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THE NEW MEANING OF TREASON\*

By Rebecca WEST

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374 Pages

Index

The first half of this book deals with the life and career of the British traitor, William JOYCE ("Lord Haw Haw"), and with several other minor characters who were tried for treason after World War II because of their collaboration with the Nazis. The rest of the book is a series of accounts, in varying degrees of detail, of the Soviet agents whose careers have become known to the public through trial, flight, or testimony, in Britain and the United States, since the end of World War II. In chronological order these are: Alan NUNN MAY and the others involved in the Canadian atomic energy espionage ring; Klaus Emil FUCHS and the Americans involved with him (i.e. Harry GOLD, Ruth and David GREENGLASS, and the ROSENBERGS); Bruno PONTECORVO, Donald MacLEAN, Guy BURGESS, William MARSHALL, Colonel Rudolph ABEL, Anthony MAYNARD, Brian FREDERICK, Gordon LONSDALE, Harry HOUGHTON, Winifred GEE, the KROGERS (aliases of the Morris COHENS), George BLAKE, and John Christopher VASSAL. The PROFUMO-Stephen WARD-Christine KEELER affair is also discussed.

In 1946 Dr. Alan NUNN MAY, a lecturer in Physics at the University of London, Canada, was tried on charges of having given the Soviets secret information about atomic projects on which he had been working for the British Government. The spy ring in Canada, for which NUNN MAY worked, included many other British and Canadians and concerned itself with matters other than scientific ones but most of the persons in the group were scientists. After NUNN MAY's trial and conviction, a hue and cry was set up by certain scientists who felt that a member of their profession could do no wrong. NUNN MAY, they claimed, had given out purely scientific information "in the spirit of true science."

\* A revised and expanded version of THE MEANING OF TREASON, The Viking Press, New York, 1947, 307 pages, index.

1548

In 1950 Klaus FUCHS, head of the theoretical division of the atomic energy establishment at Harwell in the U.K., was arrested and brought to trial for giving atomic information to the Soviets. This case was a sore point between the United States and Great Britain, because FUCHS had been given a security clearance by the British even though, at the beginning of the war, he had told the Aliens Tribunal that he was a Communist. Working at Los Alamos before returning to England, he had a knowledge of the atomic program such as only the top American scientists possessed, and this fact made his betrayal doubly bitter.

In the months following FUCHS' trial, seven other persons were arrested who were connected with this particular American spy ring. One of these was Harry GOLD, who, under arrest, broke away from the Party and became a Government witness. Under instructions from YAKOVLEV, his Soviet contact, he had been in touch with Julius and Ethel ROSENBERG, and with Ethel's brother, David GREENGLASS. Under arrest GREENGLASS testified against his sister to save his wife from prosecution. The ROSENBERGS were sent to the electric chair in 1953. FUCHS himself fared better. He was given a prison sentence. When he was released in 1959 he went to East Germany and worked as deputy director of the East German Central Institute for Nuclear Physics.

Shortly after the conviction of FUCHS in 1950, relations between the United States and Great Britain suffered a further jolt when a physicist named Bruno PONTECORVO (an Italian by birth, but a British citizen by naturalization) left the atomic energy establishment at Harwell under mysterious circumstances. After his flight it was discovered that he had been a Communist for many years and that he had developed strong ties with other Communists. Yet he had been screened five times by British security: three times after the revelations of GUZENKO and twice after the conviction of Dr. NUNN MAY. This situation raised highly critical comment in the United States and caused both countries to view their security organizations with distrust.

Another case of flight that was planned and executed in such a way as to cause the greatest possible amount of talk and thus to sow mistrust and apprehension in the West, came to light a year later. On 25 May 1951, when Donald MacLEAN, a counsellor in the British Foreign office and Guy BURGESS, a second secretary in the junior branch, sailed from the U.K. on the ship, Palaise, from Southampton to St. Malo. They then made their way to Rennes and vanished. The flight became a paper-chase rather than an escape. Everything about it raised public interest and surprise. The two men apparently

intended to leave one glaring clue after another and to ensure the maximum amount of talk. Inasmuch as the British Foreign Office preserved a discreet silence on the matter,\* it was left to the newspapers to try to discover the facts. Then, to compound the mystery, MacLEAN's wife, Melinda, disappeared two years later. The author believes that most of the information the men supplied to the Soviets was of very little substantive value. Their flight, and that of MacLEAN's wife, which served to discredit the West in its own eyes, was the real service rendered to the Soviet Union by BURGESS and MacLEAN.

In the summer of 1952, William MARSHALL, a radiotelegraphist in the British Foreign Office, was arrested and tried for handing over official documents to a Soviet diplomat. His short career as an agent was so full of flagrant breaches of security that the author finds it impossible to believe that the Soviets were making a serious effort to control him. She suspects that he was sacrificed to divert attention from the activities of a more valuable agent, Colonel Rudolph ABEL, so that the British and American authorities would think they had plugged the leak that had been troubling them.

Colonel Rudolph ABEL of the Soviet State Security Service was arrested in New York City in 1957. He had operated there for nine years, and probably would never have been caught if had not been sent as an aide and courier, HAYHANEN, an alcoholic and a psychopath who turned him in. ABEL was convicted and sentenced, but was released in 1962 in exchange for Francis Gary POWERS, the American U-2 pilot.

In 1958, two minor espionage agents came into the limelight. One was Brian FREDERICK, an electronics engineer working for the British Government. He had agreed to supply Colonel PRYBYL, the Czech Military Attaché with classified drawings for pay. This relationship was under the surveillance of a British Government security agency almost from the very beginning. For a time he was permitted to bring out documents that had been faked by his superiors. Then he was arrested and sentenced to fourteen years' imprisonment.

The other small-time agent was Anthony MAYNARD, a dissatisfied British airman. He contacted SOLOVYEV, who, according to the

\* Later in 1955, the Foreign Office published a white paper entitled, REPORT CONCERNING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF TWO FORMER FOREIGN OFFICIALS (DONALD MacLEAN AND GUY BURGESS). (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 8 pages -- see CD-937).

author, was an intelligence officer at the Soviet Embassy, in connection with a possible course of study at the State Institute in Moscow. MAYNARD, when interviewed about these meetings by British security authorities became annoyed, fled to East Germany, and there broadcast propaganda against the West. He then went to Moscow and was enrolled in the School of Engineering Construction. Falling out with his Soviet handlers, he was sent home where he was sentenced to three years in jail.

In March 1961 five members of the so-called Portland spy ring were brought to trial in London. Gordon LONSDALE, a Soviet whose real name was MOLODY, was their contact man. Born in 1922, LONSDALE had lived with relatives in Berkeley, California as a boy. He had then returned to the USSR where he attended an espionage school. He entered Canada illegally aboard a Soviet grain ship and stayed there long enough to acquire a Canadian passport under the name of LONSDALE. In England, posing as a sort of entrepreneur, LONSDALE established an espionage network with the active collaboration of Morris and Lona COHEN, who previously had been associates of both the ROSENBERGs and Colonel ABEL in the U.S. LONSDALE was sentenced to twenty-five years' imprisonment, the COHENS to fifteen. The latter sentence was also imposed on two other agents, Harry HOUGHTON and Winifred GEE. In 1964, LONSDALE was exchanged for Greville WYNNE, a British businessman who had been sentenced by a Moscow court to eight years' imprisonment for espionage, allegedly as a colleague of Oleg PENKOVSKIY.

George BLAKE was born George BEMAR, son of a Dutchman who claimed British citizenship. As a boy he lived in Cairo with an aunt. He returned to Rotterdam to finish his education. When the Low Countries were invaded in 1940 he was interned, escaped, and joined a resistance group, known as Orde Dienst. In this organization he became involved in Operation North Pole. Thus he became connected with British secret services, particularly with the Special Operations Executive (SOE) (where BURGESS also had worked). After a while BLAKE was ordered by an SOE officer to make his way to England. There he established his British citizenship, changed his name to BLAKE, and was given a temporary commission in the Royal Navy as a reserve officer.

In 1944 he was sent to SHAEF headquarters and then went to Hamburg in charge of a unit of Naval intelligence. Back in England he ended up in the Foreign Office and was sent to Downing College to study Russian history and language. In 1948 he was appointed Vice-Consul in Seoul, Korea, a cover for his real job as an MI-6 representative. He was arrested in 1950 and

wound up in a prisoner-of-war camp near Pyongyang, where he suffered ill-treatment and brainwashing. At last he went to his captors and offered to work for the Communists without pay. From then on he was a Soviet agent.

After his return to England, he was sent to West Berlin, again as a representative of MI-6. There he got in touch with one Horst EITNER, who was handling a team of agents. Eventually EITNER was arrested and, when brought before a judge, claimed that he had become a double agent at the instigation of a British official, who was a double agent himself. He described this person as a Dutchman who had some connection with the Royal Navy. Later, Colonel ALSTER, head of the Polish secret police, defected to the West and told the authorities that he knew of agents who were working for the Soviets in Berlin. One of the names he gave was that of BLAKE. During his trial, BLAKE claimed that, while in the prisoner-of-war camp in Korea, he had become persuaded that Communism was the right road. The author believes, however, that the Communist Party had long had a hand in BLAKE's career, perhaps from the very beginning of it. Be that as it may, he was sentenced to forty-two years' imprisonment in 1961.\*

William Christopher VASSALL arrived in Moscow in March of 1954 to serve as a clerk in the office of the British Naval Attaché. A homosexual, VASSALL had had an affair with a certain MIKHAILSKIY, a junior interpreter and administrative officer at the Embassy. By autumn he was regularly taking documents from the Naval Attaché's office and passing them to his new friend, who photographed them before they were returned to the files. He returned to England in July 1956 and worked for British Naval intelligence for two years. He then worked in the private office of the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, and, in October 1959, was posted to the Fleet section of Military Branch II, where he stayed until his arrest in September 1962. During these years he photographed classified material and was well paid by his Soviet employers. He was tried and sentenced to eighteen years' imprisonment.

The famous case involving Stephen WARD and Christine KEELER was only on the fringes of espionage. It is uncertain exactly what WARD's aims were in connection with his professed interest in Communism, but they led to the downfall of John PROFUMO, the British Minister of War, and to WARD's own death by suicide while in jail during his trial. WARD had kept what amounted to a house of prostitution for wealthy patrons. The affair as it unfolded in the press was extremely sordid, but the author believes that probably no espionage as such was involved.

\* BLAKE escaped from prison in 1966, after the publication of this book