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The Clandestine Caucus

Anti-socialist campaigns and operations in the British Labour movement since 1945

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Introduction

Some of this material has appeared before. Part of the section on Common Cause and IRIS appeared in *Lobster* 19; much of the discussion of the 'communist threat' in *Lobster* 24; some sections on the Gaitskellites and the Congress for Cultural Freedom appeared in *Smear!*; and a little piece on the post WW1 corporatists dates back as far as *Lobster* 12 in 1986. This is unavoidable: in this kind of research something new is always turning up and a new synthesis becomes possible.

In his book on the 1984 miners' strike, *The Enemy Within*, Seamus Milne refers on p. 163 to 'the obscure right-wing trade-union caucusing body, "Mainstream".' Mainstream *is* obscure, but it is the latest expression of an anti-socialist tradition in the British labour movement now dating back nearly fifty years. Mainstream – an organisation and a newsletter of the same name – was sponsored by, among others, Bill Jordan, erstwhile president of the AEU. The Labour weekly *Tribune* reported on 27 January 1995, in its News in Brief section on page 3, that Jordan had become general secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). Jordan's appointment to this position represents the coming together of two strands in post-war clandestine politics: the ICFTU, one of the CIA's most important post-war, anti-socialist operations in cold war Europe, and the AEU which, in its previous incarnation as the AEU, has been at the heart of anti-socialist campaigns, caucuses and clandestine operations in British trade unions since the war. This essay is about those operations. (That *Tribune* thought the Jordan story worthy of just one line on page 3 shows how little this area is understood in Britain – even on the left.)

Debts

I am grateful to:

- John Booth for many years of conversation in this field (and much material)

- Mike Mosbacher and Joan Keating for access to their theses
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- Brian Crozier for being so (relatively) candid in his memoir and providing so many clues
- Richard Fletcher for his pioneering research in the 1970s, without which none of this would have been possible.

Part 1

Clearing the ground: the unions, socialism and the state

A surprising number of Labour Party members believe that it was once a socialist party, began as a socialist party, and was then seduced from the golden pathway. But the view of the Labour Party as originally socialist is just wrong. The history of Britain's union and labour movement is one of continuous conflict between socialist and anti-socialist wings; and within that conflict the bit of the story that is usually not told is that describing the relationship between the anti-socialist section of the labour movement and British and U.S. capital and their states.

The conflict between the anti- and pro-socialist wings of the labour movement sharpened markedly after the 1918 Bolshevik revolution and the subsequent formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Although we have surprisingly little information on the turbulent years between 1918 and 1926, and, in particular, on the British Right's preparation to meet the Bolshevik 'threat',¹ we know that much of the early effort was put into groups aimed at the exploitation of so-called 'patriotic labour', such as the British

Please note: details of the books and articles cited in these footnotes are in the bibliography at the end of the essay, indexed by author's surname.

¹ Or am I being naive to be surprised that the one period in British twentieth history when there may have been something like a pre-revolutionary climate seems under researched? Stephen White, in 1975, offered a glimpse of a dense hinterland of largely short-lived parties and groups forming on the right in Britain in this period. See Stephen White, 'Ideological Hegemony and Political Control: the sociology of anti-Bolshevism 1918-1920' in *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, No. 98, June 1975. See also Webber 1987 and John Hope's 'Fascism, the Security Service and the Curious Career of Maxwell Knight and James McGuirk Hughes' in *Lobster* 22.

Workers League.²

World War 1 produced the modern British state – the Cabinet Office etc. – and mobilisation: things were run from the centre and new relationships were formed.

By the end of 1919, a new form of political activity was growing up, as yet only half understood, but radically different from the pre-war system . . . but there now existed formal, powerful, employers' institutions, a fully fledged Ministry of Labour, and a TUC [Trades Union Congress] increasingly accustomed to dealing in the political arena, wedded to a major political party which, almost alone in Europe, encompassed the majority of the non-Conservative working class. At the same time, the government's apparatus for manipulating public opinion had grown inordinately, enabling it – on its own estimate – to confront the spectre of Bolshevism and survive. Lloyd George himself, searching always for a middle way in politics, had shifted away from Liberal radicalism towards a corporatism best described as the creation in Parliamentary politics of a *staatspartei*, composed of Liberals and mainstream Conservatives (leaving a fringe right wing and a much larger, but powerless Labour Left); complemented in industrial politics by a triangular collaboration in which employers' organisations and TUC should make themselves representative of their members and in return receive recognition as estates by government.'³

The British Commonwealth Union, the FBI (Federation of British Industry, precursor of today's CBI) and the other predominantly Midlands manufacturing group, the National Union of Manufacturers, were set up during the first World War and they mark the origins of the British corporate movement.⁴ One of the leading figures of the group, Sir Dudley Docker, envisaged

a completely integrated society and economy in which industry would have its organisation of workers and management, the two sets of organisations united by peak federations and all finally capped by a great national forum of workers and managers and employers,

² See, for example. 'In The Excess of Their Patriotism: the National Party and Threats of Subversion' by Chris Wrigley in Wrigley (ed.). Of the groups which appeared in this period only the Economic League survived into Mrs Thatcher's era.

³ Middlemas p. 151.

⁴ This mirrored what was happening elsewhere in Europe, notably Germany and Italy. See, for example, Scott Newton's 'The economic background to appeasement and the search for Anglo-German détente before and during World War 2', in *Lobster* 20.

embraced by the protection of an Imperial Tariff.⁵

Another of the corporatist groups financed by Midlands industrialists, the British Commonwealth Union (BCU), led by the Birmingham MP, Sir Patrick Hannon, began funding MPs to form an Industrial Group in Parliament. The first 11 candidates were subsidised by the BCU in the 1918 election. By 1924 the group in parliament consisted of 105 (mostly Tory) members. Hannon's Industrial Group chiefly wanted government protection of British industry against foreign competition, but, to quote Hannon, they also 'wanted the largest measure of freedom in the relationship between capital and labour and the least state intervention possible.'⁶

These early corporatist dreams failed for a number of reasons. Employer organisations were none too happy at the idea of the trade unions as some kind of partners.⁷ And vice versa. Too much was being expected; it was too big a change, happening too quickly. In any case, the corporatists among the members of the Federation of British Industry (FBI) were a minority strand in the thinking of the Tory Party and British industrial capital; and even among the corporatists there were divisions.⁸

Frank Longstreth called this network – of BCU, Industrial Group, FBI and other employer propaganda groups of the period, such as the Economic League – the Preference Imperialists, and noted their links to the earlier Midlands manufacturing-based Tariff Reform League.⁹ As Longstreth suggested, it is possible to view the British economy since 1900 as a protracted struggle between British manufacturing (domestic capital) and the City of London (international finance capital), with the City in control for most of the century.¹⁰ Oswald Mosley's movement in the 1930s was, in effect, the

⁵ Blank p. 14

⁶ Farr, thesis, p. 179. See also Wrigley, 'In The Excess...' pp. 108 and 9, and Terence Rodgers, 'Sir Allan Smith, the Industrial Group and the Politics of Unemployment 1919-24' in Davenport-Hines (ed.).

⁷ Davenport-Hines (ed) pp. 222-5

⁸ Patrick Hannon's abortive attempt to create an Industrial Group of MPs and union leaders using the British Commonwealth Union is in Barbara Lee Farr's thesis. Her information came from the Hannon papers in the House of Lords. I was alerted to this remarkable piece of work by John Hope. Rodgers, in note 6, does not cite Farr's work and gives slightly different figures for the size of the Industrial Group of MPs, while quoting the same source, namely the Hannon papers. See his footnotes 13 and 16. Hannon's obituary appeared in *The Times*, 11 January 1963.

⁹ Frank Longstreth, 'The City, Industry and the State' in Crouch (ed.)

¹⁰ See, for example, Newton and Porter.

perverted continuation of the social imperialism of an earlier generation of industrialists, supporting imperial autarchy, social reform, conversion from a bankers' to a producers' economy, protectionism, public control of credit, and the suppression of the class struggle through the state.¹¹

Although the great schemes of corporatism failed, the co-operation between the state and the trade unions which began during the First World War, continued after the General Strike and was deepened by the first two Labour governments.¹² Peter Weiler quotes Ernest Bevin's view in the 1930s that that the TUC had 'virtually become an integral part of the State, its views and voice upon every subject, international and domestic, heard and heeded.'¹³ This statement of Bevin's is an exaggeration: no doubt the TUC's views were heard; but heeded?

The powers-that-be set about educating and socialising these new leaders. In 1938, for example, one of the most important of the trade union leaders, Ernest Bevin, with his wife, was taken off on a tour of the empire, at the behest of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.¹⁴ Trade union leaders they might be, seeking justice and a better deal for the British worker, but they remained patriots and imperialists for the most part, and not socialists. The gentlemen (mostly men) of the TUC did not dream – publicly or secretly – of taking over British capitalism, or of destroying the British empire. The institutional links with the British state begun before World War 2 were solidified enormously by the War. The trade unions were in the national coalition government, and some of their leaders were Ministers of the Crown – very important people.

After the war

In the immediate post-war period the TUC was dominated by what Lewis Minkin called a 'praetorian guard' against the left: Arthur Deakin of the Transport Workers, Will Lawther of the Mineworkers and Tom Williamson of the General and Municipal. Minkin describes in detail how this trio ran the what he calls 'an unprecedented period of "platform" dominance at Party conference';¹⁵ but noted that this alliance was defensive in nature and saw a communist conspiracy behind all criticism.

¹¹ Longstreth p. 171.

¹² This is a major theme of the Alan Bulloch biography of Ernest Bevin, for example.

¹³ Weiler p. 19.

¹⁴ I discussed this in *Lobster* 28, p. 11.

¹⁵ Minkin, *Contentious Alliance*, p. 83

The political beliefs of the leaders of trade unions in this period was mixed. Some were supporters of Moral Rearmament (MRA). At the 1947 MRA World Assembly at Caux-sur-Martreux in France, delegates from Britain included E. G. Gooch MP, President of the Agricultural Workers. An MRA press release on 15 October, 1947 noted that signatories to a message of support for the Caux assembly included trade union leaders Andrew Naesmith, (General Secretary of the Amalgamated Weavers' Association), G. H. Bagnall (TUC General Council representative; former General Secretary of the National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers), George Chester (General Secretary of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives), W. B. Beard and J. W. Stephenson (Chair of Building Trade Operatives).¹⁶ Some trade union leaders supported campaigns by avowedly anti-socialist groups such as Aims of Industry and the Economic League. In 1952 the *New Statesman* reported that recent Aims of Industry literature had included essays by – or under the name of, perhaps – Florence Hancock of the TUC General Council and Bob Edwards, the General Secretary of the Chemical Workers' Union, who was later to be found on the Advisory Council of the anti-communist organisation, Common Cause, discussed below.¹⁷

The Trades Union Congress and the state

Bevin's 'integration' into the British state meant a role for the TUC in the overseas state, the empire, as well as in Britain itself; and before and during the war the TUC began working with the Foreign and Colonial offices – a relationship about which few trade unionists knew – or know – anything at all.¹⁸ As one of the Colonial Office officials quoted by Weiler said, with the clarity of simpler times, the TUC could be relied upon to guide young trade unions in the empire into becoming trades unions which the employers in the colony would feel they could respect and trust and which could be relied upon

¹⁶ There is a section on MRA in Gerth (2023).

¹⁷ *New Statesman*, 12 January 1952. See also H. H. Wilson, 'Techniques of Pressure - Anti-Nationalisation Propaganda' in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Summer 1951. Edwards' obituary in *The Independent*, 25 June 1990 noted that he had been a member of the ILP and was an enemy of the Communist Party. His was thus an improbable name on the list of labour movement figures who had allegedly helped the KGB supplied by former KGB officer Oleg Gordievsky. See Gordievsky pp. 286 and 7.

¹⁸ 'At least since the foundation of the International Affairs Department, TUC staff have kept close contact with the Foreign Office, a practice which persists to the present day.' Harrod p. 105. The study by Marjorie Nicholson of this subject does not mention the International Affairs Department, though as Anthony Carew pointed out, this may tell us nothing as she worked in the Colonial/Commonwealth Department. For a more critical view see Peter Weiler, chapter 1.

loyally to keep an agreement. ¹⁹

In 1948, a member of the U.S. State Department, Third Secretary at the London Embassy, Herbert E. Weiner, reported from London on 'Attitude of Trades Union Congress Towards World Federation of Trade Unions and American International Trade Union Leaders', and wrote:

When asked how the Trades Union Congress hoped to prevent the Communists from using the technique of bona fide forms of trade union action in order to infiltrate unions in Germany and in "undeveloped" (colonial) areas, my informant said . . . in areas where trade unionism is undeveloped e.g. colonial areas, the Trades Union Congress through the British Labour Attachés keeps in close touch with Communist union activities.²⁰

In the 1970s the TUC seconded two of its international staff to the Foreign Office. This caused a minor furore when it was brought to the attention of the TUC members.²¹ Alan Hargreaves, TUC International Secretary in the 1970s, came to the TUC from the Foreign Office and refused to discuss his Foreign Office work.²²

Attacked by the socialists – and communists – on the left at home, and working against the left abroad with the Colonial and Foreign Offices, little wonder that the TUC slipped so comfortably into the Cold War role allotted to it.

U.S. influence after the war

I do not want to rerun the long debate about the origins of the Cold War or – in particular – the causes of the break-up of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in 1949, except to say that it is pretty clear now, with this much hindsight, that the British trade union leaders were determined to break the WFTU – whatever the Soviet bloc had done – and this would have been pushed through, supported by the Americans.²³ As former Labour MP Dennis MacShane demonstrates in his book, the European social democratic trade

¹⁹ Harrod, p. 29

²⁰ My thanks to John Booth for this document. On the origins of this see Marjorie Nicholson, chapter 6, especially pp. 209-11, and Weiler chapter 1.

²¹ See Thompson and Larson pp. 27-8, and 'FO reinforces TUC links', *New Statesman*, 16 November 1979 for two examples. I do not know if this practice predates the 1970s.

²² See the *New Statesman*, 20 April 1979 for the TUC's response, and 'TUC's foreign policy' by Patrick Wintour, *New Statesman*, 2 March 1979.

²³ This thesis has been most convincingly articulated by Peter Weiler.

union movement was not going to coexist with the Soviet bloc, either.²⁴ If the USA leaned on the door, as Peter Weiler and what might loosely be called 'the left' believe, it was half open already – and was never going to shut again. Into this domestic anti-communist climate came the USA's loans – and the people and ideas, the strings attached to the money.

From the first request from Churchill for clandestine assistance before America had officially entered the war, the U.S. 'aid' had come with strings attached. Despite his famous remark that he had not taken office to oversee the destruction of His Majesty's empire, Churchill had actually done precisely that to pay for the war: and the process continued after it. It was left to some of the Tory Right and some of the Labour Left – the same groups that were sceptical about the European Union – to oppose the acceptance of the conditions attached to the post-war U.S. loans.

The Council on Foreign Relations

Planning for the U.S. take-over of the countries of non-communist Europe was done, during the war, in the Council on Foreign Relations, the informal, semi-secret, think tank of the East Coast elite – the bankers, the lawyers and managers of U.S. international capital.²⁵ But when the war ended the details had not been worked out, and there was significant domestic opposition to be taken into consideration. The result was that in the chaos of the post-war years the American 'interventionists', as Pisani calls them, had to improvise.²⁶ The 'co-ordination of public and private efforts was achieved by using the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) as a clearing house for projects'.²⁷ It was CFR personnel, for example, who raised money to intervene in the Italian elections of 1947.²⁸ In the immediate post-war years the political interventionist picture is complicated: there was nothing like the clear-cut overt/covert dichotomy which we think characterised U.S. foreign policy when things settled down into the State Department/CIA mix perceived after the fifties.²⁹

²⁴ *International Labour and the Origins of the Cold War*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).

²⁵ See Shoup and Minter.

²⁶ Perhaps 'interventionist' is less offensive to the American academic ear than imperialist. 'The determination to intervene in Europe between 1945 and 1948 was fragmented, uncoordinated.' Pisani pp. 40 and 41.

²⁷ Pisani p. 4.

²⁸ James Forrestal raised private money for the Italian elections of 1947. His initiative 'signalled an end to the notion that redemocratizing European countries could be accomplished simply by regenerating their economies'. Pisani p. 67.

²⁹ I put it as 'think' because the reality was never that neat and tidy.

The Economic Co-operation Agency

At the most overt level, there was the Economic Co-operation Agency (ECA) which doled out the dollars in support of what is known as multilateral trade: that is, the ECA sought to break down barriers against American goods. A former acting head of the ECA said:

In everything we did we sought to change or to strengthen opinions – opinions about how to build free world strength, about America’s role, co-operative effort by Europeans, investment, productivity, fiscal stability, trade measurement, industrial competition, free labour unions etc.³⁰

But ECA also had what we would call a covert arm and ran psychological warfare operations.³¹ In France,

The ECA mission chief wore two hats. He was the conduit for economic assistance and defense mobilisation, as well as for psychological and economic warfare components provided by the Office of Policy Co-ordination (OPC).³²

As part of that psychological warfare programme, for example, the ECA persuaded the British TUC to produce – at least put its name to – a report on productivity, subsequently used all over Europe. ‘The ECA mission in London distributed a large number of copies abroad, urged its translation into foreign languages and prepared numerous press releases and feature articles for planting in the British and foreign press.’ The U.S. London Embassy’s Labour Information Officer, William Gausman, reported that ‘from a trade union point of view, this is the most valuable document that has been produced under ECA auspices to date.’³³

The Office of Policy Co-ordination (OPC)

The OPC, the first of the euphemistic cover names for U.S. covert action agencies in the post-war era, was formed in 1948, staffed and run by the newly created CIA, but nominally under the control of the State Department. In effect the CIA’s covert arm, by 1952 the OPC had forty-seven stations,

³⁰ Cited in Carew p. 84.

³¹ Pisani p. 91.

³² Pisani p. 96. ECA ‘does engage in some gray and black propaganda’ but ‘the programmes represent a very small percentage of the total effort and are co-ordinated with the CIA.’ Pisani p. 12.

³³ Carew p. 153.

2,812 staff and a budget of \$84 million.³⁴ Much of this growth had been funded by money from the Marshall Plan.³⁵ What we now think of as the CIA, that is the covert operation, intervention arm of U.S. multinational capital – the post-war bogey man supreme for the left – began as the enforcement arm of the Marshall Plan, engaged in operations against the left and the trade unions of Europe, communist or non-communist. The OPC was the U.S. administration's recognition that the ECA alone couldn't 'get the job done'.³⁶

Labor attachés

Another weapon in the post-war U.S. armoury was the Labor Attaché programme which was established towards the end of the war. In the words of one its creators, Philip Kaiser, 'the labor attaché is expected to develop contacts with key leaders in the trade union movement, and to influence their thinking and decisions in directions compatible with American goals . . .' ³⁷ The first Labor Attaché in London was Sam Berger. In the words of Denis Healey:

By developing good personal relations with many key figures in the British Labour movement at the end of the war, including Sam Watson and Hugh Gaitskell, he [Berger] exerted an enduring influence on British foreign policy. ³⁸

Philip Kaiser commented that Berger

had extraordinary access to many members of the [Attlee] cabinet, including the prime minister. It was universally recognised that he was the *key member of our embassy*.³⁹ (emphasis added)

There were also 'Labour Information Officers' attached to the Marshall Plan staff in the U.S. Embassy in London. One such, William Gausman,

in May 1950 began discussions with a section of the leadership of the Clerical and Allied Workers Union on how to eliminate communists from the union . . .

³⁴ Ranelagh p. 135.

³⁵ Pisani p. 70.

³⁶ Pisani. p. 67.

³⁷ Kaiser p. 113. 'The labor attaché . . . had . . . an unusual opportunity to enhance American influence among individuals and institutions that historically have no contact with U.S. diplomatic missions.' Kaiser p. 119.

³⁸ Denis Healey p. 113. Berger has two innocuous entries in the Gaitskell Diaries, and the footnote from the editor, Philip Williams, on p. 120 that he was 'first secretary at the U.S. Embassy'.

³⁹ Kaiser p. 120.

cultivated the leadership of the Birmingham Labour Party, whose journal, *The Town Crier*, closely supported Atlanticism and American foreign policy objectives in general . . . convened a group in South Wales . . . to launch a Labour-oriented newspaper, *The Democrat* . . . worked unofficially on *Socialist Commentary* . . . and became a founder member of its offshoot, the Socialist Union, which served as a think tank for the emerging Gaitskellite wing of the Labour Party . . . liaised, advised, wrote, lectured, published – and helped IRD [the Information Research Department] with the distribution of one of their early publications, *The Curtain Falls*.⁴⁰

The U.S. post-war penetration of the British Labour Party and wider trade union movement climaxes with Joe Godson, who was Labor Attaché in London from 1953-59. Godson became very close to the Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell – to the point where Gaitskell and Godson were writing Labour Party policies and planning campaigns against their opponent within the Party, Aneurin Bevan. For example, after a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party to discuss the expulsion of Bevan, Gaitskell recorded how he ‘drove to the Russell Hotel, where I saw Sam Watson with Joe Godson, the Labour Attaché at the American Embassy.’⁴¹

The leader of the Labour Party is discussing Executive Committee tactics with the U.S. Labour Attaché? This is one of the dividing lines of this essay. You either think is this unexceptional, uninteresting – even a good thing – or you do not. I do not. I think it is rather shocking; and I think that would have been the reaction of many of the Labour Party’s Executive Committee at the time had they been made aware of it. In a footnote on p. 384 of *The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell*, editor Philip Williams writes:

Godson, Sam Watson’s close friend . . . thanks to his trade union post was, like many labour attachés, seen as representing his country’s workers rather than its government. But Gaitskell came in time to feel he was involving himself too deeply in Labour Party affairs.⁴²

⁴⁰ Carew pp. 128 and 9.

⁴¹ See Philip Williams (ed.), pp. 339-41. Carew p. 129 notes that there was some conflict between Gausman and Joseph Godson, apparently reflecting divisions within the U.S. labour movement. He discusses these differences on pp. 84-5. Godson’s obituary was in *The Times*, 6 September 1986.

⁴² Godson’s son, Roy, who appears on the same trade union/intelligence circuit in the 1970s, married Sam Watson’s daughter. Watson was one of the most important trade union leaders in the post-war period, chairman of the National Executive Committee’s International Committee and a ‘liaison officer’ between the Parliamentary Labour Party and the major unions.

It may even be more complex than this for there is evidence that the Labour Attaché posts have been used as cover by the CIA. Jonathan Kwitney of the *Wall Street Journal* tracked down one Paul Sakwa, who told him that he had been the case officer for Irving Brown, the most important CIA agent in the labour movement in Europe, handling Brown's budget of between \$150,000 and \$300,000 a year, between 1952 and 1954. From being Brown's case officer in Washington, Sakwa went on to a post under cover as the Assistant Labor Attaché at the U.S. embassy in Brussels.⁴³

It was about the CIA – but not just them. The CIA was only one of many agencies working in Britain in the post-war years. Labor Attachés reported, formally anyway, to the State Department. In the end, would it make any difference to know that Joe Godson had really been a genuine employee of the State Department, and not CIA under cover as is suspected?

Post-war: private sector propaganda begins to regroup

As the war ended domestic politics returned to normal. The propaganda organisations of domestic capital restarted, though without the frenzy which had marked the post 1918 period. Their big issue was the threat of nationalisation of companies. The so-called Mr Cube Campaign of 1949/50, against the possibility of the nationalisation of the sugar industry, spent an estimated £250,000 in that year.⁴⁴ The campaign had been jointly organised by the sugar company, Tate and Lyle, and Aims of Industry, an anti-socialist pressure group formed in 1942 by a group of British industrialists. The Aims original Council had representatives from Fords, English Electric, Austin, Rank, British Aircraft, MacDougall's and Firestone Tyres.⁴⁵ There were also smaller campaigns by the Cement Makers Federation, the Iron and Steel Federation and by the insurance companies represented by the British Insurance Association.⁴⁶ The Road Haulage Association sponsored anti-nationalisation campaigns by the British Housewives' League, led by Dorothy Crisp.⁴⁷

By 1949 Aims of Industry had 'twelve area offices blanketing the industrial sections of Britain. For the fiscal year 1949-50 expenditures were budgeted for

⁴³ Kwitney pp. 334-5

⁴⁴ Finer p. 94.

⁴⁵ See H. H. Wilson for an account of the Mr Cube campaign. Aims' Council personnel is from Kisch p. 28.

⁴⁶ See Crofts, chapter 14 for these examples.

⁴⁷ See Crofts pp. 99-109, especially p. 106 where the League's funding by the Road Haulage Association, then distantly threatened with nationalisation, is discussed. Best account is Hinton's. Dorothy Crisp is the historical figure who most resembles Margaret Thatcher.

an an additional anticipated income of £260,000.⁴⁸ The pre-war tradition, discussed below, of newspapers reprinting anti-left briefings from Conservative Party groups or fronts, continued with Aims of Industry. Aims estimated that they had gained 93,178 column-inches of editorial space in 1949, worth over £1,800,000.⁴⁹ In the first six months of 1949 Aims claims to have had 41 radio broadcasts on the Home or Light programmes of the BBC; and just before the election of 1950 in January, 362 magazines and newspapers gave 11,269 column inches to Aims-inspired stories. Aims magazine, *The Voice of Industry*, thanked the British press for their 'impartial partnership' in March 1950, noting that 'News about the achievements of private enterprise and the failures of nationalisation and state control has been of sufficient value to editors for them to have given it space in their columns free.'⁵⁰

The Economic League survived the war. In 1951 it claimed to have held 20,058 meetings and 57,505 group talks in the previous year, distributed 18 million leaflets and obtained 31,064 column inches of press publicity. It employed 50 full-time speakers, 27 part-time speakers and 37 leaflet distributors; had a full-time staff of 135, owned 43 vehicles etc.⁵¹ These figures apparently describing massive campaigns by Aims and the League have to be treated with caution. They might well be exaggerated and it is not clear how successful they were. For all this anti-Labour propaganda, Labour's total vote *went up* in the 1951 General Election.

The Information Research Department

In the labour movement the Trades Union Congress was working with the newly-formed, Foreign Office-based, political warfare executive, operating under cover as the Information Research Department (IRD), in an anti-communist drive. IRD was not an innovation. British politics since World War 1 is studded with clandestine propaganda operations involving the mass media of the day. The claims of massive post-World War 2 media penetration by Aims of Industry and the Economic League are reminiscent of the operations of the

⁴⁸ H. H. Wilson p. 228.

⁴⁹ Crofts p. 216. For more details of alleged activities, see also the pamphlet *The FBI*, Labour Research Department, 1949.

⁵⁰ H. H. Wilson pp. 229 and 238. Kisch p. 37 claims that by the late 1950s Aims ' . . . controlled no less than twenty-six monthly, weekly and quarterly publications [and] edited and produced forty-five house magazines for the Tate and Lyle organisation, the Express Dairy and other organisations as well as the house magazines of most of the leading members of the 4,000 or so companies who constituted its chief supporters.'

⁵¹ *Labour Research*, July 1952. As late as 1981 it had 130 full-time employees. See the *Daily Telegraph*, 26 January 1981.

post World War 1 propaganda network operated by Sydney Walton, described in Keith Middlemas' book about British political history.⁵² In the great Bolshevik panic following the First World War, funded by the industrial sources like the Engineering Employers' Federation, Sydney Walton

took the main propaganda role from a variety of front organisations, set up during the war, such as the British Empire League, the British Workers' League, the National Democratic and Labour Party, and the National Unity Movement, all of whom had been in receipt of industrial subscriptions.'

With a budget of £100,000 a year – about what, £25 million in today's money? – Walton's 'information service' was supplied with information by the Special Branch and the intelligence services of the day. Walton eventually claimed to be able to put 'authoritative signed articles' in over 1,200 newspapers.⁵³ Parallel to the Walton network, another group of major employers formed National Propaganda,⁵⁴ which evolved into the Economic League.⁵⁵ McIvor tells us that the League by 1926 had formed an Information and Research Department, was organising in 'cells',⁵⁶ and was forming 1000 study groups a year.⁵⁷

The state followed suit. In 1919 it formed the Supply and Transport Committee and prepared to run two separate propaganda organisations in an emergency, headed by . . . Admiral Blinker Hall of National Propaganda and Sydney Walton.⁵⁸ After 1922, this network had largely been abandoned, and Middlemas makes the point that while Walton spent over £25,000 in the first five months of the 1926 General Strike, this was spent on publicity, advertising and speakers – not on the bribing of journalists and his earlier techniques.⁵⁹ Out of this milieu – and the changes in tactics it went through – emerged the Economic League.

The Conservative Party had also been busy between the wars developing propaganda systems through which it issued, sometimes under its own name,

⁵² Keith Middlemas, *Politics in Industrial Society*, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1979).

⁵³ Middlemas pp. 131/2.

⁵⁴ Middlemas pp. 131/2.

⁵⁵ See, for example, McIvor's essays.

⁵⁶ Echoed – intentionally? – twenty years later by the state's IRD.

⁵⁷ McIvor, 'A Crusade . . .' p. 641

⁵⁸ Middlemas pp. 153/4.

⁵⁹ Middlemas p. 354.

sometimes under cover of fronts, pro-Conservative material to the newspapers for them to 'top and tail' and present as normal, internally-generated copy.⁶⁰

These examples of how to manipulate the media had been learned by others in the British state system and a few years later Neville Chamberlain and other supporters of the appeasement policy secretly bought and ran the weekly newspaper *Truth*. This was largely an operation run by the former MI5 officer and *éminence grise* of the time, Sir Joseph Ball. He used the official government information machine to push the Chamberlain line, formed the National Publicity Bureau to do the same and, in 1937, through a front man, Lord Luke of Pavenham, bought *Truth*, and proceeded to use it to denigrate the opponents of Chamberlain and appeasement.⁶¹

IRD's genesis

Former Labour Minister, Christopher Mayhew, believed he was responsible for the creation of IRD.⁶² In fact its origins are a good deal earlier. In March 1946 Frank Roberts in the British Embassy in Moscow began sending telegrams to London warning of Soviet imperialism and aggression.⁶³ In April the Russia Committee of the Foreign Office was formed. In its second meeting on 7 May 1946, the Committee decided to set up a propaganda organisation.⁶⁴ It was then just a question of getting the Labour Cabinet to approve the proposal. On the way junior Foreign Office Minister, Christopher Mayhew, proposed such a propaganda offensive in October 1947, and the combination of deteriorating political circumstances and a proposal from within the Labour Party itself swung the day and the Cabinet approved the formation of this outfit in January 1948. In the second volume of his *Diaries*, Robert Bruce-Lockhart, who had been a part of the wartime clandestine propaganda system, records on 4

⁶⁰ See Richard Cockett, 'The Party, Publicity and the Media' in Seldon and Ball (eds.), especially pp. 550-553 and his *Twilight of Truth* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989).

⁶¹ Cockett, pp. 9-12.

⁶² Mayhew p. 107 where he cites the memo he wrote in late 1947 to Bevin. Philip M. Taylor in his 'The Projection of Britain Abroad, 1945-51', writes that 'The IRD was formed at the Foreign Office as a direct response to increasingly hostile Soviet propaganda in the wake of the communist coup in Prague, the escalating blockade of West Berlin and mounting pressure on Finland.' Taylor in Michael Dockrill and John W. Young (eds.) 1989.

⁶³ See, for example, Ray Merrick; and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's own publication, *IRD: Origins and Establishment of the Foreign Office Research Department 1946-48*, (History Notes, August 1995).

⁶⁴ Merrick p. 458. This is before the Cominform rejection of the Marshall Plan, for example, over a year away in 1947; before even the March arrest of Dr Allan Nunn May and the revelation of the Canadian-based Soviet spy ring; and before Churchill's American speech in which he first used the term 'Iron Curtain'.

February 1948 that he dined with Christopher Warner, who had just become the Assistant Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office in charge of 'our Information Services'. Warner offered a new version of the origins of IRD, telling Lockhart that 'As a result of a paper put up by the Imperial Defence College, F. O. [Foreign Office] have decided to renew political warfare on a limited scale.'⁶⁵

In Foreign Secretary Bevin's presentation to the Cabinet he spoke of Britain as a 'third force', who would 'give a lead in the spiritual, moral and political sphere to all democratic elements in Western Europe'. The line was to be neither Washington nor Moscow, apparently.⁶⁶ How seriously Bevin intended this we do not know. But however nicely it was being dressed up, this was pretty clearly part of the developing anti-communist struggle. Mayhew said so in a memo to Bevin. In any case, why would propaganda in favour of social democracy have to be hidden?⁶⁷

IRD was in a kind of management limbo between MI6, who supplied it with some of its information and tasks, and the Foreign Office, whose budget concealed it. IRD was, very clearly, simply the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) reborn – another example of the ability of intelligence agencies, once established, to survive the vagaries of their nominal masters in the political system.

IRD was a triple layer. On the surface was its formal cover within the Foreign Office as an information and research department. Beneath that was its role as a propaganda organisation, dispensing white (true) and grey (half true) propaganda in briefings to journalists and politicians. But beneath that was the third layer, the 'black' or psychological warfare (psywar) tier. This third tier is hinted at in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's history of IRD's origins. On p. 7 it notes that in September 1948 – i.e. almost immediately – 'part of the costs of the unit [were] transferred to the secret vote . . . the move would . . . avoid the unwelcome scrutiny of operations which might require covert or semi-covert means of execution.'⁶⁸

There is little evidence of Bevin's 'third force' notions in IRD's work once the politicians' backs were turned and they had moved on to another item on the agenda. The minutes of a 1950 meeting between IRD officials and their U.S. counterparts show no evidence at all such concepts. Christopher Warner,

⁶⁵ Kenneth Young (ed.) p. 648.

⁶⁶ Merrick, p. 465.

⁶⁷ On IRD's early years see Lucas and Morris.

⁶⁸ See note 62 above.

one of the 'fathers' of IRD, talks exclusively of anti-communist activities.⁶⁹

IRD eventually had representatives in all British Embassies abroad. In the recollection of a former MI6 officer of the period, IRD was involved in 'some of the more dubious intelligence operations which characterised the early years of the cold war.'⁷⁰ Former Ambassador Hilary King was told by a former SIS officer who had worked in Germany after the war trying to estimate Soviet bloc tank strength, that IRD circulated a paper on the subject overestimating that strength by a factor of 40.⁷¹ When the SIS officer complained about the inaccuracy of the estimate he was told by an IRD official ' . . . what does it matter old boy as long as the Labour government [i.e. of Attlee] push through rearmament.' At home, in its second level role, IRD wrote papers and briefing notes, and planted stories in the media. Mayhew remembers that

at home, our service was offered to and accepted by, large numbers of selected MPs, journalists, trade union leaders, and others, and was often used by BBC's External Services. We also developed close links with a syndication agency and various publishers.⁷²

The 1950 minutes of the IRD-US talks include Ralph Murray's comment that 'Trade Union organisations and various groups are used to place articles under the by-line of well known writers.'⁷³ Among individuals who received IRD material were Percy Cudlipp of the Co-operative Movement, Herbert Tracey, publicity director of the TUC and the Labour Party, and Denis Healey, then the Party's International Secretary.⁷⁴

The Freedom and Democracy Trust

⁶⁹ Notes on a meeting between Christopher Warner and Edward Barnett, in London, Saturday 20 May 1950, in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, Government Printing Office, Washington DC, 1977, pp. 1641-6.

⁷⁰ Verrier, *Looking Glass*, p. 52.

⁷¹ Telephone conversation with author, 27 June 1987.

Someone might usefully re-examine all the forgeries in the first phase of the Cold War and what influence – if any – they had on policy-making. Two examples are discussed in Sulzberger pp. 345-7. In 1948, having discovered that something called 'Protocol M', alleging secret Comintern instructions to the West German communists was a forgery, a month later he is offered another one in Italy, 'Plan K', plans for an alleged communist insurgency. He comments that there is 'a network of forgers and falsifiers . . . busily peddling allegedly secret documents to embassies, intelligence officers, ministries and correspondents.' 'Protocol M' is reproduced in Appendix II of Heilbrunn.

⁷² Mayhew p. 111. There are some details of this in the FCO publication in footnote 63 above.

⁷³ *Foreign Relations* in note 68.

⁷⁴ Weiler p. 216.

Part of this anti-communist programme was the creation of 'an influential group, including several members of the [TUC] General Council, which was determined to root out the communists.'⁷⁵ Among the group were George Chester (General Secretary of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives), George Gibson (former TUC chair), Lincoln Evans (General Secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation [ISTC]) Andrew Naesmith (General Secretary of the Amalgamated Weavers' Association), Alf Roberts (General Secretary of the National Association of Card, Blowing and Ring Room Operatives, later on the Board of the Bank of England), G. H. Bagnall (TUC General Council representative; General Secretary in 1939 of National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers), John Brown (Iron and Steel Trades Confederation) and Tom O'Brien (Kine Employees).⁷⁶ In April 1948 this group became the Freedom and Democracy Trust, and began publishing a periodical called *Freedom First*, with the help of IRD.⁷⁷

Unfortunately, mixing with the founders of the Trust was an American businessman called Sydney Stanley, and the whole enterprise was 'blown' when Stanley became the centrepiece of the infamous Lansky Tribunal, hearings into civil service corruption, during the winter of 1948. Not only did Stanley have many pre-war contacts with the U.S. unions, he adopted the robust American attitude to officialdom: bribe it when you have to. But he got caught.

Common Cause and IRIS

The failure of the Freedom and Democracy Trust seems to have deterred the TUC members from creating another body so directly linked to the TUC General Council.⁷⁸ Instead, some individual members of the General Council, who had been involved in the Freedom and Democracy Trust fiasco, joined a private group with the same anti-communist aims. This was Common Cause, whose origins are to be found in the merging of two quite distinct political strands.

One strand was the clandestine anti-communist (and anti-socialist) organisation in British trade unions, of which the best example is to found within the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU). Within the AEU,

An anti-Communist organisation was established at meetings of the

⁷⁵ Weiler p. 217 citing *The Times*, 10 February 1948.

⁷⁶ Weiler fn 184, p. 369.

⁷⁷ Weiler fn 189 citing *The Times*, 2 December 1948.

⁷⁸ In Coleman's book on the Congress for Cultural Freedom (discussed below) there is a reference to an Indian anti-communist politician, Mino Misani, who, in the early post-war years, published a magazine called . . . *Freedom First*. Coleman p. 150.

fifty-two-member national committee, their ruling body in 1943 and 1944, and was followed a few years later by a loose national organisation, working in secret and known as "the side" or the "antis" which succeeded in removing a good many communists from office.⁷⁹

This was the organisation which later came to be known as 'the Club' or 'the Group', and 'defined its purpose in terms of preventing a Communist take-over of the union'.⁸⁰

In the mid 1950s . . . the Right-wing members of the Executive Council began attending the factional meeting. In this period also a National Committee "Club" organiser was discreetly appointed from amongst the regular delegates to tighten the organisation of the Right-wing faction. . . . At all National Committee meetings during the period from 1956 to 1970 the right-wing controlled all places on the Standing Orders Committee, and J. Ramsden, organiser of the National Committee "Club" for nine years, was also Chairman of its Standing Orders Committee for seven of them. With [President] Carron in the Chair at the National Committee and the union Secretaryship also held by a "Club" member for the whole of the period, procedural control by the Right was overwhelming. ⁸¹

The late Ernie Roberts MP quotes from a report of a 1951 meeting of 'the Club' (infiltrated by a member of the left in the union), and notes that the principal figure was Cecil Hallett, then AEU General Secretary.⁸²

Common Cause

This clandestine trade union anti-socialism joined up with an Anglo-American anti-communist group called Common Cause. The American group was formed in January 1947 as Common Cause Incorporated, by Mrs Natalie Wales Latham (née Paine). Among the great and the good on its letterhead National Council were Adolph Berle Jnr, Max Eastman, Sumner Welles and Hodding Carter. Another well-known member was Clare Booth Luce, wife of the owner of *Time*, Henry Luce, and later U.S. Ambassador to Italy. In his biography of Mrs Luce, Alden Hatch notes that as early as 1946, before its official launch, Common Cause had established liaison with the anti-Soviet group, Russian Solidarists, better known as NTS, and that John Foster Dulles was the organisation's

⁷⁹ Wigham, p. 128.

⁸⁰ Minkin p. 180.

⁸¹ Minkin p. 180.

⁸² Roberts pp. 124/5.

'unofficial adviser'.⁸³ It seems likely that Common Cause had funding from the CIA. In declassified minutes of what appears to be the official diary of the Director of the CIA, entry of 18 April 1951, under heading 'Director's Conference', notes 'Meeting with Mrs. Natalie Wales Paine, Common Cause, Inc., 1175 Park Avenue, NYC, and AD/PC'.⁸⁴ In his recent study, *Anti-Communism in Britain during the Early Cold War*, Matthew Gerth writes:

In the early days directly after Common Cause announced its formation, what struck the [Conservative] Central Office as odd was the source of the organisation's funding. It reported that 'a great many dollars are coming from America' or, put more simply, 'there are Yankee dollars behind it'. Conservative sources reported that this US-funded British pressure group intended 'to spend a considerable number of dollars over the years in this country with the purpose of combating communism'.⁸⁵

Alden Hatch also notes that Mrs Wales Latham became Lady Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton – the only link I am aware of between the U.S. and UK groups. For when the British Common Cause was formally launched in 1952, its first joint chairs were John Brown, ex-General Secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation and member of the TUC General Council and the self-same Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton MP.⁸⁶

The British Common Cause, however, had been in existence for some time before its official launch, originally very much as the vehicle of Dr. C. A. Smith, one of the more interesting mavericks of the British Left in the 20th century. Smith met Trotsky in the 1933, was Chairman of the Independent Labour Party from 1939-41, quit and joined Common Wealth as its Research Officer in 1941. When some of the Common Wealth party left to join the Labour Party, Smith became Chair of Common Wealth. As the nature of the Stalinist take-over of Eastern Europe became clear in 1947, Smith tried to take Common Wealth with him in his increasingly anti-Soviet stance. They balked and eventually Smith left the party and joined or formed – which is not clear – Common Cause in Easter 1948.⁸⁷

⁸³ Hatch, p. 187.

⁸⁴ <<https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp80r01731r002600530001-9>>

⁸⁵ University of London Press, 2023, p. 157

⁸⁶ *The Times*, 25 February 1952.

⁸⁷ Details on Smith from J. C. Banks, Editor of the Common Wealth journal. In the obituary of Smith in the *The Libertarian*, the Common Wealth journal, no. 25, Summer 1985, Smith is said to have formed Common Cause. I believe this to be mistaken.

The British League for European Freedom

Whatever the British Common Cause amounted to in 1948, four years before its official launch, it had joined forces with the British League for European Freedom (BLEF), the first organisation formed in this country in direct response to the threat of the Soviet Union's take-over in Eastern Europe. The BLEF had been initiated in 1944 by a quartet of Tory MPs, including Victor Raikes, a pre-war member of the Imperial Policy Group.⁸⁸

Despite the dominance of Tory MPs, the BLEF attracted a trio of Labour MPs: Ivor Thomas (who defected to the Conservatives in 1950 after the publication of his book *The Socialist Tragedy*); George Dallas, former TUC General Council member and Labour MP, Chair of the Labour Party's International Committee during the war; and Richard Stokes MP. Stokes was a 'socialist' of the most idiosyncratic kind, having been a member of the anti-Semitic Right Club before the war.⁸⁹ Although information on these groups in this period is very thin, it is clear that Common Cause and the BLEF were very close. In 1950, for example, Common Cause published a pamphlet, *Communism and Democracy*, by Smith, in which he said he was writing as a member of the BLEF. The two groups shared an office in Elizabeth Street in London donated by the wealthy Duke of Westminster.⁹⁰

The Duchess of Atholl, one of the founders of the BLEF, notes in her autobiography that the decline in the BLEF's 'political work' was attributable to the arrival of Common Cause, and from then on the BLEF 'concentrated its efforts on bringing home to people the unhappy plight of the many Displaced Persons still in Germany.'⁹¹ This is something of a euphemism for the BLEF's role as support group for Eastern European exile groups such as the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN) then being run by the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). The BLEF produced an offshoot, the Scottish League for European Freedom, headed by Victor Raikes' colleague in the Imperial Policy

⁸⁸ The Imperial Policy Group was largely the work of Kenneth de Courcy. De Courcy edited and published the *Review of World Affairs* during the Second World War. The IPG and de Courcy in particular were much disliked by the Soviet government of the time. Since then de Courcy has published the newsletters *Intelligence Digest* and *Special Office Brief*. De Courcy had some influence on the right of the Tory Party into the 1960s. See index references in Highams on De Courcy. For an introduction see <https://wiki2.org/en/Kenneth_de_Courcy>.

⁸⁹ This information from John Hope who has had access to the Right Club's membership list. It is possible Stokes had joined for reasons other than agreement with the Club's aims.

⁹⁰ Duchess of Atholl p. 252.

⁹¹ Duchess of Atholl p. 252. For more detail on the Scottish League and in particular this conference of war criminals and Nazis, see Douglas Macleod, *Morningside Mata Haris: how MI6 deceived Scotland's great and good* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2005).

Group, the Earl of Mansfield. In 1950 the Scottish League organised a conference in Edinburgh for Eastern European exiles, many of them Nazi war criminals and collaborators, who had been recruited by SIS. They had been moved to the UK during the scramble at the end of World War 2 by the British and American governments for good, reliable, anti-Soviet 'assets'.⁹²

Common Cause USA

In the USA the fledgling CIA had sponsored a front organisation, the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE). NCFE's 'sister organisation' was Common Cause Inc., which included among its personnel 'many of the men – Adolf Berle, Arthur Bliss Lane, and Eugene Lyons, among others – who simultaneously led CIA-financed groups such as the NCFE and, later, the American Committee for Liberation from Bolshevism.'⁹³ Christopher Simpson notes that it was Common Cause Inc. which, in 1948, sponsored the NTS founder on a tour of the United States.⁹⁴ Just as the British League for European Freedom became the sponsor for the British exile groups in the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), Christopher Emmet, Chairman of the American Common Cause Inc, turns up later as head of the American Friends of the Captive Nations, the domestic support group for the CIA-sponsored Assembly of Captive Nations (ACEN).⁹⁵

The BLEF's George Dallas was one of those who stayed close to American interests. He became preoccupied with the danger of a communist take-over in China, and formed the Friends of Free China Association, with himself as chair and the Duchess of Atholl as president. Dallas eventually attended the 1958 foundation meeting of what became the the World Anti-Communist League. The one time socialist farm labourer had come a long way. With him at that meeting were Marvin Liebman, one of the key members of the U.S. 'China Lobby', the late Yaroslav Stetsko, Ukrainian collaborator with the Germans and head of the ABN, and Charles Edison of the John Birch Society.⁹⁶

⁹² Loftus p. 204.

⁹³ Simpson p. 222.

⁹⁴ Simpson p. 223.

⁹⁵ Simpson p. 222.

'Christopher Emmet is a classic example of those who ran the British Intelligence fronts before and during World War II and who, having proven themselves faithful and competent, went on to run the CIA/MI6 fronts of the Cold War.' Mahl, thesis, p. 198.

⁹⁶ See <<https://www.voltairenet.org/article202294.html>>.

Dallas' career, with some of the later associations glossed over, is described by his son in the *Dictionary of Labour Biography* eds. Saville and Bellamy, vol. 4, 1977.

Common Cause UK

The official, 1952-launched Common Cause was apparently founded by Neil Elles, Peter Crane (on both of whom, more below) and C. A. Smith. Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton, then a Scottish Tory MP, and John Brown were joint chairs. Brown had been the Treasurer of the Freedom and Democracy Trust which had tried to launch *Freedom First* five years before. It set up a national structure with local branches – in 1954 there were 14 – published a monthly *Bulletin*, and distributed many of the standard anti-communist texts of the time, for example Tufton Beamish's *Must Night Fall?*; some, such as the 'Background Books' series, published and/or subsidised by IRD; and leaflets from the CIA labour front in Europe, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).⁹⁷

In 1955 Common Cause's 'Advisory Council' included:

- Tom O'Brien and Florence Hancock, both past TUC presidents;⁹⁸
- Bob Edwards, General Secretary of the Chemical Workers Union, 1947-51;⁹⁹
- Cecil Hallett, Assistant General Secretary of the AEU 1948-57; General Secretary 1957-64;
- Philip Fothergill, ex President of the Liberal Party;
- Admiral Lord Cunningham;¹⁰⁰
- other retired senior military, the Duchess of Atholl and Lord Ammon.

Such 'advisory bodies' may mean very little; this might just be a notepaper job. Nonetheless, some of the 'advisory body' were people with rather specialised interests. For example, at one point the name of General Leslie Hollis appeared on it. Hollis had been the Secretary of the Chiefs of Staff committee which ' . . . considered, with Sir Stewart Menzies, the head of MI6, and Warner [of IRD] and William Hayter of the Foreign Office, what form of organisation was required to establish a satisfactory link between the Chiefs of

⁹⁷ On ICFTU and the CIA see the comments of former CIA officers Joseph Smith (p. 138) and Philip Agee (*CIA Diary*) (p. 611). For a more general discussion see Winslow Peck. The rival but much less significant World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was funded and run by the Soviet Union.

⁹⁸ Hancock had been Chief Women's Officer of the TGWU. There is a profile of her at <tinyurl.com/hfwb3cmv> or <<https://www.chippenhamcivicsociety.co.uk/Wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Dame-Florence-May-Hancock.pdf>>.

⁹⁹ Edwards had been chair of the ILP. During 1948 the Chemical Workers Union had been involved in protracted proceedings over alleged forged ballot papers by communists.

¹⁰⁰ In 1945, as Chief of the Defence Staff he had threatened Prime Minister Attlee with resignation over proposed defence cuts.

Staff and Foreign Office on matters connected with the day-to-day conduct of anti-Communist propaganda overseas.’¹⁰¹

In the Autumn of 1955 the *Common Cause Bulletin* reported that there had been moves at the Labour Party conference that year to get it proscribed – but the motion to that effect ‘was among the many crowded out from discussion’.¹⁰²

The Labour Party’s intelligence-gathering

Common Cause was one of the sources of information used by the Labour Party in its anti-communist activities in the 1950s. While no central unit was ever formally established ‘for collecting information or monitoring the activities of communist-inspired or pro-Soviet groups’, in practice the National Agent’s Department at Labour headquarters, Transport House, did the job, using as sources the publications of proscribed organisations, regional organisers’ reports, ‘Foreign Office’ material – i.e. IRD – and *Common Cause*.¹⁰³ The National Agent’s Department [NAD] had ‘lay responsibility for compiling the [proscription] list’. Shaw notes that in 1953 the proscription list was expanded by the addition of eighteen fresh groups.

What happened was rather unusual. Without consulting the NAD the International Department had submitted a report to the Overseas Subcommittee on ‘peace’ and ‘friendship’ societies. In response the Subcommittee recommended that they all be proscribed. NAD officials were never told the source of the International Department’s information though they assumed it to be the Foreign Office [i.e. IRD] and Special Branch.¹⁰⁴

A glimpse of the content of the NAD’s intelligence-gathering has been provided by the late Ian Mikardo MP, who saw ‘dossiers’ in the possession of National Agent Sarah Barker. At a meeting of a subcommittee of the NEC in 1955, Sara Barker objected to Konni Zilliacus and Ernie Roberts as prospective Parliamentary candidates. When Barker began quoting derogatory comments from files she had in her possession, Mikardo demanded to see the files.

They were an eye-opener. No MI5, no Special Branch, no George Smiley

¹⁰¹ Lucas and Morris p. 101.

¹⁰² For which, perhaps, read ‘our friends fixed the agenda’.

¹⁰³ Shaw p. 58.

¹⁰⁴ Shaw pp. 58 and 9. Shaw notes in footnote 44, p. 314, that ‘at least one NAD official was approached by a member of the Special Branch [and brother of a future International Secretary] offering “assistance”.

could have compiled more comprehensive dossiers. Not just press-cuttings, photographs and document references but also notes by watchers and eavesdroppers, and all sorts of tittle-tattle. I'm convinced that there was input into them from government sources and from at least a couple of Labour Attachés at the United States embassy who were close to some of our trade union leaders, notably Sam Watson.¹⁰⁵

Common Cause splits - IRIS is formed

The unstable-looking mixture of admirals, generals and trade union leaders that was Common Cause, disintegrated in 1956. C. A. Smith resigned along with Advisory Council members Fothergill, Edwards, Ammon, Professor Arthur Newell and Sydney Walton.¹⁰⁶ This group complained that the organisation had become 'reactionary' and that the promised democratic structure had never materialised. In August 1956 Common Cause Ltd was registered, owned and controlled by the 'reactionary' faction.

The original directors of Common Cause Ltd were:

* the new chair, Peter Crane, the director of a number of British subsidiaries of American companies, including Collins Radio of England, whose American headquarters had connections with the CIA.¹⁰⁷

* David Pelham James – Conservative MP, and Director of the Catholic publishing house, Hollis and Carter. There were a number of Catholics prominent in the Common Cause network, including the man who ran IRIS for any years, Andy McKeown. This is discussed below.

* Neil Elles, barrister and later a member of the European-wide anti-subversion outfit comprised of members of European intelligence services, INTERDOC.¹⁰⁸

* Christopher Blackett – a Scottish landowner and farmer and, I presume, but cannot show, a relative of Frances Blackett, the original secretary of the British League for European Freedom, discussed above.¹⁰⁹

IRIS

More or less in parallel with the formation of Common Cause Ltd., an industrial

¹⁰⁵ Mikardo p. 131.

¹⁰⁶ *The Times*, 6 April 1957.

¹⁰⁷ On Collins Radio, see <<http://jfkcountercoup.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/rex-blows-collins-radio-cia-cover.html>>.

¹⁰⁸ On INTERDOC see Crozier pp. 49 and 81, <<https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Interdoc>> and <tinyurl.com/2yybo9w9> or <https://wikispooks.com/wiki/Document:Psychological_Warfare_for_the_West:_Interdoc_and_Youth_Politics_in_the_1960s>.

¹⁰⁹ Frances Blackett in *Duchess of Atholl*, p. 250.

wing, Industrial Research and Information Services (IRIS) Ltd. was formed and set up in the headquarters of the National Union of Seamen, Maritime House. Initially, IRIS Ltd listed three directors:

- Jack Tanner, the recently retired President of the AEU;
- William McLaine, General Secretary of the AEU from 1938-47;
- and Charles Sonnex, the Secretary and Managing Director, and the link with the parent body Common Cause.¹¹⁰ Also it had a manager, James L. Nash.¹¹¹ According to *Labour Research* (January 1961), Nash left to join the CIA labour front, the ICFTU.

In an interview with Richard Fletcher in 1979, C. A. Smith, attributed the formation of IRIS to Common Cause's discovery of just how careful they had to be about interfering in union affairs.¹¹² Another proximate cause for the formation of IRIS is suggested by the comment from the *Common Cause Bulletin* of January 1956 (pp. 4/5) that 'only a near-miracle can prevent the Executive of the AEU from passing under communist control during 1956 . . . already there are clear signs of an all-out Communist effort to put Reg Birch in this top trade union job.'

However, another interpretation of the Common Cause split and the formation of IRIS is possible. In April 1955 SIS (MI6) were forced to acknowledge that their networks of 'agents' inside the Soviet Union had all been penetrated. Worse, the Soviets had been running a deception operation with uncomfortable parallels with 'the Trust' deception in the 1920s in which the Soviet intelligence service created and ran a fake resistance group to which the British government gave a lot of money.¹¹³ SIS had been using agents from Bandera's OUN in Ukraine and from NTS.¹¹⁴ Some time later that year, SIS gave up all its emigré groups and in February 1956 SIS handed over control of

¹¹⁰ *The Times*, 6 April 1957.

¹¹¹ *IRIS News*, vol. 1, no 1, 1956. According to Anthony Carew, Nash was also a member of the AEU.

¹¹² Fletcher's notes of the conversation say that that 'wealthy people got at [Common Cause executive member Charles] Sonnex (without telling CAS) asked him to lead IRIS. S.[onnex] remained on CC exec. Rich people attached more importance to IRIS.'

¹¹³ See Tom Bower's *Red Web* on the SIS post-war operations and chapter 8, in particular, on the dawning realisation that they had been taken for a ride – again. On 'the Trust' see Andrew, *Secret Service* pp. 445-8.

¹¹⁴ Andrew p. 165.

NTS to the CIA.¹¹⁵

What follows is what I surmise happened but for which I have no evidence. Having taken control of the British networks, new people were put in by the Americans to run things. The NTS support group in the United States was Common Cause Inc. – with its British counterpart. In London, the limited company Common Cause was formed and all the trappings of members and branches were dumped; a CIA officer or agent, under cover, the cut-out to the Agency, was installed. (If this sounds banal, it has to be remembered that in 1956 none of this had ever been made public and there was no reason for them to be anything but banal.) The American assessment of the group's activities was that its most important work had been, and should continue to be, in the British trade union movement. The previous year's attempt to have Common Cause put on the Labour Party's proscription list was noted and a spin-off, trade union subsidiary, IRIS, was formed. Common Cause would fund it – and act as another layer of insulation between it and the Agency.

IRIS activities to 1963

IRIS published a newsletter and a variety of pamphlets. They formed 'cells' – their word – to combat communists in the trade unions. How many cells, we do not know; nor in how many unions other than the AEU. They intervened in union elections. A member of ASSET, (which became ASTMS and later part of MSF) sued IRIS and won in 1958 after *IRIS News* called him a communist. In the report of the TUC annual conference in 1960, delegates describe IRIS personnel intervening in the Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen (AESD) and the Association of Supervisory Staff and Technicians (ASSET). The delegate of the latter describes *IRIS News* publishing the allegation that a candidate in a union election was a communist. *Labour Research* alleged an IRIS role in the National Union of Mineworkers and the Foundry Workers (as well as AESD and ASSET).¹¹⁶ Reporting these events, *Labour Research* commented on IRIS News that 'the main feature in the paper however is and always has been news and advice about union elections. In most cases the paper reports that certain candidates are "receiving communist support."'

In the first version of this I wrote that it seems reasonably certain –

¹¹⁵ Yakovlev p. 105. Soviet publications in this field are not famously accurate, but this account has since been confirmed by Tom Bower's biography of SIS chief Dick White, *The Perfect English Spy*, pp. 206 and 7. Yakovlev quotes from what purports to be an SIS document, 'A Proposed Statement to the NTS Leadership', which, presuming it to be genuine, may have been given to the Soviets by Kim Philby or George Blake. Bower quotes a brief section from the same document.

¹¹⁶ *Labour Research*, January 1961, p. 10.

though unproven – the IRIS was receiving some of its information from IRD. This has been firmed up considerably by the discovery on the National Archives of IRD documents from the 1970s.¹¹⁷ In one of them Andy McKeown, who ran IRIS for nearly 20 years, is described as ‘another old and trusted contact of ours [IRD]’.¹¹⁸

In putting out information – its monthly magazine and pamphlets – and telling its readers who to vote for and not vote for in union elections, IRIS behaved as an exact mirror image of the groups on the left: start a paper and put out a ‘line’. The late Ernie Roberts MP, for many years the only left-winger in the senior ranks of the AEU – the union from whence came two of the IRIS directors in 1956 – describes how the left in the union and IRIS–‘the Club’ spent their time infiltrating and reporting on each other’s meetings.¹¹⁹

In February 1966 the left-wing magazine *Voice of the Unions*, part of the opposition to IRIS within the AEU, asked where the IRIS money was coming from and commented, ‘At one time we are told IRIS employed an office staff of six to ten.’ Almost thirty years later we learned that some of the money had come from the British government after Lord Shawcross had contacted Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and asked for funding for IRIS.¹²⁰ Shawcross had approached Macmillan at the right time, for ‘Supermac’ had become infected with the fear of the ‘communist threat’. The Radcliffe Tribunal had reported in 1962, devoting a whole section to the Civil Service staff associations and trade unions, expressing concern at the number of communists and communist sympathisers holding positions in the unions;¹²¹ and his administration was being afflicted by the espionage scandals of George Blake and Vassell – and the Profumo Affair which Macmillan apparently believed was part of a

¹¹⁷ See <tinyurl.com/3ylyxuc2> or <<https://www.thecanary.co/uk/2020/05/30/secret-memos-confirm-government-role-in-the-jailing-of-ricky-tomlinson/>>. The documents can be read there if you enlarge them.

¹¹⁸ See also, for example, Rory Cormac and Dan Lomas, ‘Research note: “a cuckoo in the diplomatic service nest”: freedom of information and the “English Desk” of the Information Research Department (IRD)’ at <<https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2023.2263947>> and sections of Gerth.

¹¹⁹ See Roberts pp. 101, 122-4, 131 157, 203. The left-wing *Engineering Voice*, Christmas 1966, reported having received ‘. . . an anonymous and undated document purporting to describe the proceedings of a secret meeting recently convened by supporters of the present leadership of the AEU.’ The document referred to a ‘National Group meeting’ and said attending it had been fourteen full-time officers of the AEU.

¹²⁰ *Guardian*, 2 January 1995, based on papers released under the 30 year rule. See also ‘Anti-red and alive’ in *New Statesman*, 10 February 1995.

¹²¹ Pincher, *Inside Story* p. 335.

communist conspiracy the bring him down.¹²²

Catholic Action?

There is a distinct Catholic tinge to Common Cause and IRIS. Hollis and Carter, the company which published the Common Cause *Bulletin*, was a Catholic publishing house. Catholics among the leading figures in Common Cause included chairs David Pelham James (a director of Hollis and Carter) and Peter Crane, Brigadier George Taylor, (a director of Common Cause circa 1958),¹²³ and Sir Tom O'Brien. Catholics among the AEU/IRIS network include AEU President Bill Carron and Jim Conway, IRIS's Cecil Hallett, and the man who ran IRIS for nearly twenty years, Andy McKeown.¹²⁴ So was there, as some on the British Left believed,¹²⁵ a national Catholic Action organisation operating in Britain, as it had in other countries, such as Australia? Joan Keating investigated this belief in the course of her doctoral thesis, and though she found quite a thriving Association of Catholic Trade unionists – the *Catholic Worker* was selling 25,000 copies in 1956 – she found no evidence at all of any national, co-ordinated organisation.¹²⁶

Part 2: Atlantic Crossings

The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the Campaign for Democratic Socialism and the CIA

As well as the programmes to inculcate American notions of free market economics and union-management relations – and good feelings about America – there were operations aimed at the wider public and the Labour Party. Large numbers of Labour MPs and trade unionists were paid to visit the United States. Among the Gaitskellite grouping in the Parliamentary party,

¹²² On Macmillan's paranoia about the 'communist conspiracy' see Bower, *Perfect English Spy*, pp. 308-9.

¹²³ Keating, PhD thesis, p. 350.

¹²⁴ Ferris, p. 85. *Engineering Voice*, March 1969, reported a two-day conference of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, at which were H. E. Matthews, a director of Cable and Wireless and some time director of IRIS, and Andy McKeown of IRIS. Keating quotes McKeown as suggesting that originally IRIS was anti-Catholic because 'Freemasonry' had a 'strong hold' on the organisation, and claiming that the man who initially ran IRIS, Charles Sonnex, was a Mason.

¹²⁵ One of those who believed there was a national Catholic Action is former President of the Trades Union Congress, the late Clive Jenkins. Conversation with the author, 1995.

¹²⁶ Keating thesis, p. 335.

Gaitskell, George Brown, Anthony Crosland and Douglas Jay all made visits.¹²⁷ Under the umbrella of just one minor aspect of the Marshall Plan, the Anglo-American Council on Productivity, 900 people from Britain – management and unions – went on trips to the United States to see the equivalent of ‘Potemkin villages’.¹²⁸ Hundreds of trade unions officers went on paid visits to the US in the fifties under the auspices of the European Productivity Agency and groups of British union leaders were sent on three month trade union programme run twice yearly by the Harvard Business School.¹²⁹

The Congress for Cultural Freedom

There was a European-wide - and world-wide - programme to boost the social democratic wings of socialist parties and movements.

At Thomas Braden’s suggestion and with the support of Allen Dulles and Frank Wisner [then head of the Office of Policy Co-ordination], the CIA began its covert support of the non-Communist political left around the world – trade unions, political parties and international organisations of students and journalists.¹³⁰

The biggest of these programs that we are aware of was the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF from here on), which began in 1950 with a large conference in the US zone in Berlin, a demonstration of the strength of anti-Soviet feeling among some of the West’s intellectuals and a response to the

¹²⁷ Roy Hattersley commented that his first visit to the US was paid for by ‘something which was laughingly called The Young Leaders’ Program’. *The Guardian*, 27 February 1995.

Giles Scott Smith discussed the Young Leaders’ Program and other such schemes in his ‘Searching for the Successor Generation: Public Diplomacy, the US Embassy’s International Visitor Program and the Labour Party in the 1980s’ in *British Journal for Politics and International Relations*, 2006, Vol. 8, pp. 214-237. Many of the ‘New Labour’ figures of the 1990s went on American freebies.

In his memoir, *A Bag of Boiled Sweets* (Faber and Faber, 1995) pp. 77-8, the Conservative MP, Julian Critchley, describes how, upon letting the Conservative Party Whips know that he had never been to the United States, he was immediately fixed up with a six week freebie courtesy of the US embassy in London.

¹²⁸ Carew p. 137.

¹²⁹ Carew pp. 189/90. The British trade union whose leadership responded most enthusiastically to these American overtures was the General and Municipal Workers’ Union (GMWU) and it ‘provided from among its leading officials half the British participants in the university trade union courses at Harvard and Columbia’. (Carew p. 191) GMWU General Secretary, Tom Williamson, was one of the participants at the first meeting of the Bilderberg Group in 1954. (Eringer p. 49) Other British participants included Hugh Gaitskell and Dennis Healey, who discusses the Bilderberg meetings in his memoir, *The Time of My Life*.

¹³⁰ Smith, *OSS*, p. 368.

Soviet 'Peace offensive' then underway.¹³¹ At the time, funds for these gatherings were said to have come from the American Federation of Labour, via Jay Lovestone – a story offered up again recently by CCF apologist Peter Coleman in his *The Liberal Conspiracy*. In fact they came from the CIA, something alleged by the Soviet bloc's media at the time but not believed.¹³² The one thing the Congress for Cultural Freedom's paymasters were not interested in was cultural freedom. Peter Coleman does his best. Of the first big 1950 jamboree he writes, ' . . . almost all the participants were liberals or social democrats, critical of capitalism and opposed to colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, racism and dictatorship'. This was certainly not true of the British delegation. Of the four British delegates named by Coleman, one was Christopher Hollis, a right-wing Catholic and some time Conservative MP,¹³³ and another was Julian Amery, one of the Conservative Party's leading imperialists. In any case 'cultural freedom' was a euphemism for 'American capitalism'.

Encounter

The CCF began publishing journals – in Britain, *Encounter*, which first appeared in 1953. *Encounter* became a major outlet for the 'revisionist' – i.e. anti-socialist, anti-nationalist – thinking of the younger intellectuals around Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell, such as Peter Jay, Patrick Gordon-Walker, Roy Jenkins and Anthony Crosland, all of whom were in Harold Wilson's first cabinet in 1964. The 1955 CCF conference in Milan, 'The Future of Freedom', was attended by Crosland, Richard Crossman, Denis Healey, Roy Jenkins and W. Arthur Lewis MP.¹³⁴ Anthony Crosland was a member of the International Council of the CCF: his role, said the CIA officer who was running CCF, was 'encouraging sympathetic people' to attend CCF conferences.¹³⁵ There is no

¹³¹ Lasch p. 332. The 1951 CCF conference in Delhi was explicitly a reply to a 'World Peace Conference' sponsored by the Soviet Union. Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 1999) is now the standard work on this subject.

¹³² Dittberner p. 112. Mr Coleman's objectivity on this matter can be seen by his description of CIA officer, Irving Brown, as 'European representative of the AFL', the cover story even the Americans have abandoned. Coleman p. 34.

¹³³ Later a member of the editorial board of the Catholic magazine, *The Tablet*. This is the Hollis family in Hollis and Carter, the Catholic publishers of the Common Cause *Bulletin*.

¹³⁴ Coleman p. 110. 'Finally, Lasky moved *Encounter* closer to the Hugh Gaitskell wing of the British Labour Party . . . *Encounter* became one of the principal publications in which C. A. R. Crosland developed his "revisionist" social democratic, Keynesian program.' Coleman p. 185

¹³⁵ Hirsch and Fletcher pp. 59 and 60. Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell attended the conferences in 1955, '57, '58 and '62.

evidence that Crosland was witting of the CIA connection. Peter Coleman lists Gaitskell, Jenkins, Crosland, Rita Hinden, Patrick Gordon-Walker, John Strachey, Dennis Healey and Roderick Macfarquhar as Labour writers published in *Encounter*.¹³⁶ In 1960 editor Melvin Lasky wrote to fellow CCF officer, John Hunt, of ' . . . an enormous friendly feeling for *Encounter*' in the centre and right-wing of the Labour Party.¹³⁷

The revisionist wing of the Labour Party also had *Forward*, the less glamorous (and poorer) Labour weekly, set up to combat the influence of *Tribune*. Money for *Forward* came from Alan Sainsbury, Chairman of the retailers Sainsbury (whose son was to fund the Social Democratic Party in the early 1980s), Henry Walston, the landowner, and the restaurateur, Charles Forte.¹³⁸ There was also the \$3000 'expenses' paid made to Hugh Gaitskell for a talk to the Jewish Labour Committee in the USA.¹³⁹

Socialist Commentary

As well as *Encounter* and *Forward* there was the monthly *Socialist Commentary* as a vehicle for the anti-socialists in the Labour Party. *Socialist Commentary* began life as a journal of an obscure revisionist group of German refugees but by the early 1950s it had been absorbed by the revisionist wing of the Labour Party. In 1953 a 'Friends of Socialist Commentary' group was set up with Gaitskell as Treasurer.¹⁴⁰ '*Socialist Commentary* and the Socialist Union were plugged in direct to the USA's Marshall Plan operation in Britain by virtue of the fact that William Gausman, Labour Information Officer in the London mission, was a member of the journal's editorial board.'¹⁴¹

The dominant figure in *Socialist Commentary* was its editor for 20 years, Rita Hinden, who had been co-founder of the Fabian Colonial Bureau in 1940. The Bureau, and Hinden in particular, became an important influence on the thinking of the Labour Party – and, to some extent of the British state – on

¹³⁶ Coleman p. 73.

¹³⁷ Coleman p. 185. Roy Jenkins, splendidly *insouciant*, on *Encounter*: 'We had all known that it had been heavily subsidised from American sources, and it did not seem to me worse that these should turn out to be a US Government agency than, as I had vaguely understood, a Cincinnati gin distiller.' Jenkins, *Life*, p. 118

¹³⁸ Francis Williams p. 309.

¹³⁹ ' . . . which helped him underwrite the costs of *Forward*.' Carew pp. 129 and 30

¹⁴⁰ Haseler, *Gaitskellites*, p. 68.

¹⁴¹ Carew p. 245.

post-war management of the empire.¹⁴²

Hinden was also a participant in CCF functions, wrote for *Encounter*, and was described by the CIA officer in charge of CCF, Michael Josselson, as 'a good friend of ours', on whose advice the CIA 'relied heavily . . . for our African operations.'¹⁴³ On her death, Denis Healey, who had written widely for *Socialist Commentary's* American counterpart, *New Leader*, said that 'Only Sol Levitas of the American *New Leader* had a comparable capacity for exercising a wide political influence with negligible material resources.' But as Richard Fletcher commented, 'He [Healey] obviously hadn't paid a visit to Companies House whose register shows that in recent years *Socialist Commentary* has been drawing on a capital reserve of over £75,000.'¹⁴⁴ (Healey was apparently also unaware that Sol Levitas was also taking the CIA shilling.)

Socialist Commentary must be CIA but there is not a shred of direct evidence that I am aware of.

The social democratic network

By the mid 1950s there was a social democratic network operating in and around the Labour Party in Britain and reaching out into the British and American states, both overt and covert. The career of Saul Rose in this period illustrates this. After wartime service in Army Intelligence, Rose was a lecturer at Aberdeen University, before becoming the Labour Party's International Secretary for three years. He then moved to the then recently established St Antony's College at Oxford, one of two British institutions which sponsored Congress of Cultural Freedom seminars in the UK. (The other was Ditchley

¹⁴² The Bureau 'enjoyed a direct and amiable relationship with the Colonial Office, its advice was always considered if not always followed.' Pugh p. 222. Another commentator's assessment was that 'Officials at the Colonial Office came to respect her knowledge, judgement and persistence.' Labour MP and fellow Bureau member, W. Arthur Lewis, quoted in the entry on Hinden in the *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, vol. 2, Macmillan, 1974.

¹⁴³ She visited India and Japan on a CCF-sponsored trip after the Suez crisis. Richard Fletcher in Agee, *Dirty Work*, p. 195

¹⁴⁴ Hirsch and Fletcher p. 67. Is this £75,000 'the small capital grant (a modest bequest) on which it had so far survived' in the account of Desai? Commenting on the closure of *Socialist Commentary* in 1978, Desai writes (p. 174) that it 'had always operated on a shoestring budget which had to be supplemented by the dedication and persuasive power of Rita Hinden, its editor for most of its life.' £75,000 was a lot of money in the mid-1970s when Fletcher found this out.

The accounts of *Socialist Commentary* were prepared by the accountancy practice of the late John Diamond MP, one of the leading Gaitskellites, who later joined the SDP and was in the House of Lords. He was also, for example, the Honorary Treasurer of the Labour Committee for Europe. See Finer, Appendix 2. In this latter role John Campbell in his biography of Roy Jenkins, p. 51, states that Diamond was 'charged with raising money that did not come from the City of London'.

Manor, Oxford.) Both were outposts of the Foreign Office/MI6 network.¹⁴⁵ (Former MP Dick Taverne, mentioned recently that as a young man he went to a Young Fabian conference at the other major Foreign Office country retreat, Wilton Park . . . ¹⁴⁶)

The same elements are visible in the contributors to the short-lived *Fabian International Review*, begun in 1953. In its three years its contributors included two academics from St Antony's, Gausman, the Labour Information Officer at the US embassy in London, Douglas Jay, William Rodgers, and Mary Benson of the Africa Bureau.¹⁴⁷

It is easy at this distance to be indignant about Labour politicians hobnobbing with the CIA. But in 1955, say, when Saul Rose left his job as Labour's International Secretary, the media and the political system simply did not discuss the Anglo-American intelligence and security services. There were Americans with money scattered about the higher reaches of the Labour movement in Britain; but Americans with money had been in Britain since the war years, they had been Britain's allies only a few years before, they were anti-Stalinist, and some of them, the labour officers in one guise or another, were originally from the US labour movement.¹⁴⁸ I think it likely that in the 1950s the Labour revisionists, the Hindens and Croslands, believed they were taking part in a 'liberal conspiracy' ¹⁴⁹ against the Soviet Union, with progressive, democratic forces – people they perceived to be like themselves. But from the CIA's point of view, they were being run in one of the most successful psy-war operations of the Cold War. This operation had as one of its aims the struggle against Stalinism; but the Americans sponsored and funded the European social democrats not because they were social democrats, but

¹⁴⁵ Coleman p. 260 for the CCF connection. St. Antony's, Richard Deacon wrote in his *The British Connection*, was 'an unofficial annex of MI6 in the fifties.' p. 259.

¹⁴⁶ Dick Taverne, Institute for Historical Research (IHR) Witness Statement on CDS, 1990, p. 8.

¹⁴⁷ Of the Africa Bureau, Anthony Verrier wrote: 'liberal, UK-based . . . on which [Colonial Secretary] Macleod relied greatly for detailed background intelligence on African independence movements. Unlike some liberal organisations, the Africa Bureau was never troubled by the attentions of the security services or the Metropolitan Special Branch.' Verrier, *The Road to Zimbabwe*, p. 335. From an SIS hand like AV, this is running up a flag and shouting 'intelligence connected'.

¹⁴⁸ There had been contacts between the British TUC and the U.S. labour movement ever since the late 19th. century. See Marjorie Nicholson pp. 27 and 28. The TUC's Sir Walter Citrine worked with senior figures from the US AFL in one of the many front groups set up by British intelligence to persuade US public opinion to support the war in Europe. Mahl, thesis, p. 75.

¹⁴⁹ The title of Coleman's study of CCF.

because social democracy was the best ideological vehicle for the major aim of the programme: to ensure that the governments of Europe continued to allow American capital into their economies with the minimum of restrictions. This aim the revisionists in the Labour Party chose not to look at. As the history of US imperialism since the war shows, the US is basically uninterested in the ideology of host governments, and has supported everything from social democrats to the most feral, military dictatorships in South and Central America. But its other aims went largely unrecognised. (This, perhaps, is a tribute to the skill of the US personnel running the operations.) Looking at the networking of the social democrats in the these post-war years, the intimacy between US labour attaché, Joe Godson, and Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell, which once looked so extraordinary, now looks less like some awful aberration – and triumph for Godson – than business as usual.

The end-of-ideology ideology

The strategically important thing for the United States about the revisionists' version of socialism was its central conclusion that ownership of economic assets was no longer of paramount importance. (In the USA, sociologist Daniel Bell was arguing the same thesis, sponsored by the same people, under the rubric of 'the end of ideology'.) This was obviously the key line for US capital which wanted to penetrate the world's markets and was meeting resistance from people who called them imperialists. Officially the US was also opposed to colonialism – especially British and French; imperialism – especially British; totalitarianism (except where dictators were the best allies US business could find) and nationalism – except Americanism, which was a universal creed of such perspicacity and moral purity as to be beyond objection. The one to take seriously among that quartet is nationalism. In democratic Europe the CIA chiefly funded those who were not nationalists. To US capital, socialism was functionally simply a form of exclusionary, anti-American, economic nationalism: communism the most extreme form of all.¹⁵⁰ The internationalists in democratic Europe in the immediate post-war years were, mostly, on the liberal or centre left; the European right was, mostly, nationalist. In France De Gaulle opposed US capital. (And the CIA was to help finance the OAS against him.) In Britain it was the nationalist Conservatives and some of the Labour Left who voted against the Marshall Plan in the House of Commons. The US government only had one operating criterion where a foreign government was concerned: is it willing to allow US capital in or not? It was called anti-communism, but it was essentially anti-nationalism. Yes, it was precisely 'Taking the teeth out of British socialism' as Richard Fletcher put it in his

¹⁵⁰ The best exposition of this thesis is by Fred. L. Block.

seminal piece in 1977;¹⁵¹ but it could just as accurately have been called 'Taking the teeth out of British economic nationalism'.

The US-supported drive by the revisionists in the Labour Party had its first major setback with the rise of CND, climaxing with the famous narrow majority in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament at the party conference in 1960. To the Gaitskellites in the Labour Party it was little more than another communist conspiracy. Gaitskell's leadership of the party had largely been defined by the struggle with the left (real and imaginary), and he believed the CPGB had infiltrated the Labour Party, and was manipulating the Labour Left gathered round the newspaper *Tribune*.¹⁵² The Gaitskellites' response to the 1960 resolution had three dimensions: the formation of a party faction, the Campaign for Democratic Socialism (CDS); in the unions, the work of IRIS cells and other anti-communist groups; and the use of the party machine itself.

The Campaign for Democratic Socialism (CDS)

While the Gaitskellites dominated the PLP leadership, and had the support of the major unions, they had socialist opposition among the party's members. Gaitskell needed a faction. What became the Campaign for Democratic Socialism began before the pro-CND Labour Party conference resolution in February 1960 when William Rodgers, Secretary of the Fabian Society, a part of the social democratic network in the UK, organised a letter of support for Gaitskell from prospective parliamentary candidates. Among the fifteen who raised their heads above the parapets in this way were:

Maurice Foley, who had been secretary of the British section of the European Youth Campaign from 1951-59,¹⁵³ and later became a Foreign Office Minister and trustee of the Ariel Foundation;¹⁵⁴

Ben Hooberman, a lawyer involved in the ETU ballot-rigging case;

Bryan Magee, who subsequently became a Labour MP and then joined the SDP;

Dick Taverne, who later stood against the Labour Party as 'Democratic Labour'

¹⁵¹ Richard Fletcher, 'Who Were They Travelling with?' in Hirsch and Fletcher.

¹⁵² For this latter belief, to my knowledge, the Gaitskellites produced no evidence. Some of the Labour Right proved incredibly gullible when it came to this 'communist conspiracy', accepting as genuine the most obvious forgeries. See for example pp. 224-6 of Jack and Bessie Braddock's memoir *The Braddocks* (London: Macdonald, 1963) for a particularly choice example, passed to them by J. Bernard Hutton, who fronted several such forgeries. Who produced the forgeries? We do not know, but my guess would be IRD.

¹⁵³ This was funded by the CIA, though Foley has denied knowing this. See Bloch and Fitzgerald p. 106.

¹⁵⁴ On Ariel see Bloch and Fitzgerald pp. 151-2 and Kisch pp. 67-8.

and joined the SDP;

Shirley Williams, one of the 'Gang of Four', who founded the SDP.

Shortly after, a steering committee, containing Crosland, Jenkins and Gordon-Walker, was set up with Rodgers as chair. The group began working on a manifesto to be released in the event of Gaitskell's defeat in the forthcoming defence debate at the Party conference. On 24 November 1960, after the narrow defeat for Gaitskell's line at the conference, this group announced itself as the Campaign for Democratic Socialism, with Rodgers as chair.¹⁵⁵

Immediately after the formation of CDS, after his speech at Scarborough Gaitskell 'consulted Sarah Barker [the party's National Agent] who advised him that the Campaign could have his distant blessing'.¹⁵⁶

It set up permanent headquarters, officially 'financed by contributions from individual members of the Labour Party'. Ever since the Richard Fletcher article on CDS *et al* in 1977, there have been questions about how this operation was funded. In mid November 1960 – i.e. a fortnight after the launch – Rodgers 'reported to the steering committee that many small donations had been received, together with a large sum from a source who wished to remain anonymous.' As we saw above, Charles Forte donated money to the founders of *Forward*, and in his autobiography he quotes a letter from Gaitskell, thanking him for his financial generosity. This is undated unfortunately, but from the context it is 1961 or thereabouts.¹⁵⁷

This donation, whatever it was, enabled CDS to have 'field workers in the constituencies and unions, whom it supported with travelling expenses, literature and organisational back-up, and other publications, plus a regular bulletin campaign, circulated free of charge to a large mailing list within the movement. And all this was produced without a single subscription-paying member.'¹⁵⁸ John Diamond was the CDS fund-raiser.¹⁵⁹

A 1961 letter in CDS Campaign announced support from 45 MPs including Austen Albu (who wrote for IRIS), Crosland, Diamond (who joined the SDP),

¹⁵⁵ Haseler, *Gaitskellites*, p. 211.

¹⁵⁶ David Marquand, IHR CDS Witness Statement, 1990, p. 6. At the same seminar Bill Jones noted 'the importance of Philip Williams . . . Philip had a fantastic network of MPs'. IHR CDS Witness Statement, p. 13.

¹⁵⁷ Hirsch and Fletcher p. 62. See Forte p. 81 where Gaitskell writes, 'things have gone remarkably well inside the Party. And for this a very large amount of credit must go to our friends in the Campaign for Democratic Socialism, which you have helped so generously.'

¹⁵⁸ Hirsch and Fletcher p. 62.

¹⁵⁹ Windlesham p. 107.

Desmond Donnelly, who resigned in 1968;¹⁶⁰ Roy Jenkins (founder and leader of the SDP), Roy Mason, Christopher Mayhew (who joined the Liberals) and Reg Prentice (who joined the Conservatives).¹⁶¹ The following year were added new MPs William Rodgers (another of the 'Gang of Four') and Dick Taverne (who defected as a Democratic Labour MP, later SDP). The Gaitskellites' historian, Stephen Haseler, noted, 'The whole Central Leadership of the Party in Parliament, with the single exception of Wilson, were Campaign sympathisers.'¹⁶²

In the party's grassroots their significance is harder to assess but a 1962 study found that CDS did have some measurable effect in swinging perhaps as many as 1 in 3 of the constituency Labour Parties in which they were active.¹⁶³

In the unions

Working in some of the unions were clandestine anti-communist groupings, the best known of which was the AEU's 'club', and IRIS discussed above.¹⁶⁴ One of the people bridging the gap between the parliamentary and trade union wings of the movement was Charles Pannell, Secretary of the Parliamentary Trade Union Group of MP's and an AEU-sponsored MP.¹⁶⁵ Pannell told the American academic Irving Richter, of his 'close relationship' with the General Secretary of the AEU, Cecil Hallett,¹⁶⁶ and of their combined efforts to defeat the left in the industrial and political wings of the movement, by building IRIS 'cells'. Pannell told Richter that he, Hallett, and the IRIS cells working inside the AEU, were crucial in overturning the AEU's 1960 vote for CND and so restoring Labour Party's policy to being pro-nuclear, pro-NATO.¹⁶⁷ Birmingham MP Denis Howells 'devoted himself full time from the beginning of the Campaign until his reelection to Parliament and then after that part time to reversing the votes in

¹⁶⁰ For an account of his life see <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/wales/entries/197740a7-6f91-3a83-aa8d-d2db0082d19a>>.

¹⁶¹ Haseler, *Gaitskellites*, p. 217.

¹⁶² Haseler, *Gaitskellites* p. 219.

¹⁶³ Driver p. 97 citing *Political Quarterly*.

¹⁶⁴ There are odd traces of such groupings elsewhere. In *Labour's Northern Voice* in May 1969, Chris Norwood MP reported on the the 'Progressive Labour Group' in the shop-workers' union, USDAW, originally formed to fight communists but still operating and producing lists of approved candidates, the core activity of such a caucus.

¹⁶⁵ Windlesham fn 3 p. 82.

¹⁶⁶ Hallett was on the Common Cause council in the fifties.

¹⁶⁷ Richter pp. 144 and 5.

the Trade Unions . . . [and] played a very important part.¹⁶⁸

After the 1960 Party conference, 20 members of the TUC General Council signed a statement supporting NATO. Four of them, James Crawford, Harry Douglass, John Boyd and Sid Greene, were or were to become, officers (on paper, at any rate) of IRIS: a fifth, Sir Tom O'Brien, was still on the note paper of Common Cause. There were public gestures of support for CDS from Bill Carron and Tom Williamson, Ron Smith (Post Office Workers), Dame Flora Hancock, Anne Goodwin, W. Tallon and Jim Conway (both AEU), and Joe Godson's friend, the NUM's Sam Watson.¹⁶⁹

Using the party organisation

' . . . an informal committee consisting of the Party Leader, the Chief Whip, Bill Rodgers, the secretary of the right-wing ginger group the Campaign for Democratic Socialism, and other influential figures' was formed and met regularly 'to secure the selection of right-wing candidates for winnable constituencies'.¹⁷⁰ Professor George Jones, who had also been in CDS, commented that 'the relationship between CDS and the regional organisers of the Labour Party was very important.'¹⁷¹ The CDS had the support of at least half of the Regional Organisers, though how many is in dispute. Seyd suggests seven out of the party's twelve. Shaw thinks that Seyd must have got this wrong because one of the seven was left-winger Ron Hayward, who denies it.¹⁷² CDS organiser Bill Rodgers said that the regional organisers

were fairly well disposed, including the youngest of them who was called Ron Hayward, was very keen to have CDS making a contribution in the areas in which he was responsible . . . We believed that the party could be saved from itself and Hugh Gaitskell offered the best prospect of saving it. Once we had established that thought in the minds of the regional organisers, they acquiesced in what we did.¹⁷³

Partnership of the two wings

There are glimpses of the two wings of the labour movement working together. Cecil Hallett described a meeting between IRIS and the Trade Union Group of

¹⁶⁸ IHR, CDS Witness Statement, p. 14.

¹⁶⁹ Windlesham p. 109.

¹⁷⁰ Shaw, *Discipline*, p. 114.

¹⁷¹ IHR, CDS Witness Statement, p. 24.

¹⁷² Shaw, *Discipline*, fn 150, p. 331.

¹⁷³ Rodgers, IHR, CDS Witness Statement, p. 25

MPs in 1955 addressed by the CIA's labour man in Europe, Irving Brown.¹⁷⁴
CDS member Bernard Donoughue recalled:

In the summer of 1964, the MP for Finsbury died and I was telephoned by a friend, a left-wing journalist, and told that I must watch out, that there had been a meeting of key left-wing people and they had decided to capture Finsbury. They had a candidate, they had approached a number of people in the constituency, they had 27 votes, the candidate was going to be Clive Jenkins. I contacted one or two friends and the list of CDS people in Finsbury, including the Post Office and Telegraph Union people and they organised very actively. It emerged that the left, despite its incompetence,[sic] had their candidate and had 27 potential votes. CDS campaigned in the constituency and we won by 31 to 27, that was the summer of 1964.¹⁷⁵

In the recollection of the candidate concerned, Clive Jenkins, it was 1963. He was 'approached by a number of trade unions and ward Labour parties to stand for selection'. At the TUC at Blackpool he was tipped off that the General Management Committee of the Shoreditch and Finsbury constituency had been sent a document which described him as, among other things, the 'chief Trotskyist in Great Britain'. This had been given to journalists by Jim Matthews, the national industrial officer of the Municipal and General Workers Union, and an officer of Common Cause. Jenkins sued, collected damages and costs and later speculated about a CIA connection:

I was told by reliable friends that the anonymous letter, which had been mailed to every member of the selection committee came from a man who was seemingly a member of the CIA and operating under the cover of a petty news agency.¹⁷⁶

It is interesting to see Donoughue (above) referring to 'the Post Office and Telegraph Union people'. I presume he means the Union of Post Office Workers, one of the British unions with which the CIA is known to have worked in the 1960s. In the 1950s Peter D. Newell was an active member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. He worked as a draughtsman but wanted a change of career. It was suggested to him that he join the Post Office. Initially not keen on what he saw as a downward move, he has recalled how 'quite subtly (I now realise) it was suggested that once in the PO, I would soon be

¹⁷⁴ Richter p. 151.

¹⁷⁵ Bernard Donoughue, IHR, CDS, pp. 23/24.

¹⁷⁶ Jenkins pp. 49-51. I asked Jenkins about this in 1995 but he was unable to remember further details

able to write for *The Post*, the official fortnightly journal of the UPW [Union of Post Office Workers] – and be paid for it!’¹⁷⁷ He duly joined the Post Office, was contacted by Norman Stagg, the editor of the journal almost immediately, and began writing an anonymous, anti-communist column for it under the by-line of ‘Bellman’. For his column Stagg provided source material from the ICFTU, IRIS and the AFL-CIO.

At the time the Union of Post Office Workers was a member of the trade union international body Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (PTTI). Like many of the these international trade union organisations, the PTTI was penetrated – some would say run – by the CIA.¹⁷⁸ Its president was the late Joe Beirne of the Communication Workers of America. Beirne was also founder and Secretary-Treasurer of American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), created and run by the CIA.¹⁷⁹ As far as it is possible to be sure of anything in this field without a confession from the man himself or his case officer, Joe Beirne was a major asset of the CIA in the American and world labour movements.¹⁸⁰

Social democratic centralism

What Eric Shaw called social democratic centralism, the attempt by the right to police the entire Labour Party and trade union membership, peaked in 1962. In March 1961 five MPs, including Michael Foot, were expelled from the Parliamentary party for voting against the Conservative government’s defence estimates. The Gaitskellites repulsed the unilateralists at the annual conference that year; and in the Labour Party its ‘personnel committee’, the organisational subcommittee, was dominated by Ray Gunter MP¹⁸¹ and George Brown, a ‘CIA source’,¹⁸² and serviced by the Party’s National Agent’s Department, which received its information from IRD and others.

Then things went wrong. Determined upon a final purge of the Parliamentary party, George Brown approached MI5, via the journalist

¹⁷⁷ Letter to author, 25 May 1990.

¹⁷⁸ Agee, *CIA Diary*, p. 618.

¹⁷⁹ On AIFLD see Fred Hirsch ‘The Labour Movement: Penetration Point for U.S. Intelligence and Transnationals’ in Hirsch and Fletcher, and ‘The AFL-CIA’ by former US Air Force Intelligence officer Winslow Peck in Frazier (ed.)

¹⁸⁰ Peter Newell was introduced to Beirne at the UPW conference at Blackpool. Newell wrote of this episode in his life in *Freedom*, 25 September 1976, and more recently in *Perspectives* number 9, 1995. On the late Joseph Beirne and CIA see *Counterspy*, February 1974 pp. 42 and 43 and May 1979 p. 13; and Agee, *CIA Dairy*, p. 603.

¹⁸¹ In 1968 he became a director of IRIS.

¹⁸² See Tom Bower’s biography of Sir Dick White, p. 356.

Chapman Pincher, for evidence of Soviet links to Labour MPs believed to be 'fellow travellers'. But MI5 declined to provide any, apparently because afraid that to do so would reveal their sources within the PLP. Then, with the Macmillan government in what appeared to be terminal decline, Gaitskell died suddenly and the right in the Parliamentary Party – and the Anglo-American intelligence and security services – saw the party leadership slip from the Gaitskellites' hands as Harold Wilson won the leadership election – and then the general election of 1964.

Anti-communism as a profession: the Information Research Department

In the 1960s the left was on the rise: the 'balance of forces', as the Soviet block's ideologists used to put it, appeared to be moving in the left's direction. Whatever its causes, despite the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and despite the US assault on South East Asia, the beginnings of a détente between the superpowers began to break out; the Cold War was becoming cold thaw. In Britain, while the membership of the CPGB declined, the Party continued to play a significant role in the growth of labour militancy. Symbolised by Harold Wilson, a nominal 'left-winger' becoming Prime Minister in 1964, this perceptible shift to the left alarmed one group in particular, the professional anti-communist network in Britain, at the heart of which was the Information Research Department (IRD).

For a supposedly secret agency, we now know quite a bit about IRD – certainly a great deal more than we did in 1978 when the organisation was closed. IRD finally got partly exposed because of its curious position of working with the intelligence services, but not for them; of being part of the Foreign Office but not controlled by it. As Brian Crozier hints at throughout his fascinating memoir, IRD became an almost totally independent force in the British secret state after the war. We can only guess why this curious position was allowed to develop and then continue for more than 20 years. Was it that it suited the rest of Whitehall not to have their hands on IRD lest they get them dirty? At any rate the absence of 'interdepartmental control' did not seem to matter so long as the whole of Whitehall was in step on its response to the Soviet Union.¹⁸³ But, as Peter Hennessy remarked in a piece in *The Times*, 'once détente developed, a frequent complaint from the more détente-minded in Whitehall' – by which he means the Foreign and Commonwealth Office – 'was "We have one foreign policy, IRD has another."' ¹⁸⁴

The accumulated fragments of information that we now have show that

¹⁸³ Lucas and Morris p. 106 describe IRD as 'operating without interdepartmental control'.

¹⁸⁴ *The Times*, 1 March 1983.

the founders of IRD did what they had learned to do in the wartime Political Warfare Executive – and it remains a source of embarrassment for the British state. Tom Bower’s book on Sir Dick White and SIS contains only one (unindexed) reference to the department. With IRD under sporadic investigation since 1978, the British state has fallen back to the position where, if pushed, it would acknowledge that IRD did use ‘grey’, i.e. trueish propaganda, as well as the straightforward, ‘white’, true variety. Among the handful of academics interested in IRD, this was the current view until recently. But it does not explain why, as Lucas and Morris ask in their conclusions, ‘the records of an organisation, ostensibly existing only to provide “information”, [are] retained after more than forty years?’¹⁸⁵

Assuming the files have not been ‘weeded’ to death, among the embarrassments therein are:

1. The extent to which the British print and broadcast media of the 1950s and 60s recycled IRD material. When IRD was formally closed in 1978¹⁸⁶ it still had 100 British journalists on its contact list, including correspondents for the *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Telegraph*, *Observer*, *Sunday Mirror*, *News of the World*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Guardian*, *Times*, *Financial Times*, *Soviet Analyst* and *Economist*.¹⁸⁷
2. The revelation that IRD was a full-blown Political Warfare Executive, with all that implies, despite the fact that but no government – no Cabinet – had ever authorised the creation of the organisation.
3. Most sensitive of all, IRD used ‘black propaganda’ in political warfare, at home as well as abroad.

Professional anti-communists, IRD peddled their wares in the insurgencies of the 1950s, doing their best to portray the nationalist, liberation movements of Cyprus, Malaya and Kenya as pawns of their Russian masters.¹⁸⁸ In 1962, the former Foreign Editor of the *Daily Express*, Charles Foley, wrote a Penguin Special on Cyprus, *Legacy of Strife*. During the war with EOKA, Foley was in Cyprus working on the *Times of Cyprus*, which he had founded in 1955. He described some of the work of the ‘British information and propaganda

¹⁸⁵ Lucas and Morris p. 106.

¹⁸⁶ In fact some of its functions were simply transferred to other parts of the Foreign Office; but the ‘black’ operations seem to have largely ceased.

¹⁸⁷ Lynn Smith p. 72.

¹⁸⁸ See Carruthers, who usefully describes some of the opposition this tactic produced in other branches of the British state. In part this tactic appears to have been adopted to make British policy acceptable to the Americans.

services' – 'the Secretariat' – on the island.¹⁸⁹

No effort was spared by the Secretariat to win over the foreign press with titillating stories. Sometimes, for the benefit of American correspondents, "captured documents" which they were not allowed to see confirmed that EOKA was modelled on communist lines and that an increasing number of young communists were joining it. The official introduction of sex into the Cyprus problem was another product of this period. Reporters were invited to "Operation Tea-Party" in the Central News Room and offered libations of everything but tea together with a handout declaring that schoolgirls had been "required to prostitute themselves with fellow-members of EOKA". A later pamphlet described the sexual relations of such girls with members of the killer groups in one (unnamed) town, alleging that one of them had her first lover at the age of twelve.¹⁹⁰

The Times on 9 March 1983 carried a letter from former British Ambassador Mr H. W. King, headed, rather dryly, 'Possible failures of information'. In it Mr King described some IRD activities while he was a 'member of the Diplomatic Service' in an unnamed country. He described how he received a briefing paper which included a 'hair-raising allegation about the country in which I was serving, and was paid to know about, which appeared flat contrary to all the evidence available.' When he asked for the source of the information he was told that IRD, 'of course, had access to secret information which I had not seen.'

I rang Mr King. The country was Guinea in Africa, and the IRD briefing had claimed that there was a group of Cubans in Guinea training black African guerrillas. Eventually he extracted from the Foreign Office the information that the source of this allegation had been a tiny local paper in Southern Germany. Here is a recognisable IRD disinformation operation: not white, not grey, but black propaganda. IRD source plants false story in small outlet – perhaps using a press agency of some kind; perhaps an IRD front agency – which either can't afford to, or can't be bothered to, check the story's accuracy. Once in print abroad, in an 'independent' publication, the story can be 'surfaced',¹⁹¹ imported back to London and passed on as 'news'.

¹⁸⁹ Foley p. 34. One of whose members was Laurence Durrell, the novelist, there in the role of Director of Information Services. See Carruthers pp. 196-201.

¹⁹⁰ Foley p. 104. On IRD and Cyprus see Carruthers pp. 209/10.

¹⁹¹ This term was used by former head of IRD, the late Ray Whitney, later a Conservative MP, in an article in the *Sunday Telegraph* of 3 July 1988, in which he attacked, *inter alia*, this journal.

IRD was part of wider, post-war anti-communist struggle played out on a world scale. Nominally allies, the British and US anti-communist efforts were also rivals, especially when the British found the Americans moving into what had been their spheres of influence.¹⁹² The former CIA officer, Joseph B. Smith, describes working with – and against – the British in the intelligence milieu of the Far East in the mid 1950s. Arriving in Singapore as a newly trained CIA officer, he found that the British were

quite concerned about the fact that the [Asia] Foundation [one of the CIA fronts] has established an office in Singapore . . . [and] were extremely wary of the fact that we had such considerable sums to spend. In particular they were worried about the spreading into the area of the international anti-Communist front organisations we were supporting in Europe, like the World Assembly of Youth (WAY), the International Student Conference (COSEC), the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the Congress of Cultural Freedom.¹⁹³

Last post among the bog wogs ¹⁹⁴

The last sighting of IRD's core, 'black' role of psychological warfare is in Northern Ireland. When the British state began taking the Northern Ireland war seriously in the early seventies, IRD was included as part of the counterinsurgency kit and IRD officer Hugh Mooney was sent to train the new Army psy-ops unit, Information Policy.¹⁹⁵ Mooney constructed Information Policy in the same way as IRD, concealing the psy-war role behind the cover role of a propaganda unit, which, in turn, was concealed by the formal information role. The techniques seen in Cyprus, Kenya and Malaya are there in Colin Wallace's account of the unit at Army HQ, Lisburn. Disinformation was planted in the media; foreign journalists were taken into back rooms and shown 'secret' documents – diaries, leaflets, journals, minutes of meetings;

¹⁹² 'The British and Italians were particularly unhappy over the spread in Europe and, even more for the British, in Asia of anti-Communist front groups supported with CIA funds'. Robin Winks p. 391.

¹⁹³ Joseph B. Smith pp. 138 and 152.

¹⁹⁴ This expression was used by one of Colin Wallace's (English) commanding officers in Northern Ireland.

¹⁹⁵ Mooney is pictured in Fred Holroyd's memoir of Northern Ireland, *War Without Honour*, (Hull: Medium Publishing, 1988) and can be seen at <tinyurl.com/1jllkgv0> or <<https://villagemagazine.ie/john-hume-never-received-an-apology-from-the-british-secret-service-for-the-character-assassination-campaign-they-conducted-against-him/>>.

some genuine, many forged.¹⁹⁶ For the most part IRD tried, yet again, to establish the insurgents as a part of the Soviet global conspiracy: Ireland was 'the next Cuba'. But after the re-election of the Wilson government in 1974 they also began trying to show support for the IRA from a Labour Party influenced by the CPGB.¹⁹⁷

Although we know quite a lot about IRD's structure, we have evidence of some of its techniques, and we know about some of its book publishing activities, what we do not have are many examples of IRD's work in mainland Britain. We know that there were IRD briefings on British domestic politics. Brian Crozier tells us that in the 1960s, 'IRD had played an important role, by disseminating accurate background papers on the CPGB and on other communist groups.' Such background papers, I assume, are the basis of documents such as the Common Cause *Bulletin* no. 127, which listed CPGB personnel right down to the membership of regional subcommittees, and includes the coy statement at the beginning, that the issue was based on 'Original sources and materials, the like of which have not previously been made public.'

Thanks to some documents released to the National Archives recently, we do know about two IRD operations on mainland Britain. The first is their role in the publication of a famous pamphlet by Woodrow Wyatt in 1956, *The Peril in Our Midst*.

In 1955 Wyatt lost his seat as a Labour MP and had become a producer/ the BBC television programme Panorama. Wyatt produced an episode of Panorama about an apparent threat of communists in the British trade union movement. This was triggered by an alleged attempt by 'communists' to seize control of the executive committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU). The research for this he later converted into magazine articles; and these, in turn, were brought together as the pamphlet *The Peril in Our Midst*.¹⁹⁸ The 'communist threat' to the AEU executive was duly repulsed. However we have learned from an IRD document recently released to the National Archives that IRD probably had a hand in all this. The IRD document¹⁹⁹ describes Wyatt as someone 'with whom we have been in close

¹⁹⁶ See Foot, *Who Framed Colin Wallace?*, especially the annexes in which some of the forgeries from this period are reproduced.

¹⁹⁷ Prompted by Fred Holroyd and Colin Wallace, Ken Livingstone MP began asking parliamentary questions about IRD in 1988. See Foot, *Who Framed Colin Wallace?*, p. 17.

¹⁹⁸ Still available from Amazon and Abebooks.

¹⁹⁹ <tinyurl.com/2yp2xe3d> or <<https://www.thecanary.co/uk/2020/05/30/secret-memos-confirm-government-role-in-the-jailing-of-ricky-tomlinson/>>

touch since 1956' – the year of the Panorama programme. It shows that in 1971 IRD – and Woodrow Wyatt again – were involved in the production of another TV programme about the 'communist (and Trotskyist) threat' in the British trade unions. The document also namecheck IRIS's Andy McKeown as 'another old and trusted contact of ours'.

Little wonder then that, as Brian Crozier told us in his memoir, 'as soon as the news of Labour's narrow victory [in 1974] came in, IRD suspended all its reports on subversion in Britain.'²⁰⁰

The subversion hunters and the social democrats in the 1970s

The arrival of Harold Wilson as leader of the Labour Party must have been a serious shock to the Anglo-American intelligence services. One minute the party was in the complete control of a faction which they had been promoting – 'running' would be too strong – since about 1950, and the next the party, and the second most important member of the NATO alliance, is in the hands of someone who has spent the post-war years going to and from Moscow as an East-West trader!

The rise of the left in the Labour Party and trade union movement, symbolised by the ascent of Wilson, was being monitored by IRD and its satellites, the Economic League, IRIS, Common Cause – and by Brian Crozier, who raised the alarm in the 1970 collection he edited, *We Will Bury You*.²⁰¹ Before the IRD document reported in 2021 (see footnote 73) the charge that these groups – Economic League, IRIS, Common Cause – were IRD 'satellites' was difficult to substantiate. None of their personnel had, to my knowledge, every admitted it. However, all these groups published material which could only have come from the state – and IRD is the obvious conduit.²⁰²

Working the same seam – perhaps for a different sponsor – was former Army officer and Conservative MP, Geoffrey Stewart-Smith. In Stewart-Smith's journal, *East-West Digest*, in 1972, for example, we find names which appeared in Crozier's 1970 anthology: Harry Welton of the Economic League, who had been in the anti-left business for 'fifty fighting years', to cite the title

²⁰⁰ Crozier p. 108.

²⁰¹ London, Tom Stacey Ltd. It had contributions from Brigadier W. F. K. Thompson; Alfred Sherman, who turns up in the Thatcher movement a few years later; and Michael Bourdeaux, who was head of the then recently formed Keston College which studied and promoted Christianity in the Soviet bloc. I noted in *Lobster* 23 that Keston was then receiving funding from the American government's National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

²⁰² Take, for example, the Economic League's 'Notes and Comments' series. In no. 895, 'The New Face of Communism', there is material quoted from Yugoslav radio and TV and Radio Moscow. The Economic League, presumably, did not have its own monitoring service.

of the League's in-house history, and David Williams, the main writer for the Common Cause *Bulletin*.²⁰³

The abolition of the proscription list

Anxiety among the subversive-watchers heightened throughout the Heath years as the insurrection in Northern Ireland continued and conflict with the labour movement on the mainland UK increased, and leapt enormously with the abolition of the Proscription List – organisations which Labour Party members could not belong to – in 1973. Most of the Parliamentary Labour Party at the time seems to have barely noticed its abolition, so insignificant did the event seem. Of the various members of the Wilson governments who have published memoirs or dairies covering this period, only Tony Benn thought it an event worth recording.²⁰⁴ But to the subversion-watchers it showed the extent of the CPGB's influence in the Labour Party. Chapman Pincher at the *Daily Express*, for example, one of the outlets for the anti-subversion lobby, wrote nearly twenty years later that 'the left-wing extremists who had infiltrated the National Executive of the Labour Party induced the 1973 Party conference to abolish the Proscribed list'.²⁰⁵ But to what end? Pincher tells us it 'meant that even MPs could join the World Peace Council, the British-Soviet Friendship Society and other outfits run essentially for the benefit of Moscow'.²⁰⁶ But these never amounted to much in the 1950s and 60s – I was in CND in the sixties and have no memory of them – and meant less than nothing in 1973. It was precisely because those groups meant so little that the list was abolished as an anachronism.²⁰⁷

For the subversion hunters the Proscription List disappearing was one more event in a bad year, for 1973 also saw the first assault on IRD by the rest of the more détente-minded Foreign Office.²⁰⁸ The next year saw the Heath government's defeat at the hands of the National Union of Mineworkers, in some part due to a CPGB sympathiser (but not member) named Arthur

²⁰³ *East-West Digest* mostly consisted of large chunks of blind (authorless), extremely detailed, apparently pretty accurate material on the British Left: reports on meetings and conferences; documents and journals analysed.

²⁰⁴ Benn diary entry for 11 June 1973.

²⁰⁵ Pincher 1991 p. 113.

²⁰⁶ Pincher 1991 p. 113

²⁰⁷ The important group on that list was the then minute Revolutionary Socialist League which was to spend the next decade penetrating the Labour Party as the Militant Tendency.

²⁰⁸ Crozier calls this 'the IRD massacre', but points out that IRD had grown to become the largest single Foreign Office department. See Crozier pp. 104-8.

Scargill. By mid-1974 the anti-subversive chorus were all singing from the same page and the theory of Soviet control through the CPGB's role in unions and thus into the Labour Party, was being broadcast by everything from the Conservative Party-supporting press to the activists with connections in the intelligence services and the military.²⁰⁹ This is the background to the cries and alarms of 1974/5, the talk of military coups and the formation of semi-clandestine 'action groups' and militias by, *inter alia*, former Deputy Chief of SIS, George Kennedy Young, and David Stirling. The trade unions were at the heart of the subversive-hunters' theory, with the AEU the most important of them. When David Stirling's grandiose Better Britain-GB75 plans were 'blown' prematurely in 1974, he abandoned them and joined forces with TRUEMID, another group of anti-socialist former AEU officials. (TRUEMID is discussed below.)

The Social Democratic Alliance (SDA)

Within the Labour Party itself there was activity to combat the rise of the left. On the party political axis two latter-day Gaitskellites, Stephen Haseler and Douglas Eden, in 1975 formed the Social Democratic Alliance (SDA) and began the struggle with the left in local London politics.²¹⁰ Over the next three years the SDA, and Haseler in particular, received much favourable newspaper coverage for their accounts of the subversives' take-over of the Labour Party and trade unions, much of it fanciful in the extreme. For example on the publication of his book, *The Death of British Democracy*, Haseler wrote in *The Times* (29 April 1976):

We may now be on the verge of an economy which will remove itself from the Western trading system by import controls, strict control of capital movements and eventually non-convertability of the currency. At home this will involve rationing, the direction of capital and labour and the final end of the free trade union movement.

In 1980, among the Labour MPs Haseler and the SDA proposed to put up candidates against, were Stan Orme, Clive Soley, Neil Kinnock and Geoff

²⁰⁹ From the likes of KGB defector Oleg Gordievsky we have learned that the KGB were unaware that they were apparently on the verge of controlling the Labour Party through the trade unions.

²¹⁰ Patrick Wintour in the *New Statesman*, 25 July 1980: 'three of [Frank] Chapple's closest union colleagues, including his research assistant, have been active in the Social Democratic Alliance'. Crozier notes in his memoir that he first met the SDA's Douglas Eden at one of the early sessions of the National Association for Freedom. 'The NAF was supposed to be strictly non-party, and the presence of a long-time Labour man, as Eden was, emphasised this aspect of its work.' p. 147

Rooker, none of whom could be remotely described as on the Labour left.²¹¹ Among the SDA's early supporters was Peter Stephenson, then the editor of *Socialist Commentary*.

And the AEU

July 1974 saw the formation, with Common Cause funding, of the Trade Union Education Centre for Democratic Socialism (TUECDS), which described itself as 'an independent trade union education body run by politically-moderate trade unionists for politically-moderate trade unionists'.²¹² TUECDS was launched in November 1974 with a lecture by the SDA's Dr Stephen Haseler. The personnel involved in the early stages of TUECDS's life were members of the AEU, notably John Weakley, and the building workers' union UCATT. Among those who had been attending the first year's meetings were UCATT officials, AEU officials, David Moller, a journalist from the *Readers' Digest*,²¹³ the widow of Leslie Cannon, Lord Patrick Gordon-Walker and Kate Losinska, then recently elected president of the civil service union, the CPSA.²¹⁴

More former AEU officials, Frank Nodes, Sid Davies and Ron McLaughlin, were involved in the formation of TRUEMID, (the Movement for True Industrial Democracy or the True Movement for Industrial Democracy, it's been given as both), launched in 1975 with finance from a variety of industrial and City enterprises.²¹⁵ TRUEMID did what IRIS had done: it tried to influence the election of union officials by putting out information about the supposed left in the union. TRUEMID's activities were chiefly focused on the AEU, the civil service union the CPSA and the electricians union, the EETPU. David Stirling, after the collapse of his GB75 and Better Britain plans, was recruited onto the TRUEMID council.²¹⁶

Also reappearing in this period was the some time US Labor Attaché to

²¹¹ See 'Moderates drive to challenge 11 Labour MPs', *Daily Telegraph*, 1 February 1980.

²¹² This is from the only TUECDS document I have seen, a progress report dated 12 May 1975.

²¹³ In *Lobster* 34 I suggested that since the *Readers' Digest* was a well known cover for CIA officers, Moller was probably CIA. Moller rang me up and denied it.

²¹⁴ TUECDS is discussed by Paul Foot in *Socialist Worker*, 1 November 1975.

²¹⁵ Michael Ivens of Aims of Industry claims the credit for introducing David Stirling to Frank Nodes. See his obituary notice on Stirling in the *Independent*, 17 November 1990. Some of the TRUEMID funding is given in 'The bosses' union' in *Leveller* 17, 1978. The most detailed account of the organisation is in Hoe ch. 24.

²¹⁶ See Monica Brimacombe, 'The Company They Keep', in the *New Statesman*, 9 May 1986. Paul Foot in the piece cited in note 88 states that TRUEMID had six permanent full-time staff and three temporary full-time staff.

Britain, Joseph Godson who, though formally retired, had returned to the UK in 1971 and continued with his labor attaché work – pushing out US views and interests among the British trade union movement, and selecting trade unionists for freebies to the US. Godson was a founder member of the Labour Committee for TransAtlantic Understanding (LCTU), the labour section of the British Atlantic Committee, a NATO support group.²¹⁷ In May 1976 LCTU began the Labour and Trade Union Press Service (LTUPS). On the LTUPS editorial committee was the ubiquitous Peter Stephenson, editor of the Gaitskellite *Socialist Commentary*, and one of the early members of the Social Democratic Alliance. Treasurer of the LTUPS was General Secretary of the EEPTU, Frank Chapple, and its chair was Bill Jordan of the AEU.²¹⁸

Europe

The social democratic wing of the Labour Party had three key positions: British membership of NATO, retention of British nuclear weapons, and membership of the EEC. After the defeat of CND at the Labour conference of 1961, it was European Economic Community (EEC) membership which became their great cause. With this achieved with the EEC referendum vote for 'yes' in 1975, when it came to the ideological struggles within the Labour Party in the mid and late 1970s, in David Marquand's words, 'they lost the battle of ideas with the Left by default . . . they really didn't fight the battle of ideas.'

Support for EEC membership within the Labour Party had been formally organised first in 1959 by the Labour Common Market Committee (founders Roy Jenkins, Jack Diamond and Norman Hart), which became the Labour Committee for Europe in the mid 1960s. European unity had been one of the projects favoured by the USA, looking for anti-Soviet alliances in the early post-war era, and the European Movement had been funded by the Agency.²¹⁹ As well as receiving the support of the US, in the 1960s Gaitskellites Roy Jenkins, Shirley Williams and William Rodgers were among the regular attenders of the annual Anglo-German Konigswinter conferences.²²⁰ This time the social democrats were being supported by the British Foreign Office, which

²¹⁷ See also *State Research* no. 16, pp. 68-74 and no. 17 pp. 95 and 96, and *Sunday Times*, 17 February 1980. It was later funded by the US government's National Endowment for Democracy.

²¹⁸ Jordan was later to be among the founders of another 'moderate' caucus in the trade unions in the 1980s, Mainstream.

²¹⁹ The Movement's youth wing, the European Youth Movement, had as its secretary Maurice Foley, one of the Gaitskellites. See 'The CIA backs the Common Market' by Weissman, Kelly and Hosenball in Agee ed. *Dirty Work*, pp. 201-3.

²²⁰ Bradley p. 52.

had decided by then that their future lay in the Common Market.

The CDS, the Gaitskellites, never accepted Wilson as the legitimate leader of the Labour Party and plotted constantly against him. The personnel of the Gaitskellites, the Labour Committee on Europe and the CDS were virtually identical.²²¹ In the 1960s it was the CDS that Harold Wilson identified as the group working against him.²²² When the group formally broke up it continued as a dining club, the 1963 Club. In the early 1970s Tony Benn identified them as 'the old Campaign for Democratic Socialism-Europe group'.²²³

In 1970 the election of the Heath government meant that another serious effort to get Britain in the EEC would be made and the issue would divide the Labour Party then in opposition. In early 1971 Tony Benn's diary records him talking – with Roy Jenkins – of the Common Market issue splitting the Labour Party.²²⁴ Ten months later, on 19 October after a pro- and anti- clash in the Shadow Cabinet, Benn commented on the emergence of 'a European Social Democrat wing in the Parliamentary Party led by Bill Rodgers'.²²⁵ This group formally announced itself on 28 October 1971 when 69 pro-Market Labour MPs voted with the Conservative government in favour of entry into the EEC in principle. From then on the group operated as a party within a party, with William Rodgers acting as an unofficial whip.²²⁶

A new social democratic party?

The leadership of the parliamentary Gaitskellite faction had fallen to Roy Jenkins, and as early as 1970 some of that group has begun trying to get him to lead the formation of a new party.²²⁷ After the Europe vote in 1971 Dick Taverne and Bill Rodgers went to Jenkins and told him they should resign and form a new party.²²⁸ *Jenkins declined*. Taverne's selection for the Lincoln seat

²²¹ With a number of important qualifications. Hugh Gaitskell, for example, was not pro EEC membership.

²²² Dorril and Ramsay p. 188.

²²³ Dorril and Ramsay p. 188.

²²⁴ Entry for 13 January 1971, pp. 324-5 of *Office Without Power*.

²²⁵ Benn, *Office Without Power* p. 381. Benn also added in that paragraph: 'When I heard Charlie Pannell say that for him Europe was an article of faith, he put it above the Labour Party and above the Labour Movement, I was finally convinced that this was a deep split.' Pannell was AEU, Common Cause, Catholic.

²²⁶ Bradley p. 53.

²²⁷ 'Dick Taverne recalls a meeting of pro-Marketeers in his flat to discuss tactics as early as June 1970.' Bradley p. 53.

²²⁸ Bradley pp. 53/4.

had been organised by the pro-CDS, pro-Europe, Labour Party regional organiser for the area, Jim Cattermole.²²⁹ In December 1972 MP Taverne, at odds with his constituency party, and about to be deselected, decided to fight them and suggested again that Jenkins leave and form a new party. *Jenkins declined*.²³⁰ In 1973, after winning the Lincoln by-election as a Democratic Labour candidate, against the official Labour Party candidate, Taverne formed the Campaign for Social Democracy and sought Jenkins' support. *Jenkins declined*. That year, however, helped by Sir Fred Hayday, former chair of the TUC, and Alf Allen, future chair of the TUC, Jenkins did 'set up an institutional framework' with moderate trade union leaders – a regular dining group in the Charing Cross Hotel.²³¹

In December 1974 the Manifesto Group was formed within the PLP. Described by Barbara Castle as 'a group of middle-of-the-road and right-wing Labour MPs [which] had been meeting to discuss how to counter the growing influence of the left-wing Tribune group of MPs'.²³² Its chair was Dr Dickson Mabon, its Secretary was John Horam, who became a Conservative Minister under John Major, and two of its most active members were CDS enthusiasts David Marquand and Brian Walden.²³³

In the third Wilson government, formed in 1974, the Jenkins group in cabinet was down to 'a beleaguered minority of four', to use Jenkins' words – Jenkins, Harold Lever, Shirley Williams and Reg Prentice.²³⁴ In his memoir Jenkins describes Prentice as 'a man of flat-footed courage who had emerged in the previous two years [i.e. 1973 and 74] out of the rather stolid centre of the Labour Party into . . . my most unhesitating ally in the Cabinet.'²³⁵ Throughout 1974-5 Prentice was moving right very quickly and his speeches began to reflect this. In 1975 Prime Minister Wilson took exception to one of them, and 'More out of enlightened self-interest than generosity', as he put it,

²²⁹ Shaw, *Discipline*, p. 108. In the 'witness seminar' on the CDS, p. 24, David Marquand referred to 'the great barony of Jim Cattermole'.

²³⁰ CDS 'witness seminar' p. 55.

²³¹ Jenkins p. 354. In the CDS 'witness seminar', p. 27, William Rodgers stated that CDS had a 'very close working relationship with Fred Hayday of the General and Municipal Workers'.

²³² Castle, *Diaries*, p. 156.

²³³ Bradley p. 60. With the exception of Giles Radice MP and George Robertson MP, both GMWU/GMB-sponsored, the whole of the active leadership of the Manifesto Group subsequently joined the SDP.

²³⁴ Jenkins p. 427.

²³⁵ Jenkins p. 419.

Jenkins told Wilson that if Prentice was sacked from the cabinet he would also go.²³⁶ Shortly afterwards Wilson called Jenkins' bluff and shifted Prentice to a junior ministry post outside the Cabinet proper. Jenkins resolved to resign, tried to take Shirley Williams and Harold Lever with him in resignation – only to find that while he was ready now, Harold Lever was not.²³⁷

In Jenkins' memoir there are some wistful remarks on '1975 as a great missed opportunity for Heath and Whitelaw and a whole regiment of discarded Conservative "wets" as much for Shirley Williams and Steel and me.'²³⁸ Jenkins was looking back on the 1975 Common Market referendum campaign during which he found it more congenial working with pro-EEC Conservatives and Liberals than he did with the left-wing of his own party. It would not be hard to imagine that Conservatives like Heath and Whitelaw found Jenkins more congenial than some of the right-wing yahoos then gathering on the Conservative Party's fringe;²³⁹ and there is a large hint in Mrs Thatcher's second volume of memoirs that some kind of realignment was attempted on the back of the referendum.²⁴⁰

In December 1976 Prentice was discussing how to bring down the Callaghan government with Conservative MPs Julian Amery and Maurice Macmillan, and Gaitskellite Labour MP's Walden and the late John McIntosh.²⁴¹ Haseler, whose information on this comes from Prentice's diaries, tells us: 'For some years past the arguments for a realignment had been taken seriously by a section of the Conservative Party who had been close to Macmillan.'²⁴² Prentice may have thought he was discussing bringing down the government with parliamentary colleagues, but in this context they had other, more interesting, connections. Amery was a former SIS officer and a friend of the former Deputy Chief of SIS, the late George Kennedy Young, who was then machinating against the Labour government with his Unison Committee for

²³⁶ Jenkins tells us that he sent this message through the Prime Minister's Principal Private Secretary, Robert Armstrong, thus – deliberately or not – informing the Whitehall establishment. Jenkins p. 420

²³⁷ Jenkins p. 422.

²³⁸ Jenkins pp. 425-6.

²³⁹ On 14 October 1975 Tony Benn records in his diary: 'Robert Kilroy-Silk, Labour MP for Ormskirk, told me that £2 million had been left unspent by the pro-Market lobby and it was a fund of which the trustees were Heath, Thorpe and Jenkins . . . the rumour was that if Wilson moved too far to the Left they would use the money to set up a new party.'

²⁴⁰ See her *The Path to Power*, p. 331.

²⁴¹ Haseler, *Battle for Britain*, pp. 59 and 60

²⁴² Haseler, *Battle for Britain*, pp. 59 and 60

Action.²⁴³ Maurice Macmillan had been a director of one of the IRD front companies and had also been involved in the attempt in mid-1974 to launch a government of national unity to prevent the reelection of Harold Wilson. Prentice proposed that Jenkins form a coalition with Margaret Thatcher as leader but, on Prentice's account, haunted by memories of 1931 and the fate of Ramsay MacDonald, not surprisingly, once again *Jenkins declined*.²⁴⁴

When Harold Wilson resigned in 1976, Jenkins stood for leader of the Labour Party, lost, and went off to Brussels as President of the EEC. Jenkins bailed out at a good time, for the pro-Common Market wing of the Labour Party was losing the fight against the left in the Parliamentary Labour Party – while constantly talking about quitting and forming a new party. In 1977 the Campaign for a Labour Victory, 'in many ways a resurrection of the of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism', was launched.²⁴⁵ William Rodgers' p.a. was one of the chief organisers and it set up its office in the HQ of the EETPU.²⁴⁶ Its full-time organiser was Alec McGivan who became the first full-time worker for the SDP, four years later.

Around Jenkins in exile gathered some of the Gaitskellites. Mike Thomas, a Labour and then SDP MP: 'there in fact were a group of people working with Roy Jenkins outside parliament, most of whom were known to many of us, friends of ours, some who were less well known, in the SDA or elsewhere.'²⁴⁷ In November 1979, after Jenkins' had been given the Dimpleby Lecture on BBC TV in which to more or less announce his intention of forming a social democratic party, businessman Clive Lindley and London Labour Councillor Jim Daley, both of whom had been active in the Campaign for Labour Victory,²⁴⁸ set up the Radical Centre for Democratic Studies, 'a press cutting and information service on the political scene in Britain' – and a support group for Jenkins.²⁴⁹

Finally a group met to discuss forming the new party. From the SDA there was Stephen Haseler; from Roy Jenkins' UK support group, Clive Lindley and Jim Daley; David Marquand, Jenkins' p.a. in Brussels, and Lord Harris, who had

²⁴³ The best account of Unison is in Dorril and Ramsay.

²⁴⁴ Prentice thus managed to misunderstand – and insult – both Jenkins and Thatcher.

²⁴⁵ Bradley p. 59.

²⁴⁶ 'How Frank Chapple stays on top', *New Statesman*, 25 July 1980.

²⁴⁷ CDS witness Seminar p. 50.

²⁴⁸ Owen p. 457.

²⁴⁹ Bradley p. 73.

been Jenkins' p.r. man in the 1960s.²⁵⁰ The last stop on their way out of the Labour Party for these social democrats was the formation of the Council for Social Democracy in 1981.

Soon after the Social Democratic Party launch, issue 52 of the now defunct radical magazine *The Leveller* had as its cover story: 'Exposed: the CIA and the Social Democrats'. The author was Phil Kelly, one of the journalists who had exposed Brian Crozier's Forum/CIA links. Kelly had been the recipient of the leaked documents from inside the Institute for the Study of Conflict, and had led the campaign to prevent the Labour government expelling former CIA officer, Philip Agee. For his temerity Kelly had been labelled a 'KGB man' in briefings given by MI5, one of which was foolishly committed to paper by *Searchlight* editor Gerry Gable.²⁵¹ Kelly's article went over some of the ground covered in this essay, but though the CIA was visible in the connection to the Congress for Cultural Freedom and Forum World Features, the piece otherwise failed to justify its title.²⁵²

The Crozier operations

Running through much of this activity in the 1970s was Brian Crozier who had been warning about the rise of the British Left since the late 1960s. Crozier takes us back to the CIA operation the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) discussed in above. The CIA control of the CCF and the magazine *Encounter* began to be threatened with exposure in 1963 when, reviewing an anthology from the magazine, Conor Cruise O'Brien wrote that '*Encounter's* first loyalty is to America' and an editorial in the *Sunday Telegraph* referred to a secret and regular subvention to *Encounter* from 'the Foreign Office'.²⁵³ The next year,

²⁵⁰ Bradley p. 73.

David Marquand on Haseler: 'Haseler's invective is all working class . . . He's invented a history of a sort of populist radicalism, Norman Tebbitry in a way . . . I remember being involved in a television thing in the early 1970s on Europe where he opposed it on a sort of proletarian, solidarity, populist-nationalist ground.' Desai pp. 10-11 fn. 11.

²⁵¹ This is the so-called Gable memo, first revealed in the *New Statesman*, 15 February 1980 and reprinted in full in *Lobster* 24.

²⁵² I have an undated note I made in the late 1980s. I met a TV journalist who told me that he had got drunk once with Cord Meyer, CIA station chief in London in the 1970s. Meyer had boasted about the wonderful operation the Agency had run creating the Social Democratic Party. Said journalist put three of his best people on this but they found nothing. I don't remember who this person was and evidently he didn't want me recording his name. It must have been the late Ray Fitzwalter, erstwhile head of Granada TV's World in Action. I can't think of anyone else I might have met who had three employees to put onto a job and with whom I would have been discussing the CIA. There is still is no evidence of this operation to my knowledge.

²⁵³ Coleman p. 186. In this context 'the Foreign Office' is a euphemism for MI6.

after a US congressional inquiry into private foundations found that some had received donations from the CIA, the *New York Times* set journalists to work on the story. From that point on exposure of the CIA fronts, which were funded by some of these private foundations, was inevitable.

Forum World Features

Faced with this impending exposure, the CCF/CIA took action. The Congress's press agency was detached, reorganised and renamed Forum World Features, and Crozier was appointed its director in 1965.²⁵⁴ Crozier claims that 'In 1968 the KGB made a first attempt to wreck Forum';²⁵⁵ and perhaps in anticipation of the day when Forum was 'blown', with other personnel from the IRD network Crozier set up the Institute for the Study of Conflict (ISC) between 1968 and 1970.²⁵⁶

ISC

The first funding came from Shell and BP but then, as Crozier puts it, 'the Agency [CIA] now came up with something bigger', and put him in contact with the American multimillionaire, anti-communist Richard Mellon Scaife, who duly came up \$100,000 p.a. for ISC.²⁵⁷

ISC commissioned and published reports and began briefing the UK military and police establishments on the Crozier view of the Soviet threat to Britain.²⁵⁸ Crozier became a founder member of the National Association for Freedom (NAFF), whose launch was timed to coincide with publication of the dystopian disinformation in *The Collapse of Democracy* by his ally and colleague at ISC, Robert Moss. The unfortunately acronymed NAFF was a gathering of the anti-subversive and pro-capital propaganda groups such as Aims of Industry, and, almost immediately became the major focus of the British Right. It absorbed the remnants of the 1974/5 civilian militias, and began a series of psy-war projects against the left and the unions which prefigured much of what was to come in the Thatcher government.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁴ In his 1993 memoir Crozier acknowledges the CIA connection. See pp. 63-5. But he had denied it as late as 1990, in his review of Coleman's history of the CCF. See 'A noble mess' in *The Salisbury Review*, December 1990.

²⁵⁵ Crozier p. 75.

²⁵⁶ With a Council including Max Beloff, Major-General Clutterbuck and Sir Robert Thompson.

²⁵⁷ Crozier p. 90.

²⁵⁸ See the documents leaked – or stolen – from ISC published in *Searchlight* 18, 1976, and Crozier pp. 121 and 2

²⁵⁹ Crozier acknowledged the psy-war role in his memoir. See page 118.

Shield and the Pinay Circle

At the same, Crozier's voice was being heard in Shield, a committee of former intelligence officers and bankers, who, in the absence of IRD, prepared briefings on the alleged communist threat for the then leader of the Conservative Party, Margaret Thatcher.²⁶⁰ Crozier was also a member of the transnational psy-war outfit, the Pinay Circle, working alongside senior intelligence, military and political figures from the NATO countries,²⁶¹ was working with US Senate Subcommittee on International Terrorism,²⁶² and launched the apparently stillborn US Institute for the Study of Conflict.²⁶³

The Wilson plots

Because hard information on the covert operations of this period came first from Colin Wallace, a member of the British Army's psychological warfare unit in Northern Ireland, in whose narrative the 'bad guys' were MI5, and from Peter Wright, who had been an MI5 officer, those of us who began researching this period in 1986 and after began by looking for MI5 operations.²⁶⁴ In fact three British intelligence agencies had an iron in the fire of the mid-1970s crisis. There was a group of MI5 officers, led by Peter Wright, who were plotting against the Wilson government and, for example, trying to use the Information Policy Unit in Northern Ireland to spread disinformation about Wilson and other British politicians whom MI5 regarded as 'unsound';²⁶⁵ there was also a group of ex-SIS and former military officers, led by former SIS number two, the late George Kennedy Young, operating as the Unison

²⁶⁰ Shield employed as its researchers Peter Shipley, who ended up in the Conservative Party Central Office in time for the 1987 election, and Douglas Eden, co-founder of the Social Democratic Alliance. But Stephen Hastings has a slightly different version from Crozier. See Hastings p. 236.

²⁶¹ On Pinay see David Teacher's early pieces in *Lobsters* 17 and 18. Crozier more or less gave a nod of approval to these accounts by citing them, without criticism, in his memoir. See note 3 facing p. 194. Among the Pinay personnel were ex-CIA director Colby, ex-SIS officers Julian Amery and Nicholas Elliot, and Edwin Feulner from the Heritage Foundation. Teacher has since expanded these early essays into an enormous research piece, *Rogue Agents: Hapsburg, Pinay and the private cold war 1951-1991*, which is downloadable at www.cryptome.org/2012/01/cercle-pinay-6i.pdf. A later version can be bought at <https://www.amazon.co.uk/ROGUE-AGENTS-Cercle-Private-Cold-ebook/dp/B00C5136UI>.

²⁶² Crozier pp. 123-4.

²⁶³ US ISC is missing from his memoirs. It was formally launched in 1975, chaired by George Ball, with a line-up which included Richard Pipes and Kermit Roosevelt. See Document 3 in *Searchlight* 18.

²⁶⁴ Hence *Lobster* 11, 'Wilson, MI5 and the Rise of Thatcher'.

²⁶⁵ This is discussed at length in Foot, *Who Framed...*

Committee for Action;²⁶⁶ and there was the Crozier-IRD subversion-watcher network.

The détente with the Soviet Union was the background. In the UK it provided the context for IRD to be reigned back. In the US, in the wake of Watergate and the subsequent revelations of CIA activities in the US and abroad, and the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976, there was a purge in the CIA. To Crozier and others of his ilk, détente was a farce – a Soviet deception operation – and these intelligence cuts a catastrophe. (In their worst imaginings they were the result of Soviet operations.)

Private sector intelligence agencies?

Into the breach stepped Crozier and a group which included ex-SIS officer Nicholas Elliot and US General Vernon Walters. They created 'a Private Sector Operational Intelligence agency' and named it 6I – the Sixth International²⁶⁷ – and found funding in the US Heritage Foundation. Crozier began publishing newsletters, *Transnational Security*, and *British Briefing*, his own version of the IRD briefings on British subversion which had been curtailed in 1974 upon the election of the Labour government. *British Briefing* was financed by the Industrial Trust, edited by Charles Elwell, 'soon after retiring from MI5', and published by IRIS.²⁶⁸

What had begun a quarter of a century before as an anti-communist caucus among the AUEW's senior officers, had ended up fronting for Britain's leading anti-socialist psychological warfare expert. I do not know when *British Briefing* was first published, but the issue which began to circulate on the left in the early 1990s, number 12, was published in 1989, at which time IRIS's directors included Sir John Boyd CBE, General Secretary of the AEU 1975-82, Lord (Harold) Collinson CBE, General Secretary of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers from 1953-69, and W. (Bill) Sirs, General Secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation from 1975-85.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ It was from Young's Unison that General Sir Walter Walker's Civil Assistance emerged.

²⁶⁷ Crozier pp. 134-6. 6I, says Crozier, because there had already been 5 'internationals'. 'The fourth International was the Trotskyist one, and when it split, this meant that on paper, there had been five Internationals.

²⁶⁸ On the Industrial Trust see *Black Flag*, 15 August 1988 which reproduced the Trust's accounts for 1986/7; and on the IRIS connection to *British Briefing*, and Elwell's role, see the *Observer*, 16 December 1990, 'Top companies funded smears through charity', and 23 December 1990. See also <https://powerbase.info/index.php/British_Briefing>.

²⁶⁹ Although IRIS was still publishing its little newsletter, *IRIS News*, in 1989, compared to *British Briefing* it was so piffling as to be little more than a cover story. Collinson and Boyd are dead and Sirs did not respond to my questions.

The union leaders and the spooks

The IRIS-Crozier-British Briefing set-up sums up much of what I have been trying to tease out. Three anti-socialist, senior trade union leaders fronted the clandestine production of an anti-socialist bulletin, written and edited by former intelligence officers, financed by British capital.²⁷⁰ This anti-socialist mechanism also involved the connivance of the Charity Commission which allowed the Industrial Trust to operate in a breach of the charity laws,²⁷¹ another, non-charitable trust, the Kennington Industrial Company, and personnel from large numbers of British companies which funded it. (The money went to the Industrial Trust which passed it on to Kennington, which passed it on to IRIS; thus enabling the Industrial Trust to cling on to its charitable – and tax deductible – status.)

If this was still being funded in 1989, after ten years of Thatcherism and the fall of the Soviet Empire, how big was this anti-socialist structure in, say, 1975? Or 1965? Our knowledge of the whole operation, while greater now than before, is still pretty limited, despite the revelations about the Economic League in the past twenty years. For example, Aims of Industry is thought of as simply a propaganda organisation. But it is not so; at least it was not always so. In 1990 Aims' Director, Michael Ivens, wrote:

Once, when Aims of Industry was rather more flexible than it is now, we put a member of our staff into a factory, at the request of the management, to prevent a far-left take over. ²⁷²

Another part of this anti-socialist network is British United Industrialists (BUI), one of the funnels through which British companies fund the Conservative Party and other groups on the right. In 1985 BUI's then director, Captain Briggs, told a researcher I know who wishes to remain anonymous, who was posing as a right-winger, that BUI were then funding the Solidarity group of Labour MPs, the Union of Democratic Mineworkers and the right-wing faction in the Civil and Public Servants Association (CPSA).²⁷³

The Labour Left has never really grasped just how central, how

²⁷⁰ In 1986/7 twenty eight British companies gave money to the Industrial Trust, including BP, Bass, Unilever, ICI, Cadbury Schweppes and Grand Metropolitan. Industrial Trust accounts filed with Charity Commissioners were reproduced in *Black Flag*, 15 August 1988.

²⁷¹ See 'Breach of charity rules justified' in the *Guardian*, 7 February 1991.

²⁷² *Sunday Telegraph* (Appointments), 4 February 1990.

²⁷³ I reported this first in footnote 93 on p. 43 of *Lobster* 12 in 1986. I received no reaction to what I thought was a rather striking allegation. When I told him of this, the late Kevin McNamara MP replied that the UDM hardly needed money as they had inherited the considerable wealth of the old 'Spencer' union formed in the 1920s.

commonplace a function of British capitalism it has been to fund the left's opponents. This knowledge remained largely confined to *Labour Research* and pockets within individual unions. (It is hardly surprising that the Labour Party has never shown much interest in this, as it would have embarrassed some of its biggest supporters in the trade unions.)

By 1980 Crozier seems to have gone some way towards replacing IRD's anti-subversive role by his own efforts; and, with the election of Mrs Thatcher, he and Robert Moss abandoned the National Association for Freedom (by then renamed the Freedom Association) and concentrated on the USA and the wider Soviet 'threat'.

It is impossible to evaluate the significance of psychological warfare projects. Was the barrage of anti-union propaganda put out by the subversion-watchers in the period 1972-79 as significant as the so-called Winter of Discontent in its effect on public opinion in Britain? How effective Crozier was, I don't know. He claimed to have had quite a hand in the election of Mrs Thatcher in 1979. In one of the planning papers for his 'transnational security organisation', Crozier wrote:

Specific Aims within this framework are to affect a change of government in (a) the United Kingdom – accomplished . . .²⁷⁴

Grandiose nonsense? Perhaps. Crozier has never been taken as seriously in this country by the London media-political establishment as he has been abroad, and his memoir was hammered by most of its reviewers.²⁷⁵ But this, for example, was the view of Crozier by a German intelligence officer, the source of the *Der Spiegel* pieces, in November 1979.

The militant conservative London publicist, Brian Crozier, Director of the famous Institute for the Study of Conflict up to September 1979, has been working with his diverse circle of friends in international politics to build an anonymous action group²⁷⁶ "transnational security organisation", and to widen its field of operations. Crozier has worked with the CIA for years. One has to assume, therefore that they are fully aware of his activities . . .

²⁷⁴ Originally published in *Der Spiegel* no 37, 1982, this was translated by David Teacher and reproduced in *Lobster* 17, p. 14.

²⁷⁵ It was reviewed by occasional contributor to these columns, Bernard Porter, in *Intelligence and National Security*, vol. 9, no. 4. Most of Crozier's projects, says Porter, were 'pointless'.

²⁷⁶ 'Action group', is one of the key terms used in this field. G. K. Young's Unison was the Unison Committee for Action, a clear hint to the intelligence insider as to its intentions.

Was there a 'communist threat'?

The term 'communist' was always flexibly applied by the anti-socialist groups. The Common Cause and IRIS reports, for example, went much wider to actually mean the left, i.e. socialists; and sometimes simply anyone who opposed those in positions of power.²⁷⁷ Nonetheless in a thesis about the political uses of anti-communism we have to consider whether there was anything to the 'communist threat', or if it was simply a red herring dragged across the trail of British politics.

On the British Left the question which heads this chapter would provoke laughter, derision or anger from many. For some, since 1956 the CPGB has been a declining, bureaucratic relic, hardly a 'threat' to anybody.²⁷⁸ For others merely asking the question gives credibility to disinformation from the right. But the fact remains that significant sections of the British Right, in the propaganda organisations of capital, the state and the Conservative Party, believed that the CPGB was part of a global conspiracy, directed and financed by Moscow, which was working in the union movement and wider society to undermine capitalist democracy in Britain. And it is no longer self-evident that this was complete nonsense.

Orders from Moscow?

We know that the CPGB actually was being directed, to some extent, from Moscow after the war. Bob Darke was a member of the Party's National Industrial Policy Committee from the end of the war until 1951, when he left the Party. He described that committee as 'a Cominform puppet', receiving instructions, via visiting French communists, from the Cominform.²⁷⁹ In the year Darke quit the Party, 1951, the CPGB published a landmark policy statement, 'The British Road to Socialism'. This announced a major shift in policy in which the British CPGB ceased to base itself on the Soviet model and would henceforth pursue a peculiarly British, 'parliamentary road to

²⁷⁷ In 1964, for example, Common Cause issued a pamphlet naming 180 people in Britain with 'Communist connections', including Bertrand Russell, Lord Boyd Orr and the painter Ruskin Spear! See the *Sunday Times*, 31 May 1964. 'Big Jim' Matthews of the GMWU was one of the Common Cause directors who approved the publication.

²⁷⁸ For this view see the memoir by Des Warren, *The Key to My Cell*, (London: New Park, 1982). One of the so-called Shrewsbury pickets, imprisoned in 1972, Warren had been a member of the CPGB, became disillusioned and joined the Workers' Revolutionary Party.

²⁷⁹ Darke pp. 59 and 60.

socialism'.²⁸⁰ But in 1991 former CPGB assistant general secretary, George Matthews, admitted that much – though precisely how much is still not clear to me – of the programme contained in the 'British Road to Socialism' had been written by the Soviet Politburo and approved by Stalin himself.²⁸¹

Moscow gold?

There was 'Moscow gold' – bags of used notes, as well as the subsidy by virtue of the Soviet Union's bulk order of copies of the *Daily Worker/Morning Star*. The 'Moscow gold' claim was regarded as absurd, a state smear, by most on the British Left, not least by CPGB members, subjected to endless fund-raising appeals and newspaper selling, and CPGB employees surviving on the terrible wages the Party paid its staff.²⁸² But we know now that the Soviet Union began sending money to the British Party after the Hungarian revolt was put down – apparently to compensate the British Party for the loss of its membership (and hence membership fees) incurred by the Party's refusal to condemn the Soviet invasion. Senior CPGB person, Reuben Falber, would meet the man from the Soviet Embassy and take delivery of the bags of used notes. These would be stored in the loft of Falber's house and then laundered through the Party's accounts as 'anonymous donations' and the like. It was as amateurish as that.

The Moscow money seems to have been used chiefly to fund the Party's full-time staff. In the 1960s, despite constantly falling membership, the party employed a lot of people – seventy according to one source – including the industrial network,²⁸³ which 1980s CPGB member Sarah Benton described as 'until the late 1970s, the privileged section of the party'. (The Moscow subsidy ended in 1979.)²⁸⁴

²⁸⁰ A CPGB activist at the time, Harry McShane describes in his memoir how 'overnight we all became democratic and amazingly interested in Acts of Parliament . . . the idea was that, whereas the old Industrial Department was concerned with industrial action, the Labour Movement Department would influence the Labour Party and the trade unions and change the character of those bodies . . .' McShane p. 246.

²⁸¹ See *Guardian*, 14 September 1991 and the discussion in *Labour History Review*, Vol. 57, no. 3, pp. 33-5.

²⁸² My parents were both in the CPGB during and after the war and talked of the burden of trying to sell Party literature. My father wanted to be a full-time Party worker after WW2 but my mother, having learned how little the staff were paid, vetoed the idea. On the Party's low wages see, for example, the letter from former Party employee Bill Brooks in *Guardian*, 21 November 1991.

²⁸³ *Independent*, 15 November 1991.

²⁸⁴ The people I knew of in the CPGB were, on the whole, well intentioned left democrats who, almost to a man and woman, became Euro-communists in the 70s and 80s. The impact on the Party of the revelation of Soviet funding is discussed in detail in Mosbacher.

Secret Party members?

There were also secret Party members, though how many there were and what they did is unclear. The existence of 'secret members', a staple on the right since the war, appeared most strikingly in *Spycatcher*, in which Peter Wright recounts how MI5 had found the CPGB membership files stashed in a rich member's flat and photographed the whole lot – 55,000 files – in one weekend, 'with a Polaroid camera.'²⁸⁵ Wright claimed that these files also 'contained the files of covert members of the CPGB . . . people who had gone underground largely as a result of the new vetting procedures brought in by the Attlee Government'.²⁸⁶ Wright's claims were denied by George Matthews, who had been editor of the *Daily Worker* and assistant general secretary of the Party.²⁸⁷ However Bob Darke described members, who for 'Personal Security', were allowed not to reveal themselves as members when the Party decreed that all members should 'come out' as CPGB members in the other organisations to which they belonged.²⁸⁸ It may be that Wright simply remembered it wrongly: it was not members who *went* underground but who *stayed* underground. Further, Francis Beckett reveals (though without a source) the existence of a hitherto secret section of the Party, the Commercial Branch, consisting of 'rich members, often Jews . . . secret members . . . important industrialists', set up by Reuben Falber in the 1930s, which apparently survived into the mid 1950s.²⁸⁹ It appears that it was partly the loss of the income from this group after the revelations of anti-semitism in the Soviet Union and the invasion of Hungary which forced the Party to go to Moscow for money.²⁹⁰

But some money and instructions from Moscow, though a striking confirmation in part of the right's theories, do not in themselves tell us

²⁸⁵ Think of the logistics of this: assuming only one page per file, for 48 hours, using 1955 technology, and without disturbing the other tenants in the block of flats? It seems unlikely to me.

²⁸⁶ Wright, *Spycatcher*, p. 55.

²⁸⁷ Beckett p. 138 repeats the denials of Matthews, attributing it to 'CP officials'.

²⁸⁸ Darke p. 86. On this 'coming out' of concealed CP members, see the conference report in *Labour History Review*, vol. 57, No. 3 Winter 1992, p. 29.

²⁸⁹ Beckett pp. 147-8.

²⁹⁰ Evidence of secret CP members also comes from another Communist Party. In her autobiography the Australian feminist, poet and Communist Party activist, Dorothy Hughes, wrote of the period just after World War 2, when the ACP was under pressure from the state: 'Peter Thomas, Joan's former husband, writes leaders for the *West Australian* and is an undercover member of the State Committee of the Party.' Dorothy Hughes, *Wild Card*, (London: Virago, 1990) p. 122.

anything about the influence of the CPGB.²⁹¹ (Conspiracies may be small and ineffectual but nonetheless conspiracies.) And measuring the influence of an activity with clandestine aspects, which both the Party and its opponents have had good reasons to exaggerate, will be very imprecise at best.

Initially, post-war, the major focus of the state's anti-communists seems to have been on the Soviet front groups – the friendship societies etc. Eric Shaw mentions that in 1953 the Labour Party's Proscription List suddenly expanded with information about these groups assumed to have come from 'the Foreign Office [i.e. IRD] and Special Branch' run through the International Department of the Party.²⁹² This focus on the CPGB front groups seems to be attributable to two things. If Bower's biography of MI5 head Dick White is accurate, one is the inadequacies of MI5 in the post-war years.²⁹³ The second is the locus of IRD within the Foreign Office network, where, engaged in a propaganda struggle with the Soviet bloc overseas, it was thus more interested in pro-Soviet groups than in activities on the shop-floor.

The network of pro-Soviet groups is still the focus of the big IRIS pamphlet in 1957, *The Communist Solar System*; but the 1956 pamphlet by Woodrow Wyatt, *The Peril in Our Midst*²⁹⁴ was subtitled 'the Communist threat to Britain's trade unions', and since then it has been the Party's industrial wing which has received almost all of the attention – and about which there has been quite wide agreement, across a broadish political spectrum.²⁹⁵ Wyatt in 1956 claimed that the CPGB controlled the ETU and the Fire Brigades Union, nearly had control of the AEU and had considerable influence in the NUM. In 1962 the Radcliffe Committee, set up by the Macmillan government in the wake of the Vassell spy case, reported on the apparently extensive Party control of the civil service unions; and that year the Conservative MP Aidan Crawley wrote that the CPGB was strongest in the NUM, building workers and the AEU, and claimed they were making inroads into the clerical unions, citing sections of the woodworkers', the plumbers' and the painters' unions as being under CP control.²⁹⁶ Less ideologically interested, the historian Keith Middlemas

²⁹¹ Other left-wing parties in Britain – the Workers' Revolutionary Party for example – have received foreign funding without amounting to anything.

²⁹² Shaw, *Discipline*, p. 59.

²⁹³ See Bower, *The Perfect English Spy*, chapter 4

²⁹⁴ Wyatt fronting for IRD.

²⁹⁵ *The Peril In Our Midst*, (London: Phoenix House, 1956)

²⁹⁶ Aidan Crawley, 'The Hidden Face of British Communism', *Sunday Times*, 28 October 1962, reprinted as a pamphlet. Crawley fronting for whom? IRD seems the most likely answer.

saw 'substantial CP influence in the ETU, Foundry Workers, AEU and the NUM, especially in Fife and South Wales';²⁹⁷ and in his recent history of the Party, Francis Beckett claimed that 'the Party practically had full control of the Fire Brigades Union, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Foundry Workers and the Electrical Trades Union'.²⁹⁸ Though not in themselves proof of anything – proof would entail much more detailed analysis of the various unions than I am capable of – the lists are reasonably consistent over the period from 1956 to 1994.

The struggle in the AEU

One of the recurring themes in the literature, from the 1950s onwards, is the centrality of the struggle in the AEU. IRIS was formed by AEU members and was most active in that union (discussed above). This concern quickens in the late 1960s and early 1970s as the left, focused round the publications *Voice of the Unions* and *Engineering Voice*, began to make progress.²⁹⁹ It is found, for example, in Brian Crozier's 1970 anthology *We Will Bury You*, and in the 1972 IRIS pamphlet *In Perspective: Concerning the role of the Communist Party and its Effectiveness*. In David Stirling's GB75 documents, leaked and printed in *Peace News* in August 1974, Stirling's opening paragraph, 'The Objective Summarised', is about the lack of a contingency plan to 'weather the crucial first 3 or 4 days of a General Strike or one involving the Amalgamated Engineering Union and the Electrical Trades Union'.³⁰⁰ Shortly after the leak – i.e. late August 1974 – Stirling met Ron McClaughlin and Frank Nodes, both former AEU officials, who were forming TRUEMID, the Movement for True Industrial Democracy. A decade later the AEU was at the centre of the analysis by former SIS number two, G. K. Young.³⁰¹

While CPGB influence in the British unions – and thus in the Labour Party – was a constant refrain on the right, before the hysteria of 1974/5 there were only two occasions in the post-war period when the CPGB was even semi-seriously alleged to be posing a threat to the whole economy. The first was the 1948 dock strike. Charges of communist control were made at the time, and

²⁹⁷ Middlemas, footnote on p. 414.

²⁹⁸ Beckett p. 109. Like the rest of Beckett's book, this is unsourced but presumably the estimate is from CPGB members or former members.

²⁹⁹ See Roberts pp. 210-216. IRIS discussed 'Voice' newspapers in their pamphlet *The British 'Left'*, August 1970, pp. 18 and 19. The scare quotes round 'Left' are IRIS's.

³⁰⁰ *Peace News*, special issue, 23 August, 1974.

³⁰¹ *Subversion and the British Riposte*, (Glasgow: Ossian, 1984).

by senior members of the Labour Government;³⁰² but I have seen no evidence to support this claim and, in its absence, think we can reasonably attribute the claims to cynical manipulation of the 'red card' during a period of intense domestic difficulty for the Attlee government.

'Cynical manipulation of the red card' has often been the description of the second occasion, during the 1966 seamen's strike, when Harold Wilson made his notorious comments in the House of Commons about the role of the CPGB in the strike, and actually named CPGB members said to be active in it. This incident deserves examination.

The 1966 seamen's strike

There are two issues here, only one of which, whether Wilson should have said what he did, usually gets discussed. Most people, including most of his colleagues at the time, thought it was a tactical mistake, at best. Peter Shore told Tony Benn that he thought Wilson's remarks were 'completely bonkers'; and Benn noted in his diary, 'I think I share this view'.³⁰³ The Labour Left were appalled by Wilson's behaviour; some by his use of what they perceived as the 'red card', and others by his use of clandestine sources of information from MI5 and Special Branch. For some, this was when they first perceived the shifty, careerist Wilson, prepared to even play the anti-communist card, to break the seamen's strike. This view is powerfully expressed by Paul Foot in his 1967 essay 'The Seamen's Struggle'.³⁰⁴

In that essay Foot says that the 'basic charge' in Wilson's second statement to the Commons was 'that certain members of the Communist Party had been engaging in a desperate battle to extend the seamen's strike against the will of the NUS members'.³⁰⁵ In fact what Wilson said was more

³⁰² This is still believed on the right. See for example in the obituary of the London CPGB dockers' leader, Jack Dash, in the *Daily Telegraph* 9 June 1989. The various dock strikes and the alleged 'communist threat' are discussed in Jim Phillips.

³⁰³ Pimlott p. 407

³⁰⁴ In Blackburn and Cockburn (eds.). In that, and in his book *The Politics of Harold Wilson*, Foot traces the origins of the strike back to the smaller 1960 strike and the formation of the National Seamen's Reform Movement. I discussed Foot's highly selective account of the origins of the strike in *Lobster* 25. Historian of the CPGB Willie Thompson writes that 'the Prime Minister indicted the CP (quite inaccurately) for fomenting and organising the strike . . . accusing King Street of having organised it with the *deliberate purpose* of inflicting damage on the national economy.' (emphasis added) p. 137. Actually Wilson did not accuse the CPGB of deliberately trying to damage the national economy, and Thompson says nothing more about the alleged CPGB influence on the strike.

³⁰⁵ Blackburn and Cockburn (eds.) p. 175.

complicated – and more reasonable – than this suggests.³⁰⁶ He began by describing the CP's 'efficient and disciplined industrial apparatus', and continued that 'for some years now the Communist Party has had as one of its objectives the building up of a position of strength not only in the Seamen's Union, but in other unions concerned with docks and transport. It engages in this struggle for power in the Seamen's Union because it recognises . . . that democracy is shallow-rooted in the union, not only that grievances and exploitation have festered for many years.' He called it a 'take-over bid'.

Wilson said the objectives of the CPGB in the strike were:

First, to influence the day-to-day policy of the executive council; secondly, to extend the area of stoppage [this is the bit emphasised by Foot] and thirdly, 'to use the strike not only to improve the conditions of the seamen – in which I believe them to be genuine – but also to secure what is at present the main political and industrial objective of the Communist Party – the destruction of the government's prices and incomes policy.'

Wilson went on to say that he knew that the NUS executive committee was dominated by Joe Kenny and Jim Slater and that, while he knew neither of them were communists, he knew of their meetings with CPGB members in the union and the CPGB's industrial organiser, Bert Ramelson.³⁰⁷

But smashing Wilson's pay policy was the aim of the CPGB – and just about everybody else on the British Left and in some of the trade unions. The rest of what he said amounts to little more than an account of the routine activities of all left groups in the labour movement. They try to expand their positions and influence inside every forum. This is what they do. The young Tony Benn also thought Wilson's statement less than overwhelming. On June 28, after Wilson's listing of the CPGB members allegedly involved in the strike, Benn wrote in his diary that while the speech made him 'sick' and reminded him of 'McCarthyism', he added: 'In a sense Harold said nothing that was new, since every trade union leader knew it.'

The seamen's strike was a great boost for the CPGB and for Bert Ramelson who had only taken over as the Party's chief industrial organiser

³⁰⁶ His statement is reproduced in his *The Labour Government 1964-70* (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1974), pp. 308-11.

³⁰⁷ On this the evidence is incomplete and contradictory. On the one hand Dr Raymond Challinor told me that he discussed this with Jim Slater just before the latter's death, and Slater told him that he had never met Bert Ramelson, that he had told Wilson this, and that Wilson had acknowledged that he had been misinformed. But in his history of the CPGB Beckett tells us that Slater was part of a 'left caucus . . . people who had a high regard for [CPGB Industrial Organiser] Ramelson'. Beckett p. 182

from Peter Kerrigan earlier that year. Under Ramelson the Party began classical 'broad left' campaigns in many of the unions, apparently run by Party-controlled 'advisory committees'. Willie Thompson, himself a member of the CPGB, derides the idea that these committees had any power.

The CP advisory committees . . . were credited by an alarmist press with being an organisational framework through which a tight stranglehold was maintained upon the country's economic existence; a network through which flowed intelligence and commands enabling the Kremlin via King Street to direct its thrusts . . . For better or worse the advisories were just that – advice forums – and their co-ordinating function even within the individual area each one covered was weak.³⁰⁸

The evidence on this just is not clear: Beckett offers a different account of these committees. However Thompson more or less agrees with Beckett's claims that destruction of the Wilson-Castle trade union reform proposals, in the 'In Place of Strife' document, was 'largely a communist triumph and Wilson knew it';³⁰⁹ and Beckett cites the 1970 dock strike, the postal strike of 1971 and the miners' strikes of 1972 as disputes in which the Party played a significant role.

In the 1970s, the anti-subversion lobby, orbiting around IRD, and presumably informally briefed on the reality of the 'Moscow gold' by MI5, took the picture of real – and arguably, increasing – CPGB influence on the trade unions, and added KGB/Soviet control. To this theory the Communist Party itself contributed by occasionally boasting of its influence on the Labour Party;³¹⁰ with the Labour Party itself unwittingly adding the final touch by abolishing in 1973 the Proscription List of organisations – mostly the 1950s Soviet fronts – that Labour Party members could not join, thus convincing the paranoids on the right that the mice were in pantry.³¹¹ Unaware of the 'Moscow gold' evidence, the left dismissed the right's Soviet angle as manifest nonsense.

³⁰⁸ Thompson p. 13.

³⁰⁹ Beckett p. 175, Willie Thompson pp. 138/9.

³¹⁰ This is attributed to Ramelson in Seamus Milne's obituary of him in the *Guardian*, 16 April 1994.

³¹¹ Blake Baker was one of the media experts on the CPGB. He wrote for the *Daily Telegraph* for many years and on p. 96 of his *The Far Left* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981) wrote of the subsidies from Moscow: 'No one has ever been able to produce evidence, let alone prove it . . . All that would be necessary is a car or a taxicab to collect a suitcase full of money.' Is Baker hinting here that he knew about the cash from Moscow and how it was delivered?

MI5's role

Unaware of the evidence: this is the key point. For while the members of the CPGB – and the wider public – knew nothing of the packets of used fivers arriving in London, we know now that MI5 had been aware of the Moscow gold run almost as soon as it was begun. We can start with Peter Wright's memory again.

Then there was the Falber affair. After the PARTY PIECE operation, MI5 went on the hunt for CPGB files which listed the secret payments made to the Party by the Soviets. We suspected that perhaps they might be held in the flat of Reuben Falber, who had recently been made cashier of the Russian funds.³¹²

MI5 knew about the payments, and knew Falber was in charge of them.³¹³ All they wanted was the accounts, the records – the evidence. Wright tells us that MI5 planned to burgle Falber's flat but their first plan failed – and leaves it there. My guess would be that more sophisticated thinkers within the agency realised that they didn't really want to find the money; that it was more useful politically to leave it alone, to let the CPGB continue with the Soviet link intact.

In the USA, the FBI famously had so many agents inside the CPUSA as to make the whole enterprise a farce; and J. Edgar Hoover is quoted by a fairly senior ex-FBI source as having said: 'If it were not for me, there would not even be a Communist Party of the United States. Because I've financed the Communist Party, in order to know what they are doing.'³¹⁴ As far as we know, nothing quite like this happened in the UK. The large transmitter found attached to the bottom of the table in the CPGB's central meetings room, displayed by ex CPGB Central Committee member George Mathews,³¹⁵ illustrates Peter Wright's claim that 'By 1955 . . . the CPGB was thoroughly penetrated at almost every level by technical surveillance or informants'. With the spreading disillusion in the 1950s, climaxed by the Soviet invasion of Hungary, MI5 can have had little trouble recruiting active and former party members, like the late Harry Newton, to inform on the British comrades.

³¹² *Spycatcher* p. 175. Falber's account is in *Changes*, 16-19 November 1991. In it he writes: 'First, did the authorities know about it [the Moscow money]? I think they did.' Christopher Andrew in his *The Defence of the Realm: the authorized history of MI5* (London: Allen Lane, 2009) tells us that MI5 knew of the Soviet funding of the CPGB from the 1920s onwards.

³¹³ This suggests either that the CPGB had a high-level MI5 mole in its ranks who has never been identified, or that SIS had a hitherto unknown agent inside the Soviet intelligence apparatus.

³¹⁴ Summers, p. 191.

³¹⁵ Photographed in the *Independent*, 25 November 1989.

I do not want to argue that MI5 were running the CPGB. But it did allow the CPGB to run.³¹⁶ Had the existence of the 'Moscow gold' been revealed in 1957 or 8, coming after the Soviet invasion of Hungary, the CPGB would have been terminally damaged. But for MI5 the 'communist threat' – and the link to the Soviet Union – was simply too useful a stick with which to beat the wider labour movement and Labour Party to be surrendered. The Soviet connection with the CPGB enabled the Security Service to portray both unions and the left of the Labour Party, some of whom worked with the CPGB, as subversives; and with a subversive minority in its midst, this enabled the Labour Party as a whole to be portrayed as a threat to the well-being of the nation,³¹⁷ and thus a legitimate target for MI5.

Reviewing Willie Thompson's history of the Party, social democrat John Torode (whose father had been a significant pre-war member of the Party) charged that:

The [CPGB's] constant encouragement of strikes in support of unrealistic wage demands, the destruction of Barbara Castle's union reforms and the co-ordinated attempts to capture positions of power in order to influence Labour Party policy, did much to destroy the credibility of that party.³¹⁸

In one sense Torode is merely saying that the CPGB tried to use such influence as it had in the trade unions to frustrate social democratic policies and build up its own position. Is this not what Communist Parties always did? But Torode is apparently unaware of the significance of MI5's decision to not reveal the 'Moscow gold'. For the link with the CPGB discredited the Labour Party because of the CPGB's perceived connection to Moscow. If Torode's charge is true – and I think it is to some extent – it was only possible because MI5 had concealed the Moscow financial connection and *preserved* the CPGB as a significant force on the British Left.

Since so much of the British Left came either from, or in opposition to, the CPGB, it is impossible to even speculate convincingly how the the British Left –

³¹⁶ Something similar happened in the United States where the people who handled the secret Soviet Union donations to the CPUSA, Morris and Jack Childs, were actually FBI agents. Peter Dale Scott, *Deep Politics II: Essays on Oswald, Mexico and Cuba* (Skokie, Illinois: Green Archive Publications, USA 1995), p. 93, citing David J. Garrow's *The FBI and Martin Luther King* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981).

³¹⁷ This was a staple of the subversive-hunters in the mid 1970s. But compare and contrast Geoffrey Stewart-Smith's *Not To Be Trusted: Left Wing Extremism in the Labour and Liberal Parties* of February 1974, with his *Hidden Face of the Labour Party* in 1979. By 1979 he has added Trotskyist groups in the Labour Party to the CPGB as 'the threat'.

³¹⁸ *The Independent*, 1 October 1992.

or British politics – would have developed if the Moscow gold had been exposed in the late fifties. But perhaps the anti-union hysteria of the late 1970s, leading to the catastrophe of Thatcherism, the destruction of most of the UK's manufacturing base – and the subsequent collapse of the Labour Party in neo-liberal banality – could have been avoided.

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