

SCRUTINY

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GOVERNMENT MUST ANSWER KINCORA QUESTIONS

The real 'scandal' of Kincora is not the homosexual abuse of children in care. It is the unresolved question of whether British intelligence organisations in Northern Ireland knew of and condoned the abuses — and exploited them

The latest Kincora inquiry, which reported last month, failed to discover any evidence of official conspiracy because it was told not to ask the right questions.

This week opposition Northern Ireland spokesman Peter Archer QC asked the Ministry of Defence to give him a direct and honest answer as to whether or not British Army documents about Kincora he has received from an ex-Army official are genuine. If the documents are genuine, they prove beyond doubt that the police or intelligence services could have intervened to check on child abuse at Kincora a decade before the scandal came to light in 1980.

If that is proven, says Archer, the affair should be re-examined. 'All previous enquiries have been carefully structured to avoid the question of the intelligence services' early knowledge of the Kincora affair', he said.

Former intelligence officers say that both the Royal Ulster Constabulary and MI5 were fully aware, from police informants and agents, that Kincora's staff were exploiting children in their care. They were also top Protestant extremists and paramilitaries. Intelligence officials' knowledge of their behaviour meant that they could be blackmailed into working and informing on behalf of the intelligence services.

But Judge William Hughes' inquiry into children's homes and hostels restricted its conclusions to improvements needed in the residential child care system. Hughes' report found no evidence of a 'cover-up' — but his terms of



Protestant extremist William McGrath, 'housefather' of the Kincora boys home in Belfast and said by the Army to have been the commanding officer of a paramilitary called 'Tara'. But whose side was Tara really on?

reference specifically excluded police, military or intelligence officials. A previous enquiry into Kincora by Sussex Chief Constable Sir George Terry in 1982 and 1983 dismissed claims of police or military cover-up as nonsense. But Terry's terms of reference were also limited — to reporting evidence of criminal offences to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The Hughes inquiry report has now revealed that critical documents were never shown to Terry's inquiry.

In the summer of 1974, a special RUC inquiry investigated Kincora 'housefather' William McGrath, his homosexual activities and his extremist associates. The Hughes report says that '[these] original documents had not been in the possession of the Terry Inquiry investigators'.

After McGrath and two other Kincora staff were jailed late in 1981, senior Ministry of Defence officials became alarmed about the activities of a former Ministry official, Colin Wallace. Wallace had been an employee of the Army's 'Psyops' (psychological operations) unit in Northern Ireland until 1975. He then left the civil service.

Wallace knew a lot about Kincora, having frequently briefed journalists at the time about McGrath and his paramilitary organisation called Tara. But in 1981, Wallace too was imprisoned at Lewes, Sussex, for 10 years for manslaughter of an antique dealer. About the same time a secret memorandum went to Defence Ministry Permanent Under Secretary Sir Frank Cooper, warning him that Wallace had both the information and the motive to reveal the story behind Kincora.

Bizarrely, the Sussex police team which was then appointed to investigate Kincora for the RUC comprised the same officers who had investigated the manslaughter case against Wallace. Wallace claims his conviction was a frame-up.

The fears expressed to Sir Frank Cooper were well founded. With the aid of his wife, a former Secret Intelligence Service employee, Wallace has widely circulated a series of internal Army documents and summaries, including examples of propaganda about Kincora and other matters prepared by his unit.

Wallace's most important document, which was seen by the Hughes inquiry, is a four-page Northern Ireland Army Headquarters memorandum dated 8 November 1974, classified 'confidential'. Signed by Wallace, the document is entitled 'Tara reports regarding criminal offences associated with the homosexual community in Belfast'. The report recommends that the Army leak information about Tara to discredit the Protestant paramilitaries involved.

The Hughes inquiry scrupulously avoided finding out whether Wallace's document was genuine. They merely report that an RUC enquiry 'did not establish its authenticity'. Similarly, a forensic report was 'inconclusive as to authenticity'. The Hughes inquiry team did not ask the Defence Ministry itself, or the Army, or Wallace's former colleagues whether it was genuine — the omission Archer is now rectifying.

Nevertheless it is not difficult to prove that the Army did know about McGrath and Tara in 1974, as Wallace alleges. Two other documents on this subject which Wallace distributed are known to be genuine because several journalists in Northern Ireland at the time all

remember receiving them from Wallace. The homosexual allegations against McGrath were not printed at the time.

The Hughes inquiry stresses that merely because McGrath's homosexuality was known to the Army, they did not necessarily know about Kincora. This is nonsensical. It is inconceivable that the intelligence services would not know where McGrath — a high priority intelligence target — was employed, or fail to draw the relevant conclusion.

It is also provably untrue because entries in intelligence notebooks kept during 1974 by former Military Intelligence Officer Captain Fred Holroyd (NS, 4 May, 1984) refer to the Kincora hostel by name, and say of leading Protestant politicians that they are 'all queers'. Although this is nothing more than gossip, it does show that Army and RUC intelligence officials had had no difficulty coupling information about homosexual Protestants extremists to the Kincora hostel.

Holroyd also says that, while being trained for his Northern Ireland duties, he was told that the Tara organisation was in effect controlled by British intelligence, and was not a real security threat — implying that McGrath had indeed come under intelligence control before 1973.

Late in 1984, Holroyd assisted Wallace to send this and other papers to the Prime Minister. The original documents have never come back. Photocopies were inadvertently substituted, and pencil markings on them show whoever made them was attentive to publicity that might affect the intelligence services. But both the MoD and the Northern Ireland Office deny making, or even knowing about, the substitution. ●

Eastern moles

THE BRITISH ATLANTIC Committee, a Foreign Office-funded campaigning front for NATO, is the latest British defence-oriented group to admit that the 'Moonies' religious cult has been trying to infiltrate its ranks.

This week, BAC director Major General Chris Popham told the *New Statesman* that he too had been a target of the Moonies.

Last summer, he said, an organisation calling itself the International Security Council offered him a free trip to Lisbon to discuss Mediterranean security. He became suspicious when he learnt that the conference was not being attended by senior NATO figures. Then they admitted they were funded by the Moonies, otherwise known as the Unification Church.

A few days later, BAC members started complaining that they had been approached at their private addresses by another Moonie front, CAUSA (UK). The problem was so serious that a special warning letter went out to all BAC members. ●