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- IRELAND - PAST AND PRESENT
- PROFILE: SIR GEORGE MAKGILL
- SPOOKS: STEPHAN KOCK AND 'ALAN JUDD'
- LISTENING IN TO MI6

Journal of Parapolitics

# So that's alright then...

Despite the end of the Cold War, the work of propagandists continues unabated. They continue to promote black propaganda, lies and disinformation. For some, the nature of the world has not altered one iota. It is merely a matter of changing one bogeyman for another. Steve Dorril considers a few recent examples of the propagandists' trade.



For James Goldsmith and other anti-communists of the old new Right, the new menace is the European Union. In attacking the concept of 'subsidiarity', Goldsmith claimed that 'it is mask cynically used to impose the Treaty of Maastricht, part of a clear strategy of deception and disinformation' (DT, 23.4.94). Who writes his speeches - Brian Crozier?

Many of the interesting stories floating around over the past year have involved Ireland, giving some credence to the idea that there is an Information Policy-style unit operating in the province.

\* A *Mail on Sunday* 'exclusive' by Chester Stern (who else?) revealed that the IRA terrorist, Thomas McMahon, who had murdered Lord Mountbatten had been secretly released from Dublin's Mountjoy prison to help negotiate peace in Ireland (10.7.94). This was based on 'intelligence sources' which claimed that the prisoner's movements were 'closely monitored by MI5'. Two days later, the Irish government said that the story was 'absolute nonsense'. McMahon was apparently never influential in Republican circles and had, in recent years, distanced himself from the IRA (DT, 12.7.94).

\* Said Mujbar, one of Colonel Gaddafi's senior lieutenants, claimed that much of the information which Libya gave to representatives of the of the British Foreign Office and which was passed on to MI6 last year, describing his country's relationship with the IRA, was 'bogus' (I, 20.7.94). The Foreign Office made much at the time of this 'coup'.

\* Do I believe this? The *Sunday Times* (21.8.94) claimed that 'Iran paid millions to fund the IRA'. I am sure that money did go to the IRA but '£20 million' and more through Channel Island accounts? The front page story sounded convincing until you read the details on page 2. The claims of Dr. Mir Ali Montazam, who was first secretary at the Iranian embassy in London for six years, became less and less convincing as the article progressed. Montazam had no direct knowledge of the funding and the claim was based on speculation following snippets which he picked up at the embassy. He waited six years to tell his tale, just as the peace moves were getting off the ground and the Foreign Office was revealing meetings between IRA and Iranian officials.

\* A classic from the *Sun* and *Sunday Express* (12.4.94 & 16.1.94). MI5 and SAS agents were alleged to be hunting down 'Sergeant X', also known as 'Goldfinger', responsible for killing nine (?) members of the security forces in Northern Ireland with a specialist American sniper's weapon. The different versions had the assassin as a 'former British

Army serviceman ... served in the Falklands' and 'an American mercenary'. The *Sunday Times* claimed that he had been arrested in Dublin for other offences (10.7.94) but no more has been heard of this mysterious sniper.

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\* What happened to the claim of a Russian defector, Igor Makayev, who fled to the West from the Soviet embassy in Bangkok, that there was a 'top Russian spy in Whitehall'. Makayev had once been, according to the *Mail on Sunday* (not *Stern*!) (24.4.94), in the KGB's British section. I saw no reference to this story in any other newspaper.

\* According to a report for the International Atomic Energy Agency by Ted Hefford, a British engineer who inspected all the Matrix Churchill equipment sold to Iraq, the machines 'did not have the necessary level of sophistication for nuclear-critical application' (G, 19.5.94). Thus reversing the well-publicised assertions that Matrix Churchill equipment was used for nuclear applications.

\* Britain did not explode an H-Bomb in the late fifties recently declassified American files reveal. Two tests failed and the actual explosion was from a massive A-Bomb (I, 24.3.94). So another sacred cow of the Cold War has fallen. I suspect that nuclear matters were at the heart of British post-war deception planning. It was Dennis Wheatley who wrote a minute saying that the London Controlling Station would concentrate on 'scientific deception' against the Russians. It would be an interesting exercise to go back and look at the reality of Britain's nuclear programme and compare it with the newspaper and academic reports of the time. For instance, we now know that Britain had very few bombs and that the much vaunted independent deterrent relied to a massive extent on American technology and expertise, including the design of the Polaris warhead, which was claimed at the time to have been designed by British scientists.

\* According to Professor John Erickson, the Soviet wartime dead totalled nearly fifty million (*Barbarossa, The Axis and The Allies*, Edinburgh University Press, 1994). Having just read many books on the Cold War by the leading academics it is interesting to note that not one mentioned the staggering death toll during the Second World War on the Soviet front. Yet, this single fact probably had more bearing on the nature and direction of the Cold War than any other factor. How was it possible for seemingly rational people to imagine that a country which had lost a quarter of its adult population could then stage the expected war against the West?

Tricia Howard, who had an affair with Paddy Ashdown and had worked for two other MPs, told the *Sunday Express* (6.2.94) that there were a lot of 'seedy' affairs going on at Westminster. 'It was homosexual and involved certain ministers dressing up as French maids and acting obscenely.' These two ministers were later promoted. Did MI5 make any reference to the possibility of blackmail, as it has in the past with other ministers, when Mrs Rimington sent round the dossiers to Mr Major, as she normally does at the time of cabinet re-shuffles? The director general claims that the Service does not monitor the activities of 'top people' but it certainly does keep files on MPs.

According to a story in the *Guardian* (29.6.94) police in different parts of the country have been keeping surveillance on known homosexual meeting places. They have resorted to collecting car numbers. In one instance because 'Special Branch wanted to do a trawl of interesting public figures'. Those SB files are, of course, available to the Security Service's own computer.

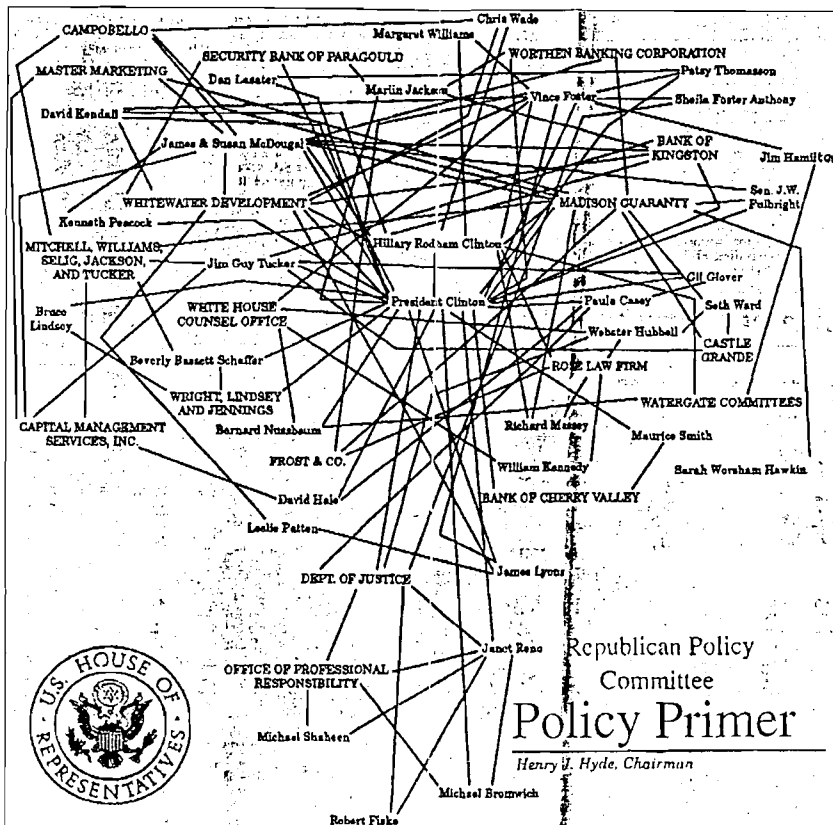
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One of the strangest and longest media sagas has been the British press pursuit of Bill Clinton. It has been the British papers, principally the *Telegraph*, clearly at the instigation of Canadian Conrad Black, and

then hot on its trail, the American/Australian owned *Sunday Times*. James Adams went as far as to attack the American press for not seeing a good story in the making. The US press did eventually pick up the stories after they had been 'surfaced' in Britain. They were mostly the product of the *Telegraph's* Ambrose Evans-Pritchard (see Spooks in this issue) who relied to a great extent on the material pumped out by fringe groups on the extreme right of the Republican Party.

This anti-Clinton campaign has become a conspiracy-laden industry worthy of the outer fringes of the JFK assassination. In an extraordinary series of articles in *The Times* (12.3.94 & 1.8.94), William Rees-Mogg showed his obsession with the minutiae of the Vincent Foster suicide, whose death, according to the former editor of the paper, bore the marks of 'professional criminals'. Rees-Mogg wrote about the exit wounds as if poring over the autopsy photographs of President Kennedy. As a true conspiracist, he wrote 'where the story becomes really worrying is when one reaches the six [emphasis added] suspicious suicides, not to mention a murder or two'.

Just to show that even apparently rational and intelligent people can believe just about anything, Rees-Mogg backed up his article with a mind-blowing illustration. If anyone on the left had used a similar graphic, I am sure that he would have been the first to call for the men in white-coats.



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# THE SILENT CONSPIRACY

Inside the Intelligence Services in the 1990s



'Stephen Dorril has a conspiratorial view of Britain's secret services. The frightening thing is he is probably right'  
*Independent on Sunday*

STEPHEN DORRIL

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Julian Putkowski, historian and researcher for the BBC series 'The Monocled Mutineer', in part two of his history of A2, provides new evidence on Michael Collins entrapment of A2 agents and the role of Irish covert operations



# THE BEST SECRET SERVICE MAN WE HAD Jack Byrnes, A2 and the IRA

There are plenty of stories which have been published by British secret agents about spy operations against Russian Bolsheviks. However, it is very difficult to find a over-generous body of literature about contemporary operations against the British Left and Irish Nationalists.

Official censorship is an obvious enough explanation for this bibliographic black hole and it is equally true that publishers are unattracted by the prospects of marketing memoirs of routine surveillance set in unexotic Britain. More specifically, in the case of A2, undemocratic excesses would have been reason enough to cloak its deeds under the blanket of the Official Secrets Act. Insofar as Irish covert operations were concerned, it was also important to hide the scale of the defeat the IRA inflicted on British Intelligence and suggests why H.M. Government has never publicly acknowledged casualties like the A2 spy, Jack Byrnes.

Yet, under the pseudonym "Jameson", Byrnes has featured in almost every biography of the IRA leader, Michael Collins and the Anglo-Irish War. Most accounts about Byrnes, whether by historians or journalists, embellish a couple of news reports published in Dublin newspapers in March 1920. (1) Concentrating primarily on events in Ireland, many also omit a crucial aspect of his activities.

Byrnes, the British secret service agent who supposed to have almost trapped Michael Collins, was simply initially involved in an extension of a covert offensive which had initially been directed against the Left in mainland Britain. Assassinated in 1920 by Collins' "Squad", it is tempting to think that Byrnes' death was brought about by personal over-confidence stemming from his initial successes as an A2 spy.

However, blaming Byrnes for his own demise fails to acknowledge the contributory negligence of his employers for having sent him to an untimely end. No less than the IRA bullets which killed him, Byrnes was a victim of the arrogant coterie of political reactionaries who directed British intelligence operations. Posthumous declarations of Byrnes' purported value as a secret agent and cursing or endorsing his killers' deeds should not obscure the responsibility of his superiors for the spy's death. But did they really blunder or was Byrnes a victim of his own success as a secret agent?

There is little question that A2's achievements against the British Left during 1919 owed a great deal to the spurious radical credentials of Jack Byrnes. However, his masquerade was of

comparatively recent manufacture and appears to have relied almost completely on his role as General Secretary of the SSAU and the partnership he forged with the British Socialist Party. However, this radical fig leaf grew more substantial for a number of reasons.

Firstly, civil unrest which convulsed Britain during the aftermath of the war created a maelstrom of radical groups whose organisers, sometimes lacking a verifiable political pedigree, could simultaneously work in different capacities in a number of campaigns and groups. Thus Byrnes' simultaneous involvement with six or seven militant industrial and political organisations was relatively unexceptional.

Secondly, small scale and financially hard-pressed campaigning groups must also have been attracted by Byrnes' apparently limitless availability and commitment. He always appeared ready too carry out the humdrum tasks of being a delegate, organiser and committee-worker. Byrnes' value as a bureaucrat was also matched by his zealous support for the SSAU. On 24 April, 1919 SSAU committee members subscribed 15/6d to reimburse Byrnes for the loss of a watch and chain he said he had pawned to keep the bankrupt SSAU in business.(2) The fact that, as SSAU General Secretary, Byrnes never spoke at a major public meeting or political rally also enabled him to avoid impromptu enquiries from a wider constituency.

Thirdly, Byrnes personal life and his past history were apparently unexceptional - which was probably why no-one probed how Byrnes managed to support his wife and children. Though successful spies and informers rarely flaunt their calling, Byrnes' home in Romford, Essex was: "An unpretentious two storey semi-detached house in a quiet part of Mildmay Road largely inhabited by the working classes."(3) His neighbours knew he had served in the Royal Field Artillery in Salonika during the war and had been discharged on grounds of ill-health during 1918. His wife, who later claimed that she knew nothing of her husband's secret service work, maintained that Jack was a commercial traveller, an impression which his frequent journeys to London and occasional long absences from home tended to support. He had a reputation in Romford for being "a bit of a politician", in labour and ex-servicemen's circles but was unpaid for his services. The people he spied on were encouraged to believe that he was poor and occasion he feigned illness which he blamed on penury-induced hunger.(4)

His family history was far from mysterious. Known to his friends as Jack, the future A2

spy was born John Charles Byrnes in his parents' home at 17 Barfett Street, Queen's Park, London on 9 June 1885. He had two younger brothers and a sister and was brought up by his grandmother. Both of his parents were English but his grandfather, a naval veteran of the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, was an Irishman from County Wexford. Peter Byrnes, Jack's father, supported his family from his income as manager of a china shop in London's Savile Row.(5) In May 1907 Jack Byrnes married 20-year-old Daisy Harper, a tailor's daughter, at Chadwell Heath, Essex. By the time he began working for A2, the couple had three children, one of whom was an infant. Jack, a gasfitter, had also served in the Royal Field Artillery for a time before 1914 and as a Reservist he was called up when war broke out.

Byrnes spent the early part of the war as a Regimental Sergeant Major in the Royal Field Artillery in Salonika before heart trouble led to him being hospitalised in Malta and later returned to Britain. His literate and neatly penned personal war diary reveals him to have been a devoted family man, an accomplished amateur water colour painter and sketch artist and a committed Anglican. He was a brave man who had been awarded a medal by the Royal Humane Society for saving horses from a blazing stable but his diary also reveals Byrnes was wholeheartedly sick of the war.

The prayer he wrote in his diary for the chance to return to his family was eventually answered on 13 June 1918, when R.S.M. Jack Byrnes, RFA No.170757, was discharged from the Army after attending a Medical Board. (6) A few months later Byrnes became prominent in Romford's ex-servicemen's organisations and constitutional Labour politics. During the December General Election he organised the campaign of Walter Letts JP, the Romford Labour Party's ultimately unsuccessful candidate.(7)

Byrnes had a muscular physique and was smartly-dressed. but his appearance was otherwise unexceptional: "About five feet seven inches high... clean-shaven, dark hair, blue eyes, medium build, hands clean and well-kept, long and sharp features." (8) Had he been seen with rolled up shirtsleeves, closer scrutiny would have revealed Byrnes' collection of tattoos. His arms were covered in designs which included a dedication to "Phyllis" and menagerie of animals, birds and reptiles, mythical and otherwise. These were complemented by a mermaid and two women, one in Japanese costume. He had two rings tattooed on his fingers, one of which was a coiled snake. (9) Though much was later made of Byrnes' interest in

birds, there is no sign that he showed in any interest the creatures (other than the tattooed variety) until a few hours before his death.

When Byrnes began his career as a spy is unclear but it is tempting to speculate that it may have had something to do with his wife, who had worked at the Admiralty in Whitehall during the war. His motivation for becoming a spy is unclear but as a partially disabled ex-serviceman with a family to support, the financial inducement of a regular wage and expenses represented obvious attractions. Circumstantial evidence indicates that he was a spy or informer before he was recruited or transferred to A2. His wages and expenses were paid from an account controlled by Major Mathews at Scotland House. Since this location was the headquarters of Sir Basil Thomson's recently established Directorate of Intelligence it seems reasonable to assume that Byrnes may have been initially recruited by the organisation. This would also serve to explain Byrnes' apparent familiarity with Major Charles St. John Rowlandson, another of Thomson's intelligence officers.(10)

There is no indication that Jack Byrnes was specially trained as a spy but his operational techniques were generally competent enough to fool the disaffected ex-servicemen of the Sailors' Soldiers' and Airmen's Union. Byrnes' elevation to the position as Secretary of the SSAU created opportunities for him to penetrate the ranks of London's Left. Byrnes used his SSAU status not only to spy on the British Socialist Party but also to monitor organisations during the summer of 1919. Perhaps the most important of these was the London Workers' Committee (LWC), which was based at 7 Featherstone Buildings, Holborn. The LWC was rather like a trades council, co-ordinating activities and campaigns involving different socialist and industrial organisations. Though less powerful, the politics of the LWC were similar to those of the better-known Clyde Workers' Committee. (11)

The Secretary of the LWC was the veteran Amalgamated Society of Engineers' activist, T.F. Knight and though dominated by male shop stewards from the railways and engineering trade unions, the LWC also included two women, Miss Copperwaite (LWC secretary) and Mrs Holloway (National Federation of Women Workers). In May 1919 the LWC initiated a campaign aimed at securing the release of a rash of socialists and conscientious objectors who were being harried and imprisoned by the Government.(12) To press their demands, the campaigning caucus of the LWC, sometimes referred to

as the Ways and Means Committee, proposed to arrange a National Rank and File Conference on 14 June, to be followed by a demonstration in Hyde Park the following day. If these proved unsuccessful, the caucus intended to advance their demands by an escalating campaign of strikes and direct action.(13)

SSAU delegate membership of the LWC also enabled Byrnes to secure co-opted membership of the militant coterie who made up the caucus, thereby allowing him to simultaneously to file daily reports to A2 about other caucus members' groups. The latter included Sylvia Pankhurst's Workers' Socialist Federation; the East London Dockworkers' Union branches; the Triple Alliance and the Policemen's Union.(14) A representative example of the kind of oral report filed by Byrnes ("No.8"), supplemented by a copy of an "Appeal to British and Irish Revolutionaries" from the Soviet Defence League", was recorded by one of his A2 controllers on May 31 1919. Since such documents are rarely made available by H.M. Government, its contents are reproduced in full.

Verbatim, the indifferently typed document read:

*Notes have been received from individuals concerning dissatisfaction at the following places:*

Warley Irish Guards  
Chelsea Barracks  
Catterick

*Hayes was interviewed this morning. His general demeanour was one of uneasiness and he was in a state described by No.8 as decidedly windy. He proposed that No.8 should give assistance at the Police Demonstration in Hyde Park tomorrow. It was explained, however that the Union was, at present, in a weak condition, and although moral support would be given, no demonstration could be made as it was considered advisable for the Union to lie low for the time being.*

*During the interview J. Syme came in to see Hayes purporting to carry a letter from McLean MP asking Hayes to visit Major Rowlandson today. No.8 having seen the hand-writing but not the context of this letter expressed the opinion that he knew the writing and that it did not come from McLean. No opinion was expressed as to who had written this.*

*Upon the departure of Syme, Hayes said to 8 'Do you know anything of Rowlandson he is the most dangerous man England', that is dangerous to the labour cause. I warn you to be very careful. No.8 denied any great knowledge of Rowlandson. he was then asked by Hayes if he would undertake to provide Union pickets at the various military centres*

around London in the event of the Police coming out on Monday - these pickets were necessary in order to persuade the soldiers to take no active part in police work. Hayes also stated that, if necessary, the police were prepared to come to blows over this matter. Hayes expressed his idea that he was being very carefully watched by Government Spies and seemed to be very much afraid on this account. No.8 will see Hayes on Wednesday next.

This afternoon No.8 will attend a meeting of the London Workers Committee. He also stated that Facey was to be present. He stated that this committee is closely connected with the I.W.W.. He also mentioned that Mrs Holloway, a member of this Committee, was of doubtful parentage.

#### Gaelic League

This league is run by Sinn Feiners. The leader appears to be a Miss O'Neill, the secretary Art O'Brien, Food House, Food Place, High Holborn. Only those who are approved Irishmen may join the league and No.8 has been approached by Miss O'Neill and asked to become a member and give his support. This league is not linking up with other Unions at present.

#### S.S & A.U

Todd and Facey are the Union Trustees while A.T. Harte, acts as Treasurer. Only a few shillings have been received during the last few days and a promise of #3 from some labour Union in the North. It is, however, a little early to judge the effect of the late requests for support.

No.8 suspects Todd and a man named Webster as being Government agents. Webster is running a branch of the S.S & A. at Notting Hill. He is described as being far too keen, while Todd has aroused suspicion through using a term which was more military than revolutionary.

No.8 was met yesterday by Captain Mander who is the secretary of the National Union of ex Service men. No.8 said that he though he had sent the charter of this Union with a previous report, but if not, he would supply a copy of it at a future date. It would appear that this Union is in a worse financial position than the S.S & A.U and is believed to be seeking affiliation.

On Saturday 14 June, Byrnes was interviewed by: "Miss Mooney - alias Copperwheat, of the Sinn Fein movement, together with a Miss Sullivan and after the interview it was decided that No.8 should meet someone of the name of Shannon who has just returned from America." (15)

"Mr Shannon" was probably Cathal O'Shannon, a Socialist Party of Ireland

activist and member of the revolutionary Irish Republican Brotherhood. Shannon, who was also a Transport Union organiser, would have been en route home from the Amsterdam International Trade Union Conference. However, it was another IRB member, Art O'Brien with whom Byrnes subsequently developed contact.

Whether due to Byrnes' success in acting out his role as revolutionary or the Republicans desperate need for arms to fight the Crown, contacts matured in mid-July. Byrnes reported the gist of an encounter with the Gaelic League Secretary, Art O'Brien. (16) The subsequent A2 report recorded that O'Brien:

*Especially requires:-*

*Revolver 45 cal.*

*Automatics 32 cal.*

*also service rifles if possible. He also wished to know whether supplies could be delivered at Liverpool. When told this could not be done he suggested that material should be stored in London until convenient opportunity arose for shipping. A meeting has been arranged for August 18th at 11.0am at Adam Street. O'Brien does not do business himself but will introduce a third party - The advisability of introducing a third party should be considered, O'Brien is departing for three weeks holiday. (17)*

Nor did the Irish alone court Byrnes. On the day David Ramsay was released from jail at the end of his sentence for sedition, Byrnes reported having met Sydney Arnold (18); Rose McKenna (19); Goldberg (20); Schwartz (21) and others at 20, Hanover Square on the night of Monday 14th July, when it was decided "to form a sub-committee representing all Unions, to formulate plans to bring about social revolution. Facey and Byrnes are on this sub-committee." (22) Given the nationalities of those involved, it would be tempting to cite the activities of this small ad hoc group as proof of an organisational Bolshevik-Irish Republican conspiracy. The rhetoric expressed by its members and their individual political activism would certainly confirm this impression. However, in practice they spent most of their time fruitlessly trying to arrange for one of their number or a friend to make an initial contact with either Lenin or James Larkin (the latter then in the USA). (23) Their failure to accomplish either task was due to the difficulty in persuading someone to act as courier or securing them a passport. Also, notwithstanding the purported abundance of Bolshevik bullion for British sympathisers, they found difficulty scraping together enough cash for the trip. (23)

The group's decision to involve Byrnes in their scheming was evidence that the mirage of the SSAU as proto-Red Guards

still retained certain currency. However, others, including Sylvia Pankhurst, were disposed to form a workers' militia. Addressing the National Rank and File Conference on 14 June she called for: "The formation of an Army on the Sinn Fein plan and suggested that as the Black Riots are on it would be a good opportunity to form such an Army to protect the workers." (24)

That such calls failed to impress many who might otherwise have supported her was due to a prevailing rumour that Sylvia Pankhurst was a secret agent - not for the Bolsheviks but for the British Secret Service! This rather startling allegation was gossiped about by many London socialists following Zachariassen's arrest. The identity of the individual responsible for the spurious allegation is most likely to have been Byrnes, though Facey had been spying for Basil Thomson since May. Byrnes filed a report on 15th July stating that Sylvia Pankhurst had received £300, "from over the water and that the Agent who brought it is at present at 85 Camberwell Green". (25) A week later, Byrnes declared, "He was known to have brought £5 to £7,000, also propaganda." This dramatic news was, however, unverifiable because Zachariassen had been hastily deported from Britain on 18 July. (26)

Byrnes appears to have also suspected that Pankhurst could identify the small group of individuals who were in a position to know Zachariassen's whereabouts and warned A2: "Sylvia Pankhurst is dangerous on account of his arrest and is believed to be threatening revenge." (27)

Motivated by diverting justifiable suspicion away from himself and discouraging revolutionaries from making common cause with Pankhurst, Byrnes reported: "Meeting with Russian people at Goldberg's house 16 Hooper Street, Theobalds Road on the night of 22-7-19. During the meeting suspicion was thrown on Miss Sylvia Pankhurst the view being expressed that she was not acting straight and with this view all present agreed. The outcome of this will be that Sylvia Pankhurst will take a long holiday." (28) Three days later he added: "Sylvia Pankhurst is suspected of being a Government agent and giving the Norwegian away. They are trying to remove her." (29)

The smear against Sylvia Pankhurst was clever and devastatingly effective, simultaneously throwing her on the defensive and poisoning alliances between anti-Government organisations. In declaring she had only received about £300 pounds from Zachariassen, those who

believed her raised questions about the rest of the money the Norwegian was supposed to have brought to Britain. Nor could Zachariassen be quizzed to clear her name or clarify matters because he had promptly been deported back to Norway.

His departure also enabled *The Times* to peddle more propaganda about Bolshevik subversion. In an article entitled, "Foreign Money For Strikes - Agent's Confession", it announced: "The man was arrested by English police. After a night's detention he made a confession to the effect that he had fulfilled his mission and handed over the packet. It should be recorded that the agitator in question, whose identity is known, denies having received any money in this way. When Zachariassen was searched, it was found that he had in his possession a large sum of money in English banknotes, which he said he had obtained in Norway, and a large stock of Bolshevik pamphlets. The sum of £6000 has been mentioned in this particular case, but the authorities regard this as a mere drop in the bucket." (30)

In 1928, Herbert Fitch, the Special Branch man who arrested Zachariassen, recalled the Norwegian taking: "A quick glance... towards a very heavy pair of boots lying in the corner of the room. I had a look at them, and, as I more or less expected, the uppers were lined with waterproof pouches in which some of the money and bonds had doubtless come over from Russia. The man's waistcoat was also false-lined, and from one of the papers I found in it I obtained the principal facts used against him in his trial." (31)

There was no trial because there was no evidence on which to prosecute Zachariassen. Even if Zachariassen was a member of the Comintern bent on supporting the Bolsheviks, it is more likely that he would have spent the funds on arms or items likely to assist Bolshevik revolutionaries.

The involvement of Byrnes and Facey with the Zachariassen affair strongly suggests that the Norwegian was a fall guy for a Special Branch dirty tricks operation intended to destabilise anti-Government opposition groups. Because of the fractured state of the British Left and the hard-sold Red Scare also peddled by employers' organisations such as the British Empire Union and the National Stability League the Zachariassen frame-up was a crude but devastatingly effective tactic. Nor was this an isolated incident, for Zachariassen's was only the latest of a string of virtually identical arrests which had occurred during the preceding year. When considering the allegations that British Intelligence were a bunch of blundering incompetents in

dealing with the IRA it is as well to be reminded that when it came to smears, Basil Thomson and associates could be devastatingly effective. However, there were inevitable complications for the prime movers in such operations, not the least of which arose from a rival intelligence service.

Notwithstanding Byrnes' adroit manouvering, within a month his covert career was threatened by two linked developments. These involved Major Rowlandson, who worked for the Directorate of Intelligence and the General Secretary of the Policemen's Union, Jack Hayes. The link was established at the beginning of July, when Major Rowlandson requested a joint meeting with Byrnes and Facey. Byrnes was unaware that Facey had been a Special Branch spy since May.(32) On 3 July, A2 noted: "Yesterday in the afternoon, John Syme came to the S.S. & A.U. office, with a message from Major St. John [sic] Rawlinsion to Facey & Byrnes, asking them to go to Park Place at 4 p.m.. They went, and we[re] asked why they had not been to see him recently. Byrnes said that he had not come because the last time he was there he felt he was not wanted to call again. The Major said this was not so. He asked for their impressions of Hayes, secretary of the Police Union, which were given. He asked how they were getting on and was led up the garden. After fencing for some time, he said he would drop a letter to them." (33)

From this it is clear that Byrnes had dealings with Rawlinsion, possibly even before being taken on to the staff of A2. However, news of this meeting was also relayed to Hayes. This became clear when the Policemen's Union launched their final, desperate strike on 31 July 1919.

Though half of Liverpool's police responded to the strike call, in London only 965 Metropolitan Police and 58 from the City of London force acted to support Union recognition and the re-instatement of victimised NUPPO members.(34) On the morning of 1st August Byrnes joined a crowd of NUPPO strikers who had gathered to listen to their leaders on Tower Hill. It was apparent the strike did not have enough support, a perspective endorsed by Sir Nevil Macready, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, who had promptly sacked most of those attending the rally. The crowd heard speeches from the Union leadership, messages of solidarity from other forces and expressions of solidarity from an ex-serviceman (Air Force Lieutenant George Elliott) and Sergeant T.J. McElligott, representing the Dublin Metropolitan Police. (35)

Like Byrnes, McElligott's presence at the Tower Hill rally owed much to a secret agenda. This was later explained by David Neligan, a secret Sinn Fein supporter and one of Michael Collins' spies in the Dublin Metropolitan Police: "Mick Collins had this idea that he could smash up the RIC and the Dublin police as well through union agitation, and he had this madman from Kerry named McElligott, an ex-RIC man who was being financed by Collins to organize the union to break up the force. So Collins sent McElligott to organise the union to break up the force. So Collins sent McElligott over to London to liaise with the strike committee of the London police." (36)

McElligott was introduced to the smartly-dressed SSAU delegate. Byrnes, according to Neligan: "... was there to say that the armed forces wouldn't lift a finger against the London police in their strike action. So they all thanked him for this expression of fraternal solidarity. Then he turned to McElligott and he said, 'How are things in your country?' Well McElligott was about to make one of his usual hell-for leather speeches, and just as he was drawing breath he saw over the other fellow's shoulder that Jack Hayes - they called him the 'policeman's MP' - was making mad signs at him to shut up. So McElligott just said, 'Oh, all right,' or something and afterwards he found out from Hayes that this man was not a union delegate at all but a spy. Hayes had been tipped off by somebody in MI5 that he was spying on labour for the British secret service." (37)

If Neligan's testimony is correct, then Michael Collins would have been told about Byrnes from 3 August, the day McElligott arrived back in Ireland. Byrnes himself sensed a threat to his security ensuing from other developments but he continued filing reports on the McKenna-Arnold group, Policemen's Union, the LWC and the rump of the SSAU Executive.(38) On 11 August Special Branch raided 7, Featherstone Buildings and the Communist Club in Charlotte Street, Soho. *The Times* featured an article about the raid on the Club and reported the arrest of Facey, "a member of the Discharged Soldiers' and Sailors' Federation and suspected of being an associate of foreign revolutionaries".(39) The *Daily Herald* also referred to Facey's arrest, observing that he had spent a good deal of time in Zachariassen's company adding rather ambiguously, "It was noticed that after his return that Facey had enjoyed unusual affluence." (40)

Byrnes, his A2 controller reported:

*Has seen the account in the paper referring to the arrest of Facey but is not worrying about*



*this as Facey is one of his greatest friends and he knows he is quite safe.*

*With regard to the raid of Featherstone Buildings - if Mrs Holloways rooms have been searched and the books and papers of the S.S & A.U appropriated, suggests that these be destroyed. (41)*

Facey was promptly replaced as chairman of the SSAU by ex-Corporal Mason, a Limehouse Brewery barrel cooper who was also chairman of the Romford Branch of the SSAU. However, Facey had not been long confined in a police cell but with Byrnes' assistance, he had been spirited to Dublin. This was made clear via correspondence which Byrnes delivered to Mrs Enid Facey, who seems to have been initially unenthusiastic about accepting an allowance from the authorities.(42) In a letter dated 15th August, Facey asked his wife to give Byrnes a receipt for £5 which accompanied his delivery of an unaddressed letter. Facey wrote: "I hope both Major R and Scotland Yard have assisted you, of course undoubtedly the War Office did! altogether I suppose you know exactly where I am and why eh?, they were able to do a lot for you well, if you persist in this absurd manner you may be the sufferer. Why not be sensible and take the money that is given you, come to me when I can make the necessary arrangements and in addition to making yourself happy and comfy see something of the world. If you like the idea of the latter please do as I request write me a letter which give to Byrnes and say so also say if you really care for me or not and if not please go to the Magistrate take this with you and show it to him tell him you want a separation from me and I agree to do this and am willing to give you #3 per week allowance! In the meantime Dearest Enid please endeavour to think (because its a fact) that I love you and seriously want you with me." (43)

From other correspondence, Byrnes and Facey had become involved in what looks to have been a mission which was mounted by the Directorate of Intelligence, with A2 (Byrnes) assistance. In Dublin Facey made brief contact with Sydney Arnold and stated that he was hiding from the Police. Arnold was simultaneously visiting the city to see Rose McKenna, who had been hospitalised for an unspecified medical operation. It is known that Facey and Arnold visited the Socialist Party of Ireland headquarters and that the Irish Labour Party Congress was taking place in Dublin at the time. However, from A2 sources little further may be deduced about this curious episode but the following undated letter, in the context of Byrnes' later involvement with Michael Collins, hints that arms ("books") may have been

involved. " ... Don't suppose I shall know definitely till the early part of next week, when the cash will be forthcoming, tho' they query the price a little as being dear, still I think it will go. Any other books (on all subjects) you can get will find a sale here. Hope you do what you can to collect same." (44)

Byrnes seems to have been missed at his usual haunts in London for a similar period but by the end of August he had resumed fund raising to revive the SSAU. He made contact with Mrs Neibovitch (a member of Arnold's group) and was approached by Mrs Holloway to assist the revival of W.F. Watson's radical broadsheet, "The Masses".(45) Byrnes was also involved with Mason in negotiations, ostensibly to purchase thirty cases of ammunition from a man named Martin who operated a barge breaking business near Essex Wharf, Hackney. (46)

While Byrnes was thus engaged, Facey re-appeared in London for a brief while and was reported (by Mason's brother) to have been put up in a luxurious Westminster hotel room paid for by Major Rowlandson. This news contradicted information from Mrs Holloway, who had received a letter with a Westgate-on-Sea postmark from Facey. However, the Mason brothers, convinced that Facey was a spy for Rowlandson, entertained the idea of selling their intelligence (possibly to a newspaper) for cash.(47) Nor were the Masons alone in voicing their suspicions about Facey. Sylvia Pankhurst's protestations about Basil Thomson's disinformation concerning the Zachariassen money may not have been universally believed but Facey was now distrusted by many erstwhile comrades.

A National Stability League spy (almost certainly a woman) assigned to inform on feminists who gathered at the "Mother's Arms", the headquarters of the East London Federation of Suffragettes and latterly the Workers' Socialist Federation, reported: "I visited 400 Old Ford Road and only Miss Gilbertson was present. we had a long conversation about matters generally, and incidentally referred to 7 Featherstone Buildings. They are all suspicious of Facey and appear to think that he gave Zachariassen away, none of them trust him and look upon him as a spy. Their views in this matter are confirmed, they think, because Facey when arrested recently, was immediately released." (48)

On 19th September Byrnes met the Mason brothers at SSAU Executive member Todd's house, 22, Piggott Street, Stepney, but failed to convince to shake the brothers' conviction that they had identified Facey's whereabouts correctly. However, the

evidence to substantiate whether Facey was a spy remained unresolved until, rather bizarrely: "'Todd' stated that he would endeavour to see Major Rowlandson today with a view to getting him to give him a job as a Detective and by this means he hoped to establish the other question re 'Facey'". (49)

Within hours, Facey (probably via Mrs Holloway) scribbled a letter to Arnold and McKenna, refuting allegations that were circulating about his spying activities. Declaring his health had been broken by stress, Facey hypocritically moaned: "... my recent experience has taught me, that generally the movement is bankrupt of common sense and decency; people whom I looked on as friends, to some as confidences, are ready to accept any and every story circulated with a view to discrediting me. When I remember what I have sacrificed for the cause, and what might have been, I feel very bitter. Scotland Yard agents have in this case done their work very well and they seem to be very numerous..." (50)

The accusations against Facey, buttressed by some compromising typed correspondence, prompted Mason, in his capacity as Chairman of the Romford Branch of the SSAU, to write directly to the leading socialist and editor of the *Daily Herald*, George Lansbury. Mason's letter to Lansbury did not name Facey but alluded to an SSAU Executive member who: "... was in the employ of the Government as a provocative agent, as a result I am now able to give the facts, of a responsible Official of the Crown, paying a man to plot revolution in this country, and incidentally smash the Union..." (51) Mason continued: "... as you have helped us financially in the past I want to give the facts to you, as I am quite an illiterate person as far as journalism goes, it is for you to judge whether the information I have can be of any use to you. I rather thought that a headline (The Last Straw Coalition plots Revolution) would stir things up. Well Comrade the facts are in my possession and I am prepared to give them to you only, as to me you are then only reliable person I know in the Labour Press..." (52)

Given that Mason entrusted delivery of the letter to Jack Byrnes, it is unlikely that it ever reached Lansbury. The evidently genuine discomfort which Facey felt at being exposed was privately expressed by him to Byrnes but he remained in hiding and in continued receipt of cash from the authorities. (53)

Since Facey had become openly saddled with responsibility for the raid on Featherstone Buildings and held to be an agent provocateur by the SSAU, it looked



very much as though Byrnes had yet again, managed to deflect suspicion away from himself. For three weeks after the furore generated by Mason, details of Byrnes' reports to A2 resumed their former character, providing information about civilian and ex-service organisations to his controller. Then matters between Facey and Byrnes reached crisis point. Continued subsidies from Special Branch and Byrnes enabled Facey to despatch small sums of money to his wife but it was not enough. Facey wanted to explain his predicament directly to his wife, Enid, so Byrnes arranged a rendezvous for them at Mrs Holloway's home on 9th October. (54) The meeting between Maurice and Enid Facey failed to materialise but it seems that the arrangement allowed the former to have a chat with Mrs Holloway and possibly Sydney Arnold, who had just returned from Dublin. (55)

Recording these developments and referring to an uneasy Byrne as No.8, A2 recorded:

*... No.8 subsequently met Facey when the latter told No 8 he had been informed that it was he who had given him away but that if he (Facey) had thought so he would have had him put inside sometime ago. No 8 states he is of the opinion that now he has declared himself as having done with the Department steps will be taken by McBrien to put him out of the way and that Facey will be the one to give the information. (56)*

Byrnes faced a dilemma. If Special Branch believed their man, Facey, had been exposed by Byrnes, then there was a real possibility that Byrnes could be disowned by A2, publicly exposed as an agent provocateur and jailed like Billy Watson. To complicate matters a little further, from a verbatim exchange of an interview between Rowlandson and Byrnes on the evening of 21st October, it appears that the former did not seem to know that the latter was a full-time A2 agent:

*Major R asked :- Are you, or have you ever been, employed with Colonel Isham?*

*No 8 replied :- No, decidedly not.*

*Major R asked :- Have you ever been employed with M.I.5?*

*No 8 replied :- No. Do you remember at the beginning of affairs I came to you and told you I had been severely let down over the raid?*

*Major R. replied :- Yes.*

*No 8 asked :- Do you think I could be employed, or accept employment, by any person who did such a thing as that?*

*No reply.*

*No 8 asked :- Who told you that I was doing so?*

*No reply. (57)*

When, a few minutes after this exchange, Rowlandson told Byrnes that Facey had been to see him, it became apparent that Facey had changed his mind about discomfiting his "old Pal". (58) A more reassuring encounter occurred two days later, when Byrnes went to what he thought was to have been a meeting of Holborn Independent Labour Party at 18 Featherstone Buildings. Four men greeted him but he only knew one of the quartet, Arthur Field.

*Field introduced No 8 to one of the party but gave no name simply introducing him as 'Comrade Byrne'... This man was between 45 and 50 years of age, well dressed, medium height, iron grey hair, and moustache, with forehead well forward, and pimple on the left side of forehead. (59)*

The man declared:

*... he had just come over from Ireland and that he always came over after any shooting had taken place. Later he told No 8 that the shooting always took place very near him. he said he understood that No 8 was a good shot and that being so he (No 8) would be a good ally for him. (60)*

The mysterious stranger was identified by A2 as W.B. Forster-Bovill the Gaelic League candidate contesting (with ILP support) the North St. Andrews Ward, Holborn in a local council election. According to Byrnes' A2 reports, Forster-Bovill, who said he was from Wexford, was easily drawn to express opinions about the positive prospects for revolution breaking out on the Clyde. (61) When Byrnes cautioned Forster-Bovill about the latter's glib references to being, "close to all the shooting affairs" which had recently occurred in Dublin", the Gaelic Leaguer replied that Byrnes:

*... was so well known to the comrades it didn't matter about him and he thought that No 8 would be a valuable ally. (62)*

Forster-Bovill also confided that the Gaelic League was re-organising and promised Byrnes an invitation to join the Irish Self Determination League. (63) If Byrnes felt reassured by Forster-Bovill's expressions of confidence, the same could not be said about Major Rowlandson. Byrnes final meeting with Rowlandson began in the company of Mason on Friday 24 October. Mason's presence was possibly to do with the plan which had been hatched by Todd at the Piggott Road SSAU meeting about Facey's spying activities. After talking together for a while, Rowlandson said he wanted to have a private conversation with Byrnes and Mason left their company. Rowlandson opened his dialogue with Byrnes by explaining Facey had admitted being a Special Branch agent and stated

that Byrnes was an MI5 employee. Byrnes response alluded to the railwayman's national strike, which had been settled in the strikers' favour on 5 October. He boasted:

*... that if he wanted to he could have, with the assistance of other men in the revolutionary movement which he could easily obtain, made it impossible for the Government to have got any trains running by simply breaking the gauge glasses on the engines. (64)*

Rowlandson then demanded to know whether this would have been done, "with the aid of the military", Byrnes said no and refused a subsequent invitation to confirm his response in writing. Asked rather pointedly if he was short of money, Byrnes readily agreed and said he would be prepared, in return for £20, to repeat his statements in the presence of four Trade Unionists selected by the Major. (65)

If Byrnes' report of this exchange is to be believed, the bare details of the conversation read like a crude attempt at coercion or bribery by Rowlandson. However, the episode is probably best understood as a minor confrontation arising from inter-secret service rivalry at a time when massive re-organisation of British Intelligence was underway. Nevertheless, subsequent reports show that A2 shifted the emphasis of Byrnes' attention from work with London's industrial militants to concentrate on cultivating contact with Art O'Brien. To some extent this was logical enough, since Byrnes' radical credentials were beginning to be challenged openly as a consequence of the Facey episode. However, it was also because the increasing challenge then being posed by Sinn Fein and IRA Volunteers to British control over Ireland.

Further, the Army, confronted with a chronic shortage of troops due to post-war demobilisation, had become keen to scale down its share of responsibility for staffing and funding the Government's counter-insurgency and domestic intelligence establishment. These factors, embellished with a gratuitous reference to civil democracy, caused Adjutant-General, Sir George Macdonogh on 13 October to tell the Army Council: "... we have been attempting to perform duties which appertain to the civil power, & that in so doing we have not merely strained the military machine but the British Constitution as well. We should insist on the Home Office doing its own work, i.e. preserving public order. It is only when the civil power has been proved powerless to carry out this work that the military should be called in." (66)

Ten days later, Winston Churchill,

Secretary of State for War, endorsed the Army Council's concurrence with Macdonogh's views and approved the dismantling of GHQ Great Britain. It was decided that the Army's domestic intelligence organisation, including A2, would be disbanded on 1 February 1920. Thereafter, Basil Thomson's Home Office Directorate of Intelligence and Special Branch were to control and co-ordinate the Government and Industry's covert domestic empire. (67)

While these decisions were being processed in Whitehall, Byrnes visited Art O'Brien to enquire generally about the Irish developments. O'Brien openly declared that: "...things were somewhat upset at the present time as practically the whole of the leading lights had been taken in the recent raid together with all papers and that the Chief Organiser was now serving three months imprisonment." (68) He also said he had written to ask whether Byrnes would be required to travel to Dublin and said that a reply to the enquiry would materialise shortly. (69) The summons did not materialise for a couple of weeks but on Saturday 5 December Byrnes, masquerading as "Mr John Jameson", left London by train and arrived in Dublin the following day. In his pocket he carried a cryptic memorandum, "meant for the other side". It read:

"Dear J,  
Shall be very glad to see you at 7.30 on Monday evening.

A." (70)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the A2 reports which chronicle the activities of "Jameson" in Dublin fail to corroborate many details which have been re-told and embroidered in various books and magazine articles. Moreover, the latter are far from consistent in their accounts of, "the most dangerous adversary that was ever turned on Collins". Stories about The "Big Fellow" were legion enough while he was alive but posthumous hagiography has tended to oversell his power, prescience and the reach of his intelligence network. Accounts of Jameson's attempt to trap Collins have long needed re-working. (71)

Most authors broadly concur with the depiction of "Jameson" published by "Frank O'Connor" in his 1937 biography of Michael Collins: "... a small plump gentleman wearing knee breeches and boots laced up to his calves. He took a room in the Granville Hotel, giving a vague hint that he was agent for a firm dealing in musical instruments; he was affable though not gregarious, dined alone and found recreation in the works of Edgar Wallace. Among the staff of the hotel he let

it be understood that a portion of his youth had been spent in the Wild West, and jokingly declared his preference for it. There, he said, they did not shoot you but tied you to a wild pony and lashed it off." (72)

Tim Pat Coogan, drawing on the unpublished memoirs of Frank Thornton and an interview with Mrs Batt O'Connor's daughter, relates how matters developed: "Collins at first took to Jameson and had him introduced to members of GHQ who also seemed to find nothing wrong with him. For no apparent reason, however, Tom Cullen took an immediate dislike to the agent and described him as a 'crooked English bastard', perhaps sensing that he and Jameson were in the same line of work. This transmitted itself to Thornton and Tobin and they decided to lay a trap for Jameson. Meanwhile Jameson was also setting traps for Collins, traps which very nearly succeeded in their objective.

Collins brought him to lunch at Mrs O'Connor's, to have her vet him. He relied on her instinct and judgment so much that he adjudged it worth while exposing her to the risk of identification as one of his agents, for a detective had been posted outside at a safe distance. Seeing Jameson come out again with another man, he cycled off to alert a waiting contingent of detectives and police. Incredibly he misinformed them, telling them that the bird had flown, not knowing that the bird was in the house where Mrs O'Connor was telling him that she did not like her visitor. The man with Jameson was Liam Tobin. Collins was soon informed of the detective's mistake; one of the men in the police party had been MacNamara." (73)

MacNamara, one of Collins' informers, had also been present in the Castle the previous day when Redmond, dressed down subordinates: "You were supposed to be looking for Collins. You have been after him for months and never caught sight of him, while a new man, just over from England, met him and talked to him after two days." (74)

Coogan's interpretation simply does not tally with Frank O'Connor's account. The latter, dubbing Byrnes "fortune's fool", states that he was met by Joe O'Reilly, another Collins' aide: "O'Reilly, Collins' messenger, who received him, was the first to take alarm. He reported that the man was an obvious cheat. Collins merely growled and sent him off with a fistful of letters; summonses to General headquarters staff to meet their new friend at Mrs O'Keefe's restaurant in Camden Street. Tobin and Cullen, warned by O'Reilly, did not put in an appearance. But the rest did, and Mr Jameson explained his

modest mission. He was a representative of the Russian government, which was anxious to avenge itself for the interventionist policy of Churchill by organising mutinies in the British army. He had already agents in every military barracks who would assist the Irish with arms and equipment. He also pretended he had contacts with the Birmingham Small Arms Factory. At the word 'arms' headquarters cocked its ears. It likes Mr Jameson so much that it arranged for a further meeting, which duly took place over tea in Mrs O'Kelly's house in Ranelagh.

But Tobin and Cullen were not allowed to escape so easily. Collins had not yet seen the miracle man and proposed to do so at Batt O'Connor's, where he lunched each day with Austin Stack. So the two disgusted lieutenants picked up Mr Jameson and brought him out on the Donnybrook tram. Mrs O'Connor, when she opened the door and saw the plump face and sharp features of Mr Jameson, also took fright. She drew Cullen aside and asked him who the visitor was. Cullen threw up his hands in despair. Collins was as obstinate as a mule. He also liked Mr Jameson, and another interview was arranged the following day." (75)

According to O'Connor, Jameson informed Assistant Commissioner Redmond, who arranged to raid the rendezvous, Mrs O'Connor's home. On the following day: "Tobin picked Jameson up in town, and they went to O'Connor's together. Jameson's ostensible business with Collins was soon done with, and they departed together and strolled to the top of Brendan Road to catch a city-bound tram. They both noticed the gentleman who mounted his bicycle and made off... to give warning of Collins' presence in the house alone as Jameson believed." (76)

The "gentleman" was a detective who alerted the raiding party, which included MacNamara, in a nearby street. Witnessed from the top of the tram, Tobin and Jameson watched the detective speak to the raiders' commander (by inference, Assistant Commissioner Redmond) and saw the party rush off - but in the wrong direction. The detective had mistaken Tobin for Collins and Redmond had assumed Collins had left the house with Jameson!" (77)

T. Ryle Dwyer, in his biography, *Michael Collins - The Man who Won the War*, also cited by Coogan, maintains: "Posing as a revolutionary anxious to undermine the British system, Byrnes offered to supply weapons, and arrangements were made for him to meet Collins, Mulcahy and Rory O'Connor at the Home Produce Shop in Camden Street. They met again the

following day at the Ranelagh home of Mrs Wyse Power, a member of the Sinn Fein Executive". (78) Dwyer basically agrees with O'Connor's version of the lookout's mis-identification and says the raid was postponed. Dwyer adds that MacNamara's role had been to inform Collins of Redmond's surveillance of O'Connor's house prior to the raid, which eventually occurred the following day. Dwyer states that it was Ned Broy who was told by a disgruntled detective of Redmond's oblique but damning identification of Byrnes as, "a man only two days in Dublin". (79)

Possibly permitting the truth to destroy these fine yarns about the raid on the O'Connors' home, Frank Thornton's own account of meeting Byrnes makes no mention of the incident: "Jameson who was a fiery communist making speeches on Communist Platforms in Hyde Park, contacted the Irish Self-Determination League in London and actually handed them over, arms and ammunition for transmission to Dublin. He gradually worked his way in to the confidence of the Leaders in London and early in 1920 was sent over with a note of introduction to Michael Collins. He actually met Michael Collins in Dublin but then Collins transferred him over to Tobin, Cullen and myself. This man's chief activity was to procure arms and ammunition from the other side, arrange as he boasted, for internal trouble in the British Navy and Munition Factories, but from the very moment he was handed over to us... Tom Cullen set himself out to test him. As he stated to Liam Tobin and myself, 'I don't trust that guy'. Every conceivable trap was laid for Jameson and in nearly every instance he fell into the trap." (80)

After Byrnes had returned to London and was de-briefed by A2, a five-page summary of his experiences was typed up. Unfortunately, from the A2 notes it is difficult, from what is recorded, to construct a clear account of Byrnes' movements, other than the approximate date when he met with Collins, Monday 8 December. These notes also lack the creative liberality of Coogan and Connor but partially corroborates Dwyer's version of events:

*The following notes have been compiled after conversation with No 8 on his return from Ireland. His visit lasted eight days at the end of which period he returned on account of receiving no instructions from his connections re the business in hand. Whilst in Ireland he came in contact with the following people:-*

MICHAEL COLLINS      R.S.M. HOGAN  
17th Tank Corps  
MC GABE (?)              GARRISON S.M.

DEVONPORT  
MRS ROSE MC KENNA      STAFF SGT  
FITTER TOURNEY R.G.A.  
SYDNEY ARNOLD      C.S.M. SARK 2nd  
Worcesters  
CAPTAIN REDDY      C.S.M. MARTIN  
R.F.A.  
MC CALLAM      C.Q.M.S. PROBERT  
17th Tank Corps

MICHAEL COLLINS *An interview was arranged with this man and No 8 received the attached memo addressed to Mr Jameson. He was met at the time appointed by a Runner who blindfolded him for the last five or six hundred yards of the journey to the meeting place. The house in which the meeting took place was near Redmond's Hill and, as far as can be judged, was the house of a Confectioner and Baker in an Alley off St George's Street south of the Fruit and Poultry Market.*

*Upon the bandage being removed from his eyes No 8 found himself in a small room barely furnished and confronted by Michael Collins and Mc Gabe, and another man who was not introduced. Collins at once spoke to 8 of their recent meeting in London and asked him if he understood the situation in Ireland, stating that the Military were trying to suppress them and that they were being closely watched. he warned 8 that he must on no account recognise any of them in the street or in public places, and that he should not be seen in any place which was known to be connected with the Sinn Fein movement. He might even go so far as to display antipathy to the cause in any public demonstration*

*No 8 suggested that the Sinn Feiners should fraternise with the troops stationed in the country and that Dances and Social Functions should be encouraged for this purpose. Collins immediately agreed with this suggestion and handed to No 8 a list of troops and their stations indicating that those underlined in red were most antagonistic to the cause. No 8 indicated that it was impossible to visit these troops in order to test their feeling in this matter unless he had a few pounds with which to treat them - this was agreed and later in the week No 8 received a sum of money for this purpose which was sent to him by a Runner.*

*No 8 is convinced that this man COLLINS is the Chief Director of all active movement amongst the Sinn Feiners and that he has now taken the place of De Valera owing to the long absence of the latter. Although Collins does not take any active part in the shooting affairs there seems no doubt that he is the organiser.*

*Collins asked No 8 to obtain for him the following information which would be of the utmost importance: -*

*Whether there were more military stores in Ireland than were necessary for the equipment of the troops already stationed there? If so,*

*where was such equipment stored and by what route and method of transport would such surplus equipment be sent to any extra troops arriving in the country?.*

*MC GABE (? Alias). This man was present at the meeting of No.8 and Collins, but had nothing to say except that No 8 was the boy for them. This man accompanied 8 on his departure from the meeting place and took him by round about routes into Dame Street.*

*MRS ROSE MC KENNA. No 8 visited this lady at Flat No 6, 18, Upper Fitz William Street where she is staying with her Cousin the wife of Captain Reddy. She indicated that she was not pleased to see no 8 as she understood he was responsible for Faceys trouble. No 8 immediately offered to depart but was pressed to stay and in subsequent conversation put her mind at rest on the above point. Later he was introduced to Captain Reddy, and it was arranged that he should meet Sydney Arnold.*

*Mrs Mc Kenna appears to have recovered from her illness and is assisting Sydney Arnold to carry on a clothing business in Dublin.*

*SYDNEY ARNOLD. At meeting with No 8 stated that he had now started a clothing business in Dublin at No 5 South Frederick street (next the Archway) - see attached pamphlet advertisement.*

*No 8 gained the impression that this business was being undertaken merely to camouflage the meetings of the Socialist republicans and members of the Gaelic League, and that it was also intended to offer employment to any who were thrown out of work through victimisation.*

*Subsequently No 8 visited the premises mentioned and discovered Captain Reddy assisting Mrs Mc Kenna and Sydney Arnold in the business of the shop. It was arranged that No 8 might be useful in purchasing material for the business in England and arranging for shipment of the same to Dublin.*

*During a second visit to the above premises No 8 met McCallam who said that he was glad that the Ryans had been taken by the Police as they were becoming a nuisance to the cause. he expressed great surprise that 8 had had an interview with Collins and said that 8 must have come on a very important mission. He further stated that Collins would be a very difficult man to take as so many people were prepared to assist him in eluding the Police.*

*During the raid at 76, Harper Street, Collins and McCallam were both present and walked out of the building through the police cordon without any notice being taken of them. He stated that if Collins were taken his followers were prepared to put Dublin flat. We rely on Collins more than on any man in Ireland - he plans everything including the shooting. It is the custom for victims to receive a Post-Card*

on which is drawn a Coffin with the name of the victim inscribed below. It is a wonderful organisation. There are so many sections; each having its own job but no section knows what the work of another section is. It is in this way that secrecy is maintained and that we are able to keep straight.

He then asked No 8 whether it were possible to procure a good supply of fountain pens (automatics) to which 8 replied that it was quite possible providing sufficient funds were forthcoming. McCallam said he could not say anything definite on this point but that he would have to interview a man called "Lee". He further stated that if No 8 could pull off the fountain pen stunt he would prove of such value to the cause that when the aims of the Republic had been realised he could ask what he liked and get it. He stated that Collins was still in Dublin and was very much upset by recent raids, but was not frightened and he was being well looked after.

During the raid the Countess Markovitch was able to escape from the building by way of the roof and stayed in hiding next door until the raid was over. It was stated that she had shot four soldiers during the rebellion with her own hand and McCallam added that he, himself, had seen her do it. He further boasted that he had taken an active part in the Rebellion of 1916 as he had spent his time sniping from the roof of the Post Office.

McCallam is supposed to be one of the leaders of the Socialist Republicans which is a workers organisation. He stated that he thought he could obtain any financial help required from Lee of Kingston.

CAPTAIN REDDY. Is attached to the Intelligence organisation at Dublin Castle, he is intimate with Rose McKenna and Sydney Arnold and appears to have some business connection with them in South Frederick Street.

The Runner who conducted No 8 to the presence of Collins told him that the restriction in the issue of Motor permits was doing a good deal of harm to the cause as their men were unable to get about as formerly, he heartily cursed the man who was responsible for this.

Attached is the cover of a packet of cigarettes manufactured by the Cigarette Makers Trade Union, London E. which is of some interest.

During the various interviews with the soldiers already mentioned no 8 found that they were all of one mind, i.e., they were all anxious to give the Sinn Feiners a damn good hiding and settle the matter. It was further stated that the next time a policeman was shot in Dublin a scheme would be put into operation which would make the Sinn Feiners very sorry for themselves.

No 8 is of the opinion that the Sinn Fein movement is limited to the middle classes and

that the bulk of the working classes are becoming Socialist Republicans. (81)

From this report, it seems likely that the initial meeting in London between Collins and Byrnes had occurred on the evening before Collins had personally supervised the spectacular escape of Piaras Beaslai and five other prominent Republicans from Strangeways Jail (Manchester) on 25 October 1919. (82)

Like Thornton, Byrnes makes no reference to the raid on Mrs O'Connor's home or even visiting the house, and the topic of supplying arms was only raised with "McCallam". Further, other than tentative identification of the rendezvous, there was little he could have told Redmond about Collins' whereabouts. Even if Byrnes liaised with Captain Reddy - and the latter had rushed off to inform the Assistant Commissioner and Collins had obligingly remained immobile for the requisite time - it is unlikely Byrnes would have remained openly resident in an hotel and socialised in Dublin for almost a week thereafter. "MacCallam" or someone from the Squad who knew of Byrnes' whereabouts would have assassinated him. In any case, Redmond did not arrive in Dublin to take up his appointment as Assistant Commissioner until a few days after Byrnes had returned to England and he was already dead when Byrnes next visited the city. (83)

Did IRA Intelligence either fail to note or chose to ignore the warning which had been given about Byrnes to McElligott? Or, could the episode have simply been a posthumous yarn to bolster up the contribution of the DMP's IRA spies in the struggle against the British?

As for the almost universally accepted notion that Byrnes' sole priority at this juncture was to ensnare Collins, the former's primary task may more plausibly be interpreted an attempt to gain the confidence of the IRA. The summary entrapment of one subversive, albeit the chief conspirator, would have jeopardised a longer-term but more effective strategy. It is more likely at this stage that Byrnes' main activities were an extension of his customary mode of operation, establishing contacts and building on confidences he had already sown via Art O'Brien. Byrnes' apparent success in cultivating contacts with the IRA also enhanced Ralph Isham's reputation in Whitehall and undoubtedly contributed to an extension of the latter's career as a British intelligence officer.

Rather in the same manner as had happened after the dissolution of PMS2, the disbandment of GHQ Great Britain, including A2, offered the opportunity of

existing and successor agencies to recruit staff. It is hard to estimate whether Isham actively sought a post with Basil Thomson or was poached from the Army by the chief of the Directorate of Intelligence. It is certain, that between 18 December and Christmas 1919 Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Isham became embroiled in secret negotiations over a transfer which would involve him carrying out a leading role in Thomson's Dublin operations. But tempers were frayed when Winston Churchill, at Basil Thomson's behest, despatched a note to Major-General Sir Cecil Romer, the new commander of MOX4, seconding Isham to Edward Shortt, the Home Secretary. Field Marshal Haig, who only had a few weeks left as Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces angrily balked at Shortt's pillage of GHQ Staff. It was to no avail and Haig was overruled by Churchill after the Home Secretary (accompanied by Isham) personally lobbied the Secretary of State for War on 26 December 1919. Isham later recalled: "Romer gave the note to Haig, who sent for me and said I was for it and he didn't like it. As I was about to leave his office he handed me the note with the advice that I deposit it with my bankers for safekeeping, he said one could never tell." (84)

As with many similar episodes, primary documentation remains unavailable but the consequence of Michael Collins' successful campaign to assassinate or demoralise Dublin Metropolitan Police detectives seems to have been precipitating factor. (85) On the 7 December a secret committee report recommended that spies who were unknown to any members of Irish Police forces be infiltrated into Dublin. This was the reason why Assistant Commissioner Redmond was transferred from Belfast to Dublin and why Isham was wanted by Thomson. What probably clinched matters was the IRA's unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the Viceroy of Ireland, Lord French, on 19 December.

The official justification for Isham's transfer to Thomson's Directorate was expressed less dramatically by the Lieutenant Colonel (Isham was allowed to keep his rank): "As the moving spirits among the forces of disorder were in civil life and as a soldier may not, under British law, take disciplinary action against a civilian, Mr Shortt, then Secretary of State for Home Affairs, in agreement with Mr Winston Churchill, then Secretary of State for War, gave me a status in the Home Office which conferred upon the necessary authority. My immediate superior in the Home Office was Sir Basil Thomson." (86)

During the following couple of weeks A2 dispersed. Because its key personnel

were being transferred to other secret service work, in a sense A2 did not disappear but rather underwent a metamorphosis. The officers shared a farewell dinner and were presented by Isham with an engraved silver match slide apiece. Lieutenant-Colonel Isham R.E. made arrangements to be presented with his CB, transformed himself into "Heyward Isham Esq." travelled with his valet to Dublin and liberally toasted the New Year at the Shelbourne Hotel. A2's other full-time spy was demobilised on 29 December and saw in 1920 as ex-Private Raymond Gray. And Byrnes? He remained with Isham but was evidently less optimistic about his future. Byrnes spent New Year's Eve with his family and in-laws and wrote his Will. (87)

Isham's visit to Dublin was connected with the organisation of Thomson's intelligence offensive and is most likely to have involved reconnaissance of what was to be treated as enemy territory and liaison with a very few personalities who were to conduct the campaign. (88) After his return to London, Isham's contribution to the assault included ordering Byrnes to renew contact with Collins.

As before, Byrnes approached Art O'Brien to arrange a meeting with Collins. The reason for the meeting could no longer be simply an offer by Byrnes to subvert the British garrison because that would not necessarily have required a face-to-face encounter with Collins. However, the possibility of a substantial supply of arms was another matter. What Byrnes and the Directorate of Intelligence did not know was that by 20 January, the IRA knew "Jameson" was a spy. Collins immediately informed Art O'Brien: "Jameson: What I have to say with regard to him will probably be somewhat of a thunderbolt to you. I believe we have the man or one of them. I have absolutely certain information that the man who came from London met and spoke to me, and reported I was growing a moustache to Basil Thompson. I may get some more information. In the meantime will you get in touch with him somehow and show him my paragraph on himself in the other memo." (89)

Tim Pat Coogan's recent biography of Michael Collins explains: "The other paragraph was a decoy written in the tone of Collins note to O'Brien on Jameson of December. Hand-written on the memo is a message asking O'Brien to 'find out from Jameson what addresses I gave him so that I can warn. I am not certain as my note is not very clear.'" (90)

Coogan, claiming to have relied the unpublished recollections of Frank Thornton and fragments of Collins-O'Brien

correspondence, concluded Byrnes exposure was due to an informant Collins had managed to place, "close to Basil Thompson himself". (91) Not only was this unlikely but it was also unnecessary for a number of reasons. Firstly, as McElligott, McKenna and Arnold could testify, there were Republican supporters in Dublin who harboured suspicions about Byrnes' true allegiances. Secondly, IRA Intelligence regularly and systematically intercepted the mail and (certainly by mid-1920) also decoded any intercepted telegraph and enciphered message. Thirdly, thanks to a Republican supporter in the Office of Records, the IRA had established the nucleus of what was to be a spy network in every Government Department - including Intelligence. Far more plausibly than an IRA super-mole in London, confirmation of Byrnes' true allegiances is more likely to have come from within Dublin Castle itself, e.g. a secretary like Lily Mernin, who typed for British Army officers and regularly scanned highly confidential correspondence. It was the co-ordinated development of a structure for systematically gathering and evaluating information which made IRA Intelligence so comparatively effective. (92)

This is not to say that all the IRA's moles who provided information did so because for ideological reasons, as Thornton subsequently recalled: "By all sorts of diverse means contacts were made with Army Officers, Auxiliary Officers and Black and Tan Officers, Sergeants and Privates... it should be borne in mind however, that all the way through these men were never fully trusted as they were working for pay and would just as readily sell our side as they were selling their own." (93) This readiness to exploit even potentially uncertain intelligence assets partly explains why Byrnes was not assassinated as soon as he landed in Ireland. If IRA Intelligence felt that he could be used, for example as a double agent, it was reason enough to keep Byrnes alive.

It is with this in mind that Byrnes report of his second visit to Ireland ("Wales") should be read:

*Proceeded to Wales on Friday 23rd January, 1920, returning Thursday 29th January 1920.*

*I met Tobin on Friday night on arrival and found there 'nothing doing' and that Collins had, probably, gone away on holiday. He (Tobin) would, however, let me know the next morning (Saturday).*

*Went down to 5, Frederick Street and saw Sydney Arnold and Rose McKenna and got in touch with them.*

*Saturday I met McColough and O'Connell (son of the man who was shot in the rebellion) McGrath and Cullen. We discussed Redmond's shooting and I was asked what impression it was having in England and I replied 'Bloody rotten'. No 8 warned them that the people were fed up and that they should give it a rest to let the public spirit calm down a bit.*

*A meeting was arranged for Sunday. Tobin turned up, but no-one else, so I had another chat with him. I endeavoured to ascertain where Collins was but was unable to do so. I found out, however, that only O'Kelly, Collins Secretary would know.*

*On Monday night met a man named 'Shaun' (leader of the Irish Socialist Party) who wanted to know whether I could supply him with Arms or Ammunition. No 8 replied that he would be most pleased to provide if they could provide him with the money to purchase them. Asked what sort he could supply and No 8 showed his own and when asked the cost No 8 stated £3-10s to £4 each when it was remarked that that was a lot of money. However, he (Shaun) decided that he would purchase up to £4,000 worth - No 8 said, very well, produce the £4,000 and we will consider business.*

*The Irish Socialist Party are out against the Sinn Feiners and have already secured, and are securing, a certain amount of Arms and Ammunition of the Mauser pattern. - This they plan to use against the Sinn Feiners at some appointed time.*

*Finding Collins absent on my arrival it caused me to refuse to deliver to them the Automatic Pistol that I took over and to demand from them that they got back from Collins the pass which I had some time ago given him and which has not, incidentally, been copied.*

*Tuesday evening I met Tobin again. He had received a letter from Collins which told him to get the pass and hand to me. they would find the pass in the basket at Mrs L's No 9 Iona Place, Dublin (Drumcondra). Also the letter said that I was to hand over the stuff I had brought to him (Tobin). Being anxious to have a look at the letter I informed Tobin that I could not hand it over on his word but that I wanted to see the letter before I do so. I then read the letter - there was no address on it and it was written in pencil as where he was there was no such thing as ink.*

*One portion of the letter read to the effect that if you tell B that he has my instructions to hand the stuff over to you he will do so. After reading this in the letter I agreed to hand it over and handed it to Tobin, who took it to the New Irish Insurance Company - I handed him my case with the gun in it and Tobin brought the case back empty.*

*We then discussed the Martial Law question and he (Tobin) asked me what I thought of it and whether I thought it would come along - No*

8 replied that he did not think so as there were sufficient troops in Ireland to carry it out.

Tobin told me that he saw in the Newspaper about the Guards what I told him - this referred to the cancellation of the Guards going to Wales.

Tobin also said he saw that 80,000 troops are coming from the Rhine and are going to be put into Ireland and I told him that he could expect Martial Law as that number would be sufficient to carry it out.

I met [deleted in original] and we discussed whether it would be possible to prevent the Guards being sent to Wales and when I pointed out it was possible after ascertaining to what stations they might be sent, and other particulars, he was quite in favour of it being tried and it was left for C's final decision as nothing was tried without his approval, but there was not the slightest doubt he would agree, in fact only too pleased to hear of it.

On receipt of the telegram I decided it would be advisable to make something up for them. I told them I had been to Ship Street and Marlboro Barracks; that I had seen the Sergeant Major, and stood him a few drinks, when he informed me of certain things that were going to happen and that I must leave for England at once to prevent it. I said I wanted to go to Southampton to see the troops in from the Rhine and when I knew what stations they were going to before they were sent to Ireland I could get amongst them.

Finally I said that if C was prepared to leave the money at my disposal (say £1,000) in a bank so that I could draw without appealing to them, I was prepared to go on and contaminate the troops which might be likely to be sent to Ireland. The idea was agreed to and that I had better leave by boat that night. To told them they could expect to hear from me from Southampton whether it was O.K. or not and Collins could communicate with me at my home address.

I definitely stated that I should require £1,000 placed to my credit in the bank and they are prepared to spend any amount of money.

I thought it was better to go on their Council as a Propaganda Minister so that no doubt when I am next in Wales I shall be formally initiated on to the Central Council as above stated. (94)

Frank Thornton's version of events substantially confirms Byrnes account but also reveals Byrnes' failure to recognise the extent to which he was also betraying himself: "One morning by arrangement a portmanteau full of webley revolvers which he stated he had smuggled into the Country, through Communitistic channels, was handed over to me by him at the hall-door of Kapp & Petersons, Bachelor's Walk.

The Deputy D.I., Liam Tobin at the time was with Jameson, and by arrangement took Jameson away as soon as I had deposited the arms and ammunition in the basement of Kapp & Petersons. So I took the bag from Jameson and went straight down the basement steps of Kapp & Petersons and waited there for quarter of an hour until the coast was clear, then came up and brought the arms down to our own Q.M. Stores which were only two doors away at 32 Bachelor's walk. I remained at the New Ireland Assurance Company's Office that day awaiting developments and sure enough one of our agents inside Dublin Castle sent me a note about 1 o'clock to make sure that none of our people were at the New Ireland Office at 3 o'clock as a very big raid would be carried out by the enemy at that hour... the military went straight down the basement of Kapp & Petersons and proceeded to search for the bag of revolvers... They ransacked the whole building from cellar to garret". (95)

Discovering an old Irish Volunteer hat convinced the raiders they were on the right track and at 1 a.m. the following morning, they returned and dug up the basement, looking for an underground cache or even a tunnel by which the arms could have been spirited away. (96)

The location of the "pass in the basket" or "file No 31, Box No.5 on the third shelf at an address where he kept all his papers", according to Piaras Beaslai, was the home of a former Lord Mayor of Dublin, J.J. Farrell: "He had no sympathy whatever for Sinn Fein. The greatest moment in his life had been when he received the King. Collins' men kept an eye on Farrell's house, and had a great laugh when the police raided it and forced the former mayor to stand outside in his night attire." (97)

Thornton, who actually participated in the subterfuge, recalled matters rather differently, though with a more ominous conclusion: "It was set by means of a row between Liam Tobin, Tom Cullen and myself. we were meeting Jameson in [Fry's?] Cafe in Grafton Street... when... Thomas [Joe?] O'Reilly as special courier to Michael Collins arrived with a despatch, all this having been arranged beforehand. Now the despatch intimated that three of us were to go on duty that night at a quarter to eight as Special Guards for a meeting of the Cabinet and Army Council that was to take place in a certain house in the south side of the City. We deliberately picked out this house because the owner was not particularly friendly to the movement... Cullen flared up and said "no" he wasn't going to go, and generally conveyed the idea that he was fed-up and had too much duty. In any event in the course of the alleged row that

we had between ourselves we let out the information of what was happening that night and before we had actually settled anything Jameson excused himself and said that he would meet us the following day. In actual fact we did not see Jameson for a week following that day... having transmitted his information to the British Authorities here about the meeting then decamped to England... a large force of military and armoured cars... generally wrecked the house without finding anything. However, this I think at last convinced our own Army Authorities that Jameson was in fact what we had described him to be, and now we were in the extraordinary position that Jameson couldn't be found." (98)

Later, of Jameson, Mulcahy misleadingly remarked: "What he was delaying about that prevented him getting us caught with him, at least on the second of these occasions, I don't know." (99)

Exactly a month later, on the morning of Saturday, 28th February, "John Jameson" re-appeared in Dublin and booked in for a third stay at the Granville Hotel. Most published accounts broadly agree about what happened thereafter. Byrnes tried to renew contact with Tobin but all IRA men who could be identified by the spy were ordered to keep away from him. The frustrated Byrnes purchased a couple of cage birds during the weekend and on Monday 1st March he bought a cage to accommodate the pair. (100) By chance, Byrnes encountered Joe O'Reilly and pestered Collins' aide to take a note to his commander. Byrnes claimed he was going to depart for London on the evening ferry and urgently wished to speak with Collins before embarking.

According to Frank O'Connor, Collins was outraged with O'Reilly for allowing himself to become even passingly involved with Byrne. After enduring Collins' wrath O'Reilly was accosted in the street again by Byrnes, who had meanwhile purchased a third cage bird. O'Reilly was pressed for Collins' response and agreed a further rendezvous. (101) However, Thornton states: "He arrived back and contacted me one morning at the New Ireland stating he wanted to see Mick Collins. I put him off and made an appointment to meet later that afternoon and finally the information of his arrival back was conveyed to G.H.Q. and an instruction given that he was to be executed. The following morning he was met by appointment and he was brought off to meet Michael Collins. He protested to the very last that we were shooting one of the best friends that Ireland ever had." (102)



Historians and journalists differ over the time, location and people who carried out the fatal deed but "Mr Jameson" left the Granville Hotel at around 4 pm. According to Coogan, O'Reilly was accompanied by two members of the Squad, Paddy Daly and Joe Dowling, when he met Byrnes. Daly and Dowling escorted Byrnes to a tram bound for Glasnevin, on the northern fringe of the Dublin, where Collins was supposed to be awaiting their arrival. After getting off the tram around 5.15 pm they walked a short distance along an avenue leading to the Model Farm, Glasnevin. Byrnes was then told by Daly he was to be shot for being a spy and the latter either tried to remonstrate or refused an invitation to make a final prayer. Byrnes then stood to attention and was shot in the back and a coup de grace was fired through the side of his head. He died instantly. (103) According to O'Connor, Byrnes' final statement, in response to his killers', "We are only doing our duty" was, "And I have done mine"; Daly recalled Byrnes' saying "That's right. God bless the King. I would love to die for him". (104)

Byrnes' body was discovered around 5.30 pm by a local farm worker and taken to the Mater Hospital. Details which emerged at the Coroner's inquest fuelled press speculation for a couple of weeks, as did the arrival of his grieving widow who came to identify and claim her husband's remains. Thereafter, official censorship enveloped everything to do with the business, except for the funeral in Romford - which was a family affair. (105)

On 31 May 1920, at a British ministerial meeting held to review IRA victories against British rule, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Walter Long conceded that the IRA had killed, "The Best Secret Service man we had", Jack Byrnes. (106)

In terms of patriotic duty, is clear from his A2 activities and his encounter with the IRA, that Byrnes was simply and unquestioningly obeying orders. In fact, his performance had much in common with that of British soldiers who dutifully marched to their deaths during the Great War - for they were controlled by the same political masters.

Long's remark about Byrnes was isolated but it occurred in the context of a Ministerial discussion which raised the full range of coercive measures which could be imposed against Irish Nationalists, including martial law, summary courts, hanging and collective fines. Long's reference to Byrnes' excellence was no acknowledgement of the latter's expertise or personal sacrifice. It was made in order to draw attention to the need for more systematic repression by Crown Forces in

Ireland. Larger scale military operations and covert operations, including the use of death squads, were subsequently launched to combat what was essentially a political protest against Imperial autocracy.

As the subsequent history of Anglo-Irish relations demonstrates, this escalation by the Lloyd George Cabinet partially appeased the Tories and Ulster Loyalists but was otherwise disastrous. The massive onslaught, which also featured organised British assassination of their opponents, united Irish Nationalists' opposition in a manner and on a scale which no amount of Sinn Fein propaganda or IRA deployment of force could have achieved. (102)

Byrnes was doomed in Dublin because he was operating in a political and social environment with which he was personally unfamiliar. He could not capitalise on any record of political activism in Ireland and existing associates in Dublin, including Rose MacKenna and Sydney Arnold, justifiably viewed him with suspicion. Even had the IRA's moles in Dublin Castle failed to identify "Jameson", his persistent failures should have alerted him and Isham to the fact that Byrne's cover had been blown. To the IRA, other than as a double agent, arms peddler or conduit for propaganda, Byrnes had little to offer. His only value to the IRA was as grisly propaganda and a deterrent to fellow spies and informers.

The subsequent slaughter of British Army spies in Dublin on "Bloody Sunday" (21 November 1920) also showed that the IRA's assassination of "The Best Secret Service man we had" was not merely beginners' luck - and decisively explains why autobiographies by British spies about the Anglo-Irish war are comparatively rare. Dead spies don't write memoirs. (103)

#### THE SCOTLAND HOUSE ORGANISATION

"Towards the end of 1919 it was decided by the Irish Government that the secret service in Ireland should be controlled from London and directed from the office of Sir B. Thomson, in Scotland House. It was believed that agents could be collected in England and sent to Ireland more easily and safely than if the head office were in Ireland where it was difficult to ensure secrecy. The military authorities in Ireland agreed that with the exception of any agents already employed by the Intelligence Branch at GHQ, all agents should be controlled from Scotland House, and an officer from Scotland House was attached to GHQ for liaison duties.

The 'G' Branch of the Dublin Metropolitan Police were not linked up with this scheme as their best detectives had already been murdered, and the Crimes Special Branch of the RIC continued to work independently. A small amount of general and political information was collected through this source but none on which any action was possible."

*Record of the Rebellion in Ireland 1920 - 21 and the part played by the Army in dealing with it. Vol. II Intelligence (W.O.; 1922)*

#### Notes

- 1 e.g. *Freeman's Journal*; *Irish Independent*, 4-8.3.20.
- 2 Ralph Hayward Isham Papers, Manuscripts & Archives; Yale University Library (hereafter: Isham Papers), Reports, 1/11 - 13, 26.4.19.
- 3 *Irish Independent*, 8.3.20.
- 4 *Ibid.*; *Weekly Despatch*, 7.3.20; Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 11.9.19.
- 5 Birth & Marriage certificates, General Register Office; interview with Byrnes' daughter, Peggy.
- 6 Byrnes' war diary; Byrnes' daughter, Peggy; WO329 Medal Roll, Public Records Office, Kew records Byrnes' rank as Warrant Officer (Grade 2).
- 7 *Essex Times*, 10.3.20; *Romford Times*, 10.3.20
- 8 *Freeman's Journal*, 4.3.20.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Isham Papers: 1/8, Notes from No. 8. Major Rowlandson, an ex-Indian Army officer, was based at 7 Park Place, SW1, premises occupied by HQ the Directorate of Intelligence.
- 11 This address was also used as a meeting place for the SSAU (Isham Papers: 1/11-13, Report, 26.4.19); it was the address from which *The Masses* was circulated; Holborn Electoral Rolls 1918-19 show the address to have been occupied by Reginald Flint; John Hearson; Mrs Jessie Holloway and William Foster Watson.
- 12 *Daily Herald* 12.5.19; Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 12.3.19?
- 13 Isham Papers: 1/7, Note, 26.5.19; 1/8, Note, undated.
- 14 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 27.5.19.
- 15 *Ibid.*, Report, 31.5.19. Identities of people not previously cited in *Lobster* No. 27: "Copperwheat" is Copperwaite; Neil Maclean (Labour) MP, Glasgow (Govan), 1918; Jessie Holloway, *ibid* note 10; Art O'Brien, Fulwood Place, WC1, Sinn Fein councillor, Irish Self-Determination League etc. was also the Republicans' leading representative in London and corresponded daily with Michael Collins. Captain A. E. Mander, c/o Labour Hall, Ilford.
- 16 The Gaelic League (founded in 1893 to revive the Irish language and culture), IRB, Sinn Fein and latterly the Irish Self-Determination League were organisations which Irish Republican activists in London joined. Official IRA companies in London were not formed until October 1919.
- 17 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 28.7.19.



- 18 Arnold (a.k.a. Semeyon Aaronson) lived at 58, Fortress Road, NW5.
- 19 Irish Socialist and a close friend of Arnold, McKenna, a.k.a. "Libertia" was the author of *A Plea for Social Emancipation in Ireland* (National Labour Press: Manchester: 1917). She had earlier asked Byrnes if he could obtain £2,000-worth of ammunition for Sinn Fein (Isham Papers 1/7, Report, 8/6/19).
- 20 Goldberg, 16 Hooper Street, WC1
- 21 Schwartz, a tailor from Bourmouth, acted as secretary to the "Russians", as Byrnes termed this group; Isham Papers 1/8, Report, 22.7.19.
- 22 20, Hanover Square was the address of the Irish Literary Society, Isham Papers: Report, 15.7.19.
- 23 Isham Papers: 1/8, Reports: 23.7.19; 25.7.19; 28.7.19; 5.8.19; 8.8.19. Details to corroborate alleged Bolshevik funding of the British Left during 1918-19 do not yet appear to have emerged from newly-available ex-USSR files.
- 24 Isham Papers: 1/8 Report, 16.6.19. Racist remarks by revolutionaries like Sylvia Pankhurst were not as unusual as their biographers sometimes care to admit.
- 25 Walter Kendall insists Pankhurst was a Bolshevik agent (see: p.252, *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1900-21*, London: 1969); Isham Papers: 1/8 Report, 15.7.19.
- 26 Byrnes was scheduled to visit Zachariassen at 85, Camberwell Green, SE5 on the evening of 15 July, shortly before the Norwegian was arrested by Special Branch. (ps. 83-4 Fitch, H., *Traitors Within*, London: 1933); Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 15.7.19.
- 27 Choosing to believe Basil Thomson, Special Branch Inspector Herbert Fitch, the Home Secretary and a *Times* article instead of Zachariassen himself, Walter Kendall insists the case documents "beyond any possibility of refutation the reality of the Comintern network" (*op. cit.*, p.246); Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 22.7.19.
- 28 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 23.7.19.
- 29 *Ibid.*, Report, 25.7.19.
- 30 *The Times*, 7.8.19.
- 31 Fitch, *op. cit.*, ps. 83-4; Isham Papers: 1/8, Reports: 22.7.19, 25.7.19.
- 32 Isham Papers: 2/16-17, Letters: Facey to Isham, 20.5.19; Hoskyns to Isham, 30.5.19
- 33 Isham Papers: 1/7, Report, 3.7.19.
- 34 Reynolds, G.W. & Judge, A., *The Night the Police Went on Strike* (London): 1968), p. 141.
- 35 *Ibid.*; Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 2.8.19.
- 36 p.163, Griffiths, K. & O'Grady, T.E., *Curious Journey* (London: 1982)
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 164.
- 38 Isham Papers: 1/8, Reports, 2.8.19; 5.8.19.
- 39 *The Times*, 12.8.19.
- 40 *Daily Herald*, 12.8.19.
- 41 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 12.8.19.
- 42 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 13.8.19.
- 43 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 15.8.19.
- 44 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 21.8.19.
- 45 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 1.8.19. "The name of the woman who is endeavouring to obtain passports to proceed to Russia via Paris is... Maria Neibovitch residing at 58 Fortress Road, Kentish Town."
- 46 Isham Papers: 1/8, Reports: 28.8.19, 29.8.19.
- 47 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 10.9.19.
- 48 Isham Papers: 2/25, National Stability League Report No.: 4031, 21.8.19. Identification is inconclusive but the most likely person is the NSL secretary Margaret Tisdall. The London Post Office Directory and W0329 PRO, Kew, suggest she is identical with Miss Margaret E.W. Tisdall (Winifred?), 9, Holland Park Mansions, Holland Park Gardens, W14.
- 49 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 11.9.19. The "other question" presumably refers to suspicions that Facey had stolen Zachariassen's money - since the cash never appeared elsewhere.
- 50 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 12.9.19.
- 51 Isham Papers: 1/7, Report, 13.9.19.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 Isham Papers: 1/7, Letter, Facey to Byrnes, 18.9.19.
- 54 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 10.10.19.
- 55 Isham Papers: 1/8, Note, n.d. re: Sydney Arnold, "58, Fortress Road- Kentish Town arrived in England from Dublin on Tuesday, Oct. 7th 1919."
- 56 Isham Papers: 1/8, Reports, 10.10.19. McBrien was Facey's Special Branch Controller.
- 57 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 21.10.19.
- 58 *Ibid.*; Letter, Facey to Byrnes, 12.9.19.
- 59 Arthur Field was secretary of Holborn ILP and Forster-Bovill's election agent. Isham Papers: Report, 24.10.19.
- 60 *Ibid.*
- 61 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 23.10.19; Notes, 24.10.19. W.B. Forster-Bovill, 51 Millman Street, Clerkenwell, claimed to have close links with the S.P.I. and knew Art O'Brien. There is a slim possibility that the man may have been mistakenly identified by A2 and could really have been a slightly disguised Michael Collins.
- 62 *Ibid.*
- 63 Isham Papers: 1/8, report, 27.10.19.
- 64 *Ibid.* Facey evidently believed that Byrnes had ceased working for Military intelligence when he later admitted to Byrnes that he had indeed told Rowlandson - and since he (Byrnes), "was not now employed by MI5 he (Facey) did not think it would make any difference to him". Maurice Facey got work at the Labour Research Department, 31 Eccleston Square, and only briefly encountered Byrnes again on 2.12.19. Isham Papers: 1/8, Note, 2.12.19.
- 65 *Ibid.*
- 66 Adjutant-General to Deputy Chief of the General Staff., 13.10.19, Public Record Office, Kew: W032/5611 No. 12. See: pp 23-4, Jeffrey, P. & Hennessy, P., *States of Emergency*, London: 1983.
- 67 *Ibid.*, pp 24-5.
- 68 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 13.11.19. on 12 November Eyrecourt, Co. Galway and the Dail Loan Office, 76 Harcourt Street, Dublin were raided by Crown Forces. Michael Collins escaped the raiders via an adjacent building's roof. However, the raids netted a key Republican organiser, Sean Milroy, 3 Sinn-Fein MP's and 6 Volunteers. (p. 41 L. O'Broin, *Michael Collins*, Dublin: 1980; p. 109, Forester, M., *Michael Collins - The Lost Leader*, London: 1972 edn.)
- 69 *Ibid.*
- 70 Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 6.12.19.
- 71 For a representative early example see: ps 84-92, O'Connor, F., *The Big Fellow* (USA: 1937; Dublin: 1991). The latest version may be found in Coogan, T.P., *Michael Collins* (London: 1990).
- 72 *Ibid.*, O'Connor. Byrnes was certainly no "small plump gentleman" see photo). Coogan, p. 127: "Plump, sharp-featured, middle-aged, of average height... born Burns, the son of a police officer from Limerick. He had worked in intelligence in India before the First World War and during it somehow managed to elude detection in Germany.."
- 73 Coogan, *op. cit.*, p.129, Frank Thornton, Tom Cullen, Liam Tobin were three of Collins' most senior Intelligence officers. The O'Connors, close friends of Collins, operated a safe house and formed part of the IRA intelligence network (see also: O'Connor, B., *With Michael Collins In The Fight For Irish Independence*, London: 1929); Detective James MacNamara was one of Collins' spies in the Dublin Metropolitan Police and secretary to Assistant Commissioner W.C. Forbes Redmond, the DMP intelligence chief.
- 74 Coogan, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
- 75 O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
- 76 *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- 78 p. 77, Ryle-Dwyer, T., *Michael Collins - The Man Who Won The War*, Cork: 1990.
- 79 *Ibid.*, p. 78. Richard Mulcahy was IRA Chief of Staff; Rory O'Connor was IRA Director of Engineering and directed operations in mainland Britain. Ned Broy was one of Collins' spies in the DMP. Collins' biographers' selection of addresses for this meeting conflict. From Byrnes' report, the most likely appears to have been "a room over Mrs O'Keefe's confectionery shop in Camden Street" (Forester, *op. cit.*, p.130). The Isham Papers contain insufficient references to make conclusive identification of the IRA men nor do they contain further information about Collins initial meeting with Byrnes in London. The "raid at 76 Harper Street" refers to Harcourt Street.
- 80 Account of IRA. Intelligence during the Anglo-Irish War given by Captain Frank Thornton to Army Units. Unpublished Ms., Military Archives, Dublin. My thanks to Eunan O'Halpin for providing this reference.
- 81 Isham Papers: 1/8, Notes on No. 8's Visit to Ireland. Dec. 1919.
- 82 *Sunday Despatch*, 5.11.37.
- 83 Redmond arrived in Dublin some time after 17.12.19 and was assassinated on 21.1.20. See ps. 72, 260, O'Halpin, E., *British Intelligence in Ireland*, in [eds.] Andrew. C. & Dilke. D., *The Missing Dimension* (London: 1984).
- 84 Isham Papers: 2/16, undated Ms. Note, "Oct. Nov. Dec. Cab Fares and Telegrams in connection with Horse Transactions" records Isham visiting Basil Thomson at "81" [Victoria Street, Kensington, W.8] on 18, 19, 23, 30 December. On 26.12.19 - "H.S. all afternoon"; Isham Papers: 2/14, Letter, Isham to C.C. Lucas, 12.5.49.
- 85 O'Halpin, *op. cit.*, p. 71: "Of the ten or so detectives engaged on political work, five had been killed or wounded by the end of the year."
- 86 Isham Papers: 2/14, p. 2, Copy of Enclosure, Letter, Isham to C.C. Lucas, 13.12.41.

87. Isham Papers: 2/16, Letter, Isham to S.G. Stephenson, GHQ GB 18.12.19; 2/16, Bill, Wilson & Gill (Goldsmiths), 23.12.19; Bill, Shelbourne Hotel, 1.2.20; Letters, O.P.L. Hoskins to Isham, 10.1.20 and reply, 13.1.20; 2/11-13, Report, 29.12.19; J.C. Byrnes' Last Will and Testament, Somerset House.
88. Circumstances would suggest that these included a resident Magistrate, Alan Bell (head of Thomson's local spy network); possibly some of those who attended the 7 December secret conference.
89. Note: Collins to Art O'Brian, 20.1.20, National Library of Ireland, quoted p. 128, Coogan, *op. cit.*
90. *Ibid.*
91. *Ibid.*
92. Unlike Neligan, Lily Mernin ("Merin" - Coogan) never publicised her activities. She was a member of the Keating Branch (Dublin), Gaelic League, whose members included Collins and many leading IRA commanders. Referred to by Collins as "Lt. G." (Little Gentleman), Mernin, according to IRA Director of Publicity, Piaras Beaslai, began spying in November or December 1919. Amongst other information she supplied the names of the British spies slaughtered by the Squad in Dublin on 21 November 1920. *Irish Independent*, 13.1.65.
93. Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
94. Isham Papers: 1/8, Report, 30.1.20.
95. Thornton, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
96. *Ibid.*
97. Dwyer, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
98. Thornton, *op. cit.*, p. 19. Thornton incorrectly recalls that Byrnes "Returned within a week".
99. Dwyer, *op. cit.*, p. 77. Citing notes by Mulcahy, Dwyer refers to Byrnes making arrangements to have Collins arrested after the previously noted meeting at Batt O'Connor's on 16 January. Byrnes was in England at the time. Dwyer's and other accounts wrongly allege Byrnes' pre-war service in India, wartime experiences in Germany and possession of a souvenir Iron Cross (given to the Squad). From this it is likely that the man who was taken to tea at Batt O'Connor's was Quinslisk, a former Connaught Ranger, member of the Casement Brigade and British spy - shot by the IRA on 18 February 1920.
100. *Freeman's Journal*, 4.3.20. Authors almost never fail to use Byrnes' decorative tattoos of birds and the caged birds as metaphors to enliven what was a factually thin story about an unknown murder victim. The cage birds were almost certainly eve-of-departure presents for Peter, Peggy and Marion, his children. His tattoo "Phyllis" referred to a fourth child who had perished during the war. I am grateful to Byrnes' daughter, Peggy, for confirming these details.
101. O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
102. Thornton, *op. cit.* p. 20. British counterparts of Collins' Squad (or IRA Active Service Units) included an ex-Royal Marines' Officer. A former colleague recalled: "He had joined the Black and Tans and was a member of a murder squad. These squads were given details of about six IRA type of men and, if they managed to kill them, each member of the squad was given a lump sum of money and a passport to anywhere he wished to go." (Unpublished Diary of Brigadier P.R. Smith-Hill, p. 31. Royal Marines' Museum, Eastney); See also Bowden, T., *Bloody Sunday - A Reappraisal*, in *European Studies Review*, Vol. 2., No. 1., January 1972, pp 25-42.

103. Coogan, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-1; *Freeman's Journal*, 4.3.20; O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 9, states Byrnes was escorted by "four young men, grave and silent."
104. *Ibid.*, Coogan.
105. *Romford Times*, 17.3.20. According to Peggy, Daisy Byrnes went permanently deaf with shock after collecting her husband's remains. HM Government's financial compensation for his death enabled her to buy the family home and provide for their children. Daisy never re-married and died in 1939, never revealing what details she knew of her husband's spying activities.
106. Jones, T., *Whitehall Diary*, vol. III, *Ireland 1918-25* (ed.) Middlemas, K., London: 1971.

[Corrections: A2 and the 'Reds in Khaki' / *Lobster* 27:

P. 18, para. 1, line 14 sp. "events"; para. 2, line 11 insert "and involved about 250,000 troops"; p. 19, para. 3, line 5 delete "largely"; p. 21, para. 2, line 23 "Royal Field Artillery" not "Royal Engineers"; p. 24, para 2, line 21. "no" for "not".]

## LETTER

There are quite a few points on which I take issue with the supposed review of my work by Mike Hughes [*Lobster* 27], and I would like to put the record straight on a number of major ones. Leaving aside the cheap (and incorrect) comments about my 'personal inability to cope with the onslaught' from *Searchlight*, I readily admit *A Lie Too Far* was a rush job, written while being up for 72 hours without sleep - but the urgency was dictated by the exigencies of defending others.

I await evidence of my supposed 'oversimplistic connections', but would say this: *At War With the Truth* wasn't just a 'reworking' of ALTF, but a substantial addition to it. But then, given the review referred not at all to the substantive content of either, this point would be lost on your readers, that I have alleged (with sufficient proof I would contend) that Hepple was actually acting as a "state agent" in both fascist and Green milieux. Hughes' bizarre and patronising comments about my research I will leave to readers to judge. However, given that it was me who informed Hughes, a full year after the event, that Western Goals was defunct, he isn't much of an authority I'd have thought.

I was most intrigued to hear you intend to cover Steve Brady's career in the next issue, presumably using the material you promised to send me but didn't. [Unfortunately, the promised material has not been sent to me. S.D.] Please do not have the effrontery to then criticise me for 'naiveté' concerning my *Lobster* 24 research about him - if it were not for that cautious article, based on available evidence, you would not even have carried an article would you. In conclusion, might I suggest that next time Mr Hughes actually reads publications before reviewing them.

Yours sincerely, Larry O'Hara.

*Turning Up The Heat: MI5 After The Cold War* - Larry's latest effort - is pure garbage. S.D.



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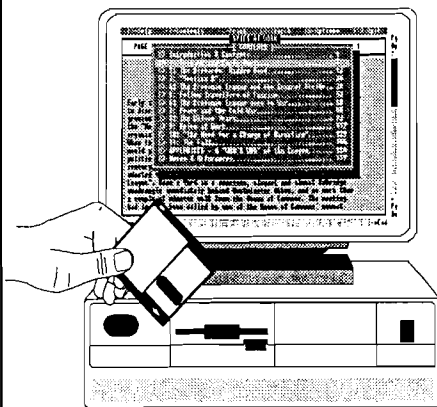
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## Introduction

The series of revelations surrounding British arms sales to Iraq have raised many questions over the role of the intelligence services and revealed much about their *modus operandi*. Some individuals, like Paul Henderson, Mark Gutteridge, and Paul Grecian, revealed their own past intelligence connections in the face of prosecutions brought by Customs. Others involved in the arms-to-Iraq saga have sought to highlight the intelligence connections of those they came into contact with in an attempt to shed light on certain events, in particular the collapse of munitions manufacturer Astra Holdings. In this latter category much attention has focused on one of the more mysterious figures to emerge from "Iraqgate" and the often shadowy world of arms packages and financing - Stephan Adolph Kock. In the media he has been referred to in numerous newspaper articles and has even been the subject of a lead story on Channel 4 News.<sup>1</sup> More recently he has been the subject of a series of parliamentary questions. Despite this interest, relatively little is known about Kock, even though he appears to have played a significant role in the events surrounding the demise of Astra and in establishing the arms deal with Malaysia at the centre of the Pergau Dam controversy. What follows is a preliminary attempt to piece together a profile of Kock drawing on the observations and experiences of some of those who came into contact with him.

## Background

Those who worked with Stephan Kock at the Midland Bank and at Astra say he was vague about his background and would avoid answering questions about it. Consequently, there is no agreement as to even where he was born. He appears to have been born in May 1927 and be a naturalised British subject. A former senior official at the Midland Bank, amongst others, believes him to have been born in Czechoslovakia. However, as TWR Laxton records in a Memorandum submitted to the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) investigation into the Pergau affair, Kock himself has claimed to have emigrated to what was then Southern Rhodesia from Holland in 1944,<sup>2</sup> although clearly this does not preclude his having been born in eastern Europe.

A CV produced by the Midland Bank's Defence Equipment Finance Department, where Kock was a Consultant/Advisor for several years, provides the single most complete account of his career. It reads:

Having served with the Royal Air Force, he spent some years in civil aviation.

Subsequently he carried out specialised duties for the British government in various parts of the world, including as Political Secretary to the Rhodesian Prime Minister in the early sixties during the period of constitutional change.

He had further military service abroad in the intelligence corps as an infantry officer. He also saw service for some years in the Special Air Service regiment. Following his retirement from the army he was for a period International Director for a major international Dutch mining and manufacturing group and subsequently again as International Director for the Shell Oil company. He is at present a non-executive director of a public company in the manufacturing sector.<sup>3</sup>

While Kock here claims to have served in the RAF, TWR Laxton was unable to find any trace of Kock having been in the RAF,<sup>4</sup> but given subsequent events it would seem likely that he served in the Rhodesian Air Force from the mid-1940s, possibly until 1951-52. Another main plank of Kock's CV is his service in the SAS. During 1951-52 an entirely Rhodesian squadron of the SAS, C Squadron, was formed by "hard-drinking, hard-fighting idealist" 'Mad Mike' Calvert from a pool of 1,000 Rhodesian volunteers.<sup>5</sup> This was part of a build-up of force levels in response to the Malayan insurgency. It would seem likely that Kock's SAS service was with C Squadron. Indeed, a 1991 *Financial Times* profile described him as, "a one time officer in the Rhodesian Special Air Service Regiment and personal adviser to Sir Edgar Whitehead, former Rhodesian prime minister."<sup>6</sup> This group served in Malaya alongside A, B and D Squadrons. This background and the contacts made would have provided the basis for Kock's subsequent intelligence work. The experience in Malaya would also go some way towards explaining what qualified Kock to act in so prominent a way on the Malaysian arms deal, one element of which involved the construction of a special forces' base at Mersing.

From 1958 until December 1962, he claims in his Midland CV to have served as Political Secretary to Sir Edgar Whitehead, Prime Minister of Rhodesia. A second long-term connection, that with the Midland Bank, could also date from this time. As his CV notes, it was during Whitehead's premiership that Walter Monckton, then Chairman of the Midland Bank, headed the Advisory Commission which undertook a review of the Rhodesian Constitution. The period from 1962 to 1967 represents something of a grey area, although Kock was apparently still based in Rhodesia. In 1992 he told the House of Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee (TISC) that; "In the Special Forces I served as Substantive Captain and

I was given my majority in Rhodesia just before UDI."<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, in 1978 Kock gave evidence to the Bingham Inquiry on Rhodesia, and in its Report is described as having been, "National Accounts Advisor to BP Rhodesia" in 1965.<sup>8</sup> However, according to the Midland CV, during this period Kock saw further "military service abroad". He also told the TISC that he "was a military intelligence officer in Rhodesia", which would also seem to date from this period.<sup>9</sup>

There is an apparent contradiction in his CV surrounding the late 1960s. In 1967 his oil connections were strengthened when he became a Director of Billiton, a subsidiary of Shell, based in the Hague, a position he held until 1973.<sup>10</sup> He exaggerated this position in his Midland CV, and had to explain to the TISC that he had been an international director, "of a company called Billiton, a mining house acquired by Royal Dutch Shell and I remained as an international director of that section of Royal Dutch Shell."<sup>11</sup> However, while his Midland CV states that he took up the position with Billiton following his retirement from the army, an internal Astra newsletter stated that: "Following his military career, he carried out special assignments for the Foreign Office."<sup>12</sup>

In 1973, Kock became a non-executive director of Biddle Holdings. Former Chairman Frank Biddle later recalled that while working for Biddle, Kock claimed to have dined out with Mrs Thatcher,<sup>13</sup> and his apparent ability to contact her is something about which he subsequently boasted to colleagues at Astra. In June 1984, Kock was taken on by the Midland Bank as a part-time Consultant/Advisor to the Bank's Defence Equipment Finance Department (DEFD), "a team of specialists with banking, military and industrial experience who can provide dedicated assistance to the defence industry",<sup>14</sup> housed within the Midland Bank Group International Trade Services (MBGITS).

### Astra Holdings PLC

Kock joined Astra as a non-executive director in October 1986 whilst working in the Midland's DEFD after being recommended from within the Bank. At the time Astra's bankers were Barclays, but in early 1986 Astra acquired a small security/electronics company, MFA International (then owned by Roy Ricks) by guaranteeing its overdraft. During discussions with MFA's bankers, Midland, the Manager of the Maidstone branch of the Bank recommended Kock to Astra Chairman Gerald James. In a lengthy Statement to the FAC investigation into Pergau, James recalled that: "In discussions with the manager at Maidstone, Peter

Weaver, I was introduced on the telephone to Stephan(us) Adolph(us) Kock...as being a man connected with the very top levels of Government and influence re the arms trade."<sup>15</sup> Kock was further recommended by Richard Unwin as a useful non-executive director after Astra had taken over Unwin International and related companies in October 1986. At the same time Kock was further recommended by the Midland Bank:

In October/November 1986, after the purchase of Unwin's company, the Midland Bank recommended Kock as a non executive director. This recommendation came from a high level in the Bank and was accompanied by a request/recommendation from Richard Unwin. There is no doubt these requests were co-ordinated. At the time Astra needed another non executive director and Kock, with his apparently leading position in the secret and very active Midland arms department, looked an ideal candidate.<sup>16</sup>

While at Astra, Kock left other directors in no doubt as to his connections. The *Financial Times* profile noted how, "on several occasions Mr Kock has boasted of his close connections with Mrs Thatcher. He told colleagues he was one of the few people trusted with the number of her private telephone when she lived at Number Ten."<sup>17</sup> Former directors have also recalled Kock's boasting of the various figures he knew, ranging from Ian Smith in Rhodesia, To Margaret Thatcher, to John Bourn. When questioned about this by the TISC, Kock replied: "These remarks that I boasted of knowing Mrs Thatcher are totally unfounded. I happened to have met her on one or two occasions. I hosted a dinner once. All that happened was when the factory north of Grantham was rebuilt they asked Mrs Thatcher to come and open it. Her secretary wrote a courteous letter saying she was not available. What I then said was: "Would you like me to write to her because I have met her"...that was the extent of my boasting." He denied that he had her private telephone number and said that the only other member of the Thatcher family he had ever met had been Denis at the same dinner.<sup>18</sup> However, former board members of Astra recall his boasting of his ability to contact Mrs Thatcher as having been more widespread than this.

Astra itself had been purchased by the James and Gumbley team in June 1981, expanding from a pyrotechnics base to become, by the time of its purchase of BMARC in 1987, capable of competing with Royal Ordnance (RO - by this time owned by BAe) in the restrictive domestic British ammunition market. This was governed by the secret EPREP (Explosive and Propellant) agreement which guaranteed

RO 80% of domestic sales. Astra's difficulties began when it purchased the Belgian munitions manufacturer Poudreries Reunies de Belgique (PRB) from Gechem in September 1989 for £20 million, a purchase intended to further strengthen Astra's challenge to RO, just as former Chairman Gerald James has always maintained people in and around government encouraged Astra to. Having completed the purchase, James was made aware that PRB was fulfilling contracts for munitions bound for Iraq in apparent contravention of the Howe Guidelines which notionally restricted such a trade. These included the propellant for both the Iraqi supergun and the smaller prototype.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, for a non-executive director, Kock was highly active in certain areas. He appeared at least once a week as opposed to the once a month, or even just for board meetings that the Chairman expected of someone in his position. Unusually for a non-executive director, he apparently involved himself in areas of Astra's business without the knowledge of either the Chairman or the Managing Director, Christopher Gumbley. For instance, in September 1989 he travelled to Belgium to visit the PRB plant at Kaulille without their knowledge. Gerald James has stated that had he known of Kock's intentions he would not have approved the trip. It was upon returning from this trip that he claimed to have contacted the security services and informed them of an "unusual propellant" (ie. - the supergun propellant). However, this level of activity did not extend to the US. When Astra acquired the US Walters Group in 1987 Kock wanted to go and inspect it but, according to former directors of Astra, was unable to do so as he was refused a US visa. According to Gerald James, he never visited any of Astra's US acquisitions.

Kock figured prominently in a detailed memorandum prepared by Gerald James for the TISC investigation into arms exports to Iraq, as well as in the oral evidence he gave on 5 February 1992. It was largely as a result of this that Kock himself was called to give evidence on 19 February, appearing on the same day as Christopher Gumbley. Kock told the TISC that he had been recommended to Astra by Richard Unwin, "a friend of mine" and stated "categorically" that the Midland Bank "had nothing to do with my appointment to the board of Astra."<sup>20</sup>

When his Midland CV was read out to him, he was asked if he had ever "been part of the British intelligence services?", he replied: "I have never been an officer in MI6 as it has been alleged." While this did not completely answer the question, when asked if he had "wide contacts and

connections through the intelligence service community", he told the TISC that: "Anyone who works in the defence area, or has been a soldier, would have access to private information of a nature that might endanger the security of the state. I would suggest nearly every officer in Special Forces would have that capability to convey information. I was a military intelligence officer in Rhodesia."<sup>21</sup> In its Report, the TISC described him as, "a non-executive director of Astra with military intelligence experience."<sup>22</sup>

The TISC also heard a tape recording of a telephone conversation made by Campbell Dunford, formerly of the Midland and Moscow Narodny Banks, between himself and Kock. In it Kock tells Dunford that, regarding Astra: "I am in command. There is no question about that. I am in command because of all the various people who have taken an interest in Astra." When asked what he meant by that and who the "various people who have taken an interest in Astra" were, Kock told the TISC that he had merely, "tried to convey to him I had the influence necessary to influence the appointment of another director" and that "all the major shareholders and banks were concerned at the situation and that is what I meant."<sup>23</sup>

On his trip to Kaulille and discovery of the "unusual propellant", Kock told the TISC that on his return he immediately, "reported the fact of the matter and discussed it with my colleagues who were more qualified than I was..."<sup>24</sup> However, he was forced to concede that he did not inform the Astra board. Neither did he inform the board of his decision to inform the "security services". The manner in which he claimed to have done so revealed a further familiarity with the intelligence community. He was asked by the TISC: "When you say you reported it to the Security Services that is exactly what you mean, you do not mean a member of the MOD's team or to somebody in the DTI, you are quite clear it was to the Security Services it was reported?" Kock explained: "Initially I did it by telephone, a very brief discussion on, I think, the Monday following 20th September. Then the first time I could get down was 11th October when I had a meeting. I did speak, of course, later to the Ministry of Defence people and I know quite a lot of them well."<sup>25</sup> This independence of spirit on the part of a non-executive director led Dr Keith Hampson MP to seek further clarification:

*KH:* Did you actually report this directly to the intelligence services without consulting or informing the chairman of the company or chief executive of the company?

*SK:* Yes, I did, Sir.

*KH:* You did?

*SK:* Yes.

*KH:* You actually went straight to Dr Pike and Major General Donald Isles?

*SK:* Yes.

*KH:* You did not first go to the chairman of the company?

*SK:* No, I did not.

*KH:* Is this the normal approach of a non-executive director, would you not normally consult with the chairman?

*SK:* It depends whether he needs to be consulted.

*KH:* Quite an interesting thought.<sup>26</sup>

This was also picked up on later by Stan Crowther MP, when he asked:

*SC:* You have these telephone numbers in your diary, do you? Not many people are familiar about how to contact MI5 or MI6. Mr James and Mr Gumbley had to get on to the Ministry of Defence who then sent people from MI6 to speak to them. How do you come to be so involved?

*SK:* I spent a lifetime-

*SC:* -involved-

*SK:* I have never been a member of MI5 or MI6.

*SC:* I am not talking about being a member.

*SK:* If I find anything which I consider to be contrary to the interests of this country I will report.

*SC:* ...The question is how do we report it? How do we get in touch with them? You certainly know how to get in touch with them all the time, do you not?

*SK:* I know how to get in touch with some of them, yes.<sup>27</sup>

This is also the recollection of Chris Cowley, formerly Project Manager for Project Babylon. In his memoir of his involvement with Iraq, Cowley recalls a conversation with supergun designer Dr Gerald Bull at a time when Bull himself was considering purchasing PRB:

I could remember Bull mentioning him [Kock] to me as long ago as 1988...I had discussed the Astra bid [for PRB] with Bull and been shown a number of papers which Bull had somehow got hold of...But among them was a list of those present at talks between Astra and PRB, held in November 1988.

'What's Kock doing at this meeting?' he wanted to know.

'Who's Kock?'

'He's a Yarpie - a Rhodesian. He works for the Midland Bank arms department, but he's also part of MI5 like Cuckney.'<sup>28</sup>

Despite Kock's claim to have informed the "security services" of the "unusual propellant" in advance of the warning given by Gumbley and James, Nicholas Bevan of the MoD told the TISC that he first knew of Project Babylon through a meeting with Gumbley and James on 26 October 1989,

after both of Kock's apparent contacts, suggesting that Kock's full report of the 11th October had not been circulated and that details of his initial telephone conversation were not passed on either. This was one of the incidents of apparent compartmentalisation which led the TISC to conclude that excessive compartmentalisation had been the cause of the apparent failure to detect the supergun programme until the last minute. However, Gerald James questions whether Kock did in fact contact the "security services" at this time. As Nicholas Bevan told the TISC: "I would say that of course information which is gathered by Government, by whatever agency, is normally circulated to other parts of Government which have an interest."<sup>29</sup> If Kock didn't, the conclusions of the TISC could be further called into question.

One theme that was central to Kock's testimony was his consistent opposition to the purchase of PRB by Astra. It was important for Kock to seek to establish this because subsequent events, culminating in what he termed the "revolution",<sup>30</sup> left Kock as the only board member who had been in place at the time of the PRB purchase by virtue of the fact that he was untarnished by having supported it at any point. Indeed, when asked by the TISC why he was the "only director left on the board...?", Kock said that: "I remained on the board because there was no reason for me to resign."<sup>31</sup> TISC Chairman Kenneth Warren (like Kock, a member of the Special Forces Club) read Kock a section of Gerald James' evidence that: "Mr Kock was desperate for the PRB deal to go through when he knew [Sir John] Cuckney and [Comte Herve de] Carmoy were involved and wished the deal to go through". Kock replied: "That is a fabrication, Mr Chairman."<sup>32</sup> However, in a note added to his evidence (which appears in the same volume as Kock's), Christopher Gumbley stated: "I must also add that Mr Kock did ring me early in the morning once before the PRB purchase and demanded that we got a move on with the purchase. He told me that he had been talking to Mr De Carmoy of SGB. Mr Kock asked for my assurance that we were proceeding with the PRB purchase with all speed."<sup>33</sup> Kock's claim that he was consistently opposed to the purchase is also contested by other former Astra directors and by a former senior official at the Midland Bank, all of whom have recalled his support for it. In his evidence to the TISC, Gumbley said: "Mr Kock advised at the beginning of the difficulties of Belgium and he was not 100 per cent for the move forward. His position changed and he became very much in favour of the acquisition."<sup>34</sup> Kock's claim that James, "made great efforts not to keep me informed of the PRB affair and there were many, many arguments because I

was not kept informed"<sup>35</sup> is also contested by James and another former member of the Astra board.

When the new management at Astra called for a DTI Inquiry into the company (marking the first time in history that a company Chairman - Roy Barber in this case - had requested a DTI investigation into his own company), it had to reconcile these two sets of recollections on this most important of issues. Kock told the Inspectors that, "he remained opposed to the PRB acquisition and that at some stage he had a long and heated argument with Mr James about it."<sup>36</sup> However, the Inspectors conceded that James, Gumbley, Miller, Guest, and Anderson (almost the entire board of directors) recalled Kock moving from his earlier opposition and that he "became positively in favour of the acquisition". However, their Report effectively accepts Kock's version of events. It states:

Mr James and Mr Gumbley told us of further specific incidents which they said illustrated Mr Kock's positive support for the acquisition. *We do not consider it necessary to detail these...* Mr Kock was insistent to us that he was throughout opposed to the acquisition, and when in due course we come to consider the roles played by each of the directors in connection with the acquisition *we shall assess Mr Kock's role on the basis that he was so opposed.*<sup>37</sup> (my emphasis)

The Report criticises the former directors for going ahead with the purchase of PRB, but the line taken by the Inspectors has meant that while the DTI has chosen to pursue the disqualification of six of the directors "in the public interest" (James, Gumbley, John Anderson, Martin Guest, James Miller and former non-executive director Laurence Kingswood) under the Company Directors' Disqualification Act (1986),<sup>38</sup> while Kock will not be similarly pursued.

When Gumbley was asked by the TISC if he could explain; "why Mr Kock was the only board member to stay after you [ie. the old board] were all removed?", he replied: "I suppose they had to keep somebody and he has stated he was probably involved in removing me at one stage and I assume that applied to the rest of the board."<sup>39</sup> Kock told the TISC that: "It was in my opinion, time for [James] to retire. That was the first one and then Mr Gumbley resigned himself, he was not pushed by me. He resigned for reasons which you are aware. The new chairman then got the board resolution passed which I seconded which suspended the rest of the directors and the rest of the directors subsequently resigned leaving me the only previous director there."<sup>40</sup>

However, James believes that it was the knowledge he and Gumbley gained regarding covert arms supplies, principally to Iraq but also to the Far East, that led Kock (who enlisted the aid of Trowers and Hamblins, "to provide independent advice during the period of board room battles...to catalogue events and evidence to be handed over to SJ Berwin relative to the DTI inquiry",<sup>41</sup> without the rest of the board's knowledge) to engineer his and Gumbley's removal. According to *The Independent*: "Mr Kock subsequently boasted of playing a key role in the reconstruction of Astra, after he had forced out or, as he described it, "pressed the button" on three Astra directors."<sup>42</sup> As James recalled in his Statement for the FAC:

I became aware that our company was heavily involved in covert and illegal arms supplies from US, UK and Belgium. In the course of investigations by myself and Gumbley it became clear that Kock became alarmed. Gumbley investigated Far East contracts including a contract for Thailand which PRB had for 155mm equipment. This contract involved £5m commission on £16m contract and was with a company called Lotberior Lopberior. Lotberior Lopberior is and was also a project to build a huge special forces complex in Thailand just across the border from Malaysia. This project is complementary to the special forces base in Malaysia which is part of the Malaysian arms deal...Lotberior Lopberior is also a huge base in Thailand which includes manufacturing capability for weapons/ammunition. My understanding and knowledge is based on direct personal contact with people in our company PRB...and also with hearing conversations between Kock and others and to seeing faxes and telexes sent to Thailand by Kock on our office machines.<sup>43</sup>

*The Independent* reported that: "What Mr Gumbley threatened to uncover during his few days in Thailand was an arms ring which reputedly spreads from Whitehall to Washington via Belgium and other loosely regulated countries to some of the world's most pernicious regimes, including Saddam Hussein's Iraq."<sup>44</sup> Once the old board had been removed, the new Astra board failed to win a single order, despite the outbreak of war in the Gulf, up to the appointment of a Receiver in February 1992, just days before James gave evidence to the TISC.

### Malaysia

While at Astra, Kock appears to have spent much of his time putting together the arms deal with Malaysia. The *Financial Times* has described how Mrs Thatcher's 1988 visit to Malaysia to sign the £1bn arms deal, "was preceded by a team from Midland's defence

department led by Mr Stephan Kock, together with Ministry of Defence and other officials and a small delegation from Britain's Special Air Services. The main consortia were bidding for contracts for a proposed special forces base at Mersing, close to Malaysia's East Coast. "Kock was there to ensure that Midland got a big slice of the action," said one former official."<sup>45</sup>

In addition, a "former senior executive from Midland Bank" told *The Independent* that Kock (described as "a consultant to Midland who also advised the Government's Joint Intelligence Committee") was the "architect of the different strands" of the Malaysian deal.<sup>46</sup> At around the same time, *The Observer* described him as, "an arms adviser, who visited Malaysia with officials from the Ministry of Defence and members of the Special Air Service before 1988, at about the time the Government was discussing aid to the Pergau project."<sup>47</sup>

As Gerald James recalled: "He was much involved with [Richard] Unwin in orchestrating a huge Malaysian arms deal about which we heard a lot almost every week. Unwin was a £75,000 p.a. consultant to Astra but did little for us as he was preoccupied with Malaysia."<sup>48</sup> In January 1994, Kock issued a (brief) statement to Channel 4 News which conceded: "I was involved in the Malaysian Dam project."<sup>49</sup>

In his Statement for the FAC, Gerald James recalled specific instances which highlighted Kock's role in the Malaysian arms deal. He noted that; "from the time of Kock's involvement with Astra he was much occupied with Unwin on the Malaysian negotiations...and organised a series of events including a Malaysian evening at the Porchester Hall. This was a supper and "knees up" for the Malaysian High Commission and took place in 1987. Both Chris Gumbley and I were invited, although unlike Kock and Unwin, we did not sit at the VIP table."<sup>50</sup> Moreover, he recalled an incident when:

With Chris Gumbley, I attended a meeting in Midland Bank in July 1988 with Nigel Rudd, a close friend of Kock and Chairman of Williams Holdings...

The meeting with Rudd which took place in Midland Bank's Cannon Street offices, took one hour. When Rudd left, Richard Unwin and various Malaysian military personnel trooped into the office. They included Colonel Harry Adnam and General Yakob or Jacob. There were, I believe, also representatives of the Malaysian High Commission. Kock started talking about the Malaysian arms deal before we had left, quite openly mentioning some very sensitive matters. He said they were having problems with Mahathir's bagman who was an Indian or an Indian



Malay or Malay of Indian extraction. Kock also complained about various parties who were being too greedy re kick backs or commissions and suggested certain officials from the UK end had done private deals and were too familiar with the bagman.<sup>51</sup>

Kock told James that, "he was personally organising the Malaysia arms deal [and] he would see to it that Astra would at least get 'one or two crumbs off the table'..."<sup>52</sup> However, as James notes, this was "something which he in fact never did, in spite of running up large costs from Astra in connection with the deal. Those included items like £150 bills or more for one day's telephone conversations from a hired car and expenses for shuttling up and down from his new home in Scotland."<sup>53</sup>

Kock had been resident in Scotland for a couple of years when, on 15 January 1990, he drove up to two men who were repairing their broken down van near his Argyll home. Kock brandished a gun and fired a shot into the air over their heads. A *Financial Times* report on the incident quoted police investigating the incident as saying that it was "very delicate" given Kock's intelligence connections and in view of the "big names" who provided references. It further reported that, "his solicitor, at the court hearing following the shooting incident said Mr Kock's defence work had left him with an acute concern for his personal safety."<sup>54</sup> He went on to say that Kock's career had been "delicate in both nature and locations".<sup>55</sup> *The Independent* reported that: "Police admit privately that their investigations were stymied by protestations on Mr Kock's behalf by the intelligence services."<sup>56</sup> He was fined £650. When questioned about this by the TISC, Kock told them, "I do not carry a gun" and, "I never carried a gun."<sup>57</sup> However, a former director of Astra clearly remembers that when Kock used to travel from his home in Scotland by car, he always used to take with him a 9mm Luger pistol in a sports bag, which he did not like to travel without. Kock would, according to the former director, then leave the pistol with the director's secretary. Kock was unable to travel to work on British Midland aircraft as, according to the same former director, he was banned by the airline following an incident with a stewardess. There also exists a record of an unsavoury incident in February 1989 at a Trusthouse Forte hotel, the Angel and Royal, in Grantham, when Kock threatened an assistant manager, telling him he was Major Kock of the SAS.<sup>58</sup>

### Inquiries into Kock

Attempts to uncover more information about Kock have met with limited success. There have been several attempts in Parliament to pursue the matter. On 22

April 1993, for instance, Allan Rogers MP asked, "what the official duties of Mr Stephen Adolphus Kock have been since 1980." However, when the question appeared in Hansard, the date included was 1990. The reply given was "None."<sup>59</sup> On 28 February 1994, Menzies Campbell MP asked "on what occasions Mr Stephen Kock has represented Her Majesty's Government in campaigning for defence exports to Oman, Jordan, Indonesia and Thailand." Jonathan Aitken replied: "Mr Stephen Kock has not, on any occasion, been asked to represent Her Majesty's Government on these matters."<sup>60</sup> On the same day, Sir David Steel's question, "on how many occasions and in what capacities [has] Mr. Stephan Kock acted on behalf of Her Majesty's Government in relation to contracts arising out of overseas development since 1988", was answered "None."<sup>61</sup>

On 1 July 1994 Michael Meacher MP asked, "for what reason Stephan Adolph Kock has Special Branch protection; and what other names he uses or has been known by", and on 5 July was informed that: "It is not in the public interest to disclose whether any person has received official protection or not. There is no Ministerial responsibility for names by which Mr Kock is known or has been known." Perhaps most revealingly, in answer to a further question by Meacher on 24 May 1994, the Government came as close as it yet has to acknowledging Kock's intelligence connections. Meacher asked: "what duties Stephan Adolphus Kock has performed for (a) the Prime Minister, (b) the Ministry of Defence, (c) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (d) the Department of Trade and Industry and (e) any other Department between 1964 and 1979; and in which countries overseas each of these duties was carried out." The reply was that: "Mr Kock performed no official duties for any Government Department during the period 1964-79. It remains the Government's policy not to comment on the contacts which an individual may or may not have had with the security and intelligence agencies."<sup>62</sup>

Kock's role within Astra and his role in arranging the arms deal with Malaysia clearly deserve further investigation. Although cited as a central figure in the Malaysia deal, both in the press, on television, and in statements to the FAC and Scott Inquiry, Kock is not mentioned once in the FAC Report or the accompanying published evidence. Although a number of the TISC's sessions involved discussion of Kock (the evidence of James, Gumbley, the Midland Bank, and, of course, Kock himself) he only appears fleetingly in the final Report, concerning his claim to have informed the security

services of the "unusual propellant" ahead of Gumbley and James. Yet his claims before the TISC, where he portrayed his role as involving no more than that normally expected of a non-executive director, do not appear consistent with the prominent role he is said to have played in the Malaysian deal and the influence and contacts he apparently had in arranging it. Perhaps revealingly, Gerald James has recorded in a letter to Allan Rogers MP how, after the FAC Report was published, he bumped into Peter Shore MP who had chaired the inquiry: "I...asked him why Kock had not been interviewed - I said 'why has the main witness not been interviewed?' Shore assumed I meant Thatcher as he said it was her prerogative as a former Prime Minister...I...said I meant Kock. To this Shore said 'I know, but that is another level of Government.'"<sup>63</sup>

### Footnotes

- 1 Channel 4 News, 28.1.94.
- 2 TWR Laxton: Memorandum on Stephan Adolph Kock, p.3. The FAC chose not to publish this or a Statement by Gerald James, former Chairman of Astra Holdings, on the same subject in the volume of Minutes of Evidence and Appendices (HC271-II) which accompanied the FAC's Report (Public Expenditure: The Pergau Hydro-Electric Project, Malaysia, the Aid and Trade Provision and Related Matters, HC271-I). However, the FAC decided to "receive" both and consequently they are both lodged in the House of Commons Library and House of Lords Record Office.
- 3 Midland Bank Group International Trade Services: In Support of Excellence (brochure).
- 4 TWR Laxton, Memorandum, pp.4-5. When he gave evidence to the Trade and Industry Select Committee investigating the supergun and Exports to Iraq, he told Doug Hoyle MP that he had been a Warrant officer in the Air Force, but did not specify which. Given the course of the questioning though, it is reasonable to assume that Kock was referring to the Rhodesian Air Force. See, Trade and Industry Committee: Exports to Iraq: Minutes of Evidence, Wednesday 19 February 1992 (HC86-xii), pp.410-411.
- 5 See, Tony Geraghty: *Who Dares Wins: The Story of the SAS 1950-1992*, 3rd Ed., Warner, London, 1993, pp.333-335.
- 6 Financial Times, 15.7.91.
- 7 TISC: Minutes of Evidence, 19.2.92., p.410.
- 8 TWR Laxton, Memorandum, p.6.
- 9 TISC: Minutes of Evidence, 19.2.92., p.409.
- 10 These are the dates given by TWR Laxton: Memorandum, p.6.
- 11 TISC, Minutes of Evidence, 19.2.92., p.408.
- 12 Quoted in Chris Cowley: *Guns, Lies and Spies*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1992, p.227.
- 13 Quoted in the Financial Times, 15.7.91.
- 14 Midland Bank Group International Trade Services: In Support of Excellence. On its activities and performance, see the Financial Times, 15.7.91.
- 15 Statement for Foreign Affairs Committee: Gerald Reaveley James, p.8.
- 16 *Ibid*, pp.8-9.
- 17 Financial Times, 15.7.91.
- 18 TISC, Minutes of Evidence 19.2.92., pp.409-410.
- 19 This is covered in more detail in M. Phythian: *Britain and the Supergun. Crime Law and Social Change*, Vol.19 1993, pp.353-377.



- 20 TISC: Minutes of Evidence, 19.2.92., p.402.
- 21 *Ibid*, p.408-409.
- 22 TISC: Exports to Iraq: Project Babylon and Long-Range Guns, HC-86, 13 March 1992, p.xxxiii. As referred to above, an internal Astra newsletter carried a similar description, as having: "Served in both the Air Force and the Army, including service in military intelligence and special forces. Following his military career he carried out special assignments for the Foreign Office."
- 23 TISC: Minutes of Evidence, 19.2.92., p.404.
- 24 *Ibid*, p.402.
- 25 *Ibid*, p.407. When pressed as to whether he had passed on his information on the propellant to MI5 or MI6, he asked to be allowed to "answer this in confidence". *Ibid*, p.412.
- 26 *Ibid*, p.408.
- 27 *Ibid*, p.412.
- 28 Chris Cowley: *Guns, Lies and Spies*, pp.226-227.
- 29 TISC: Exports to Iraq: Project Babylon and Long-Range Guns, p.xxxiii.
- 30 TISC: Minutes of Evidence, 19.2.92., p.411.
- 31 *Ibid*, p.409.
- 32 *Ibid*, p.403.
- 33 *Ibid*, p.393.
- 34 *Ibid*.
- 35 *Ibid*, p.411.
- 36 DTI: Astra Holdings PLC: Investigation under Section 431(2)(c) of the Companies Act 1985 - Report by Colin Percy Farquharson Rimer QC & John White FCA, HMSO, 1993, p.267. This marked a reduction from the "many, many arguments" he told the TISC of.
- 37 *Ibid*, pp.268-269.
- 38 Letter from Andrew Leithead, Assistant treasury Solicitor, to Harry Cohen MP, 8.8.94.
- 39 TISC: Minutes of Evidence, 19.2.92., p.400.
- 40 *Ibid*, p.409.
- 41 Astra Board Minutes, 4.12.90. See TWR Laxton: Memorandum, pp.11-12.
- 42 *The Independent*, 6.7.91.
- 43 Statement for FAC, pp.16-18.
- 44 *The Independent*, 6.7.91.
- 45 *Financial Times*, 15.7.91.
- 46 *The Independent*, 26.1.94. In addition, Campbell Durford, a former manager with MBGITS confirmed to Gerald James Kock's role, and told him that, "he was asked to set up "special banking arrangements" for the deal." Statement for FAC, p.28.
- 47 *The Observer*, 30.1.94.
- 48 Statement for FAC, p.12.
- 49 Channel 4 News, 28.1.94.
- 50 Statement for FAC, p.13.
- 51 *Ibid*, pp.23-24.
- 52 *Ibid*, p.19.
- 53 *Ibid*, pp.24-25.
- 54 *Financial Times*, 15.7.91.
- 55 *The Independent*, 11.10.91.
- 56 *Ibid*.
- 57 TISC: Minutes of Evidence, 19.2.92., p.410.
- 58 Report made by Astra Holdings into incident and Statement of the Assistant Manager, 21.2.89.
- 59 *Hansard*, 22.4.93, col.193w. Stephen rather than Stephan was an error contained in the original question draft.
- 60 *Hansard*, 28.2.94., col.589w.
- 61 *Ibid*, col.545w.
- 62 *Hansard*, 24.5.94., col.102w.
- 63 Letter dated 8.8.94.

*Steve Dorril picks the bones of the year's obituaries looking for spooks - and reveals the identity of one of MI6's current leading officers*



# Spooks Two

Roger Faligot and Remi Kauffer recently published the second volume of their history of the world's intelligence services - *Les Maitres Espions: Histoire Mondiale du Renseignement, Tome 2, De la Guerre Froide a nos Jours* (Paris, Robert Laffont, 1994). In it they reveal the real identity of the novelist 'Alan Judd' (p. 432). The *Daily Telegraph* said in April 1989 that he was 'formerly of the Foreign Office where his duties were not incompatible with those of a spy'. 'Judd' is a serving MI6 officer called **Alan Edwin Petty**.

Born in November 1946, Petty trained as a P.E. teacher and worked as a farmer, postman, dustman and sewage worker. He joined the Army as a private, later taking a commission, serving in Ireland on a number of occasions in the early seventies. His experiences there formed the basis of his first novel, *A Breed of Heroes*, published in 1981 (Hodder & Stoughton). A graduate of Oxford University he joined MI6 in 1975.

- 1975 Second later First Secretary FCO
- 1980 Consul Johannesburg
- 1980- FCO
- 1988 On leave to write biography of Ford Maddax Ford
- 1990- First Secretary FCO

In 1989, Petty published his fourth book, *Tango* (Hutchinson), an 'amusing' tale of a general manager of a paper mill [an intelligence in-joke] in South America who is recruited by British Intelligence - now privatised as 'Special Information Services plc' to run a coup. The intelligence officer, 'Mr Box', portrays the usual Cold War ideas. 'What I always say is, supposing there really are Reds under the Beds? Are we supposed to stay silent?' He partly blames the Foreign Office for Britain's decline. Whereas MI6 enlightens the government to the truth of the situation, the Foreign Office does not 'want the government ever to be uneasy. They want them always to think everything's all right because they think that keeping things all right is their responsibility.'

There is one little snippet of interest. 'Mr Box' claims that 'Some of our best agents have been nannies'. I had not really thought of that before, it obviously makes a good deal of sense. I rather like the idea of secret nannies being recruited through the pages of *The Lady*.

*Tango* is dedicated to Nick Langman and Anthony (and Caroline) Rowell, both of whom happen to feature in the Diplomatic List.

**Nicholas Langman**, b. 1.11.60. First Secretary since 1991. Served as Second Secretary Montevideo, 1986-88, so probable source for novel.

Anthony Rowell, CMG (1992), b. 10.1.37. Counsellor Pretoria 1990-93.

Petty is more than just a run-of-the-mill intelligence officer having until recently served as part of Colin McColl's secretariat with, I understand, responsibilities for briefing the press. An indication of his views and, presumably of the service, can be gauged by reading the book reviews which 'Judd' has written over the past few years for the *Telegraph*.

Petty has attacked the 'sourness and message of 'moral equivalence' to be found in John le Carre's novels. 'What is overrated is the connection between le Carre's world and the Whitehall world he writes about. No Whitehall meetings are like his; even in these days of market testing, departmental cooperation is the norm, the rules are not broken (though great ingenuity may go into arguing why they do not apply) and warfare is conducted on paper and in debate rather than by subterfuge. Things go wrong, of course, but more through confusion than conspiracy .... the idea of an effective Whitehall-wide conspiracy of the intelligence services, bankers, civil servants, politicians and arms manufacturers, all at the CIA's behest, is laughable. The real world is much more like "Yes, Minister".'

'As for the Cold War, it was not the democracies that abandoned all scruple and principle, and it is hard to imagine that any intelligence service would survive which treated its agents as in le Carre. It is also hard to imagine anyone working for an organisation in which people were as unpleasant to each other as le Carre would have...' (DT, 26.6.93).

One has to question Petty's reliability and motives when he praises Frederick Forsyth's awful *Fourth Protocol* as 'masterly'. It is 'almost contemporary and has a sinewy plausibility in its plot, procedures and tradecraft'. Once again he has a go at le Carre (though, surprisingly, he does not mention that John Cornwell was himself an MI6 officer). 'In the Cold War the real Smiley's people could not have functioned if they had dropped their moral guard. The great majority are like their Civil Service colleagues in Whitehall: loyal, honest and intelligent. They are chosen partly for those qualities. No organisation that corrupted itself or worked to its own agenda could retain their loyalty. Too many would know, to many whistles would be blown and, anyway, it would not work.'

'The myth of the hard-edged character with the heart of titanium is probably less true of the intelligence services than of businessmen and bankers, politicians and

journalists. Generally, espiocrats cannot get what they want without the willing co-operation of intelligence agents, and they do not get that by being ruthless and squalid' (DT, 5.3.94).

Petty's views are even more interesting given the surprising news that he is a regular dinner guest at the home of Labour Party Leader, Tony Blair!! Information which I managed to place with the *Guardian* diary.

So that's alright then ... we can now sleep safely in beds. Even more so after reading a letter to the *Independent* magazine (13.2.93) by 'Alan Bickerton', alias of a retired MI6 officer. To counter criticism of the service by James Rusbridger, Bickerton wrote that 'The truth (boring, perhaps, to some) is that Her Majesty's Secret Services are very moral. There is even a whiff of Puritanism in the professional outlook and behaviour of the staff, who are unblinkingly loyal to the Crown [my italics]. They are cost-conscious, and also cost-effective.' To put it mildly, not very reassuring since Peter Wright said exactly the same in *Spycatcher*.

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Other authors from the intelligence world who have written insider fiction books, which have recently come to my notice, include:

*All the Queen's Men* (Seven House, 1981) by 'Guy Montfort' which Morris Riley tells me is of interest. *The Patriot Game* (1973) by John de St. Jorre and Brian Shakespeare which is about Ireland but more intriguingly contains knowing early references to GCHQ and Ultra. 'Ray Alan' and *The Beirut Pipeline* (Collins, 1980). 'Alan' - Lawrie Vals-Russell - was the security officer at the MI6-controlled radio station Sharq-Al-Adna situated in Cyprus (recently featured on BBC Radio 4 programme *Suez: The Propagation of Truth*, 15.9.94). 'He joined the station full of patriotic and social-democratic zeal, eager to demonstrate the enlightenment of post-imperialist Britain. He was no doubt shocked to find that his job entailed mischief-making, supporting military dictatorships and feudal deadbeats, and sniping at reform movements' (p. 234). Former SAS man Murray Smith has just published *The Stone Dancer* (Michael Joseph) which isn't worth the effort of reading but does reveal that MI6 set up a Counter-Terrorism Directorate in the mid-seventies. One of the acknowledgements is to Richard Baines, 'retired FCO'.

The *IoS* (13.6.93) seemed to think that there was some mystery about the true identity of 'Commander Christopher Vernon' the MI6 hero of the novel *The Great Russian*

*Game*. This Italian book by GE Janus, a pseudonym for one of Italy's top lawyers and experts on Eastern European business, involves Vernon discovering that Perestroika was a Western plot to bring down the Soviet government. Has anyone read *Double Kill* by 'Henry McCallion' a law student from Hull who claims to have served many times with the Parachute Regiment and the SAS in Northern Ireland? Claims to have received briefings from Army Liaison on Tara

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**Tom Hurd** (MI6?). Old Etonian, son of the Foreign Secretary. It is alleged that because of his father's position, 'TH' had to have special dispensation to join the Service. Has just been posted Warsaw as First Secretary (DT, 6.9.94). I have to say, his biography doesn't look like MI6 to me.

**Richard Fletcher** (MI6). Featured in current Diplomatic List. Joined MI6 in 1966, served as Counsellor Athens, 1985. From 1988, Counsellor FCO, currently responsible for MI6 Establishment, in particular, Finances.

**Peter Longworth** (MI6). Featured in current Diplomatic List as deputy head of mission, Seoul. Joined MI6 in 1974, formerly foreign correspondent for the Westminster Group of Newspapers.

**John McLeod Scarlett** (MI6). Political Counsellor at the British Embassy in Moscow, where he was allegedly Chief of Station before being expelled (I. 2.4.94).

**Hamish Cowell**. Deputy head of mission in Tehran. Expelled from Iran in retaliation for expulsion of Iranian diplomat from London (G. 2.6.94).

**Nicholas Elliott** (MI6). Obit. DT, 14.4.94, I. 18.4.94 - written by Sir Stephen Hastings (MI6). Senior MI6 officer, Controller for Africa 1963, and later important figure in Lonrho and the Pinay Circle. In 1956, 'laid the foundations for future co-operation with Israeli intelligence' - one reason, perhaps, for his friendship with James Angleton.

Elliott wrote two slim volumes of memoirs before he died - *Never Judge a Man by His Umbrella* and *With My Little Eye* (Michael Russell, 1992 and 1993). Complying with the wishes of 'The Firm', Elliott does not reveal a great deal, in fact, very little. However, he does confirm, with relish, the fact that the Service was in his day very much an old boy's network, centred around 'what is unpleasantly called the privileged class'. In no other organisation 'has the same set of convivial camaraderie prevailed'. Much of it revolved around Whites, the leading club of the Service

where contacts, family relations, school (Eton), food and drink were the dominant force.

Elliott just manages to keep in check some extremely reactionary views. But only just. Referring to traitors: 'victims of a form of inferiority complex, of which the best example is George Blake, who wanted to prove to himself that an insignificant individual of mixed origins could become a person of consequence in world affairs' (*Eye*, p. 13).

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**Michael Herman** (MI6, or GCHQ, according to one source). I recently spotted in the Civil Service Year book that Herman was seconded to the Cabinet Office in 1973. He retired from the Service in 1987 and then joined the following year Nuffield College, Oxford, where he still resides. 1989, Chatham House dealing with intelligence and international relations (he wrote a so-so review my own *The Silent Conspiracy* for the RUSI journal). Among the articles he has written are:

Article in *Defense Analysis*, Vol.3, No.2, June 1987.

*Warning - Some Practical Perspectives, in Crisis Decision-making in the Atlantic Alliance*, US Strategic Decisions Press, 1988.  
Reflections on the Study of Soviet Military Literature, RUSI Journal, Summer 1988.

*What is intelligence?*, The Naval Review, April 1989.

*Intelligence and the Assessment of Military Capabilities: Reasonable Sufficiency or the Worst Cases?* Intelligence and National Security, Vol 4, No 4, Oct 1989.

*Intelligence and Policy: A Comment*, Intelligence and National Security, Vol 6, No 1, Jan 1991

*Verification Report 1991: Yearbook on Arms Control and Environmental Agreements*, JB Poote (ed), Vertic, 1991.

*International Perspectives on the Falklands Conflict*, in A. Danchev (ed), Macmillan, 1992.

*Governmental Intelligence: Its Evolution and Role*, Journal of Economic and Social Intelligence, 2, 2 (1992).

*GCHQ De-Unionisation 1984: Review Article*, Public Policy and Administration, 8, 2 (1993).

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**Ralph Daly** and **Bill Herber-Percy** (MI6). Involved in the early sixties Yemen campaign (Johnny Cooper, *One of the Originals*, Pan, 1991, p. 178). Herber-Percy

was an attaché at the The Hague immediately after the war.

**David Raines** (MI6) - Alleged to have resigned in the seventies over an unknown scandal inside the Service (private information).

**Lord Forbes** - later 9th Earl of Granard (MI6). Grenadier Guards, during WW2 in Greece recruiting people for the Intelligence Service for a network in conjunction with Imperial Airways (later BOAC). Died 1953. (Jean Overton Fuller, *Dericourt: The Chequered Spy*, p. 290.)

**Lord Blake** (MI6). Conservative Party historian who worked alongside Kim Philby (*DT*, 10.9.93). Is there anyone who didn't work alongside Philby during the war.

**Colonel John Clarke** (MI5/6). Obit, *T*, 5.10.93. Right-hand man to Fitzroy Maclean in Bosnia during WW2. Appointed first military attaché to Tito's post-war government in Belgrade. Military Intelligence including planning the ill-fated Suez campaign. Retired from the Army in 1959 but continued to work for both MI6 and MI5 for many years.

**Lord Erskine of Rerrick** (MI6 - see *Lobster* 27). Interesting profile of Erskine by Tim Kelsey in the *Independent* magazine (3.9.94). Recruited by MI6 in 1960 when posted to New Zealand as Comptroller in Governor-General's office. Later worked undercover as a photographer in Indonesia, Borneo and Aden.

**Viscountess Ruthven of Canberra**, Pamela Hore-Ruthven (MI6). Mother of Lord Gowrie, worked with Freya Stark in WW2, husband in SAS (*I*, 5.10.93).

**Capt. Peter Markham-Randall** (MI6) Posed as arms dealer in London and Amsterdam, 1970 (James Kelly, *Orders for the Captain?*, Kelly, reprinted 1986).

**Violet Gregson** (MI6). Aged 94, mother of the actor, Michael Gregson, 'worked for MI6 during WW2' (*ITV, This Is Your Life*, 29.6.94).

**Richard Hughes** - Far East correspondent for *The Times* and *Sunday Times*, fifties and sixties. Wrote for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*. According to his son (*ST*, 29.5.94), worked for MI6 when on Mercury News under editor Ian Fleming. Died, 1984.

**Graham Greene** (MI6) - All the recent biographies tell of his post-war work for MI6 and contacts with Alexander Korda and Maurice Oldfield in the Far East (See *DT*, 9.7.94).

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**Peggy Cockerton** (MI6), secretary, Special Liaison Centre 1948 (Tom Bower, *Red Web*, p. 111).

**Nora Dashwood**, (MI6) Assistant in SPC (Bower, p. 111).

**Riley Le May** (MI6). London 1921 (Bower, p. 13).

**George Berger** (MI6). Passport Control Officer Sweden, 1945 (Bower, p. 54).

**George Collier** (MI6). Taught Morse code to Baltic agents 1948 (Bower, p. 112).

**Mike Lykowski**, alias Mike Peters, (MI6). Liaison officer at Joint Centre, Germany, for operations in the Soviet Union, 1952 (Bower, p. 165).

**Cannon Tibbats** - Chaplain and official MI6 liaison officer at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, in the fifties (information from Robin Whittaker).

**Francis Toye**, **John Millias**, **Nicholas Everitt** and **Frederick de Valda** - all MI6 officers during WW1 (Intelligence and National Security, Vol.5, No.4, October 1990).

**Abrose Evans-Pritchard** - The Schiwer Institute in the United States claimed that Evans-Pritchard, who has been at the forefront of promoting the 'Whitewater' affair, 'made no secret of his close relations with the British Secret Intelligence Service, known as MI6'. A stringer in Latin America in the 80's and contributor to the *Economist*, later the *Daily Telegraph*, he admitted that his father was in MI6 during the war (*G*, 23.5.94).

**Patrick Seale**, one time senior journalist with the *Observer*, was alleged by Philby to have been recruited by him when Seale worked in the Middle East. Seale, who took over from Philby on the *Observer* in Beirut, strongly denied the accusation (*ST*, 4.9.94). Seale threatened legal action against Morris Riley's biography of Philby, *The Hidden Years*, which had only referred to 'rumours'.

**Michael Weighall** - Reuters correspondent in the fifties who on leaving Oxford was 'courted' by MI6. Accused by the Czechs in 1958 of working for British Intelligence. Now looking into details in his StB file in Prague (*G*, 3.9.94).

**Rodney Bond** (MI6). 1941 Crete, alleged model for James Bond (Frank McLynn, *Fitzroy Maclean*, John Murray, 1992, p. 74).

**Lady Lindsay of Dowhill**. Obit, *DT*, 4.11.93. Apparently Ian Fleming's model for 'Miss Money Penny' in the Bond books. Was she employed by the security services as one of the deb secretaries?

**Richard Comyns Carr** (MI6). Wife Barbara was a novelist who died 14.7.92, Obits. *G & T*, 4.8.92. Richard knew Philby and was sacked in 1951 (?) when allegations

concerning 'Third Man' arose. She wrote an autobiography, *Out of the Red into the Blue* (1960).

**Rodney Dennys** (MI6). Obits. *I&T*, 17.8.93. Resigned in 1957 after serving in Paris. The Times did not mention his intelligence career considering instead his role as a Herald Extraordinary and his interest in genealogy.

**Tony Brooks** (MI6/5). Profile of Brooks in SOE at time of D-Day (*S.Tel*, 29.5.94).

**Robert Cecil** - Foreign Office adviser to Menzies and MI6 at the end of the war. Very right-wing. Obits. *DT*. 3.3.94 & *I*. 2.3.94.

**Jimmy James** (MI6). Finance Director, 1950s.

**Malcolm Postgate** (MI6). 1950s, no further information (both private information).

**Peter Kemp** (MI6). Obit. *T*, 3.11.93. Like his autobiography, *Thorns of Memory*, 1990, the obituary failed to mention his work for MI6 after the war. His memorial service at Chelsea Old Church (*DT*, 1.12.93) was probably the last sighting of Britain's old imperial past and Buchanesque warriors of MI6 and SOE. The addresses were given by the MI6 musketeers - David Smiley, Hugh Astor and Julian Amery, with others in attendance such as Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker and Sir Peter Wilkinson from SOE days.

**Albert Hourani** (MI6 - see previous *Lobster* lists). Obits. *G & I*, January 1993. A typical insider background - Chatham House under Toynbee, intelligence at the British Middle East Office in Cairo during the war, director of the Middle East Centre at St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1958-1971.

**Sydney Hebblethwaite** (IRD). Senior official 1956 (*W. Scott Lucas, Divided We Stand*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1991, p. 132).

**Hubert P. Kos** (IRD). Retired from 'a shadowy department of the Foreign Office' (*DT*, 24.10.93) which was established in *Lobster* 22 to be IRD where in the early seventies he was part of a Special Editorial Unit, though, of course, he may have also belonged to MI6. Kos is currently one of the seven knights of the recently restored, after a lapse of four and half centuries, Grand Priory of the English Sovereign Military Order of Malta. Former MI6 officer, **Charles de Salis** was once a member. A 70-page official book on SMOM, *Blood of the Martyrs*, was published in 1992 (BASMOM, 60 Grove End Road, London NW8 9NH, £30.00. A fascinating historian's account for those who like arcane stuff, is *The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of The Temple*, by Malcolm Barber (Cambridge, 1993).

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*In the second in a regular series on people and organisations from the past, **Mike Hughes** traces the career of **SIR GEORGE MAKGILL AND THE GROUP WITH NO NAME.***

# Profile: Sir George Makgill

During the 1920's and 1930's the work of the British secret state was assisted by an unofficial, and extremely right-wing, network of organisations and private intelligence agencies. It was a confusing network and only now are some of the details being pieced together. Some of the central figures in this network - such as Admiral Reginald Hall [see *Lobster* 26] - are well known even if their contribution to state secrecy in the inter-war period is neglected or ignored. One man however has escaped attention, in spite of the fact that he may have hold the key to the creation and maintenance of this unofficial network.

Our knowledge of the network is still very sketchy. Most of these groups were attached to particular organisations like the British Empire Union, and ultimately co-ordinated by the Central Council of the Economic Leagues. There was, however, at least one private secret service group which maintained its independence while working close with the official secret state and the other private services. It was established and run by Sir George Makgill, a Scottish baronet, right-wing fringe politician and author of imperialist novels. Makgill's story illustrates the difficulty in piecing together any kind of picture of the operations of this network of unofficial groups, and its potential importance. But parts of the jigsaw can be completed by looking at the writings of one of his close associates.

If one man ever held a key to the complex interconnections between the Radical Right and the Secret State during this period it was John Baker White, the veteran anti-communist and anti-socialist activist. From leaving school at Malvern College in 1920 (when he was eighteen) his career involved many significant roles in the development of the secret state: freelance courier for Special Branch, member of the British Fascists, friend to the anti-Semitic campaigner Nesta Webster, adviser to MI5, MI10, the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, the Political Warfare Executive, Director of the Economic League for nineteen years and Publicity adviser for another twenty five, Conservative MP (Canterbury 1945-50) and chair of the Freedom Association in Kent.

In addition to the occasional publication of propagandist tracts, White published four important autobiographical books (*It's gone for good; The Big Lie, Sabotage is suspected and True Blue*). They are frustratingly imprecise books, and at times straightforwardly misleading. Perhaps this is only to be expected from a professional propagandist, writing about politically sensitive issues. However unless they completely fabricate, rather than merely distort the truth, then they reveal the

existence of two important and related, secret and private intelligence organisations that have so far more or less slipped through the parapolitical historian's net.

White claims in all the accounts of his early life to have begun his undercover investigations of "subversion" as an independent amateur. He began his surveillance in London and Cambridge, attending meetings of the recently formed Communist Party of Great Britain. In Cambridge he was fairly quickly confronted by a local activist - whom he calls "H" - who having established that White's interest in the Communist Party was malevolent, revealed that he too was a committed anti-communist working undercover. "H" immediately obtained for White an introduction to the man who ran the organisation for which he himself was working, whom he names as "Sir George McGill".

After a gruelling interview White was taken on by McGill. He was told that "H" would be his contact with the organisation, and that he was therefore to not establish too obvious a friendship with him. In none of White's accounts is this organisation, or "H" named. Even worse for the researcher is that, despite some tantalising descriptions of his activities and connections, there was at the time nobody called "Sir George McGill", never mind one answering the actual description given by White.

White in fact provides little personal detail about Sir George McGill, but fortunately just enough to identify him. According to White he died suddenly in 1926 - "just as he was bringing to fruition his plans to establish a voluntary organisation, O.M.S. - the Organisation for Maintaining Services" He was a member of the Caledonian Club, and "was a close personal friend of Sir Vernon Kell, the founder and first head of MI5". McGill, says White "....created at his own expense, a private counter subversive intelligence service that had one unique feature. Every man and woman working in it could be trusted." He contrasted it with official intelligence services which "....all over the world have to use men and women who are selling their own side for money, but he would have nothing to do with them. He put people into the revolutionary movement at the bottom and let them work their way up."

McGill's organisation concentrated on "....investigating not only all forms of subversion, including communism, but also the international traffic in drugs and the traffic in women and children". But, he says, McGill "....also devoted a considerable

amount of time to unmasking the cult of evil of which Aleister Crowley, alias "The Beast", was the centre". Drawing together White's autobiographical accounts it also possible to piece together a rough sketch of how McGill's group organisation worked. Its members may well have been as trustworthy as White claimed, but "McGill" left nothing to chance and it operated a cell structure. Thus White himself claims only to have been aware of that part of the organisation of which he was a member and leader which used the name "Section D".

White says that he could not "pretend to know what [McGill's] contacts with official departments were". However in addition to McGill's friendship with Vernon Kell, White says "I discovered some years later that he could always see the Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet when ever he wished and at short notice". Elsewhere he makes it clear that Churchill was also aware of and impressed by the McGill's work.

If this was the case then McGill was in close contact with three of the most powerful figures in the Intelligence Community during the early twenties and in fact throughout the inter-war years: Vernon Kell, Churchill, and Sir Maurice Hankey.

There are two immediately disturbing problems with White's story.

- 1: The reference to the Organisation for Maintaining Services, would seem inescapably to point to the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies. Is this a slip? Are they Different Groups? If it is a slip, and White is telling us that the O.M.S. was in fact McGill's brainchild then there are still serious problems. There are several accounts of the formation of the OMS, none of which mention McGill.
- 2: Perhaps more difficult than this is the fact that it is possible to say with a considerable amount of confidence that there was no Sir George McGill in the early 1920's. None of the standard and comprehensive directories list one, *Who's Who* or *Whittaker's* for example. This is, understandably a potentially fatal flaw in White's account. Why, when he finally relinquishes code letters for the mastermind of this secret intelligence set up, does he use a none existent title? Was Sir George a phantom, and the existence of his group a fiction?

Fortunately there is convincing evidence of someone who not only fits White's description, but was also moving in the political circles you would expect of the McGill described by White. That man was

however not Sir George "McGill" but Sir George Makgill.

I stumbled across him while researching the early history of the Economic League and was already interested in "McGill", but unclear about his significance in relation to the League or even where to begin to track him down. I was also interested in a number of other groups that played key roles in the formation and early days of the Economic League and had asked some one to check them out for me in a contemporary London directory.

When a "Sir George Makgill"'s name cropped up in relation to two of them it seemed too good to be true. Yet in fact further investigations showed that Makgill could hardly be anyone other than John Baker White's "McGill".

Born in 1868, Makgill died in October 1926 at the age of 57. He was the eldest son of Sir John Makgill, tenth baronet, and Margaret Isabella Haldane, half sister to Lord Haldane. On the death of his father Makgill registered his claim to the lapsed family Scottish title of Viscount Oxfuird. Though he never gained the title, his heirs have. He married a New Zealander, Frances Elizabeth Grant and they had two sons and two daughters. His eldest son's wife, Esther, went on to create the Women's Section of Moseley's British Union of Fascists. According to Makgill's *Times* obituary (20/10/26): "He was educated privately, and became known as a writer of novels, articles, and stories, chiefly of colonial life. In what is, perhaps, the best of his novels "Blacklaw", which appeared early in 1914, he gives a vivid picture of a Scottish peer converted to an almost fanatical methodism, handing over his property to a missionary society, and carrying off his five young children to New Zealand, there to lead a simple, Christian, patriarchal life." But his obituary also makes reference to his "association" with the ANTI GERMAN UNION during the great war: "In June 1915, he raised the question whether Sir George Cassel and Sir Edgar Speyer, having been born out of the British Dominions and not of English parents were capable of being members of the Privy Council. In the following December the Court of King's Bench (the Lord Chief Justice and justices Avory and Lush) delivered judgement, directing the orders nisi obtained by Sir George Makgill to be discharged, on the grounds that the respondents, having been naturalized under the Act of 1870, were capable of being Privy Councillors when they were respectively appointed."

The Anti German Union was in fact the earliest manifestation of the British Empire Union from which emerged the Economic League. That Sir George Makgill was active

within this complex network of inter-related organisations is beyond doubt. In the London telephone directory for 1917 he is named as the Honorary Secretary of the British Empire Union based at 346 Strand Walk, also the address of the diehard Tories own newspaper, *The Morning Post*. In 1918 the "business secretary" of the British Empire Union was listed as Reginald Wilson, later associated with National Propaganda (an early name for the Economic League). Makgill's name was also, in the same years, given as General Secretary of the British Empire Producers' Organisation.

The British Empire Union was an active campaigning organisation with, by the end of the Great War, 50 Branches and possibly 10,000 members. These branches organised attacks on pacifist meetings. After the armistice it continued to exist, making communism and socialism its primary target. As a part of its strategy it organised its own network of "special agencies" to gather intelligence on the Left. Undoubtedly it was this network which Baker White describes, and his "Section D" was one of those "agencies". A further link with this diehard Tory and violently anti-socialist network is suggested by an entry in *The Times* for 17 December 1920, in which it is announced the Makgill is standing as a People's League candidate in an Parliamentary election the East Leyton. Makgill is described as the People's League's vice chairman.

John Baker White implies that when "McGill" died in 1926 his organisation died with him. White himself claims not to have had any contact with any other sections of it, and that no one contacted him with a view to perpetuating it. The only evidence he offers to support the idea that there was more to the organisation than his particular section/cell is his discovery of two colleagues in Military Intelligence, presumably MI10, during the Second World War who had also worked for "McGill". After McGill's death Section D, the cell run by White since "H"'s death chose to continue operating, as "an independent self-financing organisation of dedicated men and women". According to his account in this form it continued to use the name "Section D" and operated until the outbreak of the Second World War. The British Empire Union's "Section D" which was associated with White really consisted of two groups: that which worked for Makgill, and the later independent organisation.

White's explanation of the origins of Section D is not as clear as it could be. In *The Big Lie* he says that he formed it together with an un-named "tough middle aged man" with whom he fallen into conversation after a

CPGB meeting they had both attended at the "Grove" pub in West London 1923. White's companion had heckled at the meeting and over a drinks they hatched the idea of the group which became Section D, and they agreed to meet the following day to set the ball rolling. "By 1926" he says "we had built up a group of men and women dedicated to fighting communism from the inside". In this account, White describes Section D as "a mixed lot. Engine Driver, retired policeman, skilled engineer, a university student ["H"] and a farmer, both of whom were killed in mysterious circumstances, shipping agent, society girl, economist, soldier and others".

However, the story of the origins of Section D he offers in the much later *True Blue* does not easily fit with the story he offers in the earlier book. According to this it was only after "H"'s death that he was given greater responsibility in the organisation, "and was now running my own group, known as Section D". But whether John Baker White created or inherited Section D he clearly claims to have been running it after "H"'s death, some time between 1923 and the late summer of 1926.

From White's fragmentary accounts of Section D it is possible to build up some sort of battle order and identify some of its operations and targets. These suggest, for the time, a sophisticated organisation with a significant role within the developing secret state. Amongst those who were in Section D from the beginning:

"H" It was "H" who confronted JBW about his true purpose in attending CPGB meetings in Cambridge, after a CPGB meeting addressed by C.P. Dutt, on the "Struggle of the Indian Masses". Makgill "also devoted a considerable amount of time to unmasking the cult of evil of which Aleister Crowley, alias "the Beast", was the centre". White only discovered after "H"'s death, when he was sorting through the dead man's papers at the request of Makgill, that he had been involved in this work. "What I did not know until later when, at his father's and McGill's request, I had been through his papers was that he had uncovered a blackmail plot, involving two well known politicians, connected with Crowley's activities in the island of Cefalu". JBW says that he is convinced that an international gang of blackmailers were responsible for "H"'s death.

From White's descriptions of "H" we can establish the following details:

\* "In Name, Manner and dress he ["H"] was the complete younger son of a peer", which he was. He was a "glib-tongued young man with the pale, rather stupid face crowned with untidy fair hair.....".

\* "H" did most of the talking at the meeting: "His oration was an amazing mixture of sedition, venom, hatred for his own class and unsound economics". Though he was not the secretary of the "local", White and "H" became friends, until the latter's untimely death in, what White alleged, were suspicious circumstances. On the night of his death "H" had dined with White at the "Troadero Grill" in London before returning by motorcycle to Cambridge. The following morning "workmen cycling to work in the half light" found his body lying by the roadside, on the Bishop Stortford to Newport Road with his motorbike "a twisted mass of metal lying in the ditch". White recalls that the inquest found that "he had taken the corner too fast in the dark, crashed and broken his neck". White was not convinced by the inquest. He had "ridden hundreds of miles on the back of his motor cycle and knew him to be a magnificent and very careful driver, no the sort of man who takes corners too fast on a road he knew like the back of his hand". Two months after the inquest, White's suspicions were increased when he discovered the full extent of "H"'s work for Makgill. At the "Troadero" on the night of his death "H" had been "full of plans for a visit to Paris to meet some of the leading French Communists". However in addition to this undercover anti-communist activity White subsequently found out "how deep H. had been, not in communism but in the traffic in women and drugs". It is possible to establish that "H" died some time between 1923 and July 1926, where and how he died. But who was he?

ASHBY PRITT Worked in the IRA during the troubles 1919-20, at one time acting as a courier for Michael Collins. Died, after "H", in a motor cycle accident on the York to Stockton Road in September 1929, three weeks after being shot at. As in the case of "H", White did not believe that the inquest was correct in deciding that it was an accident. Pritt was according to White "a good-looking young Irishman who was also interested in Political intelligence", whom he had met around 1923. From his account it is possible to glean the following claims for him:

\* "After the truce was signed in Ireland and the Free State government set up he worked for that Government's intelligence service inside the I.R.A., and the information he collected played an important part in rounding up the rebels".  
\* One of his main contributions to this intelligence work was in taking photographs of "many of the important leaders". He was able to do this by providing them with snaps of them posing with revolvers or rifles to give to their girl friends and wives.  
\* "Ashby spent most of his time in the

North, as he had a job in York".

\* He continued collecting information on the IRA exiles in Britain but concentrated on gathering information on the "traffic in women and drugs, which at that time was quite considerable in Hull and Sunderland".

\* He was "one man working on his own", though he met White periodically in London, "generally on his way to or from Paris, Dunkirk, Marseilles or Paris".

\* Most of the information he collected "went to the League of Nations' Special Commission in Geneva" and contributed to the breaking up of several gangs".

\* Eventually Ashby decided to settle down, he married "taking a farm outside York". Soon afterwards his wife wrote to tell White of Pritt's death, as a result of a motorcycle accident. Like "H" he had been found dead on the side of a road "on which he travelled nearly every day" with "the twisted remains of his motor cycle in the ditch".

ROSE "....An elderly lady of independent means with an inside knowledge of the then flourishing Communist Sunday School Movement". Rose died naturally before WWII, but what is perhaps interesting about specialism in Sunday Schools is the degree to which the Economic League (or rather its fore-runner, National Propaganda) was also interested in the activities of these Sunday Schools. It is extremely likely that "Rose" was Rotha Linton Orman, who died in 1935 and who was a founder of the British Fascists and close friend of Baker White and his family.

TED "....A retired mining engineer who had made enough money in Australia and Canada to live in modest comfort. He was in close touch with Percy Gladding and other top communists working inside the the Engineers' Union...". He died before the Second World War.

BILL "....A loco man who drove expresses out of Kings Cross", was alive (and, of course, retired) in 1970.

MAX "The English Max", "a naturalist who later entered government service". According to White Max died, "much too young", in 1968. It is impossible not to draw the conclusion that this Max was none other than Maxwell Knight, who became an MI5 Officer in April 1925 while serving as the British Fascists Chief of Intelligence. He combined these two posts for two years.

VALERIE "After months of patient plodding got a job in Arcos, the soviet trading organisation later raided by the police". Eventually "...worn out and suffering from consumption, died during the Second World War". The Arcos raid was one of the most significant political moves against links with USSR in the 1920's.

Its ramifications for British intelligence and diplomacy were far reaching but the source of the original information used to justify the raid has never been clearly identified. Economic League founder Admiral Blinker Hall was definitely involved, and this is powerful circumstantial evidence to suggest that the Section D agent named Valerie could have played a critical role.

HOPS was a retired CSM in Royal Signals, "specialised in red propaganda in the forces" died after WWII.

According to White on "McGill"'s death his section had determined to continue to function, on a self-financing basis. This it did until the outbreak of the Second World War, during which a number of its members became involved in resistance movements. In his accounts of the activities of the post-Makgill Section D, White concentrates on investigations into alleged sabotage on marine shipping and particularly two cases which in which he was involved - fires on board the Phillipar and the L'Atlantique.

YVES A recent Sorbonne graduate working on Le Matin in Paris. Still working as a journalist in 1970.

MAX A "wagon-lit" conductor between Paris and Geneva", shot by the Gestapo.

FINNEY, active around Portsmouth and Bordeaux. Died in in 1955? He worked with JBW on investigation into suspicious fire on French Liner the Georges Phillipar and then on L'Atlantique in 1933.

GEORGES PIKARD A Parisian member of the team which investigated the fires on the Phillipar and L'Atlantique team, later shot by the Gestapo.

MICK A member of the L'Atlantique team who was arrested and then operated from Brussels. White subsequently lost contact with him.

F. W. MEMORY, *Daily Telegraph* journalist involved in the L'Atlantique investigation.

GEORGE MARTELLI, *Morning Post* correspondent in Paris, and author who helped with L'Atlantique investigation.

IRMGARD A "good looking and highly attractive young woman" pen pal.

TRUDI, pen pal door-to-door saleswoman of sewing machines in garrison towns, Essen.

UNKNOWN Costing clerk in Krupps

UNKNOWN "One of the men who worked for him (Makgill) died gallantly in Spain fighting in the International Brigade He went there to get vital information on the participation of Soviet Russia and the working of OGPU in Republican territory".

D23 "died under torture in Gestapo headquarters in Dusseldorf".

D17 "killed in Essen by a British bomb" "Both (D23 & D17) were German patriots who loathed Nazism as an evil thing".

D19 British liason officer with French Resistance, "died in a running battle with Darnand's Millice".

Conclusion White's frustratingly fragmentary and, perhaps deliberately inaccurate, accounts of his own activities and "McGill"'s organisation suggest much closer links between many of the organisation which have attracted the attention of historians of the radical right and parapoliticians during the 1920's. Even a cautious analysis of what White wrote about it and its members over the course of thirty years must suggest that Section D provided a functional link between MI5, the Economic League, British Empire Union, the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies and also (through both White and Maxwell Knight) with the British Fascists and (through White) with the organised anti-semitism and anti-socialism of Nesta Webster. The outside possibility, of course, remains that "McGill" and "Section D" was a fiction created and maintained by White. That this is unlikely to be the case is however underlined by the fate of Makgill's personal papers. After discussing what I presumed to be the identity of the real "McGill" with fellow researcher John Hope he undertook what we expected would be the hopeless task of tracking down any of Makgill's surviving papers. We were, however, surprised to discover from his family that his papers had been preserved. Unfortunately, he had deemed them to be so sensitive and potentially dangerous that on his death he had them entrusted to the care of the Vatican.

Further reading:

John Baker White - *True Blue*, Muller, London, 1970 *Sabotage is Suspected*, Evans Bros, London, 1957 *Its gone for Good*, Vacher & Sons, London, 1941.

John Hope, British Fascism and the State 1917-1927, in *Labour History Review*, Vol 57, No 3, Winter 1992.

Panikos Panayi The British Empire Union in the First World War, in *The Politics of Marginality*, Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (Ed), Frank Cass, London, 1990.

I have not so far been able to track down any of Makgill's own books (they are not available through inter-library loans): *Outside and Overseas*, Methuen & Co, London 1903; *Blacklaw*, Methuen & Co, London, 1914; *Felons*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1915 He also published under the pseudonym "Victor Waite" *Cross Tails*, Methuen & Co., London, 1898



*"M" listens into MI6 transmissions, while Peter Newell seeks information on an old Cold War 'front' organisation*

Despite the ending of the Cold War the activities of the world's intelligence agencies have not diminished. Analysis of their radio traffic (i.e. messages sent to agents, illegals etc.) would merely indicate that there has been a change in emphasis rather than the expected dramatic decline. In fact, new agencies, as yet unidentified, have begun operations. Monitoring such communications is relatively easy - agents themselves, of necessity, using unsophisticated receiving equipment, usually of a domestic, commercial type.

ENIGMA is an organisation set up in 1993 which publishes a newsletter devoted to what are popularly known as 'numbers stations' and related esoteric denizens of the short wave bands most of which officially do not exist. It contains a wealth of material giving the latest schedules and theories relating to this long-neglected aspect of communications. Such transmissions have existed since the 1940's and yet only very recently has any serious effort been made to monitor and investigate these signals by a non-official body.

As all these signals (both voice and morse) are heavily encrypted there is little point in attempting to decode them, even by government agencies. However, we can still glean considerable information by means of traffic analysis and direction finding techniques. By noting their general habits (including errors) we can often determine the activity levels of particular agents and the number of agents/cells being served by a particular agency. Sometimes traffic will correlate with known world events. Some of these transmissions are more inscrutable than others; one of these being MI6's voice operation, 'The Lincolnshire Poacher', so named for its use of the old folk song as its tuning signal.

At present this operates for three-quarters of an hour, on the hour, from 10.00 a.m. to 11.00 p.m. daily, on three of several frequencies simultaneously, sending out blocks of 250 five figure groups. Gongs are sounded at the beginning and end of each message. Although in the past, transmissions have emanated from Creslow, Bucks, the majority now appear to be transmitted from RAF facilities in Cyprus - probably Akrotiri Lake. A second service - 'Cherry Ripe' - again using three parallel channels, probably originates in the Far East. It arose at the same time as the removal of British facilities at Hong Kong and Australia to Taiwan.

Of all the Number Stations the only ones which are consistently jammed are MI6 and certain CIA transmissions. This jamming is probably Middle Eastern in origin. A major result of the Czechoslovak 'velvet revolution' was the virtual hijacking

of their external intelligence service, the StB, by the British. Although the Czechs have their own independent communications system, their major network, OLX (sending in Czech and morse 23 hours daily, again on three parallel frequencies), is effectively the East European arm of MI6, having been formerly rumoured to be the 'British arm of the KGB'! It is the most active and predictable of all the Numbers Stations, and potentially controls about forty agents/cells.

Due to its use of encrypted agents ID's, we cannot determine how many agents are controlled by The Lincolnshire Poacher as much of this traffic will be 'dummy' whether jammed or not. It would appear that it serves the Middle East and former Soviet territories, whilst OLX specialises in East European states. It is interesting to note that the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (former KGB) and GRU activity has also increased over the past few years, but not to the extent of MI6's level. Of all the networks, the Israeli MOSSAD is by far the most extensive.

There is still much to learn about the thirty-odd communications networks in Europe which are regularly active (including the CIA from Barford St. John, Oxfordshire) and we hope that this brief introduction will wet your appetite. Some of these networks do not fit into the standard 'messages for agents' pattern and clearly have other, even more arcane purposes, as yet undiscovered.

If you would like to know more about the elusive 'Gravel Voice', the neurotic 'Ready, ready!', the 'Swedish Rhapsody' child, the unforgettable 'Tyrolean Music Station' with its sinister cryptic phrases, the 'Russian Men', 'Bulgarian Bette', 'Cynthia from Langley', the 'Jazz Player', 'Czech drums and trumpets' the 'Two day Russian Coup Wonder' (British?), the brisk military German lady of the 'Three Note Oddity', the unearthly gongs of the Stasi, and many more .... or if you feel you could contribute to our newsletter, please write for a free copy to:

ENGIMA.  
c/o Bradford Resource Centre,  
31 Manor Row,  
Bradford.  
West Yorkshire.  
BD1 4PS.



During the 1960s, I was employed by the Post Office and was, therefore, a member of the then Union of Post Office Workers (UPW). For a number of years, I was a regular contributor to the Union's official journal, *The Post*, in which I wrote a fortnightly column under the nom-de-plume of 'Bellman'. I also wrote occasional articles in *The Post*, and other Union journals, under my own name. I was not, however, particularly well-known in the UPW; and no one, except the editor of *The Post* and one or two officials of the Union, including the research officer, Edgar Hardcastle, knew that I was 'Bellman'.

In 1964, I received a letter, quite 'out of the blue', inviting me to a week-long 'school' at Margate, under the auspices of an organisation calling itself the International Centre of Free Trade Unionists in Exile (ICFTUE). I was somewhat surprised, particularly as no one in the UPW appeared to have heard the ICFTUE. Nevertheless, I was advised by the editor of *The Post*, Norman Stagg, to accept the invitation to attend. Also surprisingly, the Postmaster (or one of his officials) at the South West London District Office, where I was employed, granted me a special unpaid leave for the week. The ICFTUE paid all my travelling expenses, hotel bill, including food, and one week's wages.

My recollections of the school are rather hazy. It was, however, well organised, with lectures by a number of people, including one from, I believe, the National Union of Mineworkers. Also involved, officially or otherwise, I cannot recall, were two members of an organisation called the Industrial Research and Information Services (IRIS), Andy McKeown and Dave Sharratt. Almost all the participants, however, of whom there were about 30 or 40, were exiles from Eastern Europe. During the 'school', a group photograph was taken of us; but I do not know if it was ever published in any journal. Why I was invited seems to me, even now, something of a mystery. Or who gave ICFTUE my name and address.

I have never heard any more from the ICFTUE; but I have occasionally wondered who they were, and who financed them. Some time ago I mentioned the ICFTUE to a journalist acquaintance; and he said that they once held a meeting at the House of Commons, although he cannot remember when or with whom.

The only other information I have is a pamphlet published by the ICFTUE. It has no date, although from the subject matter it is obviously 1966. Nor does it give any address. It was, however, printed by Printing Office Excelsior, Somersstrat 22, Antwerp. It is entitled *Dialogue or Contradiction: Facts and Opinions*. The author

is not named. It is well produced; it is in English, and the English is good, although it is fairly obvious that the writer is not English, but probably East European.

The pamphlet deals entirely with conditions within the then Communist countries, including the Soviet Union and China, Cocom, and relations between Trade Unionists affiliated to the International Confederation of Free trade Unions (ICFTU) and the pro-Communist World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). The tone is, to say the least, extremely anti-Communist. The pamphlet does, however, report 'a study conference held in Zeezicht, near Ostend, Belgium, from March 27th to April 2nd, 1966', organised by the ICFTU. About 30 people took part, including 'representatives' from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Rumania, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. Also represented were members of the French Force Ouvriere, the Belgium General Federation of Labour and a number of other Western European union centres, including our own TUC and a Mr MacLeman, regional secretary of the Plumbing Trades Union of Great Britain. Mr Charles Ford, Assistant Secretary of the Trade Union Consultative Committee for Co-operation and Economic Development (OCED) also attended. The lectures were given by Prof. R. Lowenthal of the Free University of Berlin, M. Gamarnikow, A. Stroer, R. Bothereau, former general secretary of Force Ouvriere, and lastly, Herman Patteet, head of the Administrative Department of the ICFTU.

The pamphlet mentions a previous 'school' organised by the ICFTUE, in Brighton, in 1965 (but not the one I attend in Margate in 1964). It also states that the ICFTUE had, in 1966, existed for 'more than a decade' - since before 1956.

Last year, I decided that I would like to find out more about this organisation in general and, if possible, the 'school' I attend in 1964 in particular.

On 17 November 1993, I wrote to the International Confederation of Free Trade unions in Brussels, Belgium, giving them some of the above information (but not mentioning the pamphlet, which I did not have at the time), and asking them if they could provide me with any information on the ICFTUE, or tell me where I could get such information. On 21 December 1993, Mr Stephen K. Pursey, head of the Economic and Social Policy Department of the ICFTU replied by saying that 'It is indeed interesting to hear from a dedicated trade unionist like you and to note that you continue being interested in the international trade union movement' - all of which was very nice! He then said that to

provide me with the reference I require he would need a bit of researching; and that, after the New Year, he hoped to look into the questions I had raised. As I had not heard from him, I wrote to him again on 14 February, thanking him for his letter of the previous December, and asking him if he any information. As I did not receive a reply from Mr Pursey, I wrote again on 18 April 1994. Mr Pursey had not replied.

On 24 February 1994 I wrote a similar letter to the International department of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) in Washington, with whom I had corresponded in the past. I have not received a reply from the AFL-CIO either. On 10 June, I wrote to Mr Friso, the General Secretary of the ICFTU, at their headquarters in Brussels; but I have not received a reply from him. Obviously, the officials of the ICFTU have no intention of answering questions on the ICFTUE, of which they, presumably, know quite a lot.

On 3 May 1994, I wrote to our own Trade Union Congress (TUC), requesting any information that they might have on the ICFTUE. On 8 July, Mr M. Walsh, secretary of the TUC International Department, replied saying that the ICFTUE 'no longer existed' and that he could not find any reference to it in the TUC files. He did say that the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions did maintain contacts with such groups, 'and it may be that the TUC was involved in some of the contacts'.

And that is all, to date, that I have on the International Centre of Free Trade Unionists in Exile. It is obvious that not a lot is known about them; but it is also obvious that those who do know, such as the ICFTU in Brussels and, possibly, the TUC, are reluctant to discuss the matter. The more that I am 'fobbed off', the more determined I am to try and find out about the ICFTUE in general, and the 'school' I attended in 1964, in particular. For example, does any one exist which actually has the complete files of the ICFTUE in their possession? And where?

If you can provide me with at least some information, I would appreciate it; if not, maybe you can pass this on to someone who may be able to help.

[The ICFTUE was supported in the early 50s by the Nouvelles Equipes Internationales Union of Christian Democrats, a pressure group in the European movement from whom it presumably received CIA funds. Through the NEI it was linked to the British League of European Freedoms. SD]

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\* see Special Offer (page 3)

Unfortunately, Robin Ramsay has not allowed me access to back copies of *Lobster*. Despite this setback, I will supply photocopies of all back issues. The first eight issues were produced in A5 format. These were the naive beginnings of *Lobster* and some of the material no longer stands up; we have moved on from then. However, there are good articles and a mass of interesting snippets which I had largely forgotten about.

Issues 1 to 10 cost £1.25 each (UK); £2.00 (USA/Canada/Australasia and Europe)

11 to 28 (except 19, which is double the price) are £2.25 each (UK); £3.00 (US/Canada/Australasia and Europe)

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The prices include postage.

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- 6 *Secret Societies and MacGregor*, part 2; *Oswald in Mexico*; The Round Table; Reading Italy; *Who's Afraid of the KGB?* 36 pages, 1984.
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- 16 *Rothschild, the right, the far-right and the Fifth Man*; death of Hilda Murrel; French Vendetta - the Rainbow Warrior to the Iranian hostages; KAL 007; Ken Livingstone's questions; Philby names names; overthrowing Gough Whitlam. 40 pages; 1988.
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## Special Issue

*A Who's Who of the British Secret State*, compiled by Stephen Dorril. 110 pages, 1850 (approx) names and brief biographies. (A number of these were included in Nos 9 and 10.)