

## **Undercover Policing Inquiry**

### **Response to Rule 9 Request**

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#### **FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF**

**Elizabeth (Liz) Leicester (formerly Battersby)**

**Date signed: 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

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#### Introduction

1. I make this statement in response to a 'rule 9' request from the Inquiry in their letter to me dated 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021. I have been asked a number of questions (some of which I set out below) about, broadly, two issues relating to undercover policing in the 1970s – the Workers' Revolutionary Party ('the WRP') its aims, tactics etc and a single intelligence report from 1976 about the WRP's education centre ('White Meadows', 'WM', in Derbyshire).
2. A similar request and set of questions were made by the Inquiry to Roy Battersby, my partner at the relevant time. I have seen and agree broadly with what he says, so far as I have knowledge of the issue. I mention this as I

shall seek to avoid a repetition in my statement of parts of his. I have received support from others active in the WRP at the relevant time in bringing some matters to my attention in the preparation of this statement.

### Personal information

3. My full current name is Elizabeth Amanda Tate Leicester. I am known as Liz.
4. I was born on 26.12.46. I am 75. I am white. I am female.
5. Roy and I were together as a couple between 1967 and 1980. I was then known as Liz Battersby. We had two sons together born in 1971 and 1973. In 1980 we separated.
6. I am now retired but most of my professional life I worked as a community worker in local government. After retirement from local government, I worked as a trade union tutor and teacher for the Workers Educational Association.

### Our involvement in the WRP

7. Both Roy and I were active in the WRP (and its predecessor organisation, the Socialist Labour League 'SLL') from about 1968.
8. As Roy explains in his statement, he and I met with other like-minded left-wing figures involved in film, television and theatre. We held discussion groups at our Maida Vale flat until we went to Derbyshire in 1975.
9. We were in what was known as the Outer London Branch which consisted of some of those WRP members who were active in television and film.

10. I worked at the SLL's offices in Clapham South London on its paper, the Workers' Press ('WP'), which ran from 1969. I then worked on the new daily paper, 'News Line' first published in May 1976, commuting from Derbyshire to Runcorn one day per week to work on the News Line.
11. In 1975 we both moved to and ran the White Meadows education centre in Derbyshire. We remained there until 1978. I say much more about this, below, as does Roy.
12. In 1978 Roy and I were transferred to Scotland. I worked on the Scottish edition of the News Line.
13. I left full time employment in the WRP in 1980 and started managing a community centre in North London. I remained active until 1985.

#### Background about the WRP.

14. The WRP was formed in 1973. It was preceded by the Socialist Labour League ('SLL'), founded in 1959. It had a youth organisation, the Young Socialists, and an organisation for trade unionists, the All Trades Unions Alliance (ATUA). The WRP ended in 1985 when it exploded following revelations of sexual abuse by its General Secretary, Gerry Healy.
15. The main office was in Clapham, South London. It had an education centre in Derbyshire, White Meadows, below. It had a print shop in Clapham Old Town, London until it transferred the print shop to Runcorn when the News Line began printing in 1976.

16. The WRP's publication was the 'Workers' Press', which was published until 1976. That was replaced by News Line. They were distributed across the country and copies were sent abroad to like minded organisations in other countries.
17. The party developed a chain of five bookshops and five Youth Training Centres in which young people could learn particular trades. It had a film production business and published books.
18. There were about 100 staff including journalists, technicians, printers, administrators, film makers and full-time organisers.
19. At grass roots level, the WRP was organised into local branches which were then grouped into sub-districts and areas. Nationally, it was run by the Central Committee and a much smaller political committee. In theory the WRP combined democracy with centralism though there was more centralism than democracy. The WRP also held an annual National Congress where resolutions were moved and voted on, establishing policy for the following year and membership of the Central Committee was confirmed.
20. I am asked the following questions about the WRP by the Inquiry

*What were the aims of the WRP?*

21. The WRP was a Trotskyist group. Its aim was to achieve socialism. The SLL's main political objective was the election of a labour government with socialist policies. With the foundation of the WRP its emphasis moved to 'building revolutionary leadership' as the 'only solution to the crisis'. I attach

the WRP's manifesto for the October 1974 election by way of illustration of what this meant in practice <sup>1</sup>.

*Did it seek to overthrow the State as it was in the 1970's? If so, in your view, how realistic was the realisation of this aim?*

22. The term 'overthrow' in this question is, with respect, both value-laden and vague. Any significant ('revolutionary') change in how the country (the UK) was to be run would involve a major change to the State.
  
23. Certainly, as evidenced by standing 10 candidates in the 1974 election, the WRP sought to effect that change through conventional, radical, democratic and peaceful means. Before that election, in the early 1970s, the SLL called for a Labour government to be elected, and urged that such a government adopt socialist policies. Some time after that election, around 1976/7, the WRP sought the removal of the elected Labour government through the electoral process and mass movement of the working class. The WRP stood 60 candidates in the general election of May 3, 1979. This gave the organisation the right to an election broadcast on national television which was delivered by Corin Redgrave.
  
24. The WRP also sought radical economic reform. For example, at a special WRP conference in 1974 it was resolved that "the ruling class prepares for

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<sup>1</sup> WRP manifesto issued by the CC, printed in Workers Press, October 10, 1974 (doc 1: UCPI0000034745)

dictatorship”, but emphasised that “the only defence” against this is “the widest struggle for socialist policies to unite the whole working class movement in battle against the parasitic and outmoded system of private ownership.”

25. The party was vague about whether it sought to effect change through votes in the electoral system or in the workplace or both. For example, in 1976 a draft resolution highlighted the need for “the building of an independent revolutionary leadership, the creation of workers’ councils and of a workers’ militia challenging the parliamentary regime”. This statement was then qualified by confirmation that the party “does not reject participation in parliamentary elections” or “using parliament as a useful forum for exposing bourgeois democracy”.
26. In the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s, it did not seem impossible that big popular movements would bring about substantial change.

*Did the WRP use violence to advance its aims? Did the WRP foresee a time when violence would, or might be, necessary to realise its aims? Did the WRP advocate, provoke or approve of public disorder in order to advance its aims?*

27. On a rhetorical level we adopted the language of revolutionary change but this tended to be abstract and contemplated for far in the future or in distant countries. Being Trotskyists also meant being Leninists, and we certainly looked back at the Russian revolution as an inspiration and example of

legitimate violence conducted by the mass of working people in the face of oppression within and invasion from without.

28. As to how this political ardour manifested itself in the 1970s in the UK, we were opposed to much of the violence then taking place in the UK such as “individual terrorism” (the IRA), “adventurism” (physical confrontation with fascists”) or “rioting” (we acknowledged this, especially in 1981, as the righteous anger of oppressed people, but dismissed this as the wrong way to combat enemies). We explicitly opposed all these types of violence.
29. So in practice, in the 1970s and in the UK, the WRP did not use violence or foresee a time when violence would or might be necessary to realise its aims. The evidence the Inquiry has heard from undercover police officers (‘UCO’) within the Special Demonstration Squad (‘SDS’) spying on the WRP appears to confirm this <sup>2</sup>.
30. Individual former members of the WRP remember that this approach was maintained e.g. in south London in 1976-77 in the build up to the “battle of Lewisham” (13 August 1977), when the National Front (‘NF’) was physically confronted by a very large crowd. On that day, the WRP contingent marched with the trade unions. The physical confrontation with the NF was undertaken by members of other groups and by people from the local black community.

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<sup>2</sup> See eg counsel to the Inquiry’s (‘CTI’) comment on HN298 ‘Mike Scott’ at para 12.58 at p 119 of CTI opening statement (‘OS’) for tranche 1, phase 2 (‘T1P2’): ‘The WRP supported a workers revolution by a system of educational programmes teaching revolutionary doctrines which could then be spread throughout workplaces. Whilst all revolutions may ultimately involve violence HN298 did not hear violence discussed or witness any violence within the WRP’ [https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs\\_T1P2\\_Opening\\_Statement.pdf](https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs_T1P2_Opening_Statement.pdf).

31. An analogous position was taken with regard to IRA action and other types of violence in Ireland, where the “troubles” were at their height. The SLL and WRP had always advocated the withdrawal of British troops and stood “unconditionally for the defeat of British imperialism”, but distanced itself from all types of violence.
32. The WRP believed that the capitalist state and its agencies were the source of violence. Indeed the WRP sought to highlight, expose and prevent that violence.
33. So, in practice, on the streets, in the UK, the WRP participated in large street demonstrations organised by trade unions, which were common in the 1970s. But, unlike most other groups, it also took every opportunity to organise its own separate demonstrations, when it had sufficient person-power to do so. This appears to be confirmed by the SDS’ own intelligence <sup>3</sup>. For example, for many years the WRP and its Young Socialists held a separate May Day march from the traditional May Day marches held in London by the broader labour movement. In 1972 the Young Socialists held “right to work” marches from Glasgow and other cities to London, and in 1977, with its international counterparts, organised an international march against unemployment from Dortmund, Germany, to London. Roy led this march (and the 1970 one from South Wales.)
34. The emphasis during these events was unfailingly on discipline, on presenting a convincing line to working-class people who witnessed them, etc. The WRP

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<sup>3</sup> SB annual report for 1975: ‘the [WRP]...rarely joins with other organisations to protest...’, para 28 / page 7/8 (doc 2: MPS-0730099).



used teams of stewards very systematically at the time. The WRP tended not to participate in demonstrations where physical confrontation with the extreme right was likely.

35. Certainly the WRP did not plan for public disorder at demonstrations or violence. Our objective was to use constitutional and trade union tools to obtain power and effect change. This was clear to any outsider and certainly for anyone within the WRP. The SDS infiltration was not justified on these grounds and I find it difficult to understand how it might have been legitimate for the SB to select the WRP as one of its target organisations in the 1970s.
36. I can only assume that the WRP was targeted for other reasons – seemingly its influence (actual, threatened or perceived), within the labour and trade union movement. I hasten to add that these were not justifiable reasons either. They are political decisions.

#### *Annual reports*

37. With this in mind, I have looked at the SB annual reports for the period 1973-1976. During this period the WRP was listed as a target under the sub-heading 'Trotskyist'. Relevant comments include the following.
38. In the 1973 annual report these comments are recorded: 'The economic and industrial unrest offer all left wing extremist groups clear opportunities for causing trouble as most of them are well aware. The Trotskyists....have learned ....the value of having a high percentage of trade unionists in their

membership both for the excuse it gives them for participating in industrial disputes and the possibility of influencing trade union policy' <sup>4</sup>. Elsewhere there was the following comment: '...the [WRP] are going all-out with their recruitment campaigns aimed at improving their positions in the trade unions; the real progress they are making does not bode well for future industrial harmony...' <sup>5</sup>.

39. In the annual report for 1974, this is the comment: 'The [WRP], heartened by its recruiting campaigns during both recent general elections, and by its growing financial support, will clearly be in the van of industrial unrest, but recent internal schisms within the Central Committee may well curtail its ambitions. Being a highly disciplined organisation, expecting immediate obedience from its members, it has not so far caused any undue problems in the field of public order' <sup>6</sup>.

40. The SB annual report on 1975, concludes 'Since their potential for public disorder appears to have diminished, SDS coverage of this organisation will now be withdrawn' <sup>7</sup>. These reports do not explain where the evidence of the 'potential for public disorder' can be found. I am drawn to the conclusion that the WRP was targeted for political reasons and the decision to withdraw that 'coverage' was also made for political reasons, presumably connected with the heat the Labour government experienced as a result of the fall out from the raid on WM in September 1975, as set out in Roy's statement.

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<sup>4</sup> Para 34, p7 of 1973 annual report (doc 3: MPS-0728975).

<sup>5</sup> Para 13, p4 of 1973 annual report (doc 3: MPS-0728975).

<sup>6</sup> Para 28, p8 of 1974 annual report, (doc 4: MPS-0730906).

<sup>7</sup> Para 28, p7/8 of 1975 annual report (doc 2: MPS-0730099).

41. I assume that this decision-making process will be examined in module two of the inquiry, in particular its examination of 'other government bodies with a connection to undercover policing, including the Home Office'. I am concerned that, as the WRP have been refused core participant status, we will, as things stand, be unable to contribute to this important phase of the Inquiry's work (see my comments, below <sup>8</sup>).

*Did the WRP vet its members?*

42. The main, if not only, 'vetting' of members was the requirement for potential members to subscribe to the WRP's politics and procedures.

43. The 1974 Constitution established that 'Any person who accepts the programme, policy and constitution of the Party, agrees to work under the direction of its national bodies and of the appropriate local organisation and pays financial subscriptions, is eligible for membership.....All members of the Party must be members of their appropriate trade unions and shall work in other working class organisations as required by decisions of the National Congress and the Central Committee of the Party' <sup>9</sup>.

44. Beyond this, there was, in theory, some vetting of members but it was not consistent. There were constant demands to recruit more members and that became more of a priority than any vetting process. Occasionally, concern was expressed about an individual being a possible 'agent' but this could

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<sup>8</sup> See paras 116 onwards.

<sup>9</sup> Workers Revolutionary Party Constitution as amended by the First Annual Conference, 15-17 December, 1974.

have occurred when the individual concerned had disagreements about a political position or activity, or challenged the WRP leadership.

*Did the WRP take other security precautions to keep its plans, tactics or other matters confidential? If so, please explain.*

45. The accounts of security arrangements in the intelligence reports for White Meadows (below) and generally in the evidence the inquiry has published, are, from what I have been told about them, broadly accurate.

46. The WRP was security conscious and sought to keep matters confidential. I can explain why. The danger of dictatorship (the UK State spying on us in order to exert control) was constantly stressed in party statements, and, in connection with this, the need for security was talked about not only at WRP premises but also in branches. The need e.g. to keep lists of members and contacts secure, not to talk about arrangements on the telephone, etc, was constantly underlined. This was not because our activity was in any sense unlawful, but, rather, because we had a strong sense that the State would be spying on us. Many of us thought this (the perceived danger and the measures taken to prevent it) was exaggerated, although clearly, the material being dealt with by the inquiry has caused us to think again.

*Was the WRP concerned about the infiltration by the Police or others? If so, please explain why?*

47. Yes, the WRP was concerned about infiltration by the police and others. We were convinced that it must have been taking place due to the times we were living in and the radical and revolutionary movements developing in various parts of the world.
48. Part of the rationale for purchasing White Meadows was to escape the attention of the State and the media.
49. In the early 1970s the SLL ran summer camps, attended by hundreds of members and their families. On one occasion, the camp was photographed from the air. The photo appeared on the front page of the Daily Telegraph with a story highlighting the alleged 'military-style' arrangements of the tents which were 'arranged in rows'. On that occasion too it was feared that the camp might be raided so I was sent back to London in our car with all the documents which might be seized if a raid took place.
50. In the hysteria surrounding the dock strike of 1970, when a state of emergency was declared, the SLL had become a target for a press witch-hunt and this continued to inform our views and security strategies into the 1970s.
51. Learning of the SB documents now made available, it is clear to me that our security consciousness <sup>10</sup>, combined with media hostility towards us and the

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<sup>10</sup> Ref eg this comment about us: 'the WRP – an organisation notorious for its security consciousness' (doc 5: MPS-0741114), SB memo dated 25.9.1975. Also: this comment following HN298's deployment at WM: 'It is, in fact, now clear that most of the secrecy and elaborate security precautions surrounding the Study Centre are in being to boost the importance of the organisation as well as the leaders themselves'' in sequence of SB memos from 26.7.75 (doc 6: MPS-0741115).

pedalling of inaccurate slurs about us, were key factors which attracted the attention of political opponents and underlie the SB's decision to target us.

*Does it come as a surprise that the police deployed undercover officers to report on the activities of the WRP, above? Please explain your answer.*

52. It does not come as a surprise that the police deployed undercover police officers to report on the activities of the WRP. The use of undercover agents by the British state throughout modern history has been widely documented.
53. However our concern was that undercover police deployments were just the sharp end of surveillance on us by the UK State, only a small part of which has emerged into the public domain over time.
54. We believed that we were under surveillance by Special Branch and MI5 and presumably others, deploying a variety of tools. The Inquiry has already heard that 'A number of the SDS reports regarding the WRP are responses to requests for information from the Security Services'<sup>11</sup>.
55. We assume that the police and security services shared its intelligence with our opponents and vice versa<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> See CTI OS T1P2 at para 16.10 from p135 (and reports cited UCPI0000006993; UCPI0000007000; UCPI0000009259) [https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs\\_T1P2\\_Opening\\_Statement.pdf](https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs_T1P2_Opening_Statement.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> See the SB report dated 25th September 1975 of its liaison with the Observer ([UCPI0000034744](#)), below (from para 98) and in Roy's statement.

56. We assume that their cooperation went further than this – so targets such as White Meadows may have been identified as part of a wider strategy to destabilise or discredit us.
57. Our political opponents were numerous and ranged across the political spectrum.
58. Broadly, of course, the enemy we identified was capitalism and its State. The WRP saw the capitalist class in Britain as the ‘most desperate and exposed’ of all the ‘advanced capitalist countries’. Our opponents included the Conservative Party and the extreme right, such as the National Front. Although I was not personally aware of this at the time, this, presumably, is why the WRP sought to plant one of its agents in the NF, not aware that that ‘agent’ was in fact an UCO <sup>13</sup>.
59. Our opponents also came from the left such as the Labour government and Labour reformists. The Labour party had prescribed the SLL in 1959 and the Labour party were keen to detect and prevent ‘entryism’ by it and its successor, the WRP.
60. Stalinists of the Communist Party were our political opponents too. The WRP saw their reformist politics and support for trade union bureaucracies as creating ‘the political conditions’ for the capitalist strategy of inflation and wage cutting.

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<sup>13</sup> HN303 ‘Peter Collins’.

61. The media and, through it, public opinion was a tool for our opponents to further their interests and seek to damage us. Roy and I have focussed on the Observer and the BBC, but these are merely examples of the mainstream press' efforts to silence our voices and discredit us.

### Questions about report on surveillance on White Meadows

62. I have been asked, as has Roy, a number of questions, which I summarise below, about a single document, part redacted <sup>14</sup> which comprises a cover letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> March 1976 from Commander Matt Rodger of Special Branch to 'Box 500' / MI5. It attaches a 6 page 'intelligence report' by SB (supposedly) dated 4<sup>th</sup> February 1976, on the WRP <sup>15</sup>. It is attributed (largely if not wholly) to undercover police officer ('UCO') 'Mike Scott' ('MS', HN298) from the Special Demonstration Squad ('SDS'). The report is on the WRP, with a focus on intelligence gathered on White Meadows by 'Scott' who attended one of the courses between 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> February 1976 <sup>16</sup>.

### *Your role in the White Meadows centre?*

63. Roy and I were asked by the WRP to work full time and move to White Meadows. We were resident there with our two young sons from 1975 to 1977.

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<sup>14</sup> (Doc 8: UCPI0000012249).

<sup>15</sup> It confirms that the WRP was allocated a SB file - 400/75/218.

<sup>16</sup> See also the sequence of SB memos before and after this deployment (doc 6: MPS-0741115). Also ref CTI's OS from T1P2, from para 12.67 onwards at p121 of <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421>.



64. I assisted with the administration of WM - ordering food, organising cleaning, setting up rotas for care of the children who attended with their parents, ensuring adequate sleeping arrangements were in place for the students, etc.
65. I assisted in distributing the News Line, collecting branch subscriptions, attending and speaking at meetings.
66. When Roy was away, I took responsibility for his areas of work.

*In respect of para 1 of the report we are asked whether it was a "drama, history and literature study centre"; what was the purpose of this education; and who was it intended should use the centre (eg was it reserved for WRP members only)?*

67. The background is that there were substantial numbers of WRP members working in film, theatre and television. Many of them had been attending regular discussions in London on Marxism and the political situation. WM was purchased by Corin Redgrave as a Drama, History and Literature Study Centre. Members from the entertainment world were the first students at the school and attended the centre to continue those discussions. The aim was to provide a purpose built, secure and agreeable venue for those discussions.
68. The grounds of White Meadows were open and spacious and surrounded by farmland. The rural scenery and fresh air contributed to the enjoyment of many attendees. For many party members a course at the College was their

only holiday. The usual courses were one week, sometimes two weeks. From time to time there were weekend schools.

69. The purpose of the education at White Meadows was to study and discuss Marxism in its many forms in order to better understand history and the development of society from slavery, to feudalism, to capitalism and then to socialism. A variety of people gave lectures on philosophy and history. From time to time, students would assist with sales of the News Line alongside the local WRP branches in the Midlands.
70. It was felt that the local community in Derbyshire might be very anxious if WM was openly called a College of Marxist Education and that it might attract the attention of groups such as the National Front. Incidentally, it was also known locally as 'the Red House' before it was acquired by Corin, on account of it being built with red brick, while most other buildings in the area were from grey stone.
71. Following the police raid on WM soon after it opened in September 1975, the Marxist content of courses became common knowledge because of the extensive newspaper coverage. However, before and after the raid, the local community remained friendly and Christmas parties were attended by several hundred local people.
72. The centre was primarily reserved for members of the WRP, the Young Socialists and the All Trades Unions Alliance. However, readers of the daily paper (many of whom were not members of the WRP) would have seen an advert inviting them to attend courses at WM. The ad included a description of

the premises, the countryside, the 'purpose built' playroom and the 'excellent food'. This invitation to attend would hardly be appropriate if anything 'subversive' or illegal was taking place.'

*In respect of paras 7-14 (about an address given by Roy Battersby about discipline and security) we are asked if this account is accurate? And why was such stringent security required (including paras 16-19)?*

73. As far as I can remember, the account of the address in the intelligence report is accurate, though it was more than 45 years ago.
74. Roy was in charge of security though others with advanced knowledge in this area would periodically inspect the premises.
75. We also believed there was a real risk that police spies may be attending the school posing as members (for reasons Roy and I set out elsewhere in our statements). We wanted to protect our genuine members.
76. We wanted to ensure as far as possible that we would not give the State any excuse to shut down the education centre.
77. There was also the possibility of attacks from right wing groups such as the National Front. This was one of the reasons for the regular patrols.
78. On a broader note, I am deeply concerned about the circularity and self-justification for SB / SDS spying on WM. I have expressed my general concern, above, about our wish for privacy and security appearing of itself to

be a lure and justification for intrusion. Roy and I also explain elsewhere the impact of the unjustified police raid on WM, co-ordinated with a front page spread in a national Sunday newspaper (below). This led to the significant 'adverse publicity' we received, recognised at para 5 of the report. Our response to this was to maintain and increase a high level of privacy and security and this, in turn, less than 6 months' later, appears to have been one of the supposed justifications for the actions of 'Mike Scott' and his deployment within our course <sup>17</sup>. Indeed, I am bound to ask myself whether the police sought to obtain this insight into the security precautions at WM in anticipation of a further police raid, the installation of (further) bugging devices at the Centre or for some other reason.

*In respect of para 7 we are asked about these comments of what students were told by Roy Battersby as reported by the UCO: 'this was the first of the political raids on the party and the start of police intimidation. He said that the Party was not completely unprotected and not prepared. The organisation had a few surprises for them when the time came'. We are asked if this account of what was said is accurate? If so, what did he mean by it?*

79. I cannot remember if this was said by Roy Battersby. This was over 45 years ago. I do not disagree, however, with the comments Roy makes about this in his statement.

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<sup>17</sup> See the first para of Rodger's covering letter and its references to the report's exposure of '...the extraordinary measure undertaken by the Warden and members of staff to ensure complete fool-proof security, particular while students are attending courses there'.

*In respect of para 19 the contents of the education was described in the report as follows: 'the subjects for discussion were quite straightforward and innocuous and included dialectical and historical materialism, capital and philosophy'. We are asked if this is a broadly accurate description of the course?*

80. Yes, this is a broadly accurate view of the curriculum. It was 'straightforward' and 'innocuous'.

81. I have seen a syllabus for lectures on dialectical materialism, dating from 1978, which I think must have been virtually identical to the 1976 syllabus. The lectures included the following: 1. Nature – The Universal; 2. Nature and Man – The individual and the universal; 3. Dialectical Materialism – Theory of knowledge of Marxism; 4. Theory and Practice – Leninism and democratic centralism; 5. Cognition: Living Perception; 6. Cognition II: The dialectic of interconnected abstractions; 7. Cognition III: Dialectical nature; 8. Cognition IV: Actuality; 9. How dialectical theory guides dialectical practice. And the required reading included sections of V. Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks, Volume 38, Anti Dühring and Dialectics of Nature by F. Engels and sections of K. Marx's Capital, Volume I. This is typical of the seriousness and academic nature of course material.

*In respect of para 21 and speculation by the person who wrote the report that the WRP had located listening devices at WM and that they 'would probably have left some of them intact as a means of channelling lectures, chit-chat and other usefulness information to those listening in', we are asked if any listening devices*

*were found at WM? And, if so, did the contents of the educational course change as a result of the knowledge that someone may be listening in?*

82. After giving this some thought, I now recall the finding of what we understood to be a listening device. I remember WRP members who were adept at security and technology regularly came to WM to sweep for listening devices. I recall an occasion around this time when they found one. They did not take it apart or move it. I did not see the device myself but I was told about it.

83. I recall being told that a decision had been made to keep it in place. This may be guesswork on my part, but I assume that our thinking was that, by removing it, we would have alerted whoever had put it there that we had found it and that they would then find another way to listen in and we would not necessarily find out what that new way was.

84. I do not recall whether or how any discussions which took place around the site of that device changed as a result of its finding. Certainly the syllabus and subject matter of the courses did not change at all. As for other discussions, students had already been warned not to discuss or disclose personal information when they were in the building. For the avoidance of doubt, there had never been any discussion of anything criminal or unlawful so there was no question of that aspect of any discussions being altered.

*We are asked, generally, whether the writer's account of WM is accurate? If not, can inaccuracies be identified and set out.*

85. I find the report writer's description of White Meadows frighteningly accurate, subject to a couple of points.
86. The UCO must have played an active part in the routine of the Education Centre. He must have volunteered for guard duty. His knowledge of the guard's routine could only have come from acting as a guard himself. Likewise, he must have participated in dropping the News Line to the addresses he cites in Derby.
87. On a point of accuracy, at the time of his report in February 1976, on my calculations, it may be inaccurate to say that WM 'has accommodated about 900 students since its opening in the Summer of 1975' (para 2 of the report). It only opened for students in September 1975. Courses were not held back to back, some lasted 2 weeks and only 60 students could attend at any one time. There was a constant struggle to get people to attend as they had families, work commitments, etc. I wonder where he got that figure.
88. On another point of accuracy, the reporter describes all the students being searched by Roy Battersby (para 8). There were usually women students present and I would search them.

Additional observations on the report

89. I find the report is not just frighteningly accurate, but also striking in its detail. Indeed I understand that the report we are asked to comment on may be a precis of (or even quite separate from) a much longer, 30 page report on the

surveillance of WM by 'Mike Scott' <sup>18</sup>. I note that 'Mike Scott' believes that there may have been an earlier, separate deployment on a WM course between 31<sup>st</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> February 1975 <sup>19</sup>. I wonder if the education centre was bugged in some way or whether the UCO had a listening device.

90. I agree with comments Roy makes about other sources of information in other parts of the report on the WRP generally (paras 2-4 of the intelligence report).
91. Indeed the way the report is laid out (dotted lines between paras 5 and 6 and between para 20 and 21) suggests that that only paras 6-20 may relate to the UCO's report on his attendance on a course and the other information (up to para 5 and beyond para 21) are from other sources or surveillance. I note however that it is suggested to the Inquiry that another interpretation of this is that these dotted lines 'may indicate a passage that has been omitted' <sup>20</sup>.

#### *Page 1 / significance of report*

92. I note that the only comments Commander Rodger makes about the accompanying intelligence report is about the 'extraordinary [security] measure' taken at WM. The report does not address any concerns about public disorder or violence emanating from the WRP. Nevertheless Rodger's supervisors appear to seek to frame the report in those terms, as set out in a series of memos between senior SB officers concluding on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1976

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<sup>18</sup> Para 12.69 at p122 of CTI OS for T1P2 - [https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs\\_T1P2\\_Opening\\_Statement.pdf?v1](https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs_T1P2_Opening_Statement.pdf?v1).

<sup>19</sup> CTI OS T1P2 para 12.69, at p122.

<sup>20</sup> CTI OS T1P2 at para 12.69, at p122.



21. This appears to be how it has been presented to this Inquiry<sup>22</sup>. I note that the SB annual report for 1975, dated 19<sup>th</sup> March 1976, recorded the decision that ‘SDS coverage of this organisation will now be withdrawn’<sup>23</sup>.

93. The Inquiry has heard that the report was passed onto and was of interest to and used by the security services: ‘The report was evidently of some value to the Security Services: the text of the report was copied into a Security Service report and receives positive commentary whilst also, it seems, raising further areas of inquiry’<sup>24</sup>.

*Page 4*

94. Para 11. I note that the report says this about the WRP’s views of the police: ‘they would ...continue to use every means, illegal and otherwise, to hinder the WRP’. This was our view then (expressed without being aware that that comment was being reported on) and confirmed by what we have seen now about undercover policing.

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<sup>21</sup> (Doc 6: MPS-0741115).

<sup>22</sup> In the words of CTI: ‘It appeared to allay their anxieties as to the WRP’s immediate intentions however, “for the time at least, the organisation is concerned more with the political education of a hard core nucleus than with immediate revolution”. This is echoed by Acting Commander Watts: “It is valuable for us to learn that, despite all the speculation, the courses at “White Meadows” do not include incitement to public disorder.” ‘. Para 12.71 at p123 of CTI OS for T1P2. [https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs\\_T1P2\\_Opening\\_Statement.pdf?v1](https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs_T1P2_Opening_Statement.pdf?v1).

<sup>23</sup> Para 28 of SB 1975 annual report (doc 2: MPS-0730099).

<sup>24</sup> Para 12.72 at p123 and also para 16.14 at p136 / 137 of CTI OS TP1P2 [https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs\\_T1P2\\_Opening\\_Statement.pdf?v1](https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs_T1P2_Opening_Statement.pdf?v1). See also Security service record of ‘Scott’ report on White Meadows dated 26.3.1976 (doc 2: UCPI0000033495), esp p3.

95. Para 13. This reported comment also makes that point: 'Battersby claimed that both the local health inspector and the planning department had told him that pressure had been put on them to harass the centre'.

*Page 5*

96. Para 17 onwards. There is detailed information about the guard patrols and other security in place. For example, para 19, 'If... it was suspected that a police raid was imminent, the second of the guards would telephone the Clapham headquarters...The possibility of a raid or a petrol bomb attack by such organisations as the National Front had been considered...'. Again, this is important contemporaneous evidence of the reasons for our security measures.

*Page 6*

97. Para 21. Roy's statement sets out the background against which some of these comments, recorded by the UCO, were made: 'Insofar as the introduction in to White Meadows of electronic receiving devices is concerned, it seems quite possible that some such equipment has been found. This conclusion is prompted by the assertion on several occasions that the WRP would welcome police action with regard to the discovery of bullets at the Education Centre simply because the Party's case against the Observer newspaper would supposedly be elevated to criminal libel... The WRP expects the authorities to carry out bugging operations against it and in the light of the [CPGB] experience (following such a device being discovered at its

headquarters), the Party knows that without choosing the right moment to reveal any discoveries – i.e. during the court action against the Observer, its publicity value would be dissipated by the adverse news coverage the national press would print alongside the WRP's revelations. This approach also has the advantage of not warning the authorities that their devices have been discovered because, even if all of the listening devices have been located, the WRP would probably have left some of them intact as a means of channelling lectures, chit-chat and other useless information to those listening in...'. It is also significant as an example of the SDS reporting on internal discussions about litigation. This report was of course passed on to 'Box 500' / MI5. I would like the Inquiry to tell me whether this information was also passed to Derbyshire police and / or the Observer.

### Context

98. For the reasons set out in Roy's statement this single intelligence report must be seen in context. Roy lists and explains the five principal events which provide that context.
99. First there is the Special Branch report of its covert discussions with the Observer dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 1975.
100. Second, there is the police raid on WRP's WM centre on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1975 at which nine .22 bullets were supposedly found.

101. Third, there is an article in the Observer dated 28<sup>th</sup> September 1975 (headline 'Vanessa and the Red House Mystery').
102. Fourth there is the WRP campaign around the police raid and the police surveillance of that campaign.
103. Finally there is the libel action, brought by WRP activists including Roy Battersby, against the Observer arising from its article.
104. I endorse but do not repeat Roy's analysis of these events so far as I was aware of what happened. I can add the following, about my own experience of some of these events.

#### Police raid on WM

105. On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September 1975 the police raided White Meadows. I think there were 4 police forces, in addition to Derbyshire police, involved in this operation.
106. I was present in WM at the time of the raid.
107. I gave an account of what happened, from my point of view in chapter 14 of the book 'Staying Red: why I remain a socialist' by Norman Harding<sup>25</sup>. My contribution is in the section beginning 'An eyewitness account of the police raid'<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> 'Staying Red: why I remain a socialist' which was I believe first published in 2003 and the electronic version available here since 2011 - <https://stayingred.wordpress.com/>.

<sup>26</sup> Attached (doc 10: UCPI0000034743)

Observer article on 28th September 1975

108. I refer to Roy's account of this article. I note that Roy draws the obvious and significant conclusion that, at the very least, the Observer had advance notice from the police that a raid was going to happen and that they had been told by the police that something to do with 'arms' would be found. One basis for this view is that the first edition of the Observer, which was made public before the raid took place, said as much.

109. This accords with my own view. I have a clear recollection, even now, that I was made aware of the impending police raid before it happened. I was at the office at WM. I was on the pay phone to Norman Harding. He was in London reading the paper to me some time before the raid. I had time to go to Gerry Healy's office, knock on the door and tell the assembled leading members what the paper was reporting. I then went upstairs to our flat and was standing with my mother looking out the window (measuring for curtains) when all the police vans drew up. While I cannot be precise about the amount of time that elapsed between the paper becoming available on Fleet Street and the police arriving, I can say that it was sufficient for me to do what I describe and certainly confirms that I was aware, from my conversation with Norman Harding, of the Observer article and that it reported the police raid before it started.

110. Further, this appears to be consistent with what Norman Harding says. He wrote this about events on the Saturday night: 'At about 18.00 hours I started my weekly tour round Fleet Street to collect the Sunday papers as soon as

the presses started running.... I decided to flip through the papers myself. I quickly spotted an article in the Observer referring to a police raid on our Education Centre. Now if there had already been a police raid on our Education Centre I would certainly have known.... It went on to make a very specific claim: that over 100 police from the Derbyshire police force had made the raid and had discovered an arms cache buried in the grounds. When I read this I couldn't believe it.... I immediately rang the school and spoke to Liz Leicester ....'. Norman's conclusion was this – 'The first edition of the Observer came off the presses in London between 18.30 and 19.00 hours on the Saturday evening. But it is certain that from the amount of pre-planning and sheer weight of equipment and forces that the police were ready to move well before the paper was on the streets'.

#### Other questions and answers

*We are asked for our comments on 'Mike Scott' and 'Peter Collins' (UCOs), whether we recall them, what they did and the impact on us of finding out about them. Do you have any documents that may be potentially relevant? Other' – Is there anything else that you wish to add that may be of assistance to the work of the inquiry.*

111. I cannot remember either 'Mike Scott' (HN298) or 'Peter Collins' (HN303).

112. I note that 'Scott' was active in the WRP between Spring 1975 and February 1976. I am aware of his written statement <sup>27</sup> and his evidence at the Inquiry's

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<sup>27</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> witness statement of HN298 dated 5.2.2020 (doc 11: MPS-0746258).

hearings in May 2021 <sup>28</sup>. I note that 'Mike Scott' was questioned about his attendance at WMM in September 1975 <sup>29</sup>.

113. I note that 'Collins' was active in the WRP between 1973 and 1976 or so. The Inquiry has been told that he largely reported on 'matters concerning the Central Committee' <sup>30</sup>.

114. It was very disturbing to discover how close the UCOs were to my family. The constant worry of being raided again, being bugged, being watched, had a very negative impact on family life.

115. However, discovering that we were right and that there were undercover police in the WRP, has not come as a surprise but vindicates what we believed must be the case.

### Process and exclusion

116. I share the concerns, difficulties and frustrations expressed by Roy about the choices and decisions the Inquiry has made which prevent us from commenting further on these officers' role or participate more fully in the Inquiry. I feel that we have been caught in a 'catch 22'. We have not been allowed access to all relevant SB material because we have not been

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<sup>28</sup> Inquiry transcript - [https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/20210504-ucpi-t1\\_p2-evidence\\_hearings-transcript.pdf](https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/20210504-ucpi-t1_p2-evidence_hearings-transcript.pdf). His evidence from p18. His evidence about the WRP from p45.

<sup>29</sup> Transcript of his evidence, from p153 - [https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/20210504-ucpi-t1\\_p2-evidence\\_hearings-transcript.pdf](https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/20210504-ucpi-t1_p2-evidence_hearings-transcript.pdf). He explains that he was authorised to attend the course and was not aware in time of the high level revocation of that authority; he gives evidence about his queries over whether the report attributed to him was in fact his report; the appreciation of SS of his report; his view that the report produced in evidence 'may have been an amalgam of different bits and pieces' (p156); and his view that 'It's geared to revolution, but not by means of infiltration into the unions and...the Labour party...' (p157).

<sup>30</sup> CTI OS T1P2 para 16.8 at p134 [https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs\\_T1P2\\_Opening\\_Statement.pdf?v1](https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210421-CTIs_T1P2_Opening_Statement.pdf?v1).

designated as 'core participants' ('CP's) and the Inquiry has not sought out that material because we were not CPs.

117. Fifteen of us, activists from the WRP, first made ourselves known to the Inquiry in February 2020, but did not have the evidence to substantiate our concerns that we had been victims of undercover policing. We did not recognise the names 'Mike Scott' or 'Peter Collins', from 45 years ago. This evidence (or, rather, only some of it, such as the critical annual reports) was only made public in May 2021. On the basis of that material we applied to be CPs. Our application was refused, and we were invited to give evidence only on two discrete issues (including a single intelligence report) in the Rule 9 request (above).

118. In answers to a request made by our lawyers for unredacted copies of published WRP intelligence reports in which we had been named and indeed for sight of unpublished WRP intelligence reports, the Inquiry told us on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022: 'As you are aware, the statements being provided by Mr Battersby and Ms Leicester are on a specific narrow topic, and the relevant document has been provided to them. With regards to other documents which name them, as your clients are not CPs, we have not been flagging up where they are referenced in the documents in the same way as we would if they were a CP. We do not have the capacity, nor would it be proportionate for us to manually review documents for their names (either published or otherwise). As they are not CP's, their names would have been redacted (or not) in the documents which have been published in accordance with our published guidance on privacy redactions'.



119. In short, it appears that the Inquiry has not actively looked for all the important evidence that we were spied on, as we were not core participants. And, as a result, we have not been put in a position (early enough or, indeed at all) to persuade the Inquiry that we have sufficient interest in it, to be designated core participants.

120. For the reasons set out in Roy's statement, I feel that the Inquiry process has prevented important aspects of the SDS operation being considered. It is likely that the vast majority of SDS officers' spying on the WRP will not come to light and certainly the WRP will be deprived of any opportunity to comment on it. Further, as things stand, without being designated CPs, WRP representatives will not be able to contribute to module 2, which is perhaps the more significant exercise, of examining the high level decision within the police (and in all likelihood the government), which led to the WRP being targeted in the 1970s, over the course of three tumultuous years in the history of the labour and trade union movement.

Statement of Truth

121. I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed:

Elizabeth Lucast

Date:

11/2/22