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## Spies

### Laying the ghosts

Yet another ghostly figure of the Russian spy network recruited at Cambridge University in the 1930s has emerged. Mr Leo Long, an undergraduate at Trinity College in 1935, this week described how he had been part of the Soviet spy ring run by the traitor Mr Anthony Blunt. Mr Long claimed that during the war, when working in a section of the British intelligence service which dealt with German troop movements, he passed information to the Russians.

Although Mr Long was publicly identified only this week, he confessed to the British security service in 1964. He was not given immunity from prosecution (which was how MI5 managed to persuade Mr Blunt to confess), but none the less MI5 decided, apparently without any ministerial authority, not to bring him to court.

Mr Long was clearly small fry in a spy network which included much bigger fish in Burgess, Maclean, Blake, Philby and Blunt. But his story once again raises concern. How wide and deep was the Soviet penetration? How long did it continue? How many other known spies were allowed to live or die in quiet retirement? Most of what has emerged has come from investigative journalists such as Mr Andrew Boyle, whose book "The Climate of Treason" persuaded Mrs Thatcher (to her credit and against the advice of her civil servants) to expose Blunt in November, 1979. Until then he had been a pillar of the British establishment as Professor Sir Anthony Blunt, knight commander of the Victorian order and member of the Queen's household.

In March of this year Mr Chapman Pincher, another investigative journalist, said that one longtime agent of the Russian intelligence service had been the late Sir Roger Hollis, who was director-general of Britain's security service (MI5) from 1956-65 (the period during which Philby received the tip-off that enabled him to escape to Russia and when both Blunt and Long were unmasked). Mrs Thatcher told parliament that in the 1960s Hollis had indeed been suspected and investigated. The interrogation had proved inconclusive. In 1974 Lord Trend, a former secretary of the cabinet, reviewed the case and was unable to prove Hollis was innocent but agreed with those who had concluded he was not a Russian spy.

Mr Roy Hattersley, Labour's shadow home secretary, this week urged Mrs Thatcher to start a fresh investigation. He is right to do so. Until the ghosts have been laid, doubts about Britain's security service will continue. There may be five or six other traitors from the Blunt era who have never been named, but are known to MI5. Most of these were recruited before the war, when many honourable men and women became communists. They will now have retired from public service.

Mrs Thatcher should entrust this fresh inquiry to two people acting jointly, who know both the security service and the personalities of the period under review. One should be Lord Diplock, a law lord who has been chairman of the security commission for the past 10 years. The other could be somebody like Lord Rothschild who, apart from distinguished public service as head of the cabinet office's central police review staff under both Mr Heath and Sir Harold Wilson, was himself of the prewar Cambridge generation, knew men like Mr Blunt personally, and was involved in intelligence work in the war.

The inquiry should cover the 20-year period 1930-50 and should enable Mrs Thatcher to express to parliament her satisfaction that she has been told of all those who were suspected or proved guilty of treachery, whether or not their names were ever made public. Only then can the casebook of doubt be closed.