

## The British Right – scratching the surface

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This is an interim report, a sketch of some research since *Lobster 11*. *Lobster 11* began as attempts to check some of the material provided by Colin Wallace, and, quite quickly, turned into a self-education course on the 1970s and the British Right. When we put No. 11 out we had done enough reading to know that we had a lot more to do. It has continued since. It was quite obvious early on in the research for No. 11 that (a) we were setting ourselves an agenda that would preoccupy us for the foreseeable future, and (b) that this agenda was nothing less than recent British political history. This issue contains some of that post-11 research: updates, fragments, bits we left out of No. 11, plus a large chunk of material which I was turned on to by 'Jack Mahoney' (a pseudonym). This issue is dedicated to him. Much that may seem obscure in this essay on the British Right will be clarified when his own research on the period gets published.

Although there is very little easily accessible information on the British Right, the fragments that do exist are complex and the easiest way through them is to follow the trail of certain individuals in and out of various groups.

In January 1986 *Searchlight* reported on the October 1985 British launch of *Executive Intelligence Review*, one of the many magazines produced by Lyndon LaRouche Jnr. LaRouche is an American conspiracy theorist on a cosmic scale, with a variety of totally idiotic 'theories' about the world's history. His ideas are too silly to deserve summary here – he believes, for example, that the House of Windsor controls the world's drug traffic, organised the assassination of John F. Kennedy etc. etc. – but the headline of his *New Solidarity*'s story on the recent *Sunday Times*-Buckingham Palace 'leak' story gives a flavour of his delusions: "Will Dope Lobby's Queen Abdicate?".<sup>1</sup>

At that London launch of *Executive Intelligence Review* were "Latin and Middle Eastern officials . a large contingent of Ukrainian emigres . . . Hugh de Courcy, formerly of *Intelligence Digest* magazine and the British Chapter of the World Anti-Communism (sic) League and Jane Birdwood." <sup>2</sup> *Hugh de Courcy* is,

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<sup>1</sup> *New Solidarity* July 28 1986

<sup>2</sup> *Searchlight* January 1986

presumably, *Kenneth* Hugh de Courcy, and it is with his career that this skim across the British Right begins.

de Courcy first appeared in 1933 as Honorary Secretary to a grouping of right-wing Tories, most of them MPs, who called themselves the Imperial Policy Group (henceforth referred to as IPG). IPG stated its aims in a letter to the *Times*:

“the importance of Imperial development, the strengthening of the Constitution, adequate defences, a progressive housing movement, an Imperial monetary policy and the development and safeguarding of home industry and agriculture calculated to provide a rising standard of living and to reduce unemployment.”<sup>3</sup>

These aims look pretty conventional for the time, apparently little more than a banal restatement of the fundamental aims of the protectionist wing of the Tory Party since the pre-World War 1 Tariff Reform movement. But a couple of the aims hint at some of the group’s ideas. ‘Strengthening the Constitution’, as Steve Dorril pointed out, sounds like a coded reference to more repression; and the ‘Imperial monetary policy’ probably hints at the interest of the group in some of the Social Credit ideas floating about in the pre-war years.<sup>4</sup> The letter to *The Times* was signed by:

- R.V. Applin MP
- Lord Bertie of Tame (The Earl of Abingdon)
- Sir Reginald Blaker MP
- Sir Patrick Ford MP
- The Earl of Glasgow
- Lawrence Kimball MP
- W. Nunn MP
- Lord Phillimore
- W. Templeton MP
- A.R. Wise MP
- Lord Mansfield

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<sup>3</sup> *Times* 24 December 1934

<sup>4</sup> de Courcy was running a Social Credit bookshop in the 1930s. The link between interest in currency reform theories and fascism is widespread; in Australia, for example, with Eric Butler; in Britain with G. K. Chesterton, whose journal, *G.K.’s Weekly* was eventually incorporated into *The Weekly Review* which gave a platform to various fascists in the 1930s. See ‘Political Anti-Semitism Before 1914’ by Kenneth Lunn in Lunn and Thurlow (eds) *British Fascism* (London 1980).

- Victor Raikes MP

In 1940 de Courcy and some of the IPG members began a monthly newsletter, *Review of World Affairs*. The magazine's Advisory Board included Lord Phillimore, the Earl of Mansfield, and MPs Wise, Nunn and Raikes: the editor was de Courcy. Largely because of its ambiguous stance on the value of the war – the real 'enemy' was the Soviet Union – this newsletter was thought worthy of editorial comment in the *News Chronicle*.<sup>5</sup>

What the IPG actually *did*, what they *distinctively* believed, I just don't know yet. 'Jack Mahoney' informs me that de Courcy began an Intelligence News Service after the war with IPG members the Earl of Mansfield, W. Nunn and Victor Raikes, and Major-General Richard Hilton (later found in Common Cause, the League of Empire Loyalists, his own British Patriotic Party, British National Party and the National Front); was backing something called 'Christian Political Action' in 1947/8, and something called 'Christian Statesmanship' in 1949 with members of the Economic League, IPG and the British League for European Freedom.

These (to me) obscure post-war groups are introduced here to make the point very early that the activities of the British Right are at least as complex as those of the Left and, when visible – and like the Left, much of the Right's activities are semi-clandestine – show similar kinds of continuities. Consider IPG founder member Victor Raikes MP, who died this year. His obituary in the *Times*<sup>6</sup> was extremely uninformative (like his *Who's Who* entries) but did remind *Times* readers that he had been Chair of the Monday Club from 1975-78.<sup>7</sup> In 1944 Raikes was one of a quartet of MPs who, with the Duchess of Atholl, set up the British League for European Freedom, initially to draw attention to the fate of Eastern Europe at the hands of the Red Army.<sup>8</sup> The British League for European Freedom then produced an off-shoot, a Scottish League for European Freedom, headed by Raikes' IPG colleague, the Earl of Mansfield.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *News Chronicle* 12 August 1940. Some indication of the political orientation of the group may be indicated by the fact that this news cutting was found in a folder marked '5th Columnists' in the NCCL's archives: DCL Box 41.

<sup>6</sup> *Times* 5 May 1986

<sup>7</sup> Alan Lennox-Boyd, Viscount Boyd, another IPG member, was also a Monday Club member.

<sup>8</sup> George Orwell was invited to join the BLEF. His letter of refusal, plus an account of one its meetings are in his *Collected Essays and Journalism* (Penguin edition). See vol.3 pp. 368/9 and vol.4 p. 49 and Duchess of Atholl, *Working Partnership* (London 1958) p243-8

<sup>9</sup> Mansfield, it is worth noting here, was on the original Council of the Society for Individual Freedom in 1944, along with IPG member Sir Reginald Blaker.

In 1950 the Scottish League for European Freedom sponsored a conference in Edinburgh of Eastern European exiles, many of them Nazi collaborators and war criminals, who had been recruited by British intelligence and moved to the U.K. during the scramble at the end of WW2 by the British and American governments for good, reliable, anti-Soviet 'assets'.<sup>10</sup> The British League for European Freedom still exists, one of the little groups on the British Right acquired by Donald Martin.

## **Digression No. 1: Don Martin**

Donald (Don) Martin is a protégé of the veteran Australian anti-semitic conspiracy theorist, Eric Butler. Although Butler set up his Australian League of Rights in 1960,<sup>11</sup> he had apparently been active on the far-right of Australian politics since the middle 1930s.<sup>12</sup> Like de Courcy, Butler began as a follower of the various currency reform theories around in the twenties and thirties. In 1962 or '63 – accounts vary – Butler visited Britain and had meetings with A.K. Chesterton of the League of Empire Loyalists (roughly the U.K. equivalent of Butler's group), and, according to the anonymous pamphlet *The Monday Club – A Danger to Democracy* (discussed below) with the late John Paul, at that time Chair of the Anti-Common Market League and a substantial figure in Tory Party circles.

Butler's protégé, Don Martin, came to the U.K. in 1970, if the *Monday Club etc* version is to be believed, essentially as a replacement for the Butler link with Paul after the latter's death: "Butler's best hope here was lost when John Paul died. . . . Paul has been replaced at a lower level by Don Martin."

Martin set up the British League of Rights, a book distribution company, Bloomfield Books, which linked up with the veteran anti-semitic publishers, Britons, and acquired control of the British League for European Freedom and the British Housewives League. The latter was originally an anti-nationalisation front set up just after WW2 and funded, it appears, by the road transport lobby of the time.<sup>13</sup> From 1971-74 Martin's publications were regularly advertised in

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<sup>10</sup> John Loftus, *The Belarus Secret* (London, 1983) pp. 165, 205. This has been remaindered in the UK and is kicking around for 30 or 40p. One of the most important books of recent years (which may explain why no notice was taken of it here).

<sup>11</sup> *Searchlight* July 1979

<sup>12</sup> On Butler, see Freeney, discussed below, and the article on him in *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 5, no. 5.

<sup>13</sup> British Housewives League file in NCCL archives, Hull University; DCL Box 23, folder 3. 'Jack Mahoney' informs me that the BHL's leader, Dorothy Crisp, had fascist links with the journal *Tomorrow* and with A.K. Chesterton's 1945 'National Front' group. What either of these groups amounted to by the time Martin acquired control, I don't know. Not much, I suspect.

the Monday Club's Journal, *Monday World*. As head of the British League for European Freedom Martin became the U.K. delegate to the World Anti-Communist League (WACL).

The parallels between the anti-semitic/neo-fascist activities in the U.K. and those in Australia are strikingly demonstrated in Dennis Freney's *Nazis Out of Uniform: Dangers of Neo-Nazi Terrorism in Australia*<sup>14</sup> The mixture of overt racists and anti-semites, neo-Nazis and the right-wing of the 'respectable' conservative parties which *Searchlight* has been documenting in this country, is almost exactly duplicated in Australia. (One of the major differences is that in Australia Butler plays a much more significant role than Martin has ever achieved in this country.) Analogous New Zealand activities, including seven pages on another Butler off-shoot, the New Zealand League of Rights, is discussed in Paul Spoonly's recent essay.<sup>15</sup>

In similar territory are the two volumes of the *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Rise of Fascism and Racism in Europe* by a working party of the European Parliament. This is an inch-thick pile of typed essays and statements from a wide range of European experts/politicians on the recent rise of the neo-fascist and racist right in Europe. The style and quality of the contributions vary enormously but there is no equivalent body of work in English that I can think (and the report will have been published in all the official EEC languages).<sup>16</sup>

## **Common Cause**

Another strand in the de Courcy and ex-IPG member network links it to Common Cause, the nominally anti-Communist group which, like the Economic League, keeps files on the British Left and the unions.<sup>17</sup> Information on Common Cause is sparse. According to a report in *The Times*<sup>18</sup> Common Cause was formed in 1951, but a pamphlet published by Common Cause, was put out

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<sup>14</sup> Freney's 48 pp A4 booklet, with many illustrations, is available from him for £4.50 (airmail), £3.50 (seamail), international money orders only, please. Denis Freney, PO Box A716, Sydney, New South Wales, 2000, Australia.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Spoonly, 'New Zealand First: The Extreme Right and Politics in New Zealand 1961-81' in *Political Science*, vol. 33, no. 2 1981.

<sup>16</sup> Available FREE from European Parliament offices all over the EEC. In Britain that's 2 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1. Ask for documents A-2-160/85 rev. annexes 1,2,3,4. (Thanks to *Intelligence/Parapolitics* in Paris for the information.)

<sup>17</sup> See *Lobster* 11 p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> *Times* 27 April 1954.

in 1950.<sup>19</sup> Common Cause does seem to have grown out of British League for European Freedom circles. The Duchess of Atholl, on Common Cause's "Advisory Board" from its inception, links the decline in the British League for European Freedom's "purely political work" (whatever that means) to the formation of Common Cause.<sup>20</sup> Dr. C. A. Smith, former Chair of the Independent Labour Party, was Secretary of Common Cause from 1954-56<sup>21</sup> (21), presumably from its inception, apparently in 1952: a piece in *The Times* announced Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton and John Brown, ex-General Secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation as joint chairs. (Douglas-Hamilton turns up later in the 1950s as part of the de Courcy group publishing *The Weekly Review* and *Intelligence Digest*.<sup>22</sup>

In 1954 Common Cause's Advisory Board included:

- Dame Florence Hancock and Tom O'Brien (both ex Presidents of the TUC);
- Lord Ammon (trade union leader and ex-MP, who was involved with the British League for European Freedom);
- Bob Edwards (General Secretary of the Chemical Workers Union);
- Cecil Hallett (Assistant General Secretary of the AEU);
- John Raeburn (ex-Secretary of the London Trades Council);
- Phillip Fothergill (ex-President of the Liberal Party Organisation);
- the Duchess of Atholl (at the time President of the British league for European Freedom);
- Edward Hulton (publisher of the Picture Post and part of one of the earliest British intelligence news fronts);<sup>23</sup>
- Admiral Lord Cunningham;
- and Field Marshall Lord Wilson.

This unlikely grouping was unstable and at the end of 1956 Smith, Fothergill, Edwards, Ammon and others resigned, alleging, inter alia, that Common Cause was becoming "reactionary".<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The author was Dr. C. A. Smith, writing as a member of the British League for European Freedom.

<sup>20</sup> Atholl (see note 8) p. 252.

<sup>21</sup> *Times* 27 April 1954 and 6 April 1957.

<sup>22</sup> Kevin Coogan in *Anarchy* no. 38.

<sup>23</sup> Hulton fronted for the S.O.E. news agency, Britanova. See Richard Fletcher in *Tribune* September 9, 1983.

<sup>24</sup> *Times* 27 April 1954

The group eventually split into two 'Common Causes', the new one being Common Cause Ltd. – the 'reactionary' group – incorporated 8th August 1956.<sup>25</sup> Its directors were Peter Crane, David Pelman James, Neil Elles and C.W.S. Blackett. James became Chair and Peter de Peterson Vice Chair.

Eventually the C.A. Smith-led element called an "unofficial meeting", organised by members of the 14 branches, and elected a new National Executive Committee, including Lady Birdwood (on whom more below), I. Winterbotham (ex-Labour MP), H.G. Devonshire (ETU) and Miss M. Sharman (until March 1956 the organisation's information officer).<sup>26</sup>

For nearly a year there were two headquarters and two National Executive Committees, but in May 1959 the Smith-led group dissolved, the surviving six branches being told to carry on autonomously with Lady Birdwood "appointed to act as co-ordinator between branches". Dr. Smith was quoted as saying that the other Common Cause (i.e. Common Cause Ltd.) "had been used to prevent members of Common Cause controlling the organisation and from gaining the democratic constitution which the Committee had repeatedly promised from 1952-57".<sup>27</sup>

Just how "reactionary" Common Cause was becoming is suggested by the presence of Major-General Richard Hilton on its Advisory Council in 1958. Another link to de Courcy – Hilton was with de Courcy's group in the late 1940s – Hilton was a member of the League of Empire Loyalists, formed his own Patriotic Party in the late fifties, a member of the British National Party in 1960, and, I believe, a founder member of the National Front.<sup>28</sup>

As well as putting out its quarterly bulletin of research on the unions and the British Left, Common Cause was acting as a 'front', channelling money from British industry to Industrial Research and Information Services (IRIS), a group of anti-communist trade union officials running a similar, if differently slanted operation to that of Common Cause.<sup>29</sup> An example of Common Cause's information gathering and distribution appeared in 1970 when the National

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<sup>25</sup> Information from Company House Records.

<sup>26</sup> *Times* May 2 1958

<sup>27</sup> *Times* May 11 1959. 'Jack Mahoney' points out that there are two 'Lady Birdwoods', Lord Birdwood's two wives. I don't know if this is the racist Lady Birdwood who reappears in the sixties and seventies.

<sup>28</sup> Patriotic Party – see George Thayer, *The British Political Fringe* (London 1965) p. 61. The BNP reference is in *Report on Fascist Organisations* by Christopher J. Cowling in NCCL archives, DCL box 42, folder 10.

<sup>29</sup> This emerged in the course of the schisms within Common Cause. See *Labour Research* January 1961.

Union of Students acquired a copy of a Common Cause circular which had been sent to British University authorities listing the alleged affiliations of National Union of Students leaders.<sup>30</sup>

In *Lobster* 11 we commented on the extraordinary detail in Common Cause's 1974 *Bulletins* on the Communist Party of Great Britain, suggesting that such detail could only have come from Special Branch/MI5 sources. On re-examining some Common Cause *Bulletins* in the early 1970s we noticed this cryptic sentence which seems to first appear in *Bulletin* 127 (p. 124): "Original sources and materials, the likes of which have not been previously made public, have been the basis of this research". It could be more explicit in confirmation of our thesis, but not much.

*Labour Research*, the only regular source of information on the organisation, has never taken it seriously. In February 1984 they called it "an organisation dominated by retired 'blimps'" and wondered, not for the first time, why British firms continued giving the organisation tens of thousands of pounds a year. But surely, if we have learned anything from the Thatcher era it is that we should not underestimate the 'blimps' in this society; nor, perhaps, should we readily accept the idea of inevitable left-wards 'progress' built into the 'blimp' concept. At best, such 'progress' is a case of two steps forward and one step back.<sup>31</sup>

## **The Monday Club**

Traces of the de Courcy-IPG of the 1930s survive in the shape of Alan Lennox-Boyd and Victor Raikes' membership of the Club into the 1970s. The most interesting discovery we have made since *Lobster* 11 about the Monday Club is the anonymous 1972 pamphlet, *The Monday Club – A Danger To Democracy*, 20,000 copies of which are said to have been distributed in 1972.<sup>32</sup> Many of the people *Lobster* 11 was interested in are here, 14 years before it: Kitson, Stewart-Smith, ("the CIA's man in the House of Commons"), Walter Walker,

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<sup>30</sup> *Labour Research* March 1971. This 'reds in the universities' theme of Common Cause in the seventies illustrates nicely how little the Right's preoccupations have changed. In 1932 the Anti-Socialist and Anti-Communist Union ran a similar campaign, singling out Harold Laski, R.H. Tawney, Hugh Dalton and Maurice Dobb. See Brown, fn 76, p253

<sup>31</sup> *Information wanted*: there was an American 'Common Cause', founded in the late 1940s. Anyone got any information on them? (And this should not be confused with today's liberal Common Cause.)

<sup>32</sup> 20,000 copies seems implausible, If there were that many it would be easier to find. Copies will be available through the public library system. If you have trouble tell the library there is a copy in Hull University's library. 'Jack Mahoney' suggests that, based on its style and the kinds of typefaces used, it was probably produced by the same (anonymous and still unidentified) group who were producing *The Anti-fascist Bulletin* at the time.



Lady Birdwood, the McWhirter Brothers, Gerald Howarth and the Society for Individual Freedom – all feature in this curious document alongside various other lesser known figures from the racist and neo-fascist British Right of the late 1960s and early 1970s. But which bits of it are believable? Some are (because they can be checked elsewhere); some may be (because they are similar to other events; the characters behave ‘in character’); but at least a third of it is just uncheckable – reports of private (sic) meetings, private (sic) correspondence and so forth – the mixture, in fact, which characterises *Searchlight*.<sup>33</sup> Like *Searchlight*, this pamphlet is, in large part, the result of covert operations against the neo-fascists and racists. Exactly who was – and still is – mounting such activities is not clear to me. The National Front’s Martin Webster attributed this pamphlet and all manner of other ‘dirty tricks’ to the ‘62 Group’, a semi-clandestine anti-fascist organisation set up in 1962.<sup>34</sup>

## **Digression 2: Gerry Gable**

Gerry Gable was a member of the ‘62 Group’ as a young man. He rang me after reading No. 11 and, as you would expect, did – when eventually asked – deny the assertion in *Lobster* 11 that *Searchlight* was being run by, or with the co-operation of MI5.

The only other people who appear to be as suspicious of Gable and *Searchlight* as we are, are the anarchists associated with *Anarchy* magazine, and the libertarian, anarcho-capitalists (sic) associated with the Libertarian Alliance in London. For our part, we retract nothing. It may well be, as one *Guardian* journalist told us, that Gable is “a great man” with a life-time of anti-fascist work behind him. He is also the person who wrote in the 1977 notorious ‘Gable memo’:

“I have given the names I have acquired to be checked out by British/French security services, especially the French and German connections, and the South American stuff is being checked by Geoffrey Stewart-Smith’s institute”.

It is argued by Gable’s defenders that in his position he is bound to make connections with various intelligence agencies. But what are we to make of his use of FARI (Stewart-Smith’s institute)? The anonymous 1972 pamphlet said of Stewart-Smith:

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<sup>33</sup> ‘Jack Mahoney’ advises that some of the meetings described in this document are documented elsewhere in reports in libraries of the Board of Deputies and Weiner Library.

<sup>34</sup> For Webster’s (not uninteresting) views on this, see his column in *Spearhead* May 1973, January 1975 and February 1975. On the ‘62 Group’ and similar organisations, see *Thayer* (above, note 28) chapter on ‘The Yellow Star Movement’.

"It is also his job to act as liaison man with any Right extremist group that they (i.e. the CIA) wish to contact or make use of in this country. To facilitate this he has recruited one Peter Crozier, a close associate of Colin Jordan, to act as his go-between."<sup>35</sup>

Whether or not this specific claim about Stewart-Smith is true, and we have no idea, Gable's use of FARI is inexplicable for a self-professed anti-fascist and anti-racist. When Gable wrote his memo FARI was being funded by the South African government (although it is possible that Gable was unaware of this), and its Council included four men who have appeared in *Searchlight*: Julian Amery (connection with the Italian fascist party, MSI, in March 1979), Lord Chalfont (connections with Chile, August 1979), and Robert Moss and Brian Crozier (all over issue 18, 1975). The detailed case against Gable made in *Anarchy* 36 remains unanswered.

## **Society for Individual Freedom**

Another of the right-wing groups about which we ought to know more is the Society for Individual Freedom (SIF henceforth). Neither *Labour Research* nor *Searchlight* have ever paid much attention to SIF (or, perhaps, just didn't get much information). *Searchlight*, for example, in a brief paragraph in No. 31, refers to "the dear old SIF", and then remarks on the presence of G. K. Young as a former chair and the late Ross McWhirter as a member of its executive council. *Labour Research* provided some details on SIF membership in a piece on "Powell and His Allies"<sup>36</sup> citing 35 MPs (more than the Monday Club) as members; Lord Lyle (of Tate and Lyle) whose family has been connected with SIF since its formation in 1944; the late Lord Renwick (one-time chair of the Institute of Directors and board member of British United Industrialists); G.K. Young and Ross McWhirter.

Another interesting member was Gerald Howarth. Howarth is the MP said recently to have been plotting the murder of Gerry Gable, but for our purposes his role in the early 1970s in the Prosecute Peter Hain campaign is more interesting.<sup>37</sup>

Considering the overlapping memberships represented here – British United Industrialists, Institute of Directors, Aims, Monday Club – not to mention the intricate trails left by McWhirter and G. K. Young in the early 1970s through the so-called 'private armies' of 1974 and thence into the formation of the National Association for Freedom – SIF has to be of interest.

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<sup>35</sup> *Monday Club* etc p. 7

<sup>36</sup> *Labour Research* February 1969

<sup>37</sup> Gordon Winter, *Inside Boss* (London 1981) pp. 382/3

Young and McWhirter are important cross-roads figures on the Right in the late sixties and early seventies, the role attributed to them in the anonymous 1972 '*Monday Club* etc.' pamphlet in which McWhirter was "a key fund raiser on the right" and Young "fixer extraordinary".<sup>38</sup>

SIF was founded in 1944 (Aims of Industry in 1942), both of them being responses to the controls over private capital imposed by the war-time government. SIF was the amalgamation of Sir Ernest Benn's 1942 Society of Individualists and the 1943 National League for Freedom. Among SIF's first Council members were Colin Brooks, editor of the anti-Semitic *Truth*, and two IPG members, the Earl of Mansfield and Sir Reginald Blaker MP.<sup>39</sup>

## **The World Anti-Communist League and its British Connections**

There was a British representative at the first meeting in 1958 which eventually led to the formation of The World Anti-Communist League (WACL), a former trade union leader and Labour MP, George Dallas.<sup>40</sup> While serving in a minor capacity in the war-time coalition government, Dallas became increasingly concerned about the direction of Soviet policy and came to regard Poland as a test case of this. After the war he was a strong supporter of the 'Free Polish' cause and shared platforms with the Duchess of Atholl.<sup>41</sup>

In 1956 he became the first chair of the Friends of Free China Association (Atholl was President), and took a delegation to the then Formosa. With Dallas at that first pre-WACL meeting, as well as a trio of German Nazis, was Yaroslav Stetzko, then chair of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), and one-time Prime Minister of war-time Ukraine.<sup>42</sup> The Ukrainians in the Bandera/Stetzko-led Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) were one of the East European groups which worked with the Germans during the war and were then adopted by US and UK intelligence agencies after it. That many of the personnel of these groups were war criminals is one of the areas of post-war history which is just beginning to be explored. John Loftus' *The Belarus Secret*

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<sup>38</sup> It is rumoured – strongly rumoured – that Ross McWhirter was a member of Mosley's Union Movement in the 1950s.

<sup>39</sup> 'Jack Mahoney' informs me that Sir Ernest Benn flirted with the British fascist fringe just after WW2 having been involved with A.K. Chesterton and Maj-Gen. J.F.C. Fuller in their abortive 1945 'National Front for Victory'.

<sup>40</sup> Dallas reference in WACL by Henrik Kruger in *Anarchy* no. 37. Dallas biography in *Dictionary of Labour Biography* Vol 4, eds. John Saville and Joyce Bellamy (London 1973).

<sup>41</sup> Saville/Bellamy (see note 40) p. 73

<sup>42</sup> Kruger, WACL (see note 40)

<sup>43</sup> although primarily about the US use of these Nazi-collaborators, revealed the use by the British intelligence services of the Scottish League for European Freedom as cover for some of these groups.<sup>44</sup>

Information on ABN, the Stetzko-led grouping, is thin at present: we await even the first step, a full-scale study of the ABN's journal, *ABN Correspondence*, for example. In Britain the various emigre groups, members of ABN, have attracted a cluster of obscure (or, perhaps, just neglected?) organisations: the British and Scottish Leagues for European Freedom, the International Confederation for Victory over Communism, and the European Freedom Council.

In the British League for European Freedom in the 1970s were Lord Barnby of the Monday Club, Don Martin, who became chair by 1973 and Lady Jane Birdwood, in 1971 on BLEF's national executive. Other familiar names on the Right mentioned in *Lobster* 11 gathered round: Ross McWhirter, Tom Stacey (the publisher and leading member of the British Chile lobby), and John Biggs-Davison (Monday Club) were speakers in 1971 at the BLEF-organised 'Captive Nations Week'. Geoffrey Stewart-Smith and the Australian anti-semite, Eric Butler, at the 1973 version.<sup>45</sup>

A long list of MPs, both Tory and Labour, have associated themselves with ABN in the sixties and seventies: Michael English, Bessie Braddock, Jack McCann, Sir David Renton, John Graham, J. McMillan, Michael O'Halloran, Michael Fidler, Tom Oswald and Sir Frederick Bennett. John Wilkinson MP's association with the group runs from 1971 (or earlier) through to 1985 when, as Chair of the European Freedom Council, he was one of the featured speakers at the joint ABN-European Freedom Council meeting in London. <sup>46</sup>The climax of the three-day gathering was the presentation, by Wilkinson, of medals to Stetzko and his wife, and to General John Singlaub, current head of the World Anti-Communist League. Recently the Ukranian-born Stefan Terlezky

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<sup>43</sup> See footnote 10.

<sup>44</sup> Loftus (see note 10) p 204. The BLEF's Chair writes, in very vague terms, of that organisation's role in this in her autobiography (see note 8) pp. 247-51

<sup>45</sup> All the names in this section and the paragraph which follows it have been taken from pages of *ABN Correspondence* (undated, unfortunately) sent me by 'Jack Mahoney'.

<sup>46</sup> I assume that most of these MPs know little or nothing of the origins of these emigre groups, and got involved via constituency politics; i.e. having an emigre community within the constituency. Michael Fidler, for example, was President of the British Board of Deputies 1967-73, and surely was unaware of the fascist/anti-semitic currents running through the groups which make up the ABN. Those currents were demonstrated by the eulogy to Maj-Gen. J.F.C. Fuller, the British fascist, printed in *ABN Correspondence*, March-April 1966. (Reported in *Weiner Library Bulletin* vol. 20, no. 3, 1966.)

MP has become prominently identified with ABN activities.

The rise of the WACL has been best described by Henrik Kruger.<sup>47</sup> A variety of British groups have had the role of official British affiliate. Geoffrey Stewart-Smith's Foreign Affairs Circle was the affiliate in 1973 before it quit amidst arguments about money and accusations from Stewart-Smith that WACL was being infiltrated by anti-semites and fascists. Foreign Affairs Circle was succeeded by Don Martin/Lady Birdwood's British League for European Freedom. According to *Searchlight*,<sup>48</sup> Martin was then running two organisations, BLEF and his British League of Rights, and referring to them both as the British WACL affiliate. From 1973 to 1979 WACL was increasingly dominated by overtly anti-semitic and neo-fascist groups, eventually leading to a schism within WACL, the termination of the BLEF's status as official affiliate, and transfer of that title to Peter Dally and the British Anti-Communist Council (about which, more below), circa 1980.<sup>49</sup>

With Peter Dally and the British Anti-Communist Council we come full circle, in a sense; for before his role in BACC, Dally had worked for over a decade in one of Kenneth de Courcy's organisations, Intelligence International. Dally turned up at the May 1985 launch of Western Goals (UK)<sup>50</sup> Head of Western Goals (UK) is Young Monday Club leader, Paul Masson, who was one of the speakers at the November 1985 ABN London conference.<sup>51</sup>

### **Digression 3**

How significant the UK end of Western Goals should be taken is impossible to evaluate this early. Its US parent body does have to be taken seriously, even though there is a dearth of decent information on its activities. The largest piece on the group, 'The Private Spy Agency' by Elton Manzione (*National Reporter*, Summer 1985) contains one whopper of a mistake and a number of highly dubious assertions which don't give grounds for much confidence in the accuracy of the rest of the piece.

The whopper is the claim that Western Goals' German branch – founded in 1981 – “publicly admits ‘co-operating’ with Reinhard Gehlen”. Gehlen died in 1979. The dubious assertions concern the alleged existence and activities of a

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<sup>47</sup> Kruger, (see note 40 above).

<sup>48</sup> *Searchlight* July 1979

<sup>49</sup> This schism is described both in Kruger and in a *Washington Post* piece reprinted in *Searchlight* no. 38.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in large, very interesting piece 'Their Creed is Hate' in *National Student*, March 1986. The (anonymous) author is, presumably, the editor, Chris Horrie.

<sup>51</sup> He spoke on 'The aspirations of the young generation in Great Britain'!

body in the U.S. called Defence Industries Security Command (DISC) and its alleged Swiss subsidiary, Permindex. Manzione links them both to the assassinations of Robert and John Kennedy, when, as far as I know, there is no reliable information (and none given by Manzione) on the existence of DISC, let alone any role in those assassinations; and the alleged activities of Permindex were subjected to devastatingly destructive analysis by Steve Dorril in *Lobster* no 2.<sup>52</sup> This DISC-Permindex material has been floating around the fringes of the Kennedy assassination literature since the end of the Garrison enquiry and is usually lifted (without acknowledgement, as Manzione does) from a samizdat on the assassination, *The Torbitt Memorandum*. It is interesting, if a little depressing, to see that this material is still around, recycled unchecked by a journal which wants to be taken as seriously as *National Reporter*.<sup>53</sup>

Nevertheless, Western Goals, with its financial base and its high-powered board (Singlaub, Teller, Admiral Moorer et al) has to be taken seriously.

The British Anti-Communist Council (BACC), the current UK affiliate to the World Anti-Communist League, has as its President and Secretary, Patrick Wall MP and Jill Knight MP respectively. Wall's role in this organisation, even if he is just a figurehead, doesn't seem to have yet filtered through to the mainstream media in Britain. With his hairpiece and all, the 'Mad Major' Wall is often presented as something of a figure of fun – but he isn't that. His '92 Group' seems to have remained a well-kept secret within the Tory Party for over twenty years until 1983, and is now reported to be the largest Tory Party grouping at Westminster, with over 80 MPs.

The 'New Right' discovered by the media in the late 1970s (essentially after Thatcher came to power), is little more than an expression of the media's complete lack of interest in the British Right prior to Mrs Thatcher. This 'New Right' is frequently the same people as, and believes the same things as the 'old' Right. The '92 group' for example, appears to be nothing more than the current vehicle for the South African-supporting sections of the Tory Party. A recent deputation to the Prime Minister from the unofficial back-bench committee of Tories opposed to sanctions consisted of John Carlisle and three 'old hands' whose names recur throughout the late sixties and early seventies

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<sup>52</sup> No, don't write to us for copies of it. We don't have any left and are not willing to start photocopying things. If you want it – and it is very good and important – get the slightly amended version printed in *The Third Decade* November 1985, available from Jerry Rose State University College, Fredonia, New York 14063. Send \$3 minimum for one copy. Subs are \$15 per annum (six copies).

<sup>53</sup> Used to be *Counterspy*, Box 647, Ben Franklin Station, Washington DC 20044. Annual sub. for UK is \$25. For other countries, best to write and enquire first.

– John Biggs-Davison, Julian Amery and Patrick Wall – all of them Monday Club members in the sixties and supporters/members of the Anglo-Rhodesian Society. Other Anglo-Rhodesian Society members were Monday Clubbers Ronald Bell, Stephen Hastings and Harold Soref, who were on its Council.<sup>54</sup>

The basis of Wall's influence – such as it is – is probably his role as chair of the Southern Africa Sub-committee of the Conservative Foreign Affairs Committee from 1970-78. One of the recent pieces on the '92 Group' included, from 'the cast' of *Lobster* 11, Biggs-Davison, Wall, Jill Knight (of BACC) and Winston Churchill.<sup>55</sup>

The most detailed recent analysis of parliamentary economic links to South Africa is in *Labour Research* (August 1986), although if you look closely, many of the 'links' are pretty weak. Julian Critchley MP's 'link' to South Africa is about average:

"Lists as employment or office Public Affairs Adviser to SSIB-Lintas Ltd, owned by the US Interpublic Group of companies which has nine South African subsidiaries."

Good orthodox Marxists that they are, *Labour Research* really want there to be direct concrete 'interests' to explain the Tory Party's infatuation with South Africa. And, yes, while there are some, Biggs-Davison, Knight, Churchill and Wall are not on their list. The 'economic interest' approach misses, marginalises, the fact that many on the Tory Right support South Africa because they are racists and/or anti-communists whose talk of the 'Soviet threat to the Cape' *et al* is genuine.

Some on the Tory Right are something like neo-fascists. I don't want to overstate this, but from the days of the Anglo-German Friendship Society, the Link *et al* in the 1930s, there has remained a section of the party just not particularly interested in the concept of democracy.<sup>56</sup> Patrick Wall and Jill Knight's links to the World Anti-Communist League through BACC, Tory MPs Wilkinson, Terlezky, Billingham and Merchant supporting World Anti-Communist League and/or Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League activities,<sup>57</sup> the Bells and

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<sup>54</sup> Anglo-Rhodesian membership from Counter Information Services (CIS), 'Sell-out in Zimbabwe', no date, but probably 1978.

<sup>55</sup> *Sunday Times* 22 June 1986. On the '92' see also *Guardian* 23 June 1986 and *Observer* 10 August 1986.

<sup>56</sup> On the Tory Party and the fascists in the 1930s see eg, Simon Haxey, *Tory MP*, (London 1939) and 'Graccus' (Tom Wintringham), *Your MP*, (London 1945).

<sup>57</sup> Piers Merchant MP, one of the speakers at WACL 1986 'World Freedom Day', January 1986. (*Asian Outlook*, February 1986). Stefan Terlezki and Henry Billingham MPs, at WACL/APACL 'Captive Nations Week' July 1984 (*Asian Outlook*, August 1984).

Proctors in domestic racist groups like WISE – none of this is new. What does appear to be new, at least since the formation of WACL, is the current ‘weight’ of the British WACL affiliate. Patrick Wall, a significant figure on the Tory Right for twenty years, is quite a different kettle of fish from marginal racists and anti-semites like Don Martin and Lady Birdwood, his predecessors as WACL affiliates in the UK. With Mrs Thatcher in power, the authoritarian Right in the Tory Party has got that much closer to the centre of gravity.

## **The anti-union/strike-breaking organisations**

Another distinctive strand on the British Right are the antecedents of the strike-breaking/anti-union aspirations of General Sir Walter Walker’s Civil Assistance and David Stirling’s GB 75 in 1974 and ‘75. These antecedents stretch back through every decade at least as far back as World War 1, show the kind of continuity of belief, personnel and action visible elsewhere on the Right; and, here as elsewhere in the *history* of the British Right, there is little information readily available.

Other than the Tory Party itself, the only significant organisation which has survived on the Right since the 1920s is the Economic League, running a large-scale intelligence operation against the Left and the unions under cover of its propaganda operations. Continuously funded and staffed by British capital for over half a century, the Economic League has to be taken seriously. Yet there appears to be only one substantial essay on it, the ‘Background Paper’ in *State Research Bulletin No. 7*, and not a single piece of academic work.

There is some debate about the League’s origins. *State Research*, quoting the League’s own version of its history, has it founded by, among others, Admiral Hall (ex chief of Naval Intelligence), and originally known as Economic Study Clubs. But the *State Research* essay also points out that the League’s fifth annual review (1925) states that the League was originally known as the Central Council of the Economic League, and prior to that, as National Propaganda. *Labour Research*, on the other hand, in an early piece on the League<sup>58</sup> refers to the Central Council of the Economic Leagues (plural), known, prior to 1920, as the National Propaganda *Committee*.

This muddle is resolved by Barbara Lee Farr in her wonderful PhD thesis.<sup>59</sup> The National Propaganda Committee (singular) was set up by Patrick Hannon’s British Commonwealth Union in 1919; and it was this Propaganda Committee which formed the Economic Study Club – a centre for training anti-socialist

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<sup>58</sup> *Labour Research*, September 1926

<sup>59</sup> Barbara Lee Farr, *The Development and Impact of Right-wing Politics in England, 1918-39*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Illinois 1976.



speakers.<sup>60</sup> Hannon confirms some of this in his *Who's Who* 1924 entry which includes "Director, Economic Study Club". Farr states, flatly, that "the Economic Study Club was reorganised after the (General) Strike as the Economic League".<sup>61</sup> This is indirectly confirmed by accounts of John Baker White's career in which he is always described as the League's first director, 1926-39.

What matters is the link to Hannon and the British Commonwealth Union (henceforth BCU). For the BCU, practically invisible in our social history,

"represents an important, unique direction of right-wing activism. Money not moral pronouncements was its means of persuasion....its methods reveal an underground network of secret subsidies to 'sympathetic' politicians and labour leaders, infiltration of government departments, intrigue and industrial spying".<sup>62</sup>

At this distance it hardly matters which trade union leaders and politicians Hannon and the BCU bought-off: J. Havelock Ellis was the only name I recognised.<sup>63</sup> What is interesting is that the covert funding of anti-socialist trade union leaders visible in the 1950s with the Common Cause-IRIS connection mentioned above, should have been happening in the early 1920s. *Plus ça change.*

The period between 1918 and 1926 was one of intense activity on the Right as well as the Left: this, perhaps, was the last period when 'class warfare' was not a piece of wishful thinking on the part of the Marxist left in Britain.<sup>64</sup> A large range of right-wing groups appear – and disappear – many of them, like the Walker and Stirling outfits of the middle 1970s, specifically aimed at strike-breaking.<sup>65</sup> In a recent letter to us, *Aims* director, Michael

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<sup>60</sup> Farr thesis p. 158 (see note 59): using Hannon's own papers, she can be assumed to be accurate.

<sup>61</sup> Farr, thesis (see note 59) p. 234

<sup>62</sup> Farr, thesis (see note 59) pp. 153, 150. But how does she (or we) know it was unique?

<sup>63</sup> Other names she mentions include: Herbert J. Read, funded to start a break-away National Federation of Postal and Telegraph Clerks; A.R. Jephcott; Marshall Pike; Frank Sheppard; J. S. Seddon.

<sup>64</sup> The BCU also funded Christabel Pankhurst's Women's Party.

<sup>65</sup> . The Monday Club's journal *Monday World* commented in 1969 "We are probably moving into a decade of unprecedented political instability, uncertainty and change. Unless the Conservative Party and its individual members of Parliament are able both to recognise and meet the challenge of challenging times we could be in for a period of civil disturbance unparalleled since Chartist agitation over one hundred years ago." Cited in Andrew Gamble, *The Conservative Nation* (London 1974) p. 108 Similar sentiments were being expressed by many of the people Cecil King was talking to during this period. See his *Diaries*.

Ivens, expressed the view that the formation of all the groups in the 1970s was in response to the perceived 'threat' from the Left. It may not be too much of an exaggeration to suggest that for the Right, the early 1970s looked like a re-run of the 1920s.

*Labour Research* first reports on strike-breaking organisations in November 1925, mentioning The Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies (OMS), the National Citizens' Union, the British Empire Union, and the British Fascists. OMS is a reasonably well-known feature of the backdrop to the General Strike of 1926. Steve Peak<sup>66</sup> notes, in passing, "on September 25 1925, the unofficial Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies has been set up under Lord Hardinge of Penshurst to begin enlisting potential strike-breakers and the government did not try seriously to distance itself from the new body".<sup>67</sup>

*The 1925 Labour Research* article lists OMS' Lord-laden Council and details some of its activities.<sup>68</sup> But even the apparently well-established OMS story has wrinkles. In his autobiography<sup>69</sup> John Baker White, the first Director of the Economic League, attributes the formation of OMS to one Sir George McGill, a personal friend of Vernon Kell, the first head of MI5. Prior to the OMS episode McGill

"created and directed a highly efficient private intelligence service, investigating not only all forms of subversion, including communism, but also the international traffic in drugs and the traffic in women and children".<sup>70</sup>

White was recruited by McGill and by 1924 was running Section D of McGill's operation.<sup>71</sup>

OMS appeared two years after the *British Fascists* (sometimes called British Fascisti), whose strike-breaking intentions were plainly stated in their formal objectives:

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<sup>66</sup> Steve Peak, *Troops in Strikes* (London 1984). An excellent piece of work which we should have plugged earlier.

<sup>67</sup> Peak (see note 66) p. 45

<sup>68</sup> On OMS see also *Labour Research* March 1926.

<sup>69</sup> John Baker White, *True Blue* (London 1970)

<sup>70</sup> White (see note 69) p. 129

<sup>71</sup> White (see note 69) p. 142 The extant accounts of the formation of OMS make no mention of McGill; and extant histories of MI5 ignore him also. Information on McGill would be welcome.

“to assist by all lawful means in the preservation of law and order and protection of persons and property, and to co-operate whenever possible with the military or police or other authorities in so doing”.<sup>72</sup>

The British Fascists are another major grouping on the Right which awaits a really serious study. Farr’s essay, based on a chapter of her PhD, is a sketch with some (illuminating) details: British Fascist members acting as ‘stewards’ at Tory Party meetings; the formation of ‘Q squads’, paramilitary forces; Patrick Hannon, while Director of the BCU, on the British Fascist Grand Council, and President of the Birmingham Branch in 1925/26 (something he omits from his *Who’s Who* entries); the presence of people later prominent in the fascist movement of the 1930s, including William Joyce, Arnold Leese and Sir Charles Petrie.

The National Citizens’ Union began as the Middle Classes Union and was involved in strike-breaking in 1919, 1920 and 1921.<sup>73</sup> Its members joined OMS.<sup>74</sup> The British Empire Union, founded in 1915, set up an ‘Industrial Peace Department’ to campaign against ‘the dangers of revolution and communism’,<sup>75</sup> and, like the National Citizens’ Union, publicly supported OMS and enrolled its members in it.<sup>76</sup> Brown gives some information on the British Empire Union while comparing it with the Anti-Socialist Union.<sup>77</sup> Both were funded by British capital, and Brown notes that the Empire Union “apparently had much greater resources”, quoting the Soviet Union’s *Izvestia*’s 1936 description of the British Empire Union as the main enemy of socialism in Britain.<sup>78</sup>

The *Anti-Socialist Union*, founded in 1908 (and, after 1925, known as the Anti-Socialist and Anti-Communist Union), although not directly involved in the strike-breaking of the 1920s, had on its executive committee several members of Baldwin’s Cabinet at the time of the 1926 General Strike: Wilfred Ashley,

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<sup>72</sup> Barbara Lee Farr, ‘The British Fascisti, the OMS and the general strike; right-wing activism in the 1920s’, in *Societas* Autumn 1975, p. 261,

<sup>73</sup> *Labour Research* November 1925

<sup>74</sup> Farr, thesis (see note 59) footnote on p. 258.

<sup>75</sup> *Labour Research* November 1925

<sup>76</sup> *Labour Research* November 1925

<sup>77</sup> Kenneth D. Brown, ‘The Anti-Socialist Union, 1908-49’ in *Essays in Anti-Labour History* ed. K.D. Brown, (London 1974)

<sup>78</sup> Brown (see note 77) p. 255. The Earl of Mansfield (IPG) was President of the British Empire Union for most of the 1930s.

Oliver Locker-Lampson, Samuel Hoare and the Chief Civil Commissioner during the strike, Sir W. Mitchell-Thompson.<sup>79</sup>

The Anti-Socialist and Anti-Communist Union declined in the 1930s, apparently due to the success of the British Empire Union, and finally dissolved in 1949, its financial and literary assets being handed over to the Economic League.<sup>80</sup>

With so little information available on these groups, information on their personnel is equally thin, but with the fragments that do exist, a pattern of overlapping memberships – of a network, going back to the thesis of *Lobster* 11 – is visible in the biographies of some of the leading individuals.

- Sir Harry Brittain: Executive of the Anti-Socialist Union; Executive Committee, Economic League; Honorary President of the Friends of Italy; member, Anglo-German Friendship Society; Tory MP; Carlton Club; and, back to the origins of all this, founder member of the Tariff Reform League.
- Sir Edward Illiffe: Vice President, Economic League; Executive of the Anti-Socialist Union; Treasurer of the British Empire Union; Tory MP; Carlton Club; Council member, Society for Individual Freedom (1944).
- Wilfred Ashley: Chair of the Anti-Socialist Union; as Lord Mount Temple, President of the Anglo-German Friendship Society; Tory MP; Chair of the Navy League and Chair of the Comrades of the Great War.<sup>81</sup>
- Patrick Hannon: General Secretary, Navy League; founder, Comrades of the Great War; founder, British Commonwealth Union; Grand Council, British Fascists; Vice President Federation of British Industry; Tory MP; Carlton Club; Vice President, Tariff Reform League; founder member, British League for Freedom (1943).
- W. R. Runciman: Vice President, Economic League; member, Anglo-German Friendship Society; Tory MP.

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<sup>79</sup> Brown (see note 77) p. 259. Hoare's brother was a regional official in the Economic League in the thirties (see below). R. B. Blumenfield, one of the ASU founders, was shown in *Tatler* May 30, 1934, at a January Club/Blackshirt dinner. ('Jack Mahoney') These Cabinet Ministers give 'Carlton Club' in their *Who's Who* entries, as do a great many of the others mentioned in this section. The Carlton Club still runs a semi-formal political organisation, its 'Political Committee'. Leon Brittain MP was described fairly recently as a member.

<sup>80</sup> Brown (see note 77) p. 257

<sup>81</sup> Navy League and Comrades of the Great War both 'patriotic' organisations, i.e. 'anti-alien' and anti-left. Comrades of the Great War was co-founded by Patrick Hannon. On CGW, see Wooton, 'Ex-servicemen in Politics', in *Political Quarterly* 1958, pp. 114-132. Hannon was secretary of both, simultaneously. On the Navy League, see 'Anti-Semitism with the Boots Off', in *Weiner Library Bulletin* (Special Edition).

- Earl of Malmesbury: Vice President, Economic League; member, Anglo-German Friendship Society; Honorary Treasurer, Anti-Socialist Union.
- Lord McGowan: Vice President, Economic League; member, Anglo-German Friendship Society; Carlton Club.
- Colonel Geoffrey Hutchinson: Economic League Council; member, Anglo-German Friendship Society; Tory MP.
- Earl of Selbourne: Vice President, Economic League; member, Anglo-German Friendship Society; in the sixties, supporter of Edward Martell; Monday Club member; Anglo-Rhodesian Society; Carlton Club; founder member, Society for Individual Freedom.

The overlapping memberships of groups like the Economic League and the Anglo-German Friendship Society visible in those biographical sketches hints at one of the really under-explored areas of this period: how far the anti-labour, anti-union groups moved in the late 1920s and '30s towards a fascist position. Granted, per se, membership of the Anglo-German Friendship Society tells us nothing, but with certain individuals such a political drift is pretty clear. Lord Mount Temple (Wilfred Ashley MP), President of the Anglo-German Friendship Society and Chair of the Anti-Socialist Union, signed a letter in support of the Munich Agreement with members of the pro-German Link and the notorious anti-semitic, Captain Ramsay MP.<sup>82</sup> The British Empire Union (with the Earl of Mansfield as Chair) and the National Citizens Union were also involved with Captain Ramsay in the short-lived far-right coalition, the 1938 Co-ordinating Committee.<sup>83</sup>

The continuity, expressed in the biographical sketches, from the 'patriotic' groups like the Navy League and the Comrades of the Great War – which were part of the 'anti-alien' campaigns of the first two decades of this century; 'anti-alien' being a polite way of saying 'anti-semitic' – through to the later groups suggests that when more details emerge on all these groups, we will find that a substantial proportion of their leading members were anti-semites, as well as being pro-Franco, pro-Mussolini and, finally, pro-Hitler. Gisela Lebzelter noted that the leading members of the Britons Publishing Company (publishers of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*)

"were also affiliated with other patriotic movements such as the British Brothers League, Eugenics Society, Loyalty League, Navy League or Vigilantes Society . . . an anti-alien tradition with a sometimes definite

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<sup>82</sup> Robert Benewick, *The Fascist Movement in Britain* (London 1972) p. 190

<sup>83</sup> Benewick (see note 82) p. 289

anti-Jewish basis".<sup>84</sup>

Lebzelter here is writing of the period just before and just after World War 1, but there are enough hints in those biographies to suggest that the war was not some kind of 'natural break' and that there may be a degree of continuity all the way through from the pre WW1 era to the second World War (a continuity best expressed by Patrick Hannon's career).<sup>85</sup>

If the British Commonwealth Union, Economic League, Federation of British Industry and the British Empire Union are anything, they are the voice of the British manufacturing sector. Take the founders of the BCU: Sir Hallelwell Rogers, Allan Smith, F. Dudley Docker, Sir Vincent Caillard and Patrick Hannon. All were Midlands based, Rogers and Hannon Birmingham MPs; all of them with industrial interests in the Midlands. The BCU, FBI and the other essentially 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.

"Docker envisaged a completely integrated society and economy in which each 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, embraced by the protection of an Imperial Tariff".<sup>86</sup>

The BCU's 'Industrial Group' of MPs (the first 11 subsidised by the BCU in the 1918 election – £7,900 spent on 15 candidates; 11 elected) grew to 105 (mostly Tory) members by 1924. The Industrial Group – Hannon was secretary and leader – wanted government protection of British industry against foreign competition, but, to quote Hannon, wanted "the largest measure of freedom in the relationship between capital and labour and the least state intervention possible".<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Gisela C. Lebzelter, 'Henry Hamilton Beamish and the Britons; Champions of Anti-Semitism' in Lunn and Thurlow (eds) see note 4 above: first (unnumbered) page of her essay.

<sup>85</sup> The hidden anti-semitism of the political Right in this period is visible, for example, in the autobiography of John Baker White (see note 69 above). White (p. 123) describes Nesta Webster as a "far-seeing woman of whom I saw a good deal . . . writer of books on secret societies and subversion"; and notes (p. 132) his fond memories of G.K. Chesterton's 'bon mots' – the only one he remembers being "How odd of God to choose the Jews".

<sup>86</sup> Stephen Blank, *Industry and Government in Britain: the Federation of British Industries in Politics, 1945-65*, (Saxon House, Farnborough, 1973), p. 14. Docker's vision is not unlike that embodied in the NEDC ('Neddy') of the sixties, except that NEDC remained a talking shop and never had any power.

<sup>87</sup> Farr thesis (see note 59) p. 179

Longstreth calls this grouping – BCU, Industrial Group, Economic League, FBI *et al* – Preference Imperialists, and notes their links to the earlier Midlands manufacturing-based Tariff Reform League.<sup>88</sup> But what this sector could never effectively articulate, even when it perceived it correctly, was that then, as now, its primary enemy was the City of London.<sup>89</sup>

Squeezed by other capitalist economies, under attack from a labour force increasingly politicised and militant, in the post World War 1 era British manufacturing capital set up defensive organisations against both threats: funding the BCU, Economic League, Anti Socialist Union and British Empire Union against the unions and the Left; and the FBI, National Union of Manufacturers, Industrial Group *et al* in futile attempts to influence government policy – essentially, at the beginning, to press for protective tariffs.

As Longstreth shows, 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 or finance capital), with the money-lenders in control for virtually all of the century. As Longstreth notes, Mosley's movement in the 1930s

“was, in effect, the 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”.<sup>90</sup>

This 'producers' alliance' – the heart of the corporate vision – was half-tried in the 1930s after the 1932 Imperial Tariff and the 'National Government', during World War 2 of necessity, and again under the Labour governments of the sixties and seventies – but without ever seriously threatening City of London dominance of the Bank of England and the Treasury, the power-centres of the British state. Today it is, once again, the Labour Party which is proposing a 'producers' alliance', this time under the banner of 'rebuilding the manufacturing base' (and, once again, without proposing to do anything about the money-lenders' power bases in the Bank of England and the Treasury).

The utter political impotence of this country's manufacturing sector before

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<sup>88</sup> Frank Longstreth, 'The City, Industry and the State' in *State and Economy in Contemporary Capitalism* ed. Colin Crouch (London 1979)

<sup>89</sup> And when it was articulated – Longstreth quotes memos to the government from the FBI opposed to the return to the Gold Standard – it was ignored.

<sup>90</sup> Longstreth (see note 88) p. 171

a (numerically) tiny minority – the City of London; if you will, the *English* ruling class – has yet to be explained. (It's only recently been even remotely *described*.) Never mind not introducing 'socialism', the real failure of the Labour governments since the war has been their inability to shift power from the money-lenders to the manufacturing sector. Harold Wilson ends up chairing a docile enquiry into the City of London he should have tried to destroy; and Mrs Thatcher, the great 'English nationalist' (her phrase) enthusiastically presides over the destruction of 25% of the manufacturing base which supports many of 'her' people.

How little has fundamentally changed. In 1981 the then President of the CBI (successor to the FBI and National Union of Manufacturers) spoke of a 'bare knuckle fight' with the Thatcher government – a 60 year echo of the FBI's Sir Alfred Mond's House of Commons speech on the manufacturing sector being sacrificed on 'the cross of gold'. (Only the technical language of economics changes: the mechanisms, the power transmission, remains the same.) Beckett's speech received a standing ovation from the vast majority of the delegates at that CBI conference, many of whom, presumably, were delegates from manufacturing companies enthusiastically contributing to the Economic League's near £1 million budget that year.

The Economic League, which began with the BCU's twin aims of persuading the government to change its policy and introduce tariffs, and defeating the Left and the unions, concentrated on the latter. The kinds of attempts to buy off the union leaderships made by the BCU may have continued. In 1937 some internal Economic League documents were leaked to the *Daily Worker*. As well as describing police (Special Branch) co-operation with the League, they included some letters from the League's then director, John Baker White to a regional official, R.R. Hoare. These letters included:

"In most areas the League is openly and avowedly anti-communist ... on many occasions we have supported the Labour Party in its fight against communism, and most particularly in the trade unions. It may interest you to know that the co-operation between Sir Walter Citrine (General Secretary of the TUC) and myself on this question is far closer than most people imagine ... through an intermediary the League is giving active assistance to one very important trade union in fighting the communists within its own ranks".<sup>91</sup>

Citrine sued the *Daily Worker*, denying everything. John Baker White denied only those sections relating to Citrine, and Citrine won his case.<sup>92</sup> The whole

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<sup>91</sup> *Daily Worker* 8 May 1937

<sup>92</sup> *Times* 23 July 1937



thing may have been part of the Communist Party–right-wing labour wars of the period. Yet there have been enough examples of British capital funding union leaders from the BCU onwards, through the IRIS/Common Cause episode described above and TRUEMID in the 1970s<sup>93</sup> to make me wonder.

These days the mantle of the BCU is worn by British United Industrialists whose director, Captain Briggs, claimed in 1985 that BUI was 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).<sup>94</sup>

## **Edward Martell – the bridge**

After World War 2 the role of strike-breaker and public anti-socialist campaigner was picked up by Edward Martell.<sup>95</sup> Martell, who had been a member of the Liberal Party until the early 1950s (a member of the ‘libertarian’ rump of the party), set up his Free Press Society (1955), followed by the Peoples’ League for the Defence of Freedom (1956), the Anti-Socialist Front (1958), his newspaper, *New Daily* (1960), the National Fellowship (1962) and the Freedom Group (1963).<sup>96</sup>

Even the names of these groups suggest Martell’s role as the bridge between the pre-war groups and those of the 1970s: the ‘Peoples’ League’ and ‘Anti-Socialist Front’ have obvious, and presumably intentional echoes of the Anti-Socialist Union and all the various ‘leagues’ of the 1920s and 1930s.

Martell’s organisations were involved in strike-breaking in 1958, 1962 and 1963.<sup>97</sup> Although Martell apparently attracted the support of tens of thousands of people, he never received the kind of overt backing from senior people on the British Right, in British capital or the Tory Party given to the groups in the 1920s and ‘30s. Donald Johnson MP, one of Martell’s few open supporters in

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<sup>93</sup> On Truemid, see Monica Brimacombe, ‘The Company They Keep’, in *New Statesman* 9 May 1986.

<sup>94</sup> Claims made by Briggs to someone who, for obvious reasons, does not wish to be identified. The *claims* are true – i.e. Briggs did make them – but whether or not BUI *are* funding these groups is another question. It has been pointed out to me by Kevin McNamara MP that the Union of Democratic Mineworkers hardly needs financial help as it inherited the (considerable) funds of the ‘Spencer’ union of the 1920s.

<sup>95</sup> In 1956 *The Times* included Martell in a long list of groups working against ‘communism’, including: MRA, Common Cause, IRIS, Mosley’s Union Movement, and something called the Anti-Communist League of Great Britain. My point is that Martell was the public – publicity-seeking – campaigner. To a greater or lesser degree, all these other groups worked semi-clandestinely.

<sup>96</sup> On Martell, see *Labour Research* August 1956, February 1962, November 1963 and George Thayer, *The British Political Fringe* (London 1965), ch. 4.

<sup>97</sup> *Labour Research* November 1963

the House of Commons commented:

"It was Edward Martell's misfortune that no one with a positive political stake in the party would commit themselves to open support. The National Fellowship had a distinguished list of open supporters . . . (but) scarcely a person with any political know-how."<sup>98</sup>

Few of the names associated with Martell seem to crop up elsewhere, but there are one or two interesting connections: Lord Addington, a keen supporter of Moral Rearmament (about whom a lot may get said, one day); the Earl of Selbourne sponsored the Freedom Group; and in the National Fellowship was Air Vice Marshall Donald Bennett, who turns up a decade later with Lady Birdwood, Don Martin *et al.*<sup>99</sup>

Although Martell's empire folded in the mid-sixties (demonstrating that his actual support was smaller than he always said), he pops up again in 1977 with Lady Birdwood and Donald Bennett in Self Help, another strike-breaking, anti-union, newspaper printing outfit, allegedly financed by Ross McWhirter.<sup>100</sup> He is currently a 'consultant' to Charles Forte.

It was Martell's misfortune to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, pursuing his anti-union, anti-socialist aims at a point when it had become deeply unfashionable on the right to be openly right-wing. Nothing he did would have seemed out of place in the National Association for Freedom. All the talk of there being a 'New Right' in Britain in the 1970s is falsified by the very existence of Martell and his organisations. Yet he is rarely mentioned in the various articles that have been written about that 'New Right'. Today, as much as when he was politically active, he seems to be faintly embarrassing. He deserves better. If anyone can be said to be the forebear of the Thatcher-led counter revolution it is Martell.

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<sup>98</sup> Donald Johnson, *A Cassandra at Westminster* (London 1967) p. 111.

<sup>99</sup> On Bennett's later associates see *Searchlight* no. 51.

<sup>100</sup> McWhirter financing Self-Help in *Searchlight* no 28.