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Read all about it - the IRA has.

Leaked MI5 documents exposed

British security operations

in Europe. Lives were lost and

are still at risk. It is the wor

st security disaster in the 20

year long war against the IRA.

**Duncan Campbell analyses MI5's blunders
plus Sisulu, Tory collectivism, sex games**



Carry on spying —and dying?

The leak of MI5 documents to the IRA is the biggest security disaster in the 20-year-war with the Provos. Duncan Campbell has copies of the documents. They reveal a bungling incompetence which would be truly comic—if people's lives didn't depend on their operations

Exactly one year from the moment that Douglas Hurd imposed the broadcast ban on Sinn Féin, the Republican movement has scored its biggest ever propaganda coup against the British government. The leaked documents describing British intelligence operations in West Germany—code-named WARD and SCREAM—are as catastrophic a failure of British intelligence as was Kim Philby's defection to Moscow a generation ago.

Even before the revelations in the Sinn Féin organ, *Republican News*, there was mounting evidence that the IRA's recent terror campaign in West Germany had been conducted with remarkable and unacceptable freedom from interference by British and German security and anti-terrorist units. The campaign began in March 1987 with a huge 300lb car bomb attack on Rheindahlen, home of the British Services Security Organisation (BSSO) in West Germany. Since then, five servicemen and the West German wife of a British soldier have been killed. Until a few days ago, no-one had been arrested for any of these offences and there were no clues as to the identity of the bombers. These security failures are strong evidence that the IRA may have played the counter-intelligence game themselves—and won, by turning agents back against the British.

The IRA leak is thus the beginning of a long nightmare for BSSO, the Security Service (MI5), the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) and the Cabinet Office intelligence staff. It is apparent that the files leaked to the IRA from the offices of BSSO, which is a joint MI5/Ministry of Defence organisation.

I have inspected the leaked documents carefully over the last three weeks, and consulted

others who have professionally handled similar material. There is no doubt of their authenticity.

The real damage of the IRA leak lies not in what we (and MI5) know, but in what we don't know. Key inquiries passed back through the channels used to release this material have not been answered and will probably never be answered. The IRA refuse to say when they got the documents, how they got them, or what they did with them when they got them. Nor will they say how much more information they've got.

The most recent of the three documents I have obtained is dated January 1984. Each is classified UK SECRET. They're actually underclassified, say intelligence experts, and should properly be stamped TOP SECRET. It must be assumed that the IRA has had possession of these and other documents for much of the last five years. They are likely to have been used to "turn back" the organisations and operations described against the British army and its security measures. The fact that some of those named as useful to MI6 are understood now to be alive and well and living peacefully in a large southern Irish town strongly suggests that they have won the favour and protection of the Provisionals.

The Operation WARD documents appear to have been taken from file S/16173/4 at BSSO headquarters in Rheindahlen. BSSO liaises with MI5 in London, and with MI6 and MI5 officers at the British Embassy in Bonn. BSSO also has a major liaison branch in Cologne which works with the German security organisation, the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV)—literally, the federal office for the protection of the constitution. There is an important BSSO branch in Berlin, where BSSO and SIS run

extensive surveillance operations, including telephone-tapping.

The operations leading to WARD began soon after the British Army in Europe realised that its personnel and bases had become IRA targets. Barracks in West Germany were first bombed in 1978. More bombings followed in Dortmund in July 1979 and, a month later, in Brussels. In February 1980, Colonel Mark Coe was shot and fatally wounded while parking his car at home in Bielefeld.

After the 1979 bombings, the chief of Army security and intelligence operations in Germany, Colonel W C Deller, put forward the first plan to get British agents inside Irish groups in Germany. Deller suggested "penetrating the Irish community as a means of obtaining some forewarning of a PIRA (Provisional IRA) attack." Deller was warned that this "raised many difficulties", and was ordered not to proceed. The chief difficulty would have been German unwillingness to allow foreign military personnel to run their own spying operations within the German civilian community. At this time, the Army had been kept completely in the dark about the existence of SIS (Secret Intelligence Service, or MI6) agents in Germany working as part of Operation SCREAM.

The Army ignored the warning not to send spies into the German civilian community. By early 1980, they had recruited five "informants supplying... information on the Irish community on a regular basis." At first, the Army didn't tell BSSO or German security about their agents. When they later confessed what they'd been doing to BSSO, they were "anxious to avoid the suggestion that they were running agents." Despite this, "they admitted having a number of contacts among Irish communities, particularly in clubs and bars." A former UK government security officer observed that Deller's activities were "typical Army on (short) postings—Boy Scouts, determined to leave their mark."

During 1980, MI5's F5 section, which is concerned with Irish terrorism, and members of an intelligence group called "UKI" discussed the problems of running more agents against the Irish in Germany. (UKI is believed to be a reference to the intelligence coordination and assessments staff who work within the Cabinet Office.) MI5 official John Deverell, who was later promoted to be director of counter-espionage, played a key part in the discussions. He was then designated F5/O and took charge of MI5 operations against Irish terrorism. Intelligence officials visited Dusseldorf and Hanover "to gain more perspective... on joint Irish agent operations in the FRG". They studied how to "steer" agents into the Irish community (choosing, for example, which bars the agents should patronise).

German labour laws were a big problem. Since Irish migrant workers in West Germany notoriously avoided work permit restrictions, British undercover agents would have to break German law to remain credible to their work-mates. This stipulation later led to two agents being arrested, one of whom, code-named FLINT, was taken into custody. Another agent, ELGIN, "was charged with involvement in lump activities in 1982" and was fined.

After reviewing the problems, the head of the SIS (MI6) station in Bonn suggested an "initial

brief" to UK intelligence chiefs. The SIS man wanted to use the Army to "talent spot and then to pass to SIS for recruitment potential agents who could meet (intelligence reporting) requirements on Irish extremist activities in Germany, Ireland, or elsewhere on the Continent". Early in 1981, the Joint Intelligence Committee in London approved his proposal, but in a slightly different form, under the secret codename, WARD. In May 1981, Dr Meier, president of the German BfV, agreed to allow operation WARD to go ahead on German soil. He stipulated that the director of BSSO had a duty to exercise "professional judgment (and) ensure that the operation was properly controlled".

The BfV was "unhappy that the Army would be concerning itself with persons under German jurisdiction". The BfV had also complained, it appeared, that they were not seeing the intelligence gleaned from Operation WARD. That was less of an oversight than it seemed—there wasn't any intelligence to show.

By the summer of 1981, Operation WARD had been approved by both German and British intelligence chiefs. A special committee, the WARD Control Group, was brought together and met every two months in Rheindahlen.

Even after the German complaints, they weren't told everything about what the Army had been up to. "A number of the (Army Security and Intelligence) Group's contacts were declared" to a West German counter-terrorist officer, but the leaked document clearly implies that other Army agents were concealed from the BfV.

The leaked documents revealed the abysmal quality of British anti-terrorist intelligence to the IRA

These revelations do significant damage to Anglo-German security relations. They paint a picture of extraordinary and embarrassing disarray within British and German security organisations. This disarray has recently been demonstrated by the deadly errors that led to the Lockerbie bomb disaster. The documents indicate a cavalier attitude, especially on the part of the British Army, to German constitutional and legal proprieties. Indeed, the documents themselves were written in late 1983 and 1984 in order to prepare senior BSSO officers for showdown meetings with British diplomats in Bonn, and soon after with top BfV officials.

The documents also reveal that British security organisations were able to produce no worthwhile intelligence or security information whatever. They were continually at war with each other. BSSO was angry with the Army, which flagrantly disregarded important German regulations that BSSO were constitutionally required to observe. Army security officers in Germany recruited and ran their own unauthorised agents for a year. They illegally diverted

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Soho's legendary Windmill Theatre finally closed its doors...

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The nation's oil imports exceeded 448 million barrels...

an undercover surveillance unit to spy on an Irish demonstration in Dusseldorf in June 1982, using both "static and mobile" surveillance. This, BSSO staff suspected, was only one of many unauthorised Army undercover activities in Germany that Army officers kept hidden from them. Indeed, Army security officers had in 1982 openly used against BSSO information which "provided opportunities to turn a critical light onto BSSO".

BSSO was also at odds with SIS and the staff of the Irish Joint Section (of MI5 and MI6) who were in day-to-day control of operations WARD and SCREAM. In September 1982, for example, a London-based SIS senior official, Michael Moores, tried to get Army undercover agents to do extra work, "talent spotting" or keeping surveillance on potential agents in whom SIS was interested. The Army were happy to go along with this, because it increased their power and access to SIS data, even though it was quite apparent that SIS were more interested in using the Army's security apparatus in Germany for their own ends than in supporting security protection activities.

In a memorandum dated 25 October 1983 and written by Mr R C Cullen, head of BSSO's security branch, Moores' activities are described in terms of scarcely disguised fury as "sowing the seeds for uncoordinated action, duplication, etc". In one particularly serious case, the German BfV were asked three different times to do background checks on a single individual, Larry O'Rourke, a former County Down IRA member from Dundalk. When BfV officials found out that three different parts of their organisation had simultaneously been asked to do background checks on O'Rourke by three different British intelligence organisations, they were—understandably—peevled.

When Moores took over the chair of the WARD Control Group, he "floated" the names of three potential informers like O'Rourke who might be "recruitable". The two others, whose names *Republican News* have said they will publish this week, are Aidan Jordan, a former Provisional IRA member and Brendan "Bo" Crossey from Newry, who was believed to have arrived in Germany three months earlier and "could be recruitable".

The Director of BSSO went straight to "C/UK" (either the chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, Sir Colin Figures, or the Coordinator of Intelligence, Sir Anthony Duff) in December 1982 and demanded that SIS in general and Moores in particular stop trying to use Operation WARD to steal Army intelligence operators. If SIS did not desist, he warned, there would be further ructions with the BfV.

There were soon more difficulties. By early 1983, BSSO was urgently trying to get MI5 to terminate WARD before it led to further embarrassment with the Germans. "Voices began to be raised about whether WARD which thus far had produced almost nothing was a viable proposition." This led to an intelligence meeting in London in February 1983, and then to a high-level meeting with angry BfV officers in Rheindahlen a month later.

At the meeting, Herr Grunewald of the BfV "highlighted" the need for professionalism by "military field operators". He was assured—absurdly—that these undercover

IRA attacks on British Army targets in Europe 1987-89:

23 March 1987 300lb bomb exploded outside the officers' mess at the British Army HQ in Rheindahlen. Also the BSSO Headquarters. Thirty-six German civilians injured.

6 March 1988 Three IRA members killed by the SAS in Gibraltar while planning a car-bomb attack against an Army parade.

1 May 1988 Car bomb killed two RAF servicemen and critically injured another at Nieuw Bergen, Netherlands. In a separate incident, off-duty RAF men machine-gunned in their car at Roermond, Netherlands, killing one and seriously injuring two.

3 May 1988 Bomb under captain's car defused next to officers' mess at Rippon Barracks, Bielefeld.

13 July 1988 Bomb blew a hole in the wall of Glamorgan Barracks, Duisberg, injuring nine soldiers.

5 August 1988 Bomb exploded at Army map-makers' offices at Roy Barracks, Ratingen.

12 August 1988 RSM Heakin of the 1st Battalion, Royal Regiment of Wales, shot dead in his car in Ostend, Belgium.

19 June 1989 Bomb exploded at the Quebec Barracks, Osnabruck, West Germany. Four other devices, each containing 66lbs of Semtex, were made safe. No casualties.

2 July 1989 Corporal Steven Smith of the Royal Tank Regiment killed by a car bomb outside his home in Hanover. Car bomb found nearby and defused.

28 August 1989 Staff sergeant discovered Semtex bomb under his vehicle in Hanover.

1 September 1989 Two off-duty soldiers shot and injured in Munster.

7 September 1989 Heidi Hazell, the wife of a British serviceman, shot dead near her home in Dortmund, West Germany.



Army intelligence operators would "in each case declare themselves as members of the Ministry of Defence in their approaches to individuals... for recruitment." Reading this, a former intelligence man commented to me, "I can just see an intelligence squaddie going up to the source in a bar and saying, 'Excuse me, I'm from the Ministry of Defence. May I buy you a Guinness?' Do they think the Germans are that stupid?"

Moores told Grunewald that he was "ex-

tremely conscious of the political implications of WARD ... WARD sources were specifically instructed to avoid involvement in the German political scene." He promised the BfV that if any source in future became more than a British Army "listening post" warning of Irish newcomers to the local scene, BfV would know at once. Grunewald quite obviously didn't trust the Brits and the meeting closed with him saying that he wanted to come back every two years to find out what was happening.

The Germans were rightly concerned about the professional standards of the British security operations. Crucially, access to the docu-

'Excuse me, I'm from the Ministry of Defence. May I buy you a Guinness?'

ments revealed the abysmal quality of British Army anti-terrorist intelligence in Germany to the IRA. Operation WARD was not one among many anti-Irish terrorist intelligence activities; it is all that there is, or was.

The documents also gave the IRA an insight into Operation SCREAM—a Cabinet Office Intelligence (UKI) operation, primarily run by SIS, using "offensive penetration" agents against the IRA. The work of one SCREAM agent, code-name ORGEAT, is described in detail. SIS sent him to Dusseldorf in the autumn of 1981. By November 1981, he had settled in the Irish community there and "had identified persons among the Irish people in Dusseldorf with strong Republican sympathies" for the benefit of his Army and SIS case officers.

Operation WARD finished up as a story of sustained intelligence cock-up and muddle no novelist would dare to invent. By October 1983, after five years' thought and three years' action, 16 agents had been tried and many more discarded, yet it had failed to produce "any worthwhile intelligence". The 1984 review revealed that agent FLINT had been taken into custody "for contravention of FRG (German) labour laws", and faced trial. Agent MALTA had been "compromised". Agent BEDFORD was "under suspicion of being an agent among the Irish groups". Agent GLASGOW had "lied to his handler" and deceived German officials who were vetting him about a "woman friend". His lies became a minor international incident and "his overall credibility was being looked at very closely". Agent BANGOR, who had formerly run a pub in Hameln called "Jeff's Place", went religious and became a Jehovah's Witness.

The real identity of many agents, such as BANGOR, is revealed in the documents. This is in itself a major breach of security, for which the BSSO author is now likely to face penalties. For example, agent NORWICH is identified as "John REED of Minden", adding that he was a former "CX source" who had been "phased out". "CX" is the code designation for an intelligence diplomat in Bonn, believed to be the MI5 counter-intelligence liaison officer at the British Embassy. Of 16 WARD agents, the documents

reveal, "only two can be said to be active in the sense of reporting at all". But these two were agent MALTA—who was believed to have been "compromised"—and agent GLASGOW, who was distrusted and believed to be a liar. On top of this, there was a "considerable turnover (of agents) necessitated by the discarding of unsuitable sources".

Only agent BEDFORD, a former British soldier, had "access worth the name" to information about Irish Republican activities in West Germany. But the running of agent BEDFORD involved such complexities of intelligence mismanagement that not even John Le Carré could unravel the intricacies. BEDFORD, who in 1980 was based in Bochum, was one of the five unauthorised Army agents whose activities Operation WARD was supposed to make legal.

By the time WARD began, Bedford wasn't just spying on the "Irish Committee in Bochum". He had infiltrated "the German political scene". As soon as he started spying on German politics, the undercover British Army unit which had recruited him should have turned his case over to BSSO and the BfV. They didn't. Instead, they appear to have attempted to ingratiate themselves with the local German security police by supplying them with a new agent to spy on domestic politics. Agent BEDFORD now became a joint agent of the British Army and the Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz, the security agency of the Land (state) of Nord Rhein Westphalia (LfV-NRW).

The BfV didn't know that BEDFORD was also a spy for the LfV, and the LfV didn't know anything about Operation WARD, or that the BfV were involved in it. Meanwhile, the British were now wondering whose side BEDFORD was really on. The WARD report says that "suspicions against his bona fides were voiced on a number of occasions by members of the (intelligence) 'scene'." BSSO ordered the Army to "disengage" and leave LfV-NRW in charge, triggering another major row between the security operators. But agent BEDFORD carried on spying for LfV-NRW. By the end of 1983 he was installed in Paderborn, providing information on the Irish Committee there, as well as spying on domestic German political activity.

No-one yet knows what other information has leaked. But many of the documents refer to "annexes" of further information, which appear to include details of the agents used in WARD and SCREAM. It is more likely that the IRA are selectively releasing information than that they only obtained parts of a complete document. So how much has actually leaked? "Until they (MI5 leak investigators) know the answer to that question," says one experienced intelligence officer who has seen the documents, "all the Army's current activities are at risk." It's worse than that. Lives are at risk too. And there is real damage to Anglo-German relations—they refer to German operations too.

It must now be assumed that every British agent, every security and intelligence operation in Germany and perhaps further afield, is at risk from the WARD disclosures and the opportunity they gave the IRA to penetrate British intelligence activities with their own double agents. With one blow, an entire British security apparatus has been turned, potentially, into what the trade normally calls a "negative asset". ●

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