

Super Blog:

The Real Story of the SDS

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The Prime Minister could, and should, be a core participant in the UCPI. But the misdirection of the UCPI by his first two Home Secretaries could prevent it from reaching the correct conclusion....

This is the Landing page of this super blog at the bottom of this page are some pdfs to download the complete Blog, the four individual, sub blogs and a compilation of published evidence of subversion assessments. This is a stupidly large document which I have reduced in size to a5 to save its footprint I strongly advise not printing it out.

Intro: the UCPI story and the real SDS story

Twenty years ago revelations started to emerge that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS or Scotland Yard) had placed officers in “deep cover” in left-wing political campaigns. It then emerged that some of these officers had been involved in intimate relations with activists and had spied on trades unionists and social justice campaigns.

The judicial Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI) was appointed by Theresa May when she was Home Secretary in 2015, with the purpose of examining undercover policing practices since 1968, including oversight, misconduct, and impact on public trust.

The inquiry started collecting documentary evidence almost immediately. but it was fully 5 years before any evidence could be gathered from witnesses in public. The delay had been caused by Scotland Yard and its support for the identity, not only for real names but for the fake cover names, to be withheld from the victims of the officers’ abuse. The inquiry’s concession of this in a substantial number of cases, and its selection of only a small number of many victims named in the officers’ intelligence reports means that the full scale of the abuse will never be known and many victims and their relatives will never know what was done to them. This terrible failure has only been exacerbated by the Inquiry team’s, failure to even index victims with anonymised “nominals”, as was done for officers in the Herne and Ellison Inquiries.

Only after 5 years did any documentary evidence start being published. As of September 1, this year (2025), 7,495 documents and now been published. Most of these had not been previously published. A large proportion are intelligence reports

and correspondence between MI5 and the MPS, deliberately destroyed or “lost” by Scotland Yard but fortunately scrupulously retained by MI5.

There is published evidence on the UCPI’s website which shines a light on the political and parapolitical decision-making that led to creation of the SDS. But the UCPI that it has not drawn on it to explain the political and historical origins of the SDS, with the result that once again in opening statements the Home Office’s lawyer has made the indefensible claim that the home office had nothing to do with its creation.

The UCPI Inquiry is not a politically impartial manifestation of the due process of law, responding to revelations of unlawful behaviours. It was politically commissioned, and it is politically controlled. This is particularly problematic when the sponsoring politicians and their predecessors are also participants.

Initially commissioned by the Conservative and Liberal coalition government, it was when implemented by a series of increasingly unstable and eccentric Conservative governments until 2024 when it became the responsibility of the current Labour government. Unfortunately, there is no reason to believe that the apparent change in the complexion of the government in 2024 will now make it easier for the UCPI to get to the root cause of the deliberately subversive actions of Scotland Yard since 1968.

This was only further underlined when latest Home Secretary – like the previous ones a core participant as well as its sponsor – once again repeated the deliberate misdirection that the Home Office played no part in its establishment or “tasking” of the SDS. There is already in the UCPI evidence base enough to indicate that tasking of the SDS was a (historically top secret) process involving a hierarchy of organisational stages decision makers.

This does not mean that it was a complicated or difficult to understand. What made it easier to understand in terms of how the decision was made to use police to collect information on political organisations the deeply deceptive and intrusive undercover operation was that the process used had been at existence for at least twenty years and all the key players involved had been engaged in it for many years, and the Prime Minister at the head of the hierarchy, Harold Wilson, had been a member of the Cabinet at the time it was created and finalised in 1948.

The civil service head of the process was the cabinet Secretary reporting directly to the prime minister – Bert Trend in 1968.

The cabinet was responsible for two top secret Official Cabinet Committees dealing with counter-subversion, one concerned with subversion in the British Isles and the other with Subversion overseas particularly (but not exclusively) focussed on the British Empire and Commonwealth.

In respect of the SDS in 1968 the Official Cabinet Committee Subversion (Home) was the main oversight, tasking, and “customer” committee.

The principal Cabinet Civil Service leads were the permanent under-secretaries (PUS) at the Home Office (Phillip Allen in 1968), Defence (James Dunnett) and Labour (Denis Barnes) beyond that the cabinet had discretion about who should attend. This might include the Cabinet Office press secretary (Don Bullock/Joe Haines) The MI5 Director General would be represented by the Director Of F Branch (Counter Subversion and CPGB)(Richard Thistlethwaite). The Metropolitan Police Commissioner would be represented by Assistant Chief Constable “C” (Peter Brodie) Allen would be represented or accompanied by the Home. Office Deputy James Waddell who as chief B Department oversaw both MI5 and Scotland Yard.

Until 1968 Wilson had an additional Cabinet Minister dealing with the Security Service. This was George Wigg, in effect by-passing the rather too liberal minded Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins. But when he replaced Jenkins with Callaghan in the Autumn, he no longer felt the need for this.

Since the National Union of Seamen’s strike and its ensuing state of emergency in the summer of 1966, Wilson had been used to being briefed directly by the Director of F Branch. F Branch provided Subversion(Home) with regular briefings on the subversive threat to the UK. The acceptance of these by the Cabinet Secretary and the PUSs, with the approval of the ministers to whom they were accountable, established the UK counter subversion-priorities for MI5 and Special Branch.

Combatting trade union militancy and frustrating the CPGB’s encouragement of was at top of the priorities established by Subversion(Home). Between 1947 and 1951 it devised and introduced three nationalised blacklisting schemes that used MI5 registry files to exclude CPGB members and trade union militants from the Civil Service, firms and their subcontractors involved in secret government contracts and final in pro-active and ongoing surveillance of those engaged in sensitive research and development programmes.

These blacklists continue today in the form of the UK Security Vetting (UKSV) a government agency still within the Cabinet Office. Since 2015 CGI a French-Canadian company has provided the UK National Security Vetting Solution (NSVS) at a cost of just short of £50m pa. The NSVS solution includes all Britain’s intelligence registries. It has recently been migrated to a dedicated cloud service.

CGI’s contract envisages in excess of 200,000 applicants being vetted every year, the migration to the cloud took 8 weeks to complete and included the details of two million vettings done since the contract commenced.

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Download Menu

Super Blog

Intro

Pt 1 The Prehistory of the SDS

Pt 2 The Parapoliticial history of the SDS

Pt 3 The Secret History of Dick Thistlethwaite

Evidence