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THE HIDDEN ORIGINS OF INTELLIGENCE HISTORY: REHABILITATING THE ‘AIRPORT BOOKSTALL’

In July 1984, Christopher Andrew and David Dilks published a modest-looking collection of essays called *The Missing Dimension*. In fact, this was nothing less than a manifesto, calling on academic historians to take intelligence history seriously and lamenting that this important subject was dominated by journalistic accounts and unreliable memoirs. Indeed, it derided this latter material as the ‘airport bookstall’ school of intelligence history.¹ More than thirty years later, anyone taking the many intelligence courses currently available in leading universities will almost certainly be told that the academic study of their subject began in 1984. Since then, academic writing on intelligence has mushroomed, with numerous journals and books series. By contrast, books on intelligence from before this date are noticeably absent from both university libraries and intelligence module syllabi.²

This article was first given as a paper at 'Unwrapping National Security: A Workshop on Methods in Intelligence and Security Studies', Aberystwyth University, in October 2014. The author gratefully acknowledges comments made there and also by other readers.

¹ The term originates with: C. Andrew, ‘Historical Research on the British Intelligence Community’, in R. Godson (ed.), *Comparing Foreign Intelligence: The U.S., the U.S.S.R., the U.K. and the Third World* (Virginia, 1988).

² This argument is based on selecting five preeminent authors from this period – Chapman Pincher, Gordon Brook-Shepherd, Rebecca West, John Bulloch, Andrew Boyle and searching for them in King’s College, Brunel University and Warwick

Donald Cameron Watt was perhaps the most censorious. Watt was an influential figure, holding the prestigious Stevenson Chair in International History at the LSE and winning the Wolfson Prize for his magisterial history of the outbreak of the Second World War, *How War Came*.³ Importantly, he was President of the UK Universities Study Group on Intelligence and was also one of the longest serving members of the editorial board of the journal, *Intelligence and National Security*. Watt collectively condemned what he called 'TV faction, journalism and the airport bookstall school of history with their interminable cries of "cover up"', insisting that these were all dubious historical forms where the author was lured in by the seduction of the inside story - 'the belief that there is always a secret behind the facade'. He warned that in its extreme form 'this impulse leads to the conspiratorial school of historiography'.⁴

Intelligence history has been driven forward by three distinct, if overlapping, sets of writers: former practitioners and policy-makers, academics and journalists. As Gerry Hughes has reminded us, these can be jealous factions, with journalists seeking the intellectual respectability of academia and professors yearning after the financial

University libraries. I am indebted to Richard Aldrich, Philip Davies and Michael Goodman for sharing their undergraduate syllabi on intelligence.

³ Like Christopher Andrew, he was appointed as an official historian. His subject was the organisation of British defence policy, 1945-64, but this volume has yet to appear.

⁴ D. C. Watt, 'Critical Afterthoughts and Alternative Historico-Literary Theories', in Wesley K. Wark (ed.), *Spy Fiction, Spy Films and Real Intelligence* (London, 1991), p.214.

rewards of trade publishing. Both these categories envy the insider information enjoyed by the practitioner or former minister. Former intelligence practitioners, such as Sir David Omand, have become professors. Specialist intelligence journalists, among whom we might number Paul Lashmar and Stephen Dorril, have also become professors. Cees Wiebes, the most eminent Dutch intelligence historian joined government to become its lead investigator at NCTB, the counter-terrorism fusion centre. Prominent American academics such as Bob Jervis and Richard Immerman have openly described their experiences working as contractors for the CIA. Perhaps only Lord Hennessy of Nymfield can claim to have transversed all three categories. Happily, these categories are now demonstrably fluid, but as Watt's acerbic comments make clear, in the 1980s they were not.⁵

Accordingly, the literature from this earlier period has been largely exorcised from the historiography of British intelligence.⁶ As early as 1990, Donald Cameron Watt – looking back at works on intelligence from this period – attacked ‘the sheer unhistoricism of most of the literature about national “secret services”, adding that

⁵ R.G. Hughes, 'Of Revelatory Histories and Hatchet Jobs: Propaganda and Method in Intelligence History', *Intelligence and National Security*, 23/6 (2008), pp.859-63.

⁶ The ‘Dark Age’ of intelligence history might be said to lie between 1945 and 1984. The historiography of British intelligence is best understood in waves that overlay each another, as opposed to discrete discontinuous periods. This was preceded by the ‘Spy Fiction’ era, roughly 1905-1960, see: C. R. Moran, ‘The pursuit of intelligence history: methods, sources, and trajectories in the United Kingdom’, *Studies in Intelligence*, 55/2 (2011); N. Hiley, ‘Decoding German spies: British spy fiction 1908–18’, *Intelligence and National Security*, 5/4 (1990), pp.55-79.

this inhibited real historians from working in the field because of the fear of losing their professional reputations.’⁷ Watt’s observation explains why professional historians continue to deliberately ostracise earlier works of popular intelligence history, adding that their worries were ‘in part psychological, in part methodological.’⁸ The pejorative term ‘airport bookstall’ school is designed to distance popular writers, consigning them to oblivion amongst true crime and football biography.⁹ Yet despite the low opinion held by many intelligence scholars of the ‘airport bookstall’ school of British intelligence history, the methodological issues that Watt alluded to remain as a constant and in fact, link us to, rather than distance us from, these earlier writings.

Accordingly, the anxieties about this earlier literature stand in need of revision. Moreover, the literature from this period might be better designated the ‘Muckraker Era’, rather than the ‘airport bookstall’.¹⁰ First, I will suggest that the literature from this ostracised period can still provide a useful frame of reference and, triangulated

⁷ D. C. Watt, ‘Intelligence and the Historian: A Comment on John Gaddis’s “Intelligence, Espionage, and Cold War Origins”’, *Diplomatic History*, 14/2 (1990), p.199.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ C.f. fn. 20. Andrew, ‘Historical Research’.

¹⁰ I use the term ‘muckraker’ here in the American sense, suggesting a journalist who investigates allegations of corruption among the government to perform an auditing or watchdog function, not in the British sense of a journalist specialising in salaciousness or scandal. See Louis Filler, *The Muckrakers: New and Enlarged Edition of Crusaders for American Liberalism* (Pennsylvania, 1976), pp.367–68.

with today's scholarship, provide fascinating information. Second, the investigative techniques pioneered in the Muckraker Era – ‘archival hacking’, anonymous elite interviews and access to privileged information – *still* constitute the methodological backbone of historical research into intelligence, marking muckrakers out as pioneers not pariahs. These arguments are illustrated by focusing on the works of three authors – Rebecca West, Gordon Brook-Shepherd and John Bulloch – as emblematic authors of the Muckraker Era. Admittedly, there are other authors who could have been chosen: Chapman Pincher, Andrew Boyle or Anthony Cave-Brown, to name but a few. However, West, Brook-Shepherd and Bulloch have been selected because they constitute the leading non-fiction spy-writers of the era. Lastly, I will attempt to recast the literature from the Muckraker Era, offering a new and more constructive perspective, despite the epistemological shortcomings. Accepting the limitations of texts – like a contemporary historian of Rome accepts the limitations of the accounts of Tacitus or Polybius – opens up new avenues of enquiry and new narratives.¹¹

The importance of embracing new narratives cannot be overstated. Currently, intelligence historians are over-dependent on declassified documents and official histories by the British government and this has created a close, even unhealthy, relationship. Intelligence historians need documents from the British government to write their histories; the government needs historians to retroactively validate past

¹¹ On the parallels between intelligence history and historical research on ancient or medieval history see R.G. Hughes, 'Of Revelatory Histories and Hatchet Jobs', p.844; P. Jackson, 'Introduction: enquires into the secret state' in R.G. Hughes, L. Scott and P. Jackson (eds.) *Exploring Intelligence Archives: Enquiries into the Secret State*, (London, 2008), p.2.

actions to maintain the legitimacy of the current intelligence community. The upshot of this is a current academic sub-discipline of intelligence studies which, while embracing critical ideas in its ontology, has nevertheless suffered epistemological sabotage by the authorities and lacks any appetite for investigation, beyond buying a train ticket to the National Archives. Remarkably, dissatisfaction with this supine attitude has prompted academics in the cognate disciplines of sociology and communication theory to launch their own alternative field under the banner of ‘surveillance studies’.

THE RISE OF THE BRITISH MUCKRAKERS

The first wave of intelligence writing that informed the British public about espionage was entirely fictional and was written in the first half of the twentieth century. The mythical British spy created by the pen of novel writers like William le Queux and John Buchan was real in the minds of a society besotted with a ‘sense of imperial frailty’.¹² Authors of spy fiction were nourished by a growing sense of national decline that toyed with the anxieties Edwardian society, eventually verging on paranoia by 1910. Often claiming to be “faction”, spy and invasion stories, if anything, belong to the literature of patriotism that portrayed the quintessential swashbuckling English gentleman in service of King and country in a secret war to hold back the looming tide of barbarism. This fictional depiction of the spy would dominate British public perceptions almost unchallenged up until the end of the Second World War

¹² C. Andrew, *Her Majesty's Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (New York, 1985), p.34.

when, for the most part, fictional ‘spy-fever’ about mostly non-existent German agents was substituted by real life ‘mole mania’ focused on the KGB.¹³

The pinnacle of ‘mole mania’ was perhaps the 1960s – a decade aptly described by Richard Aldrich as an era of ‘exposure’ – because of a series of real-life spy scandals. This exposure began with a bang. Global events that no-one could hide – such as the shooting down of the CIA’s U-2 spy-plane and the capture of its pilot Gary Powers, or the Bay of Pigs the following year – put espionage on the front page of every newspaper. This accelerated cultural change amongst journalists and reporters who had previously been respectful of secrecy were now asking questions.¹⁴ The secret services themselves were caught up in this and became oddly self-conscious about their own image, set against that of the enemy. Hitherto anxious to hide the very existence of secret services, now they used defectors to leak material to the press about their opponents in a race to damage each other’s reputation.¹⁵ This

¹³ Alongside a torrent of spy-fiction existed a second stream of literature that celebrated the new detective as a mixture of undercover operative and scientist, see H. Shpayer-Makov, *The Ascent of the Detective: Police Sleuths in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Oxford, 2011).

¹⁴ R.J. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence* (London, 2001), pp.607-10.

¹⁵ For example, K. Anders, *Murder to Order* (London, 1965) details the KGB liquidation of Ukrainian nationalist leaders L. Rebet and S. Bandera. See also Paul Maddrell, ‘What we have discovered about the Cold War is what we already knew: Julius Mader and the Western secret services during the Cold War,’ *Cold War History* 5/2 (2005), pp. 235-258.

was a wonderful time to be a ‘muckraking’ investigative journalist exploring the burgeoning world of Cold War espionage.

In Britain, the spy-world was also booming. 1961 saw the uncovering of the illegal KGB residents in the Portland Spy Ring, and later that year, former MI6 employee George Blake was exposed as a Soviet spy. In 1963, the Profumo Affair, focused on the Secretary of State for War who engaged in an affair with a London call girl who, in turn was also in a relationship with a Soviet spy, Yevgeni Ivanov. The frenzied press coverage resulted in frequent references to MI5 in the newspapers. In 1967, Chapman Pincher at the *Daily Express* revealed that the Government routinely intercepted thousands of private cables, setting in motion a chain of events that brought personal censure upon then-prime minister Harold Wilson and very nearly spelled the end for the D-Notice Committee, the joint government media body whose purpose was to prevent the public disclosure of information that would adversely affect ‘the defence of the realm’.¹⁶ A year later, Kim Philby, an MI6 traitor and the ‘third man’ who had defected to the Soviet Union in 1963, published his KGB-sponsored memoir, *My Silent War*, which remorselessly revealed the details of MI6 personnel, operations and liaison relationships over thirty years.¹⁷

The decade expedited a narrative critical of British intelligence that challenged conventional wisdom and pre-figured the new discipline of intelligence studies. Writers such as Chapman Pincher, Nigel West, Andrew Boyle, Philip Knightley, John Bulloch, Anthony Cave Brown, Douglas Sutherland, Clive Irving, Rebecca West and

¹⁶ Moran, ‘The pursuit’, p.36.

¹⁷ See K. Philby, *My Silent War* (London, 1968).

more wrote feverishly on Atomic Spies, the Ultra Secret, the Wilson Plot, the ‘Cambridge Comintern’ and the purported duplicity of MI5’s former Director-General Sir Roger Hollis. These writers would provide the *first nonfiction narrative* on intelligence, set against a government that endeavoured to keep the archives closed and intelligence disclosures out of the public domain. Although they provided the ‘first narrative’, British muckrakers embodied the spirit of revisionist history, as they sought to deconstruct the British secret service, its spies and the establishment more generally. As such, ‘muckraker history’ is the most appropriate epithet for literature from this period as for the most part writers embraced a sense of counter-culture. They operated outside academia, mostly from Fleet Street, contested traditional views of events, and reinterpreted orthodox views on evidence, motivations and decision-making processes surrounding intelligence. For the authors of this era, writing on intelligence was both a professional and political activity, designed – as Christopher Moran has pointed out – ‘to shake the establishment by shining a harsh and bright light on its unethical practices’.¹⁸

To a certain extent, the criticisms of the British muckrakers are justified, as some of the writing from this period had a propensity towards rather sensationalist narratives.¹⁹ For example, Anthony Cave Brown’s notorious and erroneous assertion

¹⁸ Moran, ‘The pursuit’, p.34.

¹⁹ Three very good examples of this are R. Deacon, *A History of the British Secret Service* (London, 1969); P. Knightley, *The Second Oldest Profession: The Spy as Bureaucrat, Patriot, Fantasist, and Whore* (London, 1986); and W. Stevenson, *A Man Called Intrepid* (New York, 1976). None of these books have ‘aged’ particularly well and have been criticised for being replete with errors and a few fabrications.

that Churchill allowed the bombing of Coventry to go unopposed to protect the Ultra secret.²⁰ Moreover, in the absence of evidence, some British muckrakers from this ostracised period violated what John Ferris aptly describes as the first rule for rabbit stew, ‘first, catch your rabbit,’ and its corollary, ‘if you haven’t caught a bunny, you can’t bake it’.²¹ On the other hand, some of the writing was good and showed the early signs of a developing discipline. So why has the era been viewed as a ‘Dark Age’; a period of British intelligence that young scholars are forewarned to engage with at their own peril? The answers can be found in one of intelligence history’s most cited books, Andrew and Dilks’ *Missing Dimension* – the edited volume that served as a manifesto for proper historians to investigate secret things – and which has served as the historiographical ‘big bang’ for intelligence studies.²²

OFFICIAL ORIGINS

Missing Dimension had many targets. It criticised mainstream historians of diplomacy and military operations for ignoring intelligence, it criticised the ‘airport bookstall’

²⁰ A.C. Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies: The Vital Role of Deception Strategy in World War II*, (London, 1976), pp.32-45.

²¹ J. Ferris, ‘Coming in from the Cold War: The historiography of American intelligence, 1945-1990’, *Diplomatic History*, 19/1 (1995), p.93. The Ferris quote is third hand from Winston Churchill, which in turn is from Mrs. Glass's recipe for Jugged Hare: ‘First catch your hare’. See: T. Ben-Moshe, *Churchill: Strategy and History* (Boulder, Col, 1992), pp.236–37.

²² C. M. Andrew and D. Dilks, *The Missing Dimension: Government and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1984).

for not doing it properly, and it criticised government for not releasing more records. Yet oddly, the ground for *Missing Dimension* and its ideas was prepared by several official histories of British secret service success during the Second World War, and the first in a fleet of official histories on the same subject, edited by Harry Hinsley.²³ Challenged by insiders who wanted to set the record straight,²⁴ the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Burke Trend, pressed for the release of Ultra records to scholars, arguing this was better than the field being dominated by journalists and defectors like Philby. Hinsley's *magnum opus* would go on to become the blueprint of 'good scholarship' for future generations of intelligence historians.²⁵

The ostracisation of the muckraker literature, however, did not take place in earnest until 1984 with the publication of *The Missing Dimension*, co-edited by one of Hinsley's former tutees, Christopher Andrew. In the introduction to the edited volume, Andrew surveyed the published work on intelligence and noted that

²³ F.H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War: Volume 1: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations* (London, 1979); M.R.D. Foot, *SOE in France, An Account of the Work of the British Special Operations Executive in France 1940–1944* (London, 1966).

²⁴ F. Winterbotham, *The Ultra Secret* (London, 1974); J. C. Masterman, *The Double Cross System in the War of 1939 to 1945* (New Haven, 1972).

²⁵ C.J. Murphy, 'The origins of SOE in France,' *The Historical Journal*, 46/4 (2003), pp. 935-952; R.J. Aldrich, 'Policing the past: official history, secrecy and British intelligence since 1945', *The English Historical Review*, 119/483 (2004), pp. 922-953. See more recently, I. Cobain, *The History Thieves: Secrets, Lies and the Shaping of a Modern Nation*, (London, 2016).

academic historians had tended to either ‘ignore intelligence altogether, or to treat it as of little importance’, and that the ‘yawning gaps in the history of British intelligence’ to some extent had been filled by ‘adventurous non-academics’.²⁶ By 1988, as a contributor to another edited volume on intelligence, Andrew would give the literature of ‘adventurous non-academic’ writing on intelligence a name: the ‘airport bookstall’ genre.²⁷ The label stuck, and since then has come to describe almost all books, except the above official histories, written during the Muckraker Era.²⁸

Andrew was unquestionably the academic pioneer. No university historian had written more scholarly articles on intelligence in the previous decade.²⁹ Yet for

²⁶ Andrew and Dilks, *The Missing Dimension*, pp.1-2.

²⁷ See Andrew, ‘Historical Research’.

²⁸ The following Book and articles have used or applied the label ‘airport bookstall’:
Moran, ‘The pursuit’, p.36; R.J. Aldrich, *Espionage, Security, and Intelligence in Britain, 1945-1970* (Manchester, 1998); R.J. Aldrich, ‘Persuasion? British Intelligence, the History Policeman and Official Information’, in C. R. Moran and P. Major (eds), *Spooked: Britain, Empire and Intelligence since 1945* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2010); C.J. Murphy, ‘Spooked: Britain, empire and intelligence since 1945’, *The International History Review*, 36/2 (2014), p.373; P. Hennessy, ‘The less secret state’, *History Today*, 62/10 (October 2012); M. Hindley, ‘First annual list of dissertations on intelligence’, *Intelligence and National Security*, 13/4 (1998), p.208; D. C. Watt, ‘Intelligence and the historian: A comment on John Gaddis’s “intelligence, espionage, and Cold War origins”’, *Diplomatic History*, 14/2 (1990), p.204.

²⁹ See for example: ‘Déchiffrement et diplomatie: Le cabinet noir sous la troisième république,’ *Relations Internationales*, 5 (Spring 1976), pp. 37-64; ‘The British Secret

Andrew to establish this narrative, with intelligence as ‘the missing dimension of most diplomatic history’, it was necessary to marginalise all works of intelligence that had come before, and the term ‘airport bookstall’ embodied this particular framing.³⁰ Logically, Andrew and Dilks’ argument about a ‘missing dimension’ was true insofar as most scholars of diplomatic and military history had ignored the subject, but in saying this they were merely moving in step with Trend’s decision to accelerate official history and intelligence declassification. A more cogent observation would have been the extent to which the larger official history programme prior to 1979 had actively airbrushed intelligence from the public record.

Andrew’s more acerbic critique of the ‘airport bookstall’ is less plausible. It depends on a charge of ‘absurdity’ levelled against many best-selling publications on

Service and Anglo-Soviet Relations in the 1920s. Part I: From the Trade Negotiations to the Zinoviev Letter’, *The Historical Journal*, 20 (1977), pp. 673-706; ‘Whitehall, Washington and the Intelligence Services,’ *International Affairs*, 53 (1977), pp. 390-404; ‘The Mobilization of British Intelligence in the Two World Wars,’ in N.F. Dreiszinger (ed.) *Mobilization for Total War: The Canadian, American and British Experience 1914-1918, 1939-1945*, (Waterloo, 1981), pp. 87-101.

³⁰ The phrase ‘missing dimension’ originates from Sir Alexander Cadogan. See D. Dilks (ed), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan O.M. 1938-1945* (London, 1917), p.21. Andrew and Dilks, *The Missing Dimension*, p.1. While not an official historian, David Dilks had served as the lead researcher for the vast Eden and Macmillan memoirs, enjoyed unparalleled access and so had glimpsed the missing dimension himself.

intelligence.³¹ But it links back to the missing dimension thesis, since Watt argued that in part, historians had seldom engaged with literature from the Muckraker Era because of the reputational issue, a ‘psychological’ barrier in front of historians that was no less formidable than the methodological barrier.

University historians may have been snooty about trade publications. However, the ‘absurdity’ charge about many best-selling publications on intelligence was misplaced. The merit of a text should be evaluated on an individual basis, regardless of the period it was written or the nature of the outlet. Moreover, when one compares some of these early works to academic work being produced today, what becomes abundantly clear is that the problems of gaps in the archives and the difficulty evaluating insider information have changed little. In short, the epistemological shortcomings that have confined the works of British muckrakers to a ghetto-like existence for the past three decades are in fact universal.

Three decades on from *The Missing Dimension*, many a scholar has answered Andrew’s clarion call.³² Most of these historians use variants of three techniques pioneered by the muckrakers. (1) To become increasingly skilled at an approach Richard Aldrich has termed ‘archival intelligence hacking’ combing private papers and ‘adjacent’ records to fill in ‘both the general outline of the missing intelligence

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² See especially the special issue edited by Oliver Hoare, ‘British Intelligence in the Twentieth Century: A Missing Dimension?’, *Intelligence and National Security*, 17/1 (2002).

dimension and much of its operational detail'.³³ (2) To follow the advice of Philip Davies, and substitute elite interviews for official documents.³⁴ Or (3) as Christopher Moran notes, to rely on 'inside information obtained from well-connected friends in Whitehall'.³⁵ The above three were the methodology of the "muckraker", and are still largely the essence of today's intelligence historian.

Methodological continuity is thus at the core of any attempt to rehabilitate the 'airport bookstall'. Three authors – Rebecca West, Gordon Brook-Shepherd and John Bulloch, illustrate this well.³⁶ Together, these three authors demonstrate how the methodology from the Muckraker Era has not fundamentally changed for those writing on contemporary intelligence issues in the twenty-first century. The

³³ Moran, 'The pursuit', p.39; Andrew and Dilks, *The Missing Dimension*, p.4; and R.J. Aldrich, 'The Secret State', in P. Addison and H. Jones (eds.) *A Companion to Contemporary Britain* (Oxford, 2005), p.336.

³⁴ P.H.J. Davies, 'Spies as informants: Triangulation and the interpretation of elite interview data in the study of the intelligence and security services', *Politics*, 21/1 (2001), p.74.

³⁵ Moran, 'The pursuit', p.36.

³⁶ These books are: R. West, *The Meaning of Treason* (New York, 1949); R. West, *The New Meaning of Treason* (New York, 1964); G. Brook-Shepherd, *The Storm Birds: Soviet Post-War Defectors* (London, 1988); G. Brook-Shepherd, *The Storm Petrels: The Flight of the First Soviet Defectors 1928-1938* (London, 1977); J. Bulloch, *Akin to Treason* (London, 1966); J. Bulloch, *M.I.5: The Origin and History of the British Counter-Espionage Service* (London, 1963); J. Bulloch and H. Miller, *Spy Ring: The Full Story of the Naval Secrets Case* (London, 1961).

contributions of the three authors also highlight that the information generated from this period should also not be ostracised, as they still have contributions to make. These books are by no means the only examples of texts from this ostracised period which warrant rehabilitation, however they are exemplars that delineate broader trends from the Muckraker Era.

REBECCA WEST

Rebecca West is a particularly alluring example of an early pioneer of the Muckraker Era as she has been heralded as one of the most important writers of the twentieth century.³⁷ However, her contribution to the field has almost been entirely overlooked by intelligence historians – despite being the first to identify the subject that would be in ascendency for nearly four decades: the nature of treason.³⁸ Undoubtedly there were individuals better suited than West to write about the techniques, stratagems and organisational structures of Nazi, and later Soviet, espionage operations. Nevertheless, she did conceptualise treason and ideological betrayal in a sophisticated way. West, at this notably early stage, showed the intellectual wherewithal to analyse an issue that many other historians at the time considered inconsequential.

West ought to be considered the mother of intelligence history. She was the first to isolate a theme that would dominate much intelligence writing for the next half century: the study of traitors, moles and ideological betrayal. West began with a study

³⁷ T. Martin, ‘The alphabet library: M is for the meaning of treason, “simply superb storytelling”’ *The Telegraph*, 20 May 2014. See also L. Gibb, *West’s World: The Extraordinary Life of Dame Rebecca West* (London, 2013).

³⁸ West, *The Meaning*; West, *The New Meaning*.

of John Amery, the pro-Nazi son of one of Churchill's cabinet ministers and brother of Julian Amery, who served in the government of Margaret Thatcher. The idea of ideological betrayal transfixed the bureaucracies of East and West in the early post-war period, exemplified by the Stalinist purges in eastern Europe during the 1950s and McCarthyite purges in America. Frantic searches in Whitehall for KGB moles found their ultimate expression in Chapman Pincher's *Their Trade is Treachery*, published in 1980, making the unsettling claim that former-MI5 director, Sir Roger Hollis, was a Soviet traitor.³⁹ West was thus a pioneer of serious non-fiction intelligence writing.

Her first book, *The Meaning of Treason*, was originally conceived as a magazine assignment.⁴⁰ In 1945 Harold Ross, the *New Yorker's* founding editor, commissioned West to report on the trials of William Joyce, better known as "Lord Haw Haw", and John Amery – two British fascists who left for Europe in the 1930s and served Nazi Germany as radio propagandists. Both were sentenced to death by hanging in 1945. After sitting through the court proceedings at the blitz-damaged Old Bailey, West realised she had more material than would satisfy a column in *The New Yorker*, and embarked upon a wider study of trials and treason. The first edition of *The Meaning of Treason* appeared in 1949. West was particularly interested in the betrayals of Joyce and Amery, which she saw as 'that sin which travesties legitimate hatred because it is felt for kindred, as incest is the travesty of legitimate love'.⁴¹ She argued that Nazi intelligence operatives attempted by any means – be it coercion,

³⁹ See C. Pincher, *Their Trade Is Treachery* (London, 1981).

⁴⁰ R. West (ed. B.K. Scott), *Selected Letters of Rebecca West* (New Haven, 2000).

⁴¹ West, *The New Meaning*, p.3.

seduction or bribery – to induce treachery. It was published to wide acclaim and *Time* magazine featured the author on its cover with the tagline: ‘In the 20th century, treason is a vocation’.⁴² The book was praised in reviews in equal measures for its clarity, its trailblazing and, of course, West’s famed ability to weave a narrative into ‘superb storytelling’.⁴³

West’s methodological approach to the writing of *Treason* is to be commended. Unlike many other British muckrakers and current intelligence historians, she worked for the most part from open sources, court proceedings and more mundane records. From these files, West was able to provide a profound insight and a ground-breaking analysis on the psychology of betrayal. This is the epitome of Aldrich’s ‘archival intelligence hacking’. The core files held by MI5 and Scotland Yard on William Joyce and John Amery were not available for popular consumption at the time of West’s writing. Undeterred, working with only court documents – her adjacent files – she provided not only a foundational text on betrayal but also a pioneering work of what we now call psycho-history.⁴⁴

⁴² Time Magazine, 8 December 1947, with Author Rebecca West on the cover, at:

<http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19471208,00.html>

⁴³ Martin, ‘The Alphabet’.

⁴⁴ Bernard Schweizer (ed.), *Rebecca West Today: Contemporary Critical Approaches* (Newark, 2006); Effie Yiannopoulou, ‘Globality, the Totalitarian Mass and National Belonging’, in Ruth Parkin-Gounelas (ed.), *The Psychology and Politics of the Collective: Groups, Crowds and Mass* (London, 2012), pp.122-34.

The Meaning of Treason gave only limited attention to British nationals who in the post-war era were exposed as spying for the Soviet Union.⁴⁵ West would correct this in the second edition of *The Meaning of Treason* entitled *The New Meaning of Treason*, published in 1964 – at the height of the Muckraker Era. In the years following the first edition, West came to feel that Joyce and Amery's trial and execution had merely been 'the death agony of the amateur in a specialized age'.⁴⁶ West argued that a new breed of traitor, driven by ideology rather than a thirst for prestige and power, would dominate the Cold War era. In *The New Meaning of Treason*, West offered psychological profiles from the new age of treachery, covering the activities of the atomic spies Alan Nunn May, Klaus Fuchs and the Rosenbergs, the defections of both Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean and the Profumo Affair. Her epilogue also dealt with the emerging accusations against Kim Philby, who would soon flee to the Soviet Union.⁴⁷ Railing against government secrecy, in her second book, West would not just use court documents from the Old Bailey but from US courts too. Noticing that lengthy reports had been issued by the governments of the US, Canada and Australia, she was perhaps the first British writer on intelligence to exploit more liberal information regimes across the Atlantic.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ H. Kalven Jr., 'The Meaning of Treason by Rebecca West Reviewed', *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 16/2 (Winter, 1949), p.378.

⁴⁶ West, *The New Meaning*, p.266.

⁴⁷ A third edition (1982), published by Virago, contained more information on the Cambridge spies, specifically Anthony Blunt, avowed by Thatcher's government two years before.

⁴⁸ West, *The New Meaning*, forward – The Report of the Royal Commission appointed by the Canadian Government to Investigate the Atom Spy Ring (1945), the

In 1965, Foreign Affairs described *The New Meaning of Treason* as one of ‘the most provocative and probing discussion(s) of the implications of treason in an age of mass culture and technological explosion’.⁴⁹ However, her book had its critics. Perhaps one of the main criticisms of *The New Meaning of Treason* was one of West’s hypotheses: that Soviet espionage deliberately set out to undermine the trust of the Americans in the entire British security system to prevent co-operation between the two countries. It seemed implausible to many readers and reviewers at the time.⁵⁰ However, with the Cold War behind us we now know that sowing distrust between the allies was a central KGB strategy. It is therefore all the more curious that West’s pioneering work has gone unacknowledged and uncredited in the historiography of British intelligence history.⁵¹

GORDON BROOK-SHEPHERD

United States Government publication, *Soviet Atomic Espionage* (1951) and the Report of the Royal Commission appointed by the Australian Government to investigate matters arising out of the defection of the Soviet diplomat Petrov (1955).

⁴⁹ H.L. Roberts, ‘Recent books on international relations general: political and legal’, *Foreign Affairs*, 43/3 (April 1965), pp.536–539.

⁵⁰ See S. Hook, ‘Faces of betrayers’, *The New York Times*, 29 November 1964.

⁵¹ Her other books, contain further neglected work on intelligence history, including the first extensive discussion of the case of William Marshall, an SIS/diplomatic cypher clerk recruited by the KGB and tried in the 1950s. See, R. West, *A Train of Powder* (London, 1955).

One of perhaps the most unsung writers from this ostracised period of intelligence literature is Gordon Brook-Shepherd. As a journalist who dealt with intelligence like many other British muckrakers, Brook-Shepherd has been tarred with the same unscholarly brush. Akin to Rebecca West, his two books on intelligence, *The Storm Petrels* and *The Storm Birds* are interconnected, dealing with the same subject matter – defectors – although separated from one another by sequential chronology.⁵² Also like West, Brook-Shepherd was a journalist who turned his talents to writing about British espionage. However, unlike West – and many muckrakers of the day – Brook-Shepherd had a first-hand understanding of espionage. During the Second World War, he had worked in British military intelligence.⁵³ Being a former intelligence officer was important to Brook-Shepherd’s writing of both *Storm Petrels* and *Storm Birds* for two reasons. First, because it meant that he had valuable contacts from the war in the world of intelligence that he would carry with him into the world of journalism.⁵⁴ Second, Brook-Shepherd spoke the shibboleth – he was the consummate insider. For intelligence officers, speaking to Brook-Shepherd about the inner workings of Britain’s secret intelligence machinery simply felt less adulterous than speaking to a mere news correspondent.

⁵² Within the text I refer to these two texts as ‘*Storm Birds*’ and ‘*Storm Petrels*’ respectively.

⁵³ ‘Obituary of Gordon Brook-Shepherd’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 January 2004.

⁵⁴ The blurb on Brook-Shepherd in *The Iron Maze* notes that he worked in military intelligence, ending up a Lieutenant-Colonel with the Allied Commission in Vienna. See G. Brook-Shepherd, *Iron Maze: The Western Secret Services and the Bolsheviks* (Basingstoke, 1998).

Storm Petrels, the first of Brook-Shepherd's books on Soviet defectors was released in 1977. It is truly a valuable work as precious little has been written about Soviet defectors and Soviet espionage in the pre-Second World War period.⁵⁵ Even today, it is still one of a notably short list of titles. In *Storm Petrels* Brook-Shepherd used the same literary tool as West, finding paradigmatic personal cases that delineated the contours of a wider phenomenon. This multi-biographical approach was common among British muckrakers and remains influential among academic intelligence historians today. In fact, this practice was so commonplace among early intelligence historians that D.C. Watt would later note this practice as being a hallmark of the 'British intelligence history school.'⁵⁶ Brook-Shepherd was interested in pre-war Soviet defection and told this story primarily through five figures: Boris Bazhanov, Georges Agabekov, Grigory Besedovsky, Walter Krivitsky and Aleksandr Orlov. Each had written their own books, but *Storm Petrels* is the only study to weave them into a singular narrative and to offer a comparative analysis.⁵⁷ The importance of Brook-Shepherd's single narrative cannot be overstated, and it was a vital

⁵⁵ V. Krasnov, *Soviet Defectors: The KGB Wanted List* (Stanford, 1985), p.11.

⁵⁶ See D.C. Watt, 'Intelligence studies: The emergence of a British school', *Intelligence and National Security*, 3/2 (1998), pp.338-341.

⁵⁷ See: A. Orlov. *Handbook of Intelligence and Guerrilla Warfare* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1963); W.G. Krivitsky, *In Stalin's Secret Service: An Exposé Of Russia's Secret Policies by The Former Chief Of The Soviet Intelligence In Western Europe* (Westport, CT, 1939, 1979); G. Agabekov, *OGPU: The Russian Secret Terror* (Westport, CT, 1931, 1975); B. Bazhanov and D.W. Doyle, *Bazhanov & Damnation of Stalin* (Athens, OH, 1990); and G.Z. Besedovsky, *Revelations of a Soviet Diplomat* (London, 1931).

methodological device at this early juncture. One individual – a defector – recounting the events of his own defection can certainly, justifiably, be accused of providing apocryphal details of events and circumstances. After all, defections from the Soviet Union to the West deal with tergiversators, men who in their own narratives will seek to justify their decision to defect and bolster their claims on behalf of their new host country.

Storm Petrels was not just based on previous writing, but also on well-placed sources and debriefings of Soviet moles, such as Walter Krivitsky by SIS in 1940.⁵⁸ As a trusted journalist who had worked in British intelligence, doors opened for Brook-Shepherd. He also had unprecedented access to official files that detailed Soviet espionage operations.⁵⁹ Additionally, he was granted extensive interviews with the defectors and the intelligence personnel related to their cases.⁶⁰ In other words, Brook-Shepherd was able to triangulate his work – which Phillip Davies aptly illustrates in *Spies as Informants* is an important benchmark for the methodological rigour of any piece of writing on intelligence.⁶¹ Brook-Shepherd, commenting on his own work said he, ‘was able to fill most of the gaps’ left by previous writers by using a combination of written records, interviews and memoirs.⁶² In retrospect, his work

⁵⁸ W.E. Duff, *A Time for Spies: Theodore Stephanovich Mally and the Era of the Great Illegals* (Nashville, TN, 1999), p.203.

⁵⁹ N. West, ‘Fiction, Faction and Intelligence’ in L.V. Scott and P. Jackson (eds.) *Understanding Intelligence in the Twenty-First Century: Journeys in Shadows* (London, 2004), p.123.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Davies, ‘Spies as informants’, pp.73-80.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.78; Brook-Shepherd, *Storm Birds*, p.12.

prefigures the SIS-approved work undertaken by Christopher Andrew on the KGB, working first with Oleg Gordievsky and then Vasili Mitrokhin.⁶³

Brook-Shepherd's first book was not met with the same lofty praise as West's *The Meaning of Treason*, receiving a generally tepid response. The major criticism was the book's tone. He was criticised for providing a sensationalised account that 'wasn't essential' and was considered 'not quite-fiction'.⁶⁴ Another commentator noted that at times it reads like 'novels of spy fiction'.⁶⁵ The criticism is not wholly unfair. It must be noted that the book is missing a bibliography and is poorly footnoted. This reflects the fact that Brook-Shepherd worked largely from 'unattributed' or 'un-attributable' sources, which obviously creates some problems of historical reliability – as you have to accept or reject the word of the author. Again, in this respect he appears as a "storm-petrel" for the official histories that would begin to appear only a few years later and which often attracted similar criticism for opaque referencing.

Brook-Shepherd, and other muckrakers, is thus no different to current intelligence writing in this important respect. Even now, few former or current

⁶³ C.M. Andrew and O. Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story* (London, 1990); C.M.

Andrew, and V. Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York, 1999).

⁶⁴ E.M. Oboler, 'The Storm Petrels Book Review', *Library Journal*, 103/3 (1978), p. 360.

⁶⁵ Defense Intelligence School, *Bibliography of Intelligence Literature: A Critical and Annotated Bibliography of Open-Source Literature* (Washington, 1981), p. 11.

intelligence officers will consent to being ‘on the record’ and so the use of the ‘private information’ footnote from data gleaned from elite interviews has not changed.⁶⁶ The diminished use of the ‘private information footnote’ or its use alongside other types of sources reflects an era of ‘open government’. Since the Waldegrave ‘Open Government’ Initiative in the 1990s many more documents have been released and press archives have become word-searchable.⁶⁷ More narrowly, writers also benefit from an active research community that contributes to an ever-expanding selection of strong secondary sources.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, anonymous elite interviews persist. Andrew’s 2009 *Authorized History of MI5* – like Gordon Corera’s *MI6, Life and Death in the British Secret Service* and Philip Davies, *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying* – is punctuated with anonymous elite interviews. In his notes, Corera relies on the traditional ‘private information’ footnote, Davies provides his own coding system for maintaining the anonymity of his interview subjects, whilst Andrew prefers to use the phrase ‘recollections of a former security officer’.⁶⁹

When Andrew was selected for MI5’s ‘Authorized History’ – which gave him unprecedented access to MI5’s official archives, as well as to former and serving security officers – his response to the difficulty of evaluating insider information was

⁶⁶ Though, of course, it has waned.

⁶⁷ R. J. Aldrich, 'Did Waldegrave Work? The Impact of Open Government Upon British History', *Twentieth Century British History*, 9/1 (1998), pp.111-126.

⁶⁸ Hennessy, ‘The Less Secret State’.

⁶⁹ P.H.J. Davies, *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying: Structure and Process in Britain's Secret Intelligence* (London, 2004), p.364; G. Corera, *MI6: Life and Death in the British Secret Service* (London, 2012), p.448 and C. Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* (London, 2009), p.972.

the following: ‘Posterity and postgraduates are breathing down my neck. I tell my PhD students: I know you can only get on in the profession by assaulting teachers. You are not going to make a reputation by saying, ‘Look, Professor Andrew was right all along the line’.⁷⁰ His argument has much force and has been widely accepted by commentators’.⁷¹ Andrew’s attitude is most likely correct, but Brook-Shepherd – and every other muckraker who ever conducted an elite interview or had privileged access to files – could use exactly the same argument.⁷² No writer with a sense of professional integrity would knowingly publish something they knew to be false. Moreover, arguing that journalists somehow have less integrity when it comes to their work is tantamount to intellectual snobbery. Perhaps the main difference between the two official historians and Brook-Shepherd was the openly acknowledged nature of the relationship between the writer and the secret services that now exists. More recent books, including Michael Smith’s study of Foley, conducted with clear assistance from SIS, also falls into this strange category of officially-assisted but unofficial history.⁷³

Academic rigour will often jostle with research ethics or national security concerns. Insider information is not going to go away, neither are special friends. Yet ethical research frameworks have become much stronger in recent decades and with these, the imperative to anonymise or else seek elaborate written permissions. Thus,

⁷⁰ D. Walker, ‘Just How Intelligent?’ *The Guardian*, 18 February 2003, at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2003/feb/18/highereducation.academicexperts>

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ M. Smith, *Foley: The Spy who Saved 10,000 Jews* (London, 1999).

Andrew's comments in *The Missing Dimension* – which pertains to the difficulty of evaluating insider information – remain pertinent. Nevertheless, we can overcome this problem eventually, often with further triangulation utilising new files, which at the time of writing were not accessible, and with contemporary secondary source literature. In terms of *Storm Petrels*, the *Guy Liddell Diaries* edited by Nigel West are particularly useful, as are the *Haunted Wood* and *A Time for Spies* which bring forward new Soviet material.⁷⁴ Yet strangely, some of the official papers used by Brook-Shepherd's *Storm Petrels* are mysteriously no longer available to researchers.⁷⁵ Does this mean that over time some secondary texts from the Muckraker era will become valuable sources in themselves?

Brook-Shepherd's next offering successfully built upon *Storm Petrels*. The 1988 *Storm Birds* dealt with four major post war defections: Igor Gouzenko, Oleg Penkovsky, Vladimir Vetrov and Oleg Gordievsky.⁷⁶ The reception of *Storm Birds* was almost universally positive.⁷⁷ Among the positivity, however, a common theme

⁷⁴ G. Liddell (edited by N. West), *The Guy Liddell Diaries, Volume 1, 1939–1942* (London, 2005); Duff, *A Time for Spies*; and A. Vassiliev and A. Weinstein, *The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America* (New York, 2000).

⁷⁵ P. Hopkirk, *Setting the East Ablaze: Lenin's Dream of an Empire in Asia* (London, 1984), p.210. Brook-Shepherd had early access to the private memoirs of Harry Carr, station-chief in Helsinki for Baltic cases. Carr's memoirs are still classified by SIS.

⁷⁶ Details of Arkady Shevchoeko defection, the onetime Under Secretary at the United Nations, are also included in *Storm Birds*.

⁷⁷ All the reviews were generally extremely positive: 'The Storm Birds: Soviet Postwar Defectors', *Kirkus Review*, 1 August 1989; R. Cornwell, 'Great

was a sense of something missing from the narrative – that of western intelligence and its reception, indeed encouragement of these defectors. In her opening of *The New Meaning of Treason*, West acknowledged that the subject she wanted to deal with crossed over many disciplines, which meant she was ‘obliged to leave unanswered many questions which will occur to the reader.’⁷⁸ Her Majesty’s Government remains one of the most secretive in the West, and the notorious section 3(4) of the Public Records Act, which permits the retention of official documents indefinitely, greatly effects intelligence history.⁷⁹

No area of government is shrouded in secrecy more than a state’s intelligence community; the UK is no exception. Undoubtedly, secrecy is important and defensible on the grounds of operational and national security, and many intelligence historians have made this point.⁸⁰ On the other hand, the traditional British

Internationalists’, *London Review of Books*, 11/3 (1989), pp.13-14; The Storm Birds *The Economist (US)* 5 November 1988; C.C. Cram, *Of Moles and Mole Hunters: A Review of Counterintelligence Literature, 1977-92* (Washington, DC, 1993), pp.52-57; G. Smith, ‘Recent Books on International Relations, the United States’, *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1989), p.204; M. C. Carnes, ‘The Storm Birds: Soviet Post-war Defector (Book)’, *Library Journal*, 144/1 (1989), p.68; and N.P. Gleditsch, ‘Book Notes’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 29/2 (1992), p.235.

⁷⁸ West, *The New Meaning*, forward.

⁷⁹ Davies, ‘Spies as informants’, p.74.

⁸⁰ See W.E. Colby, ‘Intelligence secrecy and security in a free society’, *International Security*, 1/2 (1976), pp.3-14. Others writing historiographies of British intelligence

governmental attitude, articulated here by Kenneth Robertson, is best exemplified by the view that ‘the only realistic choice facing an intelligence service is between total secrecy, the suit of armor, and the fig leaf, anything short of total secrecy.’⁸¹ This absolutist assessment, which was adhered to by the majority of British governments in the twentieth century, is the principal reason that serious inquiries into intelligence were conducted almost solely by journalists – and in the twenty-first century official and authorised histories were launched, to stem the tide.

Storm Birds, like almost all books that involve co-operation with the authorities, contain their own deliberative omissions, even deceptions.⁸² *Storm Birds*, like *Storm Petrels*, also received significant help from both the Central Intelligence Agency and the British intelligence services, in terms of elite interviews and access to archives.⁸³ The price was a one-dimensional focus on the defectors and their past services and no contextual detail about their engagement with the Western services. Brook-Shepherd would himself acknowledge this assistance in his 1998 ‘*The Iron*

have raised this issue: see Moran, ‘The pursuit’; and W. K. Wark ‘Special issue on espionage: Past, present, future?’, *Intelligence and National Security*, 8/3 (1993).

⁸¹ K.G. Robertson, ‘Accountable Intelligence: The British Experience’, *Conflict Quarterly*, 8/1 (1988), p.13.

⁸² Nigel West Details in detail an error in the Volkov letter, which Andrew cited. See N. West, ‘With friends like this’, *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 27/4 (2014), p.850 and N. West, ‘Defending whom?’, *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 23/4 (2010), pp.767-769.

⁸³ Cram, *Of moles*, pp.52 & 55.

Maze: the Western Secret Services and the Bolsheviks’ noting that his previous two volumes ‘on Soviet defectors to the West’ were projects ‘also launched on my behalf by British intelligence.’⁸⁴ Yet the contribution is still overwhelmingly positive, illustrated by the case of GRU officer Vladimir Rezun, who defected to the British in Switzerland in 1978. Rezun’s information is a good example of the kind of credible information that *Storm Birds* contains and that is available nowhere else. Rezun brought information about the Red Army’s Spetsnaz units to the British in his debrief.⁸⁵ The information obtained indicated that these units were tasked to employ sabotage, terror and other extreme actions in the event of war.⁸⁶ British intelligence allowed Brook-Shepherd to interview Rezun, following the example of the CIA that had also made several of their defectors available to him.⁸⁷ This sort of access was in itself a superb achievement. Yet, searches for Gordon Brook-Shepherd’s name on the two main intelligence journals in the US and UK yield only a few results from the same authors, and often with criticisms. Searching for him within university library catalogues you will find only his books on the Hapsburg Dynasty. Like Rebecca West,

⁸⁴ Brook-Shepherd, *Iron Maze*, p.2. Nigel West has also claimed that ‘Brook-Shepherd, who had prevailed upon his friendship with then Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, to let him see individual files while he was researching *The Storm Birds*’. See, N. West, ‘Slightly less secret’, *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 24/4 (2011), p.811.

⁸⁵ See Brook-Shepherd, *Storm Birds*.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* Brook-Shepherd was also able to interview Gordievsky for *Storm Birds*. See C. Pincher, *Treachery: Betrayals, Blunders and Cover-ups: Six Decades of Espionage* (London, 2011), p.33.

Brook-Shepherd has been largely ostracised from the historiography of British intelligence.

JOHN BULLOCH

The last writer we revisit is John Bulloch, perhaps the quintessential British intelligence muckraker. He is better known, however, for his writings on the Middle East than for his three intelligence books during the ‘era of exposure’ – the 1960s. Bulloch joined the *Telegraph* in 1958 and quickly cultivated fruitful intelligence connections. In 1961, with his *Telegraph* colleague Henry Miller, Bulloch’s first project in the world of intelligence was the co-written *Spy Ring*, addressing the Portland naval spies. Two years after the publication of *Spy Ring*, *M.I.5: The Origins and History of the British Counter-Espionage Service*, perhaps Bulloch’s magnum opus, was released to much fanfare. Three years later, his last – and often forgotten text – *Akin to Treason* was available on all good ‘airport bookstalls’. In *Akin to Treason* Bulloch came close to providing almost a complete survey of all Soviet spies in Britain up to the year of its publication, 1966.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, despite being one of the most important journalists to cover espionage in the 1960s, his writing and contribution to the historiography of British intelligence has become a footnote to his career and the contribution he made to analysing the contemporaneous upheavals in the Middle East.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Bulloch and Miller, *Spy Ring*; Bulloch, *M.I.5*; and Bulloch, *Akin to Treason*.

⁸⁹ Indeed, examining Bulloch’s obituaries in the *Telegraph*, *Independent* and *Guardian* his writing on intelligence in each piece only receives a paragraph – only a sentence in the *Guardian*’s review.

Bulloch, like West and Brook-Shepherd, was an enterprising journalist who had combined the ability to tease out a story where others had presumed a trail had gone cold, with a talent for sustained and thoughtful analysis. Remarkably, Bulloch embarked upon writing the history of MI5 when the official records were out of bounds. Instead, he secured the assistance of the family of the late Sir Vernon Kell, who had been the Director-General of MI5 for its first three decades. He was able to speak with Kell's wife and son and was the first individual to sieve through Kell's private papers at the Imperial War Museum, uncovering new information on the Blake, Lonsdale and Vassal cases. This is an early archetypal case of Aldrich's 'archival intelligence hacking'. The Official Secret Act cordoned off interviews with current and former Security Service employees, yet Bulloch completed his history of MI5 and did so without venturing too far away 'from the path of documented fact'.⁹⁰ Kell's private papers were the 'adjacent' papers to the official records locked away in Thames House and so Bulloch was able to generate a cogent history of MI5. Bulloch, and other muckrakers, also showed that mundane files released into the archives often contained hidden gems and that those government officials charged with 'weeding' them out often did not do as good a job as a determined muckraker. In this respect, he pioneered a technique that academic historians such as Christopher Andrew, David Stafford, Bradley Smith and Julian Lewis would rediscover in the late 1970s.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Ferris, 'Coming in', p.93.

⁹¹ B. F. Smith, 'Sharing Ultra in World War II', *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 2/1 (1988), pp.59-72 and Aldrich, *Espionage, Security*, p.12.

Two decades later, David Stafford and Bradley Smith would use this technique to write their well-received histories of SOE and OSS.⁹² Four decades later, Richard Aldrich would employ the same artisanal technique, learned patiently from his predecessors, to write his unofficial history of GCHQ.⁹³ All of these scholars used adjacent files and private papers. Also, like Bulloch, Stafford, Smith and Aldrich would miss important programs and chapters of the organisation's history. This, however, by no means detracts from the ingenuity and knowledge generated by the research. Despite Bulloch's methodological ingenuity to cover an organisation shrouded in mystery – that would be emulated by many academic intelligence historians for generations to come – *M.I.5* was not well received by historians at the time. Instead it was criticised for its lack of rigour, and has subsequently been expunged from the intelligence studies literature.⁹⁴

M.I.5's reception within government circles better reflects the value and depth of the research. Just two weeks before the book was published it was returned by

⁹² D. Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance, 1940-1945: A Survey of the Special Operations Executive* (Toronto, 1980); B. Smith, *The Shadow Warriors: O.S.S. and the Origins of the C.I.A.* (New York, 1983). Most remarkably, Julian Lewis used the same technique to write about the post-war JIC during the 1980s, see *Changing Direction: British Military Planning for Post-war Strategic Defence, 1942-47* (London, 1988).

⁹³ See R. J. Aldrich, *GCHQ: The Uncensored Story of Britain's Most Secret Intelligence Agency* (London, 2011).

⁹⁴ G. C. Constantinides, *Intelligence and Espionage: An Analytical Bibliography* (Boulder, CO, 1983), p.101.

Colonel L.G. Lohan, the then D-notice secretary, with a mass of blue-pencilled deletions that he insisted were necessary.⁹⁵ When the publisher – Arthur Baker – balked at the edits, the publisher’s solicitors received an urgent message that the then Home Secretary, Henry Brooke, needed to see the publisher immediately. The next day the Home Secretary warned that the publication of *M.I.5* would be a very serious breach of the Official Secrets Act. In the meeting, a man referred to as Mr. Roger – who was in all likelihood Sir Roger Hollis, the then-Director-General of MI5 – admitted that the book did not breach the Act, but argued that the book would be against ‘the public interest’.⁹⁶ The Home Secretary and Hollis then insisted upon edits and changes to a number of pages, which the publisher and Bulloch reluctantly agreed to.⁹⁷ For a book that academics criticised for its lack of thoroughness, the government of the day went to quite some lengths to redact it.

M.I.5 received its finest review from the Director-General himself. On the day the book was released, Hollis informed the Cabinet Office that the book gave a ‘reasonably clear picture of the work and methods of the Security Service, and its relationship with the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police.’⁹⁸ Despite the book containing many inaccuracies, Hollis was in no doubt it would give the KGB and

⁹⁵The National Archives, Kew [TNA]: CAB 21/5845, Brooke to Macmillan, 18 Mar. 1963. See also minutes of a mtg. between Macmillan and the Home Secretary, ‘The Bulloch Book on MI5’, 6 Mar. 1963.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, also TNA: CAB 21/584, Hollis to Trend, SF.53/24/3/Supp.B(114a)/D/gG., 5 Mar. 1963. The ‘taxpayer’ covered the cost of the edits to the already printed books.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

other hostile intelligence services, ‘a clearer idea of our functions and methods than they have hitherto had.’⁹⁹ Hollis was right, the book did give a good account of the history of the British Security Service from its establishment in 1909 through to the early months of the Second World War. In particular, it describes the work and some of the methods as practised by Kell, using elucidatory espionage cases, largely German, with which the Service had dealt with and defeated.

Of course, the book is not without faults. As Peter Gill has pointed out, *M.I.5* is based on the private papers of Kell; thus, the tone the book takes is rather uncritical towards Britain’s longest serving security service chief.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, as Kell was dismissed by Winston Churchill in 1940, the book is not as strong in the post-war period as it is on the origins of MI5, the First World War and the Interwar period. For the post war period, the book is mostly based on secondary sources, which were emerging at the time, and elite interviews conducted by Bulloch. The strength of the book is its coverage of the period 1919-40; however, reviewers have tended to judge the title wholly on the second half and overall given the book a negative review. For example, George Constantinides in his *Analytical Bibliography of Intelligence and Espionage* noted the book ‘can in no way be considered even to begin to deal with the history of the organisation.’¹⁰¹ Sadly, both *Spy Ring* and *M.I.5*, along with his third book *Akin to Treason*, have almost been entirely ignored by contemporary intelligence historians, and lie discarded onto the scrap heap of history.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ P. Gill, *Policing Politics: Security Intelligence and the Liberal Democratic State* (London, 1994), p.14.

¹⁰¹ Constantinides, *Intelligence and Espionage*, p.101.

Conclusion

West, Brook-Shepherd and Bulloch are but three pioneers of the Muckraker Era. Their most important contribution was methodology, deploying archival intelligence hacking, elite interviews and circuitous access to produce robust results. Moreover, empirically, in various sub-sets of intelligence history, books from this ostracised era contain unique information, for example on the Rezun case. These books can act as useful guides to recently declassified files, contributing to more academically rigorous texts on intelligence in the twenty-first century. Thus, all that is left from D.C. Watts 'in part psychological, in part methodological' explanation of why literature from the Muckraker Era has been marginalised is reputational panic about footnoting books that were not produced with the precincts of universities. We therefore need to suggest a new way of engaging with literature from the Muckraker Era that respects the value of their methodological contribution.¹⁰²

Historians who deal with civilisations with limited archival records, for instance, historians of the Roman Republic, confront the same methodological issues identified in Andrew's *Missing Dimension*. Indeed, they are faced with an even more daunting 'missing dimension', as they are not dealing with gaps in the archives but near non-existent archives, as well as limited secondary sources often making implausible claims. Nevertheless, with developments in technology combined with more sophisticated archaeology, lofty claims by Rome's official historians can be either verified or refuted. Intelligence studies is not dissimilar, and like ancient or

¹⁰² Watt, 'Intelligence and the Historian', p.199.

medieval history, it will have to develop elaborate skill sets to verify elusive information, and as a result grow in stature.

In recent articles on intelligence studies, three pre-eminent scholars in the field – Wesley K. Wark, Len Scott and Christopher Moran – have converged along similar lines.¹⁰³ They have all argued that, once marginalised and neglected in academia, the subject of intelligence history is now firmly entrenched in British universities. Looking at the state of intelligence studies in the UK, their assessment appears on the mark. The discipline is growing, despite its epistemological hurdles, and it is also becoming ever more popular because of its obvious policy relevance.¹⁰⁴ Anthony Glees, while arguing that ‘Intelligence Studies is undervalued by universities – with only a few institutions offering degrees in intelligence studies, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level’, has conceded that ‘very many universities offer modules on intelligence studies’.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, Glees acknowledges that the possibilities for the academic study of intelligence in the UK are now ‘immeasurably greater’ than at any other point in the past.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ See Moran, ‘The pursuit’, p.33-55; Wesley K. Wark (ed.), ‘Special issue on espionage’; L. V. Scott, ‘Sources and methods in the study of intelligence: A British view’, *Intelligence and National Security*, 22/2 (2007), pp.178-98; and, C. R. Moran and C. J. Murphy (eds.), *Intelligence Studies in Britain and the US: Historiography since 1945* (Edinburgh, 2013), p.1.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ A. Glees, ‘Intelligence studies, universities and security’, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 63/3 (2015), p.287.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p.286

Intelligence studies arrived as an academic discipline in the 1980s. As one historian of Soviet moles has observed, at this point Christopher Andrew coined the phrase, 'the airport bookstall school of intelligence history', and staked out the moral high ground to promote archival research.¹⁰⁷ It is entirely understandable that a new subject felt it necessary to establish its credentials and prove its methodological *bona fides*. But it is unfortunate that it achieved this by vilifying some of its most important pioneers, intrepid investigators who piloted so many of the methods and techniques that academic intelligence historians would rediscover in the 1980s. Donald Cameron Watt's determination to place these intrepid investigators alongside conspiracy theorists is especially regrettable.

Happily, the historiography of intelligence is filled with irony and not a little humour. As the late Keith Jeffery acutely observed, since Andrew and Cameron Watt criticised the airport bookstall, some of the traffic has been in the other direction. Academic historians have not always chosen to publish their findings with an obscure academic journal or a lofty university press, and instead have hankered after wider public recognition. Jeffery noted that increasingly, sober well-researched work has nevertheless been 'subject to sensationalisation'. Discussing recent work on the First

¹⁰⁷ S. Kerr, 'Investigating Soviet espionage and subversion: the case of Donald Maclean', *Intelligence and National Security*, 17/1 (2002), pp. 101-116.

World War, he complained that scholars were being encouraged to over-dramatise their findings 'by publishers queuing after station (or airport) bookstall sales.'¹⁰⁸

Having vilified the airport bookstall, has Andrew now embraced it? Intriguingly, while most official histories, including that of the Joint Intelligence Committee by Michael Goodman, have been required to appear in somnolent academic series with Routledge, the official histories MI5 and MI6 were exempted in the hope that they would reach the airport bookstall - which indeed they have done in full measure. Jeffery himself complained privately of having to resist pressure from his publisher to 'sex up' sections of his MI6 history that his editor deemed 'too academic'.¹⁰⁹ Yet we should surely celebrate the fact that the official histories of MI5 and MI6, funded by the public purse, are widely available to non-specialists on the airport bookstall, and indeed the railway bookstall, at low cost. Perhaps, as a result, the muckraker pioneers have finally been vindicated.

¹⁰⁸ K. Jeffery, 'Intelligence and Military History: A British Perspective', in D. Charters, M. Milner & J. Brent Wilson (eds.) *Military History and the Military Profession*, pp.113-114.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Keith Jeffery, 2009.