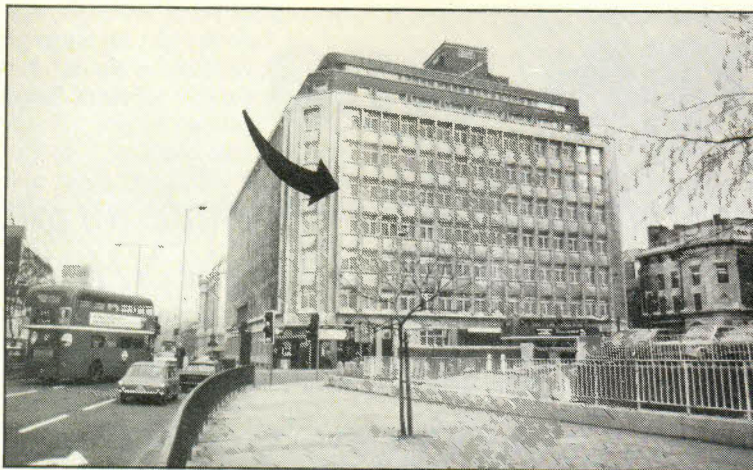


FRONTLINES



MI5 files on top-secret domestic operations kept in the registry at Gower St HQ

Publishers hand over Wilson plot book

Government lawyers and the official "D Notice" censorship committee this week succeeded in an attempt to get the publishers of a new book about the MI5 plot against Harold Wilson to hand over copies of their manuscript. Following a statement by Attorney General Patrick Mayhew in the Commons last week that the government was "considering legal action" against the book, Heinemann's have agreed to send a copy of the manuscript to Rear Admiral Bill Higgins, Secretary of the "D Notice" (Defence, Press and Broadcasting) committee.

The new book—*The Wilson Plot*, by *Observer* writer David Leigh—is a comprehensive account of how MI5, the security service, obsessively spied on and eventually plotted to oust Harold Wilson from government. Leigh has uncovered many hitherto undisclosed names of key campaigners against Wilson inside both MI5 and MI6. It is this feature of Leigh's researches which appears to have alarmed the government, as it can only imply that MI5 tongues have considerably loosened, rather than tightened, as a result of the *Spycatcher* case.

Leigh said this week that he was "appalled" by Heinemann's willingness to submit the manuscript to the government—but had been unable to stop them doing so. Since some of his revelations appeared in the *Observer* two weeks ago, Higgins had also applied strenuous pressure to the paper's editor Donald Treford—who is a member of the D Notice committee—to get the book handed over for

official review. This pressure had been unsuccessful.

But Heinemann's surrender is likely to have come too late for Rear Admiral Higgins to do anything about the book. Although the manuscript had been held up for months until the House of Lords gave its final ruling on the *Spycatcher* affair, the presses rolled throughout last weekend. The book has been distributed, and was scheduled for launch on Thursday morning—unless the government injuncts it first.

Leigh's list of plotters against Wilson include James Speirs, a former MI6 station chief in Tel Aviv, who retired in 1979, and Harry "Buddha" Wharton, the head of the highly sensitive K5 section of MI5. Run jointly with MI6, K5 section ran agents in and from Soviet bloc and other communist countries.

Leigh also discloses that besides MI5's now well-known, massive archive of personal files held at their Curzon Street centre, in Mayfair, there was a second registry which is secret even from many MI5 staff. This registry, which was then run by Ray Whitby and Robert Holden of K6 section, held files designated with the special code letters YPF. Besides holding legitimate files on British agents in hostile intelligence services, the "YPF" registry was also used to hold the results from the service's less acceptable domestic operations. It is located on the fourth floor of MI5's headquarters on the corner of Euston Road and Gower Street in North London.

Leigh concludes that the Wilson

Plot was indeed "a reality—but was more the product of blinkered 'intelligence' stupidity than an *ab initio* desire to unseat a socialist premier." Yet, despite a history of intelligence interference with the Labour party which runs from the Zinoviev telegram to date, only a few left-wing backbenchers proved interested in taking up the issue. After his grotesque mishandling of the Peter Wright affair, says Leigh, it "wasn't even worth approaching" Neil Kinnock. And Roy Hattersley's assistant found it to be "a distraction" from proper economic affairs. If Kinnock bothers to read the book, and sees how the most tangential of CND or similar connections were repeatedly used to hound or harass Labour MPs from the ranks of government, he should find substantial cause to be very alarmed. *Duncan Campbell*

Clause for alarm

Just as the lawyers predicted, no local council has faced prosecution under Section 28. That's not to say it is not having any effect. Ask the makers of "Get Your Clause Off Our Lives", a video drawing parallels between the persecution of homosexuals by the Nazis and the growing homophobic climate in Britain.

The trouble began in April this year when Wolverhampton was in Tory hands and a lesbian and gay rights group booked the council-owned Lighthouse media centre for a showing of their new video. The screening was banned by councillor Gordon Jones, the Tory chairman of the leisure services committee, who said: "I cannot permit public buildings or facilities to be used to promote homosexual activities. It is a sickness, which should be medically treated,

and not a way of life."

Soon afterwards the video was shown at a private meeting in the Wolverhampton Polytechnic Students' Union building, even though the Union's Tory vice-president had branded it as "provocative" and Tory councillor John Mellor had condemned the screening as "reprehensible". Mellor is also a member of Wolverhampton's Voluntary Sector Council (to which the rights group is affiliated) and when he discovered that the VSC was considering showing the video, he protested so strongly that the VSC was forced to ban any screening until it had taken legal advice. At this point the local Law Centre felt compelled to issue a statement saying that "the unwillingness of voluntary groups to screen the video, or to allow the gay and lesbian rights group to hire a public room, shows that a climate of fear exists in Wolverhampton. Voluntary groups are afraid to do anything which is contrary to Council policy, because if they do councillors threaten to close them down".

In May Labour won back control of the council by a single vote, but of course the "climate of fear" persists. In October the race relations and equal opportunities committee invited a member of the rights group to serve on the committee as a co-opted, non-voting member. As a result the Tories have contacted the Wolverhampton South West MP, Tory Nick Budget (who is a barrister), for a legal opinion on whether the council is in breach of Section 28. Apparently he is now in consultation on the matter with Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley, who will be asked to rule on the move.

With Mrs Thatcher's eyes firmly set on the northern Labour strongholds in the wake of Bradford, some Labour councillors in Wolverhampton

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE

