

# 'Murdochgate': More evidence of NoW phone hacking and Met involvement

## Release Tommy Sheridan now!

**Philip Stott**  
Socialist Party Scotland

James Murdoch, chief executive of News Corporation, swore blind to a House of Commons select committee in July that he knew nothing about the widespread nature of phone hacking at the now-defunct News of the World (NoW).

He also denied having seen an email in 2008 that proved that the illegal actions of NoW went way beyond the risible "one rogue reporter" fig leaf excuse that News International (NI) clung onto for years.

Tragically for Murdoch, the former editor of NoW Colin Myler and the newspaper's long-term lawyer Tom Crone gave evidence in September to the select committee that they had both met James Murdoch and showed him the email in 2008.

The "For Neville" email contained transcripts of hacked messages from the mobile phone of Gordon Taylor - head of the football players' union, the PFA.

Murdoch junior agreed to the £500,000 pay-off to Taylor to stop his legal action. In other words James Murdoch must have had knowledge of the phone hacking operation.

### Police involvement

Significantly, Myler and Crone claimed that the "For Neville" email was given to them by the Metropoli-

tan Police. This followed the police seizure of thousands of documents from the NoW's private investigator Glenn Mulcaire.

Mulcaire carried out a large amount of the phone hacking for the paper and was jailed in 2007.

Why did the Met police hand incriminating evidence back to the NoW that clearly showed illegal activities had taken place? Why did the original investigation into phone hacking by the police conclude that this evidence and thousands of other documents did not prove widespread illegal activity?

And why, when the police were asked to review all the evidence again in 2009, did it take just eight hours to conclude there was nothing to justify new prosecutions - when the Met had all the information in their possession, including about the hacking of murdered schoolgirl Milly Dowler's voicemail and thousands of other cases?

Many have pointed to a culture of cover-up by the Met and collusion between the leading figures in the Met and News International. The head of the original police investigation, Andy Hayman, ended up working for the Times, part of the NI empire.

Neil Wallis, the former deputy editor of the NoW, secured a job with the Metropolitan Police as a PR consultant after he left the paper. While employed by the Met, Wallis was paid £25,000 for "crime exclusives" by the NoW.

In what has been described as an act of revenge, the Met threatened to use the Official Secrets Act to force Guardian journalists Amelia Hill and Nick Davies to reveal who told them that Milly Dowler's phone had been hacked. After a huge outcry this has now been dropped.

Lawyers working for Milly Dowler's family are demanding statements from top News Corp executives in the US. They are convinced that there is clear evidence of regular payments by the NoW to corrupt police officers.

These developments reinforce the Socialist Party's demands for a genuine, democratic and open inquiry involving representatives of the trade union movement into the Murdochgate scandal. The current Weeting investigation being carried out by the Met cannot be relied upon, given the Met's own central role in the phone-hacking saga and the cover-up.

### Tommy Sheridan

Another former editor of NoW, Andy Coulson, is currently being investigated by Strathclyde police as part of a perjury investigation. Coulson is now suing News International because they have stopped paying his legal costs, which they were doing for four years following his resignation as NoW editor.

Coulson was NoW editor when Scottish socialist Tommy Sheridan won a defamation case against the paper in 2006. The former Scottish NoW editor, Bob Bird and the former Scottish paper's chief reporter, Douglas Whyte, are also under investigation after giving evidence during the Tommy Sheridan perjury trial. This scandalously led to Tommy's subsequent jailing.

They variously denied in court knowing anything about phone hacking, payments to police officers and denied ordering the hacking of Tommy Sheridan's phone.

This is despite the fact that Tommy's mobile number, PIN number and home address were found in Mulcaire's documents.

Clive Goodman, the NoW former royal correspondent, claimed hacking was widely discussed at editorial meetings when Coulson was editor.

Operation Rubicon was launched



Cover-up and collusion at the Met? photo Paul Mattsson

after Tommy Sheridan's solicitor and the Labour MP Tom Watson handed in a dossier which included the names of hundreds of people in Scotland believed to be victims of Mulcaire's and the NoW phone hacking operation.

It's been reported that there are now between 40 and 50 police officers involved in the Scottish investigation into hacking, possible police corruption and perjury.

It remains to be seen if charges are brought against Coulson - who was David Cameron's communications director when he gave his evidence in December 2010 - and what attitude the Scottish Crown Office takes given their vendetta against Tommy Sheridan over the last five years.

What is clear is that Tommy Sheridan, currently in Castle Huntly open prison, should be released immediately.

As Tom Watson pointed out in the House of Commons in July, Tommy Sheridan's conviction "may well be unsound".

The full scale of the Murdochgate scandal, which has yet to fully emerge, involving top politicians,

police officers and the legal establishment as well as the Murdoch empire, demands nothing less than a full and open public inquiry by elected and accountable representatives including from the trade union and workers' movement.

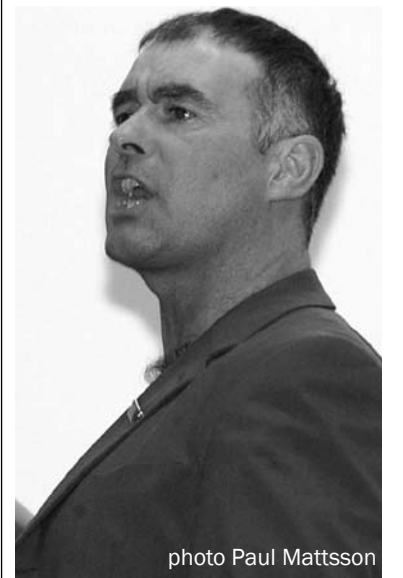


photo Paul Mattsson

Tommy Sheridan

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## Scotland: SNP do the Con-Dems' dirty work

The Scottish National Party (SNP)-led Scottish government announced a range of savage cuts in their recent spending review statement. Finance secretary John Swinney, confirmed the government's intention to implement £3.5 billion in spending cuts up to 2015.

For public sector workers who are facing the brunt of the attacks, it's a declaration of war against their pay, pensions and jobs. Unison has pointed out that a total of 31,000 public sector jobs in Scotland will have been axed over last year and 2011/12. The rate of job losses in the public sector will now accelerate as the impact of the cuts hit home.

On top of this 500,000 workers in Scotland now face a wage freeze at least until April 2013. Local government workers had already seen

a three-year pay freeze imposed on them by CoSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities). Even the token £250 wage increase for those earning under £21,000 - and many employers will not implement it - is a wage cut after inflation.

If the SNP think their spending plans will help "grow the Scottish economy" as they claim, they are deluded. You cannot impose public sector job cuts and reductions in living standards on this scale without driving the economy into the ditch.

The SNP's spending review also saw major cuts in local government funding, affordable housing (50% cut) and further education (15%). Even the NHS, which is supposed to be ring-fenced, will see real cuts of up to £400 million by 2015. Inflationary costs and the impact of

private finance in the health service will mean further job cuts among NHS staff.

Scandalously, the SNP have allowed the imposition of sky-high tuition fees on students studying in Scotland from England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### Cuts

An indication of the impact of the slashing of budgets was graphically shown when Glasgow city council announced a further £13 million in cuts for the city. It now means a £61 million cuts package for this year. Local councils across Scotland will also seek to accelerate cuts in the wake of the SNP's review.

The trade union movement must respond and quickly. The decision

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### John Swinney - finance secretary

of Unison to continue with a ballot over pensions among its Scottish local government membership for 30

November is welcome. The Unison Scottish secretary's statement that the strike was off has now been removed from the Unison Scotland website.

With many unions balloting in October it is vital that meetings are organised in every workplace to urge a massive vote in favour of action. The unions must build for a mass Scottish TUC demonstration on 1 October in Glasgow (assemble 11.30am in Glasgow Green) as a step to a mass strike on 30 November.

This is not only a fight to defend pensions. For millions of workers it will be seen as a chance to have their say on the brutal austerity being meted out by the rich and the millionaire politicians.

Full article see [www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk](http://www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk)