

[Home](#) > [News & Insights](#) > [Developments in Undercover Policing Inquiry \(UCPI\) expose secret State operation to undermine Workers' Revolutionary Party \(WRP\)](#)

ALL POSTS



# DEVELOPMENTS IN UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY (UCPI) EXPOSE SECRET STATE OPERATION TO UNDERMINE WORKERS' REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (WRP)

FALSELY ACCUSED OF CRIME  
PROTEST & POLITICAL INTEREST

**JUSTICE**

NEWS & INSIGHTS

FEBRUARY 22, 2023

TEAM

**MIKE SCHWARZ**

Evidence from almost 50 years ago and very recent admissions from State bodies show that leading 1970s campaigns and campaigners were spied on by undercover officers operating within the framework of Government-approved and Security Services-led strategy for undermining their opponents, including 'BAFTA' winner Roy Battersby of the Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP). Using supposed 'intelligence' obtained by undercover police officers from the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) the State's strategy included planting damaging and inaccurate stories about the WRP in favoured national papers; to contribute to the blacklisting of leading director Roy Battersby, excluding him from the BBC; and protecting the interests of at least one Labour MP who was under threat of de-selection.

At the very top of Government, an operation was set up, using the SDS, the undercover policing team being examined by the UCPI, to identify and undermine supposedly 'subversive' individuals and organisations in the UK and abroad. The operation had the blessing of Prime Ministers at the time, the active involvement of the Cabinet Office, the permanent secretary to No 10 Downing Street and cabinet ministers.

Among a multiplicity of overlapping committees operating in the 1970s, set up for these purposes, one unit, in which the Home Office was involved, was responsible for 'home' subversives ('the Official Committee on Subversion at Home'). The units appeared to work in tandem, with the Security Services (MI5 and MI6) relied on the services of the Metropolitan Police Service, its Special Branch ('SB') in particular. SB was responsible for the SDS.

The operation's strategy relied on the SDS to infiltrate target groups, spy on leading individuals and use that so called 'intelligence' in a concerted effort to undermine their credibility and effectiveness. It was designed to be top secret and deniable.

That operation had concluded that the WRP was not 'subversive' (and so did not meet the Security Service's test for surveillance) and was not a threat to public order (Special Branch and the SDS's test for infiltration). Its rationale, however, was to seek to undermine supposed political opponents by obtaining and leaking supposedly damaging information about them to tame press contacts to undermine those opponents in the public eyes, a process which the operation perceived to be a use of 'democratic' means to serve its political objectives.

See notes below to some of the relevant documents, now published by the UCPI. For just one example [click here](#).

Four events which occurred in the mid-1970s, relating to the WRP and about which new evidence has come out in the UCPI, show how this strategy was deployed against the WRP and some of its leading individuals.

An undercover officer ('UCO', HN298 known as 'Mike Scott') was deployed to infiltrate an East London branch (Little Ilford) of the WRP, in the constituency of leading Labour MP, Reg Prentice. In the 1950s the Labour Party had expelled individual members of the Socialist Labour League (the 'SLL', the predecessor to the WRP) and in 1964 expelled the Young Socialists, the large and active youth movement

of the SLL / WRP. The Labour Party were concerned in the 1970s that he, Prentice, was to be de-selected by supposed extremist entryists (and was, indeed later de-selected). At the Labour Party conference in September 1974 Prentice delivered a platform speech decrying 'extremists', a thinly veiled and highly publicised attack on the WRP.

SDS UCO ('Mike Scott') was placed within the WRP's educational establishment at White Meadows in Derbyshire, to spy on its manager (Roy Battersby and his then partner Liz Leicester) and what took place at the centre. 'Scott's report was sent not only to SB but also to the Security Services, MI5.

Derbyshire police raided White Meadows in September 1975 on the advice of the Security Services. SB advised against the raid, but were complicit in it. They, SB, briefed the Observer newspaper in advance of the raid. The Observer published a damaging Sunday article on the WRP and the centre, reporting the raid in detail before it had actually taken place.

MI5 had also a resident agent at the BBC and, using supposed 'intelligence' from among others the SDS, identified supposed subversives who would then be 'blacklisted', their careers at the BBC, in effect, at an end. This is what happened to Roy Battersby. He was blacklisted in early/mid 1970s despite having already won Best Film Drama awards (then equivalent of the later BAFTA) for the programmes 'Roll On Four O' Clock' and 'Leeds United' in 1970 and 1973/4.

Roy Battersby and Liz Leicester have been refused 'core participant' status in the Inquiry, though both have provided written statements. Liz gave oral evidence. Roy was not invited to do so.

Roy was one of a number of leading WRP activists who brought a libel claim against the Observer following the Observer article and the police raid on White Meadows. It appears that the State, including the police, had – but withheld – key relevant evidence which led to the full truth being withheld from the judge and jury, from the WRP and the public. The Metropolitan Police contributed to another miscarriage of justice, this one in the civil courts to add to over 50 (and counting) which the undercover police unit has caused in the criminal courts.

Roy Battersby commented as follows:

*"This is all so far beyond enquiring into a few rogue or inadequately managed cops lying and deceiving and ruthlessly using and abusing their victims. Under the cover of secrecy, the web of deception and lying, spying, muck-spreading, the human exploitation, blacklisting and ruination was, and no doubt still is, state-wide up to Cabinet level, involving various kinds of police, MI5 and MI6 and other institutions, politicians, and international in its scope. The emergence of so much evidence already makes the careful timidity of the Inquiry – weeding out witnesses, controlling who gets a voice and who does not, the overall narrowing of the meaning of the terms of reference – painfully obvious.*

*"I'm 86. Before I go I need to know the truth, the whole truth, about the career destroying frameups, about the muckspreading, and the blacklisting that I and many others endured at the hands of the state and its willing accomplices in the press and even more shamefully in the BBC.*

*"Blacklisting, the attempted trashing of reputations, night raids of private property, the strip searching of residents including my in-laws, both in their seventies and visiting from America to see their grandchildren, the wrecking of careers – all being brushed under the carpet by the Inquiry, being deemed beyond its remit. For forty eight years I have managed not to become bitter, not to complain but being refused core participant status and the opportunity to give oral evidence to the Inquiry proves hard to swallow. Our voice is reduced to whatever can be squeezed into a closing statement."*

Liz Leicester commented as follows:

*"This inquiry has uncovered the wide ranging surveillance of legal organisations by the state. Exploiting the commitment and energy of our members to working for a more equal society, police spies have abused our personal and political freedoms. We always suspected a web of spies from organisations such as Special Branch, MI5 and even MI6 – this has now been confirmed as the Special Demonstration Squad clearly provided information to a whole range of state agencies, right up to Cabinet level.*

*"In spite of various police spies confirming that nothing illegal was going on at the Workers Revolutionary Party's Marxist College of Education, they continued their spying, even raiding the premises in a night time swoop which included strip searching all the women present, including my 65 year old mother who had recently arrived from Canada for a visit.*

*"This Inquiry is much too limited in its scope. Even so, it has revealed a web of intrigue and cynical activity by the state. Much more needs to be investigated to uncover the extent of their activities."*

Mike Schwarz, from Hodge Jones & Allen, the lawyer for Roy Battersby, Liz Leicester and other former WRP activists said:

*"I am confident that only a small proportion of the truth has come out. It has only been exposed now because of the tireless sacrifices of campaigners such as Roy and Liz. It has come out despite, rather than because of, the secret State's, wishes. If this was happening secretly 50 years ago, one shivers to think what has been done since and what is happening now."*

**Legal notes and references here:**

- Today's [closing statement by counsel](#), Owen Greenhall of Garden Court Chambers, on behalf of Mike Schwarz of Hodge Jones & Allen's clients, written version and oral version delivered.
- Counsel to the Inquiry (CTI) David Barr KC's [opening statement for tranche 1, module 2b and 2c](#)
- His [closing statement for tranche 1](#) of the inquiry

- [Roy Battersby's statement to the Inquiry](#) (see paragraphs 80 to 142, especially 119-120)
- [Liz Leicester's statement to the Inquiry](#) (see paragraphs 98–110)
- [Transcript of her evidence to the Inquiry](#)

Some of the relevant documents published by UCPI:

- <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UCPI0000035238.pdf>
- <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UCPI0000035277.pdf>
- <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UCPI0000035255.pdf>
- <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UCPI0000035318.pdf>
- <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UCPI0000035317.pdf>
- <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UCPI0000035254.pdf>
- <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UCPI0000035253.pdf>
- <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UCPI0000035269.pdf>
- <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UCPI0000035264.pdf>
- <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UCPI0000035242.pdf>
- <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UCPI0000035309.pdf>



For further information, please contact:

**Alison Hicks**

[alison@yellowjerseypr.com](mailto:alison@yellowjerseypr.com)

DD: 0808 23 9 4011 | T: 0808 23 9 5975

**Ammaarah Hafezi**

[ammaarah@yellowjerseypr.com](mailto:ammaarah@yellowjerseypr.com)

DD: 0808 23 9 8378 | T: 0808 23 9 5975

FURTHER  
READING

# UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY HEARS WORKERS' REVOLUTIONARY PARTY EVIDENCE



PRESS RELEASES

JUSTICE

## UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY

BLOG

## A NEW PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO UNDERCOVER POLICING FINALLY GETS THE GO-AHEAD