

PILC makes opening statement to UCPI

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This morning we made our opening statement to the Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI), which began on Monday.

The Inquiry will investigate undercover operations conducted by police forces in England and Wales since 1968. It will examine in particular the activities of two units: the Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) and the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU).

Our opening statement can be read and downloaded [here](#). It calls for a thorough investigation of the activities of both the SDS and NPOIU and the officials who authorised the use of spying against our clients.

It is our view that the Inquiry must examine not only the role of senior civil servants, but also of successive Conservative and Labour Home Secretaries, who, we submit, must have been aware of and sanctioned the activities of undercover policing units. We also submit that Prime Ministers of the day were aware of the activities of the political police.

Finally, our opening statement demands a full and detailed analysis of the role of Special Branch departments and the security services, including MI5.

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These agencies were also involved in the surveillance of MPs, social-justice campaigners and trade unionists.

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Political policing has ruined lives, derailed campaigns, led to the blacklisting of workers and brought democracy into disrepute.

In preparing this opening statement we are grateful to Piers Marquis of Doughty Street Chambers and James Scobie QC of Garden Court Chambers. Huge thanks are also due to our clients: Lois Austin; Richard Chessum; 'Mary'; Dave Nellist; Hannah Sell; and Youth against Racism in Europe (YRE).

This Inquiry will be a long journey. We are committed to it.

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