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The IER joins unions, blacklisted workers and MPs in call for more thorough investigation into the role of the police in blacklisting

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Unions, blacklisted workers, parliamentarians and those targeted by undercover police have sent an Open Letter to Sir John Mitting, chair of the undercover policing inquiry,

calling for a more thorough investigation into the role of the police in blacklisting.

The unprecedented measure comes in response to an inquiry ruling barring a blacklisted union activist, **Dave Smith**, from giving oral evidence to the inquiry. A Judicial Review against the ruling was submitted by Imran Khan KC in September, but last week the JR was refused by the High Court Judge, Hon. Mrs Justice Lieven. The Open Letter describes the legal rulings as 'perverse and against the public interest' and has been signed by General Secretaries of two unions reported on by undercover political police; Sharon Graham of UNITE and Steve Wright of the Fire Brigades Union.

Steve Gillan, current TUC President and Gen. Sec. of POA who also signed the letter, commented:

This is not about one individual. There are nearly 7 million trade unionists in the UK. That's 7 million members of the public who have a direct interest in the spycops inquiry fully investigating the role the police played in blacklisting union members. That means more than just police voices need to be fully heard.

'Alison', who was deceived into a five year relationship with the undercover officer Mark Jenner, (who infiltrated the construction union UCATT) commented:

These so-called 'elite' officers found time to deceive women like me into relationships AND destroy workers' careers through blacklisting. The Inquiry must find time to fully investigate both. Dave Smith and blacklisted workers deserve the same chance that I had to challenge the warped police narrative, and to put their truth on record.

Responding to the Open Letter, **Dave Smith** said:

UK Security Vetting is making headlines because of its role in the Peter Mandelson scandal, but its involvement in the spycops and blacklisting scandals has gone almost completely unnoticed. Masses of evidence covered by Restriction Orders or hidden on the inquiry's unnavigable website shows that the UK's political police units reported on trade union and political activists for decades. Their intelligence was shared with major employers via unofficial industry blacklists and official state orchestrated 'vetting'. This caused workers to lose their jobs and to lose their homes. A lot of working class families are very angry. This industrial scale breach of human rights has gone largely unreported in the press, and to its eternal shame under investigated by the very public inquiry set up to look into it.

Open Letter to Sir John Mitting, Chair of the Undercover Policing Inquiry

We the undersigned, publicly call upon Sir John Mitting, the Chair of the undercover policing public inquiry, to call Dave Smith to appear as a witness at a future set of oral evidence hearings. Smith is a core participant in the inquiry, spied on by multiple undercover officers. The spycops compiled intelligence reports on his trade union and anti-racist activities that were then circulated to the security services.

As the secretary of the Blacklist Support Group and co-author of the book, '*Blacklisted: the secret war between big business and union activists*', Smith is acknowledged as the leading expert on the Consulting Association blacklisting scandal, and the police involvement in it. Smith has assisted two select committee investigations and his research has been cited in Parliament, in academia, the media and even by the police.

Following a formal complaint by the Blacklist Support Group, Operation Reuben was set up as an internal police investigation into police collusion in blacklisting. Operation Reuben concluded that:

“Police, including Special Branches and the Security Services supplied information to the blacklist funded by the country’s major construction firms, The Consulting Association and other agencies. This allegation is Proven.

Special Branches throughout the UK had direct contact with the Economic League, public authorities, private industry and trade unions” (Operation Reuben Para. 4.2 & 13.1.2)

It is in this context that investigating the downstream use of police intelligence for vetting or blacklisting members of the public became one of the stated aims of this inquiry. Yet the subject is barely mentioned in opening statements by state actors and only cursory questioning of police witnesses has taken place. There was not a single word on blacklisting or vetting in the Chair’s Interim Report published in 2023.

Without calling on Dave Smith’s in-depth research into the mechanics of blacklisting, the lack of openness by state actors on the issue will go virtually uncontested, and any findings will be based on the failing memories of a small cohort of ex-police officers. The ruling by the chair of the public inquiry to deny Smith the opportunity to give oral evidence is perverse and against the public interest.

Signed by:

Sharon Graham – Gen. Sec. UNITE the Union (core participant)

Steve Wright – Gen. Sec. Fire Brigades Union (core participant)

Paul Nowak – Gen. Sec. Trade Union Congress

Steve Gillan – Gen Sec. Prison Officers Association, current President Trade Union Congress

Matt Wrack – Gen. Sec. NASUWT, former GS FBU, former President TUC (reported on by undercover police)

Gary Smith – Gen. Sec. GMB union

Sir Paul Kenny – former Gen. Sec. GMB union, former President of TUC

Daniel Kebede – Gen. Sec. National Education Union

Jo Grady – Gen Sec. University & College Union

Paul Mackney – former Gen. Sec. NATFHE (reported on by undercover police)

Fran Heathcote – Gen. Sec. Public & Commercial Services Union

Sarah Wooley – Gen Sec. Bakers, Food & Allied Workers Union & President GFTU

Dave Calfe – Gen. Sec. ASLEF

Mick Whelan – former Gen.Sec. ASLEF

Eddie Dempsey – Gen. Sec RMT union

Gawain Little – Gen Sec. General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU)

Darren O’Grady – Ass. Gen. Sec. National Education Union & blacklisted electrician

Steve Hedley – former AGS RMT union (blacklisted core participant)

Dr Emma Runswick – Deputy Chair British Medical Association

John McDonnell MP (Labour)

Dave Nellist – former Labour MP (core participant)

Baroness Jenny Jones (Green) – reported on by undercover police

Frank Smith – blacklisted bricklayer core participant

Dan Gilman – blacklisted core participant

Lisa Teuscher – blacklisted core participant

Steve Acheson – blacklisted electrician core participant

Noelle & Monica Higgins – daughters of Brian Higgins
(blacklisted core participant)

Marilyn Jones – widow of John Jones (blacklisted core
participant)

Helen Steel – blacklisted core participant

Dave Morris – blacklisted core participant

Emily Apple – blacklisted core participant

Suresh Grover – core participant

Joe Batty – former TGWU rep

Lois Austin – core participant

Mark Metcalf – core participant

'Alison' – core participant

'Jenny' – core participant

'Jessica' – core participant

'Lindsey' – core participant

'Wendy' -core participant

'Madeleine' – core participant

'Lindsey' – core participant

Kate Wilson – core participant

Donna McLean – core participant

Hannah Sell – core participant

Lindsey German – core participant

Eleanor Fairbaird – core participant

Zoe Young – core participant

Alex Hodson – core participant

Dr Donal O'Driscoll – core participant & Undercover
Research Group

Merrick Cork – core participant

Tom Fowler – core participant

Chris Brian – core participant

Ben Leamy – core participant

Michael Dooley – blacklisted bricklayer

Frank Morris – blacklisted electrician

Colin Trousdale – blacklisted electrician

Tony Jones – blacklisted electrician

Kenny Irvine – blacklisted builder & Building Worker Group

Kenny Newton – blacklisted electrician

Dr Jack Fawbert – blacklisted bricklayer

George Fuller – blacklisted bricklayer

Terry Brough – blacklisted bricklayer

Tony Sweeney – blacklisted joiner

Paul Filby – blacklisted joiner

Dr Graham Sharp – blacklisted carpenter

Bill Kaye – blacklisted carpenter worker

John Bryan – blacklisted bricklayer

Mark Thomas – blacklisted activist comedian

Paul Crimmins – blacklisted bricklayer

Tony Seaman – blacklisted scaffolder

Lee Fowler – blacklisted electrician

David Dix – blacklisted electrician

Martin Overy – blacklisted electrician

Pat McEwan – blacklisted steel erector

Stephen Bland – blacklisted electrician

Martin Smith – blacklisted civil servant & Organising for a Change

Professor Keith Ewing – President of Institute of Employment Rights

Hilda Palmer – Families Against Corporate Killers

Janet Newsome – Hazards Campaign

Rory O'Neill – Hazards

Mick Holder – London Hazards Centre (targeted by undercover police)

Sheila Coleman – Hillsborough Justice Campaign

John Dunn – Orgreave Truth & Justice Campaign & blacklisted coal miner

Rob Williams – National Shop Stewards Network & blacklisted car worker

Henry Fowler – Strike Map

Eveline Lubber – Undercover Research Group

Hannah Griffiths – The Human Rights Fund

Organisations

Blacklist Support Group – core participant

UNITE the Union – core participant

Fire Brigades Union – core participant

Trades Union Congress

General Federation of Trade Unions

Police Spies Out of Lives

Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance

The Monitoring Group

Undercover Research Group

Hillsborough Justice Campaign

Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign

National Shop Stewards Network

Institute of Employment Rights

Hazards Campaign


London Hazards Centre

Strike Map

Organising for a Change

The Human Rights Fund

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pycops-inquiry-confirms-spying-on-unions-and-blacklisting/

Blacklist Support Group update and statement
(<https://www.ier.org.uk/inquiry-confirms-spying-and-blacklisting/>)

minister-admits-being-briefed-by-spycops/

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