

## In the Undercover Policing Public Inquiry

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### Second witness statement of Diane Langford

Dated: 21 April 2022

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#### Introduction

1. I make this statement supplementary to my first witness statement of 15 March 2021.
  
2. I provide evidence on two matters of relevance to Tranche 1 Phase 3 of the Inquiry:
  - (1) Observations and questions arising from the disclosure to me of various documents contained in my Registry File by the Metropolitan Police Service ('MPS');

(2) My belief, in light of evidence heard in Phase 2, that my friend Ethel lived in the same block of flats as the SDS safe house, rather than in the same block of flats as HN45 as I asserted in my first witness statement.

### **My Registry file**

3. In March 2022 I made a Subject Access Request to the MPS requesting all personal data held in my Special Branch Registry File (402/69/250).
4. I recently received a response providing me with 22 heavily redacted documents.
5. Despite the extensive redactions I have still been able to gain some important insights of relevance to undercover policing which I hope will be of assistance to the Inquiry.

### **History sheet**

6. I believe that Exhibit D25651 ( UCPI0000035070 ) is the history sheet from my Registry file.<sup>1</sup>
7. This 13 page document is the least redacted of all the documents I was provided. It contains 157 entries written on a type writer dated between 10 April 1968 and 10 August 1984. Each entry provides a brief description of information that has been recorded about me.

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 12 <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Pocock-WS-1.pdf>

8. My understanding is that each entry cross references to another file which contains the relevant report where I am mentioned (the cross references have been redacted in the document I've been provided).
9. As can be seen from Exhibit X ( UCPI0000035069 ), 38 of the entries correspond to reports already disclosed in the UCPI.

*Key indicating origins of reports*

10. From reading the history sheet, it appears to me that in or around March 1971 a decision was made to use a key when logging new entries. Almost all entries logged for the rest of the year have the letters C or SP recorded next to the date. Often the letters are placed in apostrophes: 'C' and 'SP'.
11. From mid to late 1972, the key appears to change and there are only a small number of SP references, and most entries are now marked C or S.
12. From the time when it appears that a key started to be used, there are 76 entries on my history sheet. 23 of these are referenced as C, 25 as SP and 16 as S. The remainder are not given a letter.
13. With reference to the entries marked C, S or SP I make the following observations:
  - a. 11 out of 12 entries relating to meetings of the Women's Liberation Front are marked SP;

- b. Seven of these entries have corresponding UCPI reports (predominantly authored by HN348);
- c. There are multiple entries relating to meetings which took place in private homes; all of these are marked S or SP;
- d. All entries reporting my identification at demonstrations are marked C;
- e. Entries relating to information obtained from the Morning Star and Women's Liberation (publicly available material) are marked C.

14. I also note that SDS reports frequently refer to C Squad using the abbreviation 'C'.

15. It appears to me that it is a reasonable possibility that entries marked S and SP relate to SDS reporting and those marked C relate to reporting by C Squad (which I understand was the unit in Special Branch responsible for monitoring communists and subversives, public order and domestic extremism).

16. This belief is supported by evidence from various managers in Phase 3 which suggests that SDS reports were identified as such. In particular I note the following evidence:

- a. At paragraph 17 of his second witness statement (MPS-0747797) Barry Moss asserts that he believes that several SDS reports from 1971 are S Squad reports. He notes that one report is marked S9090 on the minute and says that this indicates that it is the 9090<sup>th</sup> report of S Squad.
- b. At paragraph 27 of his first witness statement (MPS-0747155) Richard Scully states that S Squad reports were numbered to keep track of

output and the number was qualified with an S to indicate that it had originated from S Squad.

17. I am aware that S Squad was not formally established until 1974. However, in light of the evidence of Moss and the references on my history sheet, I wonder if it originated unofficially several years before, and perhaps S originally stood for the SDS before S Squad was formed to have oversight of the SDS.

18. My solicitor asked the Inquiry in correspondence if they knew the meaning of the C/S/SP references and if they did not if they would seek to understand them. In a response dated 19 April 2022, the Inquiry stated that it did “not consider that it is necessary to its terms of reference to understand the meaning of the references. We have limited resources and are incredibly busy and it would not be proportionate to commit further resources to this.”

19. Given that the police and the Inquiry have stated that many SDS reports appear to be missing, it seems to me that the history sheet is very helpful to the Inquiry’s investigations. If my theory about the key is correct, and it is also used in other civilian witnesses’ history sheets, the Registry files could offer a simple way to identify undercover reporting relevant to each witness.

20. I think it is crucial that managers are asked questions about any knowledge they might have about the meaning of this key, why it was introduced, why S appears to have been used instead of SP after August 1972, and how those in the Registry office would have known how to apply it to particular reports.

*Decision to open a Registry File on me*

21. Following consideration of [UCPI0000005789], at paragraph 55 of my first statement (UCPI0000034348), I hypothesised that my Registry File had been opened following my election to the Executive Committee of the London Revolutionary Socialist Students Federation. This is because [UCPI0000005789] was the first report I had been provided by the Inquiry where I was detailed as having my own Registry File.
22. Having reviewed the history sheet I now believe that the decision to open a Registry File on me was made primarily because of SDS surveillance of my involvement in the Britain Vietnam Solidarity Front ('BVSF').
23. The first 15 entries of the history sheet are typed in the same font up to and including an entry on 12 June 1969 which states that I am a key member of West London BVSF. I suspect that a decision was made to open a Registry File on me following the report dated 12 June 1969.
24. My understanding is that when creating my Registry File, the details of 14 previous reports where I had been mentioned were collated and recorded on the history sheet.
25. From here onwards in the document the font varies every few entries. I understand that this reflects the process whereby, after my Registry file was opened, the

history sheet was periodically updated to keep a record of new reports in which I was mentioned.

26. Eight of the 15 entries up to 12 June 1969 relate to my involvement in the BVSF, and five of these have corresponding reports that have been disclosed in the UCPI.

27. Following correspondence with my solicitor, the Inquiry agreed to search to see if it held a report corresponding with an entry relating to a BVSF meeting that took place on 9 June 1969. It subsequently confirmed that it did and that the report would be put through the redaction process and disclosed to me in the coming weeks. The Inquiry did not search for other reports in the period preceding 12 June 1969, but I suspect that if the Inquiry did conduct such a search further SDS reports would be identified.

28. Exhibit D25642 (UCPI0000035066) is a redacted Special Branch report dated 22 May 1969, which was disclosed to me in response to my SAR. It is dated 3 weeks before the decision to open my Registry file and is a report which was prepared by Special Branch in response to a request for information about me from another organisation. It contains detailed personal information, including my involvement in the BVSF and VSC, and is said to include a recent photograph. The author of the report notes that they are “reliably informed that the photograph is a good likeness.”

29. I am aware from evidence I have read in the UCPI that if a report is based on information from a UCO then the UCO will be asked about any accompanying

photograph to confirm the identity of the person. I therefore think it is likely that Exhibit D25642 (UCPI0000035066) relates to undercover policing.

30. Given the number of SDS reports relating to the BVSF meetings I attended, it appears to me that the history sheet indicates that the decision to open my Registry File was made significantly as a result of SDS intelligence.

31. I wonder to what extent SDS reports were disseminated for the purpose of informing decisions to open personal files on me and other individuals? Would my file ever have been opened if I hadn't been spied upon by undercover officers? Do the history sheets of other civilian witnesses show that Registry Files were also opened on them as a result of SDS reporting?

32. I believe that a decision by intelligence services to open a personal file on someone is very serious. This formal designation as 'a person of interest' has significant implications, blacklisting being an obvious example. Did the opening of my Registry File lead to other agencies opening files on me? Did it lead to trade union 'blacklisting' agencies spying on me at work?<sup>2</sup>

33. I am now 80 years old, and yet the state still holds this file on me based on my attendance at political meetings over half a century ago. I think this is extraordinary. To me it is reminiscent of the Stasi and other authoritarian regimes and the irony is that the police's undercover operations were supposed to protect our democracy against such regimes. They ended up emulating them. I worry that such files have

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<sup>2</sup> See paragraph 50 below



led and can lead to depriving individuals of basic rights such as the right to work or demonstrate against coercive government policies. The maintenance of such files is thus an ever-present danger. I think it is important that the Inquiry investigates the role that undercover policing played in decisions to open and store these files and what the relevant undercover reports evidence about the underlying basis for those decisions. The history sheets from Registry Files appear to be key to this area of investigation.

### *Extent of surveillance*

34. The history sheet shows that I was subject to intensive surveillance for nearly two decades, much of which was by undercover officers. I am curious as to why it ends in 1984, and I wonder if this is because Registry Files were computerised in the mid 1980s. As I said in my first statement, given that I am as politically active now as I was then, I find it extremely unlikely that the surveillance of me has ever stopped and feel that this is something that is relevant for the Inquiry to investigate, particularly given that it seems that the surveillance stemmed from and/or was maintained due to my being the subject of undercover reporting. I hope that the Inquiry will disclose further documents to me relating to the past 30 years, and I strongly believe that I must be informed at least about the extent and duration of the surveillance of me.

35. I cannot be certain which of the entries in the history sheet currently lacking corresponding UCPI reports relate to undercover policing. I believe that the apparent key for latter entries may give a good indication, suggesting that nearly

two thirds could relate to SDS reporting. However, regardless of whether my hypothesis is correct, I believe that the entire document is relevant to this Inquiry because it allows a more in depth understanding of the policing context in which undercover operations took place.

36. In 1969 alone, reports referencing me were produced on 44 days of the year, and this is just material generated by Special Branch. I believe that the security services were also monitoring me and producing their own reports.

37. All of the dozens of entries where my activity is recorded relate to normal, legal campaigning work, such as meetings, demonstrations and talks. It appears that every aspect of my political activity was surveilled, with mentions made in the history sheet of my involvement in at least 29 different lawful organisations.

38. I note that there are two entries in the history sheet which relate to events where there are corresponding UCPI reports where I am not named [UCPI26990] and [UCPI0000010569]. I recall both of these events and can confirm that the history sheet is correct in noting my presence. I wonder where the information came from. It suggests that other sources in Special Branch were obtaining intelligence on these events in addition to that provided by the SDS.

39. I wonder how many similar examples of duplication of surveillance of me by different Squads in Special Branch there would be of if more SDS reports were available? I think this is important evidence for the Inquiry to look at when considering whether SDS intelligence could have been obtained using less

intrusive means. More generally, I wonder what light reports from officers in these other Squads could shed on UCO activity over the years. For example, could they provide contemporaneous evidence of UCOs' unlawful activities and potentially knowledge within Special Branch of those activities?

40. As I observed in my first witness statement, reporting relating to my political activity is interspersed with gossip and nonsense. I highlight two examples here to give a flavour of particularly offensive and ridiculous reporting:

- a. An entry dated 17 February 1970 which states that "Wife of REDACTED is said to have had a lesbian relationship with REACTED." To what end was this recorded? It is both prurient and homophobic.
- b. On 1 October 1970 it is recorded that I am "alleged to be a possible threat to the safety of President Nixon who will be visiting on 3.10.70." This is something out of Monty Python; it is utterly laughable.

41. I find it incomprehensible that public funds were expended on creating a cloak and dagger fiefdom that was self-perpetuating, cultish and based on manufactured moral panic. I'm amazed that the government was persuaded by self-aggrandising, florid and deliberating misleading reports to keep funding widespread intrusion into the lives of its citizens, particularly the women's liberation movement, students, People of Colour and LGBT people.

### *General observations*

42. The history sheet complements the disclosure provided to date by the Inquiry. In my view it appears to give a more detailed picture of the undercover deployments. Going forward, I believe that if other civilian witnesses are provided with their own history sheets it could help them to assist the Inquiry in its investigations significantly.
43. In terms of enhancing my understanding, the history sheet offers a glimpse into the extent of surveillance of the women's liberation movement. In my first opening statement I expressed my deep concern that so little evidence had been disclosed relating to undercover reporting on the movement, and my belief that there was likely to have been much more extensive involvement of UCOs.
44. My concerns seem to be validated by the history sheet which details multiple examples of reporting on the Women's National Coordinating Committee, women's liberation conferences and meetings and the Women's Equal Rights Campaign, many of which are referenced with S or SP. As I suspected, thousands of women who fought to ensure that we were not treated as second-class citizens, who campaigned for equal pay, and access to education and childcare were monitored and had their private information recorded. And I imagine that what is recorded in my history sheet is just the tip of the iceberg and does not in any way reflect the true extent of spying on the women's movement.

45. Unfortunately, my ability to assist the Inquiry using the history sheet is hampered because five decades have passed since the information was recorded. My memories have faded, and I disposed of diaries, leaflets and other documents which would have helped me to recall the events detailed some years before my involvement in the Inquiry. However, I imagine that other civilian witnesses who are younger than me, and for whom events are more recent, will be able to offer greater assistance to the Inquiry if they are provided with the history sheet from their Registry Files.

46. Following disclosure of the history sheet by the MPS, my solicitor asked the Inquiry if it could conduct a search to see which entries, in addition to the 38 we had identified, had corresponding SDS reports. Despite the difficulties resulting from the passage of time, I hoped that if further reports were located and disclosed to me I would be able to offer further assistance to the Inquiry. The Inquiry said that it would not be proportionate to carry out such a search.

47. I subsequently identified 12 specific entries which I thought may be of particular relevance to the terms of reference, and my solicitor asked if the Inquiry would be willing to carry out a very limited search by date relating to these entries. The Inquiry agreed and subsequently identified a report relating to the BVSF meeting mentioned at paragraph 27 above and another report dated 17 February 1970 which I believe relates to a Palestine Solidarity Campaign meeting.

48. I was told that these reports had not been picked up in previous document reviews by the Inquiry. The Inquiry has said that these reports will be disclosed to me once

they have completed the restriction order process. However, the Inquiry does not consider it is necessary for me to see them before the Phase 3 hearings. This is disappointing as I had hoped that the reports may have assisted my recollections and potentially enabled me to provide useful evidence relevant to this phase of the Inquiry.

49. Given that from a simple date search alone the Inquiry has identified two previously undisclosed SDS reports of relevance to me, I hope that in future the Inquiry will use the history sheets of other civilian witnesses to assist their enquiries. It seems to me to be a very simple and proportionate way to identify relevant reporting and to allow civilian witnesses to assist the Inquiry to discover the truth about these operations.

#### Other Registry file documents

50. Finally, I wish to note several reports related to my employment and trade union activity that were disclosed in response to my SAR which I find very concerning. Whether the reports were produced by the SDS or not, as I have explained above, I think that SDS reporting will have strongly influenced decisions about wider surveillance of me, so I believe these documents are relevant to this Inquiry:

- a. D25675 (UCPI0000035071) is a heavily redacted report dated 19 September 1975. It records my employment details, my membership of the union NATSOPA and my recent appointment as Mother of the Chapel. The report states that I am “frequently seen reading Maoist literature.”

- b. D25650 (UCPI0000035068) is another redacted document dated 14 September 1982 which notes my recent separation from Manu and records that I am working at the Press Association and notes that I am “heavily involved with union affairs.” It goes on to state that “since [the] separation LANGFORD has become disenchanted with Marxist-Leninist theory but remains interested in extreme left-wing politics.”
- c. D25646 (UCPI0000035067) is a very heavily redacted report which is undated. The only information I can see states, “We are reviewing the information relating to Mrs Langford and have been unable to confirm REDACTED her present occupation. We should be most grateful for any information which you may have.”

51. Why was any of the above information recorded on my personal file? I was a trade unionist – how could that have been considered in any way lawful? I find the comment about literature I was reading at work particularly disturbing. How on earth did this information end up in a Special Branch report? I was genuinely shocked by this reporting, and it left me feeling soiled. Commenting on what I was reading is a clear example of thought policing. It seems to me that those surveilling me were interested in a democracy in name only.

52. I would like to know who produced the reports and who the information was collected for. What is written in the redacted sections that I cannot see? Is this an example of Special Branch liaising with trade union ‘blacklisting’ agencies?

53. In this statement I have been able to highlight the relevance of some of the documents in my Registry File to the terms of reference of this Inquiry, despite the heavy redactions. If the Inquiry provided me with an unredacted copy I believe I would be able to be of much greater assistance. I would be grateful if the Inquiry could now consider obtaining and disclosing the file to me.

**Ethel's address**

54. In my first statement (UCPI0000034348) I set out the circumstances where Dave Robertson/HN45's cover was blown on 6 February 1973, when he was recognised at an Indochina Solidarity conference by my friend Ethel who knew him in his real identity.

55. At paragraph 220 I stated that, several days after the incident, Ethel told me that:

*"Dave lived in the same block of flats as her at West End Lane and that it was common knowledge among other tenants in the block that the flat he occupied was a "police flat".*

56. I recall this conversation with Ethel vividly. She said that the policemen in the flat were very friendly and they were well known in the block. I remember being totally gob smacked. I found it astonishing that an undercover police officer would openly live in a "police flat".

57. However, having heard the evidence of HN45 and HN347 at the Phase 2 hearings last year, I now wonder whether I was mistaken in thinking that Ethel lived at West End Lane. I knew that HN45 lived at West End Lane because I had kept the form



that he filled in with his name and address when he joined our study group on Marxist-Leninist thought. I now think that it is possible that I assumed this was Ethel's address because she had told me that she lived in the same block of flats as HN45.

58. At the hearings HN45 described his cover flat at West End Lane as a bedsit. He also explained how he would sometimes go to stay at the SDS safehouse overnight for security reasons. I understand that this was a bigger flat where SDS meetings were held.

59. In his witness statement, HN347 said that he thought that HN45's cover flat was sometimes used for SDS meetings. In oral evidence he accepted that he was probably mistaken given that it was a bedsit, and it was more likely that HN45 stayed over in the SDS safehouse flat. He thought he may just have assumed that it was HN45's cover flat because he remembered him sleeping there.

60. Over the time I knew Ethel she lived at two different addresses. I recall that one of them was in Kilburn; I don't remember where the other one was. Unfortunately, I didn't visit her at either address, so I'm unable to be more specific.

61. I now think that it is most likely that Ethel lived in the same block of flats as the safehouse and, like HN347, she assumed that it was HN45's address as he often stayed there. This would also explain why it was known as a "police flat", given that undercover officers would meet there at least twice a week.

62. I'm aware that the SDS annual report for 1974 (MPS-0747787) implies that a second SDS safehouse flat was obtained mid-way through 1973 for security reasons. No specific month is given, and I wonder if the second flat was obtained because of HN45's exposure as a UCO. I hope that Counsel to the Inquiry will explore the reasons for obtaining the second flat at this time with the relevant managers giving evidence in Phase 3.

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. M. L. H. D.", is positioned above the "Signed:" label.

Signed:

Date: 21 April 2022