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UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY HEARS WORKERS' REVOLUTIONARY PARTY EVIDENCE

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PRESS RELEASES

MAY 13, 2022

Undercover policing inquiry hears evidence of spying on the Workers' Revolutionary Party, and its links to blacklisting at the BBC of BAFTA winner Roy Battersby

The public inquiry into undercover policing (UCPI) will hear today of the links between the activities of undercover police and the blacklisting by the BBC of the likes of award-winner TV director Roy Battersby, in the 1970s and beyond.

For the first time, the public is learning of the direct connections between:

- Spying by Special Branch's secretive undercover police unit, the Special Demonstration Squad on the Workers' Revolutionary Party including Roy Battersby. Roy was on its Central Committee and he and his then partner, Liz Leicester, ran its education centre, White Meadows, in Derbyshire.
- Intelligence reports submitted by undercover officer 'Mike Scott' on his infiltration of White Meadows in 1976, via Special Branch, to the security services (MI5, known as 'Box 500').
- MI5's formal role in vetting appointments at the BBC.
- Roy Battersby's blacklisting by the BBC.

Liz Leicester gives evidence live at the Undercover Policing Inquiry from 10 am on Friday 13th May, supplementing written statements she and Roy have submitted to the Inquiry. Both they and a dozen other activists from the Workers' Revolutionary Party have been refused 'core participant' status in the Inquiry.

Commenting on these revelations Roy Battersby said:

"Blacklisting is a blight in the arts as in all fields. I was relatively lucky as through hard work and the support of brave colleagues, I was able to pursue a successful career outside the BBC. Others, both in the arts and elsewhere, were less fortunate.

"Leading state institutions spied on key cultural and political figures and stifled their careers. This was an attack on political free speech and a huge loss to the country's cultural life and to the plurality and moral authority of the BBC itself.

"This week's revelations should not signal the end of investigations. We have incontrovertible proof of the 'smoking gun'. The Inquiry must now establish who was responsible – who loaded, aimed and fired it and who else was targeted and why.

"It is a huge disappointment and a sad reflection on the Inquiry's lack of curiosity, that the Workers' Revolutionary Party have been deprived of the opportunity to play an active role in answering these questions."

Notes for Editors

The UCPI's website – <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/>

Privacy - Terms

Opening Statements by counsel to the inquiry and by the non-state participating group, which refers to these practices can be found [here](#) – eg at [paras 13 and 66](#).

Roy's written statement is [here](#).

It is anticipated that Liz's written statement and a link to her live oral evidence as she gives it will be published [here](#), by the Inquiry, on Friday 13th May:

[Blacklisting at the BBC, including of Roy Battersby](#) – and 'Blacklist: the inside story of political vetting; the Hogarth Press' p114-117

Early evidence of the role of the SDS in this process – [transcript of 'True Spies' programme, p17.18](#).

[At least three UCOs infiltrated, spied on and collected 'intelligence' on the WRP in the 1970s](#) ('Michael Scott' HN298, 'Peter Collins' HN303 and 'Jeff Slater' HN351).

'Scott' spying on the WRP's education centre in Derbyshire in 1976 and his [extensive report](#) for SB sent to 'Box 500', code for MI5.

The [inquiry's decision](#) to refuse 'core participant' status to the WRP.

For further information, please contact:

Yellow Jersey PR:

Alison Hicks

alison@yellowjerseypr.com

T: [0808 239 4011](tel:08082394011) | [0808 239 5975](tel:08082395975)

Alexandra Santos

Alexandra@yellowjerseypr.com

T: [0808 239 8378](tel:08082398378) | [0808 239 5975](tel:08082395975)

Alex Crean

Alex@yellowjerseypr.com

T: [0808 239 3996](tel:08082393996) | [0808 239 5975](tel:08082395975)

