

Dave Morris: Opening Statement for the start of the Tranche 2 hearings [23.6.2024]

I, Dave Morris, Core Participant, make this Opening Statement.

It is divided into the following sections:

- A Background to this Statement
- B Unjustified and unjustifiable deployments
- C Unacceptable tactics employed
- D Some conclusions

A. Background to this Statement

This is my 4th Opening Statement after writing and presenting one at the start of each of the previous Phases of hearings. It is written by me in my own words.

I am in part a Litigant in Person. This is partly to save on some of the Inquiry's legal costs and partly to ensure an authentic voice during this Inquiry of one of the victims of the Undercover Policing units. I speak as a life-long community activist and organiser doing my best to stand up for the rights of people, in defence of the environment, and the future of our society and planet. I was targeted by undercover police units from the mid-1970s for at least 30-40 years.

I wrote my own Witness Statement for Tranche 2 earlier this month. As a result of the substantial delays in the disclosure process [* *See below*] and therefore the recent splitting of T2 into two Phases (P1 and P2) I expect to submit a Second Witness Statement at the start of P2 covering matters which I had been unable to cover in that Statement.

The matters in this Opening Statement largely reflect upon the significance of the matters dealt with in my Witness Statement. I don't therefore need to repeat those details in this overview.

** After 6 years of what appears to be delaying tactics by the Met, including insisting on complex and time-consuming anonymity and security processes mainly to protect the privacy and human rights of police spies, the Inquiry had only managed to complete the evidence for 'Tranche 1', the 1970s, by 2023. The Home Office intervened to insist the Inquiry must complete all the remaining Tranches, covering 1980-2010 within 2 years, and produce a Final Report by December 2026. However, the imposition of this arbitrary deadline seems to have understandably created panic and chaos within the Inquiry, and serious unfairness for Core Participants. Suddenly things are going at a furious pace, processes and proceedings have been truncated, corners are being cut, and massive pressure and impossible deadlines are being exerted on the Core Participants (CPs) who feel their rights are being curtailed. Regarding the chaotic and rushed preparations for Tranche 3 [1993-2007] already underway, many of those targeted by UCOs feel they and their important evidence are being excluded after waiting so long for the full truth on who spied on them and for what reasons, and for justice. Many CPs are now calling for the next Home Secretary to address this as a matter of urgency.*

The questions I was asked to answer in my Witness Statement seemed to focus heavily on the efforts by the police to try to retrospectively justify their unjustifiable deployments and tactics. Hence in this Opening Statement I focus on the deployments and tactics themselves.

B. Unjustified and unjustifiable deployments

1. In this Statement I will try to summarise how the reporting on myself and the groups with which I was associated was unjustified and unjustifiable.
2. All the groups targeted were small campaigning groups pursuing issues of widespread public concern and trying to create a better society for everyone. Those involved were concerned members of the public doing their best to question and improve things.
3. The Inquiry's Interim Report in June 2023 concluded, about the SDS deployments: *"The question is whether or not the end justified the means [...]. I have come to the firm conclusion that, for a unit of a police force, it did not; and that had the use of these means been publicly known at the time, the SDS would have been brought to a rapid end."*
4. The Interim Report was timely coming at a time when the Met had been found by other Inquiries and official Reports to be institutionally racist, sexist and corrupt, and remained under 'special measures' since July 2022. The Metropolitan Police themselves had finally been forced on 20th February 2023 to admit in their Closing Statement for Tranche 1 that: *'By modern standards, the SDS's deployments in this period are **unjustifiable** [my emphasis], because of the way they were structured – not least because there was a failure to consider intrusion, necessity, and proportionality.'*
5. The key questions that need to be asked and answered are:
 - a. Did these 'unjustifiable' deployments continue? The answer is yes - and to a much greater extent.
 - b. And did the unacceptable tactics employed continue? Yes they did - and got even more unacceptable.
6. Looking back at my activities as an activist and anarchist throughout the Tranche 1 period (1970s), it is significant that the UCO, Graham Coates, who for years targeted me personally and the groups I was involved in during that time, concluded: *'I do not think either the International Socialists or the anarchist movement was subversive in terms of their actions'. 'I do not believe any info I provided.. was particularly significant. I do not think it would have made any difference to public order if I had not worked for the SDS'.*
7. So I now come to the other groups that I was involved in, relevant to Tranche 2 (including matters held over from Tranche 1) that were specifically targeted by the SDS.

London Workers Group (LWG)

8. The LWG existed from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. I was significantly active in the group for most of that period. Its aims were to promote solidarity and awareness among fellow workers around London, to encourage people to organise themselves in workplaces to collectively challenge the dictatorial power of those who control and exploit workers, and to support workers when they took action to stand up for their needs and rights.
9. LWG was an open collective, involving anything between 3 and 30 people at weekly coordination meetings and fortnightly or monthly public meetings addressing a wide range of subjects relevant to workers. There were the usual and traditional protocols of almost all community groups in the UK of electing a treasurer and secretary to ensure that financial and contact details were properly managed and participants' privacy was respected.
10. As well as its meetings, the LWG produced leaflets and a bulletin, and attended various protests, picket lines and demonstrations.
11. I support the Statement of 'MSW' inasmuch as it covers matters within my knowledge.
12. UCO 'Tony Williams' infiltrated this entirely open and transparent group, abusing the trust of those attending and taking part who, in good faith, were doing their best to advance the LWG's very positive and much needed aims. Mr 'Williams' took on significant roles at various times, including publicity manager, group representative at an international conference, Treasurer and Secretary – a position he abused to be able to steal the private contact details of the group's supporters.
13. He admits in his witness statement that he did not witness any public disorder by the group. Instead the SDS interest in this group appears to be driven by LWG support for workers in trade disputes. His reports were sent to Mi5. This raises real concerns over blacklisting.
14. He attended a birthday party held in a private house by a member of LWG. He admits that: *'I would not have been a credible undercover officer unless I had lived the normal life of a member of the group and attended birthday parties and the like.'* This sums up a routinely unacceptable aspect of SDS-type activity, that it can't avoid gross invasions of people's privacy.
15. 'Tony Williams' makes a further significant admission in his Statement, that after 4 years involvement in the anarchist movement: *'I did not witness nor become involved in violence whilst deployed undercover save that the police in Scotland in Torness [anti-nuclear power protest] were somewhat heavy-handed in dealing with what was essentially non-aggressive trespass.'* That is, the only example of 'violence' he can think of in that 4 year period is by the police.

16. I ask the Inquiry to ask why no employers have ever been infiltrated for their systematic daily exploitation of workers and robbery of their labour; their daily illegalities regarding workplace health and safety, Trades Union rights, rights to breaks and overtime pay; use of blacklisting; and violent threats to sack workers and leave them and their families penniless if they don't obey orders without question.

Persons Unknown defence campaign

17. This was a traditional defence campaign in 1978-1980 for people arrested on serious 'conspiracy' charges and facing trial. I was an activist in the group for most of that period. The aims were to provide welfare, legal and publicity support to those arrested, publicise and criticise the repressive policing and laws involved, liaise with journalists and spread news about the case to counter media hysteria, attend hearings and take notes, liaise with solicitors and so on.

18. As far as I recall the coordination meetings were open, and run collectively. The activities were geared to achieving the aims above, and included producing leaflets, organising public meetings, pickets and doing the usual traditional things any such defence campaign would do. Eventually the charges were reduced and the 'Persons Unknown' defendants were found 'not guilty'.

19. Despite all that, 'Tony Williams' abused the trust and privacy of those involved by attending meetings and reporting on them, including on the legal advice and strategy of the defence. No doubt this benefited the police who were facing criticisms about the case.

20. I ask the Inquiry to ask if (and if not, why not) any police force units have ever been infiltrated by Undercover Officers trying to identify such units' use and abuse of violence against members of the public, discriminatory stop and search, corruption, misogyny, racism, disregard for the justice system, and/or interference with rights to demonstrate and thereby creation of disorder.

London Greenpeace

21. London Greenpeace was the first Greenpeace group in Europe, set up in the early 1970s. In 1977 it was invited but declined to merge into a new Greenpeace UK, which became famous for its direct action tactics at sea.

22. London Greenpeace continued to be a loose open collective publicly meeting weekly. Its aims were to encourage people everywhere to question and take action individually and collectively to respect and protect the environment, respect all animals, oppose all wars, reject 'consumerism', and generally encourage people to take control of their own lives

instead of Governments and corporations controlling the world's resources and decision-making.

23. It did all the usual things any campaign group would do – hold discussions, produce written material, brief the media, organise public events and protests and so on. London Greenpeace's activities were open and didn't include any clandestine direct action.
24. I first associated with the group during its anti-nuclear power campaigning at the end of the 1970s, getting actively involved in the group from around 1982 until today.
25. Regarding evidence from others involved in London Greenpeace I support the Statement of Albert Beale inasmuch as it covers matters within my knowledge. I have requested but unfortunately not been given access to the Statements of Gabrielle Bosely and Martyn Lowe submitted 2-3 months ago as the Inquiry has not yet been able to get them into the T2 bundle.
26. From the mid-1980s for at least 8 years the trust and privacy of those involved in the group or attending its open meetings, and indeed the integrity of the whole group, was seriously abused by long term infiltration by SDS undercover police officers.
27. For a number of years 'Bob Lambert' was a prominent and influential activist in London Greenpeace, which he publicly summed up in 2011 as 'a peaceful campaigning group'. He engineered fraudulent and therefore abusive sexual relationships with a number of women including fathering a child (who he later abandoned), strongly promoted animal rights direct action, acted as agent provocateur - including being accused of being responsible for the burning down of a Debenham's store. He also I believe contaminated a court case by participating in a false identity, and helped write the anti-McDonald's factsheet which became the subject of the 'McLibel' case. He was later promoted to become head of the SDS.
28. Meanwhile he handed over his deployment to 'John Dines'. This was also a long term and influential deployment in which Dines helped produce leaflets, organise events and protests, and became group Treasurer. He cynically engineered a long and fraudulent, therefore abusive, sexual relationship with group participant Helen Steel in which they lived together as a couple for 2 years. After Helen and myself were sued for libel by the McDonald's Corporation, it was discovered that Special Branch (and we later found out Dines too) were collaborating with McDonald's who had also infiltrated the group. Dines was getting details of our confidential legal advice and strategy following our meetings with lawyer Keir Starmer who helped us pro bono for 10 years during the case - the longest and one of the most controversial in English legal history.
29. I ask the Inquiry to ask why the SDS did not infiltrate the Government for their support for wars and for their promotion of and threats to use weapons of mass destruction. And why the SDS did not infiltrate Corporations for example for the destruction of the environment,

the food industry's daily mass cruelty to billions of animals, and the fossil fuel industry's responsibility for causing climate change which is on course to wipe out most of humanity.

30. London Greenpeace eventually had to put its work on hold as activists had to devote most of their time to the McLibel case, and so the McLibel Support Campaign was set up. I will go into further detail about this in the autumn.

31. I ask the Inquiry to ask why the SDS did not infiltrate McDonald's for their responsibility for systemic, daily, industrial-scale breaches of the law regarding workers rights, and animal welfare (as set out in my Witness Statement, para 84).

Stop 'The City' protests

32. The early 1980s saw the growth of a huge anti-militarist movement opposed to the US Government's threat to site a new generation of nuclear missiles throughout the UK and Europe. There were mass protests of tens of thousands of people outside the gates of military bases. Myself and other activists in London Greenpeace launched a call for protests in 'the City', London's financial district, against the financial institutions which finance and profit from the arms trade and war. Thousands took part in 4 such events in 1983-4, its remit expanding to encompass protest against capitalism as a whole.

33. The events were organised and coordinated by open, publicised meetings. It was decided there would be no leaders or even spokespeople. The idea was to encourage a wide range of peaceful, decentralised and self-organised activities all day throughout the city to engage with those who worked there, slow down financial activity, and reclaim the 'City' for people not profit.

34. An SDS Undercover Officer had infiltrated the London Region of CND, and reported on their deliberations on whether and how to support the protests. There are many other UCO reports, many containing inaccuracies and mischaracterisations about the plans, the events, about myself as a 'leader', and the aftermath.

35. I ask the Inquiry to ask why the SDS did not infiltrate any 'City' financial institutions or hedge funds for their investments in - and support for - the systematic daily global exploitation of people, global poverty and hunger, and destruction of the environment.

Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign

36. I was one of the initiators and coordinators of the TSDC, set up in 1990 for the 491 people arrested during and following the 250,000-strong anti-poll tax demonstration in 1990. The demonstration was on the day before the Government's controversial new Poll Tax was due

to be imposed, and followed weeks of residents' protests outside Town Halls throughout the country. The demonstration had been attacked and broken up by the police, and a 'riot' ensued.

37. The TSDC was a traditional defence campaign in its aims and ways of working. It was coordinated through open, collectively-run meetings, and provided welfare and legal support to those arrested. It called for the charges to be dropped, including on the grounds of the well-established legal right of self-defence against police aggression and the traditional political right of self-defence against an unfair law or Government policy. It organised pickets of legal hearings and prisons, and produced newsletters and general publicity. It won the support of the whole anti-poll tax movement and ensured the movement stayed united and strong in the face of continuous media and Government attacks. By the end of the year over 14 million people were refusing to pay the hated tax. It was unenforceable and was scrapped.

38. I will say more about the TSDC, and how its targeting by the SDS was unacceptable, in the autumn.

Some other groups/campaigns relevant to Tranche 2

39. I was involved in some other groups and campaigns within the Tranche 2 period which were also unnecessarily and unacceptably targeted by SDS officers. For example:

- the anti-nuclear power movement, in particular the peaceful but determined 1979-80 protests at Torness in Scotland (which at least 4 SDS officers targeted)
- the Anti-Falklands War Support Network, a pacifist network which supported people arrested in 1982 for opposing both sides in that war
- the Wapping printworkers dispute in 1986 (5,000 brutally sacked by News International), in particular helping distribute the workers' own PICKET bulletin.
- the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign in 1985-1989. I lived close by. This was a traditional defence campaign which was critical of the police. I support the Statement of Stafford Scott.

C. Unacceptable Tactics employed

Influencing groups and activities

40. In most of the examples above, the police spies took on positions of responsibility and/or were influential in other ways. This was and is totally unacceptable.

Engineering fraudulent personal and sexual relationships

41. Both Bob Lambert and John Dines manipulated women into long term intimate relationships to further a secret police agenda. This was and is totally unacceptable.

Hoovering up personal and private information

42. The SDS officers stole groups' contacts lists and invaded people's lives and homes, hoovering up masses of personal and private information to pass on to Mi5. This was and is totally unacceptable.

Exhibiting unprofessional and biased attitudes, language and behaviour

43. The SDS officers dehumanised and demonised members of the public trying to make society better, treating them with utter contempt. They did this with the unprofessional and biased language used in their reports, their (mis)characterisation of people and their motives, their abuse of people's trust, and their own spying activities. All this was and is totally unacceptable.

Disregard for legalities and legal process:

44. The SDS was enabled to act with secrecy and impunity beyond the law. As demonstrated by the aforementioned examples, officers were empowered by their managers to:

- enter people's homes without a warrant
- systematically breach people's rights to personal privacy
- collaborate with the blacklisting of trades unionists and others
- engineer abusive sexual relationships without the victims' informed consent
- act as agent provocateurs
- breach legal privilege, report on confidential legal advice, and ascertain defence campaign strategies
- undermine and show contempt of the justice system (eg failure to declare to courts their real name and true role)
- collaborate with corporations against campaigners

45. All this was and is totally unacceptable.

46. This being unacceptable was underlined by me and Helen Steel's successful 2005 'McLibel' verdict against the UK Government at the European Court of Human Rights, in which the Court ruled:

*" The Government have pointed out that the applicants were not journalists, and should not therefore attract the high level of protection afforded to the press under Article 10. The Court considers, however, that **in a democratic society even small and informal campaign groups, such as London Greenpeace, must be able to carry on their activities effectively** [My emphasis] and that there exists a strong public interest in enabling such groups and individuals*

outside the mainstream to contribute to the public debate by disseminating information and ideas on matters of general public interest such as health and the environment..”

47. Although this was part of our successful verdict against the oppressive nature of the UK libel laws, as triggered by the service of writs against activists in London Greenpeace in 1990, the conclusion quoted above could just as easily be transposed to the illegal and unacceptable actions of the SDS and the need to protect campaign groups from being infiltrated and undermined.

Bias

48. The spies Reports and the police generally used and continue to use biased and politically-charged language to attack and stereotype campaigners and protestors, such as:

- ‘violence’, rather than ‘self-defence’ or ‘resistance’
- ‘disorder’, rather than ‘reclaiming the streets’ or ‘collective empowerment’
- ‘subversion’, rather than ‘challenging oppression’ or ‘seeking a better society’
- ‘extremism’ rather than ‘commitment to real change’.

49. Indeed such loaded words as ‘violent’, ‘disordered’, ‘subversive’ and ‘extreme’ can be reasonably and accurately used to describe the current way society is run by a ruthless and inhuman system intent on maintaining the profits and power of an elite at any cost to the public or planet – a system that movements for change were, and still are, rightly questioning, opposing and challenging.

D. Some conclusions

50. The use of, and tactics employed by, undercover officers to target the groups I was involved in was an outrage and totally ‘unjustifiable’, as already effectively conceded by the Met Police in February 2023 and in the Inquiry’s Interim Report.

51. People have a fundamental right to organise themselves, to protest and seek positive change. People have a right, maybe even a duty, to challenge unacceptable Government and capitalist policies and practices harming society, and to encourage everyone to seek to create a better society.

52. There’s a long and noble tradition - going back centuries - of refusing to accept unfair or repressive laws and measures (such as secret political policing) which only serve to protect oppression and injustice.

53. Protests and movements for change also enable people to empower themselves and each other, and should be encouraged everywhere. By spreading collective self-organisation,

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mutual aid and community solidarity, it can be demonstrated there are alternative and better ways of living and running our society – this is real democracy in action.

Dave Morris, 23.06.2024