoteric performance of
9 revolutionary songs from Albania but there were also
10 more conventional items from the National Interest
11 (skiffle group), John Tilbury (pianist), the Hole in the
12 Wall Gang (Irish folk group) and a Rastafarian poet.
13 This drastic departure from purely revolutionary culture
14 was a deliberate attempt by the PDF to present itself as
15 something other than just the latest Revolutionary
16 Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) front
17 organisation and it was clear that party hardliners had,
18 through much soul searching, convinced themselves of the
19 necessity for such an apparent compromise. However it
20 is doubtful whether many or indeed any outsiders were
21 attracted to the concert."

22 Would you say it is accurate that the choice of
23 performers on that occasion were chosen deliberately to
24 avoid presenting the PDF as just a front of the
25 Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain

1 (Marxist-Leninist)?

2 A. No, I would say that that's not correct. Actually, the
3 Rastafarian poet referred to was Benjamin Zephaniah, who
4 became very well known and later refused a Queen's
5 honour.

6 No, clearly the party has always attracted
7 progressive musicians. It was so in those days. It
8 still is the case.

9 Q. Mr Chant, these events that were held by the Progressive
10 Cultural Association or the People's Democratic Front,
11 was there any practical impact of these events? Did it
12 encourage membership of the Revolutionary Communist
13 Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) from your memory?

14 A. It is a strange way of putting it, in that it probably
15 doesn't cross our minds that this was an opportunity to
16 recruit people to Revolutionary Communist Party of
17 Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

18 Q. So not --

19 A. HN 19 seems very concerned, and maybe the undercover
20 officers were similarly minded in this, that there are
21 front organisations which, you know, seek to hide the
22 actual force behind them. It seems to me to be written
23 from that point of view. Yes, it is interesting, the
24 way he talks about departure from purely revolutionary
25 culture. So that was deliberately going in a different

1 direction.

2 No, the fact is we -- the parties always had good
3 relations with progressive musicians. There was -- you
4 know, you could say revolutionary culture which was
5 specifically -- I mean Cornelius Cardew himself wrote
6 quite a number of songs which are clearly
7 revolutionary --

8 Q. Yes?

9 A. -- and the founding of the party and so on.

10 Q. There is clearly a link between the party and music,
11 from the very outset?

12 A. Yes. The point I am making is that these -- there were
13 songs which were songs and music which were specifically
14 for Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
15 (Marxist-Leninist) and its circles, and then there's the
16 wider progressive musicians.

17 This was -- I remember the occasion, because I am
18 pretty sure this was the last concert -- December 1981,
19 isn't it? -- before Cornelius Cardew was killed in
20 December 1981, yes.

21 Q. Can we move on to document UCPI017190, this is at B13 of
22 the bundle. It might be 17190-1.

23 Thank you.

24 This is an intelligence report dated 24 February of
25 1982, which reports on another organisation, the Trade

1 Union Revolutionary Opposition. If we go straight to
2 paragraph 3, it is quite difficult to read but I am
3 going to try:

4 "This organisation was formed by and consists mostly
5 of members and supporters of the Revolutionary Communist
6 Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). Its most
7 conspicuous member although not necessarily its most
8 influential is [I think that name is Stuart Monroe]. In
9 typical Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
10 (Marxist-Leninist) fashion it claims to exist for the
11 interests of the masses but effectively excludes support
12 by uncompromising extremism. For this reason it is
13 doubtful whether the Trade Union Revolutionary
14 Opposition would be able, unaided, to mobilise
15 sufficient support to pose a serious public order
16 threat. However, the tenacity, personal plausibility
17 and known history of violence on the part of Monroe and
18 others Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
19 (Marxist-Leninist) members indicate a potential capacity
20 for causing disturbances which cannot totally be
21 disregarded."

22 Firstly, Mr Chant, were you yourself a member of the
23 Trade Union Revolutionary Opposition at any point?

24 A. I don't believe so.

25 These reports from HN 19 always come at it from the

1 point of view of whether these organisations are
2 dominated by the party or not. As I tried to make clear
3 in the witness report, this wasn't the way that the
4 party looked at them. They were organisations which --
5 I mean, they were of their time but it was, like it
6 still remains a task for instance to mobilise workers in
7 the trade unions to take progressive stands. And how
8 the trade unions should act effectively. These are
9 pressing problems. These are similar problems that the
10 Trade Union Revolutionary Opposition was trying to deal
11 with in its day.

12 I mean, I take particular exception to the way it
13 poses this issue of whether Trade Union Revolutionary
14 Opposition is large or effective enough to pose
15 a serious public order threat. Because this was never
16 any objective of either the party or these mass
17 organisations. It strikes me that indeed the question
18 of public order had -- I mean, I say we have never been
19 for fomenting public disorder or threatening public
20 disorder in the way that these undercover police
21 officers pose the question. Order -- public order --
22 very much in those days meant that things, you know, had
23 reached a certain stage in history. And had an
24 authority which should be recognised and opposite to
25 this was a threat to public order. I don't think that

1 was part of our thinking then or now.

2 Q. Thank you.

3 The next document I want to bring up, UCPI015992,
4 which is at B37. This intelligence report dated
5 10 December 1982. It's another report of a concert held
6 by the Progressive Cultural Association. But I want to
7 take you specifically to paragraph 4, where HN 19
8 reports:

9 "The only item of interest during the proceedings
10 was an announcement that earlier in the day a National
11 Front meeting in Gravesend had been broken up by
12 a contingent of Hind Mazdoor Lahar. The Revolutionary
13 Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)'s Asian
14 front organisation."

15 Apologies if I have pronounced that incorrectly.
16 But was that right, was it a front organisation of the
17 Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
18 (Marxist-Leninist), would you have described it that
19 way?

20 A. No, I wouldn't. Hind Mazdoor Lahar means Indian Workers
21 Association, as I recall. I know there were activists
22 of the party who were active in HML as we used to refer
23 to it, Hind Mazdoor Lahar.

24 Q. Would it have the same status as a group such as the
25 Progressive Cultural Association or the People's

1 Democratic Front in terms of its relation to the party?

2 A. I am not sure that it would be correct to say that. To
3 my recollection, I don't think it was set up in the same
4 way on the initiative of Revolutionary Communist Party
5 of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). Certainly, as I say,
6 party comrades from the Punjab and probably Pakistan
7 were involved in it.

8 Q. Thank you.

9 Mr Chant, we have talked about several of these
10 front organisations or these organisations related to
11 the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain
12 (Marxist-Leninist). You have said that it wasn't
13 something that you would have particularly considered at
14 the time, whether or not you would be able to recruit
15 new members from these fronts. I think you said in
16 evidence that wasn't really the purpose of them. What
17 do you say to the suggestion that the Revolutionary
18 Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) used these
19 front organisations to conceal the true number of its
20 membership?

21 A. Conceal from whom? I mean, if it is concealing the
22 numbers from the State, I don't think these mass
23 organisations would assist. If it was concealing them
24 from the public -- you see, I think from my grasp of
25 what HN 19 is saying is that he tries to have it both

1 ways. You know, when there is a meeting he goes to that
2 has only a small number of people, he says the party is
3 an ineffective organisation, it has passed its heyday
4 and so on and so forth. When you have events, meetings,
5 cultural events, sports events where thousands of people
6 turn up, he says, well, this must be a way of concealing
7 the numbers of the party. It's not the way of looking
8 at it.

9 Whether it's understood or not, we have always
10 regarded ourselves as at the forefront of the people's
11 movement. You know, working to move history forward, if
12 you like. We have never agreed with this idea -- it's
13 mentioned in a footnote somewhere in a witness
14 statement, the idea that this is now the end of history.
15 We have reached the ultimate kind of society. So all
16 these activities are part of, you know, building the new
17 outlook, building the new organisations. The unity of
18 the people. Their determination to move from the old to
19 the new. And what is -- what we could call a modern
20 enlightenment movement. We think of communism as the
21 enlightenment movement of our day, you know, as opposed
22 to the Scottish enlightenment or that period. I --
23 speaking personally of course -- was always very
24 inspired by these activities and it always kind of
25 surprised me that figures like Malcolm Shearing were so

1 cynical and dismissive of them, and thought it correct
2 to -- I mean, it there are requests from the Security
3 Service for names of musicians that, for instance, there
4 is the case with the Albanian Society, I think, it was
5 asking HN 19 to find out who this musician was that was
6 interested in Albanian music.

7 You know, the interests on whether I was moving
8 house and whether that would interfere with the work of
9 the sports and cultural festival and so on. You know,
10 it is difficult to empathise without that mindset, and
11 it is just one more example which shows how in the
12 present this kind of interference in the political
13 affairs of the people, you know, should be banished from
14 the way the State works.

15 Q. Thank you, Mr Chant. Those are all the questions I have
16 for you.

17 Sir, it is 12.35.

18 THE CHAIR: Yes. We would normally have a break now to
19 permit anyone who has questions which they wish to be
20 put to -- under Rule 10. I think that would be
21 convenient now, would it not?

22 MS BRUCE-JONES: Yes.

23 THE CHAIR: Is the full 15 minutes likely to be needed?

24 MS BRUCE-JONES: I think unlikely, sir.

25 THE CHAIR: If it is not, then if those who do have

1 questions can deal with it more rapidly than 15 minutes,
2 we will resume when they have.

3 MS BRUCE-JONES: Thank you.

4 (12.35 pm)

5 (A short break)

6 (12.41 pm)

7 MS BRUCE-JONES: Sir, there are actually no further
8 questions to put to Mr Chant.

9 THE CHAIR: In that case that concludes today's proceedings
10 and we will resume tomorrow at 10 o'clock. I say with
11 a note of self-congratulation that for once one of my
12 estimates has proved accurate.

13 Mr Chant, thank you very much for the assistance you
14 have given the Inquiry. You are of course free to
15 leave.

16 A. Thank you, it has been good to be able to give the
17 evidence.

18 (12.43 pm)

19 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am, Thursday, 11 July
20 2024)

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