SIX SPIES IN THE SHADOWS

Robert C. Williams

We will examine the history of espionage through the biographies of six well known practitioners: Queen Elizabeth I’s spymaster Francis Walsingham; the Boer War hero and founder of Scouting, Robert Baden-Powell; the Dutch femme fatale shot for espionage in 1917, Mata Hari; the “Ace of Spies” and model for James Bond, Sidney Reilly; the Soviet mole who operated at the highest levels of British counter-intelligence, H.A.R. (Kim) Philby; and the German-born atom spy working at the heart of the wartime Manhattan Project in Los Alamos to build the atomic bomb, Klaus Fuchs.

Espionage is a wilderness of mirrors in which deception is a practiced art and observation a vital skill. Whereas the historian seeks an approximation of the truth through argument and narrative grounded in evidence, the spy seeks to know everything, say nothing, and commit lying, forgery and even murder as necessary. The historian is therefore justified in bringing to the study of espionage a healthy skepticism regarding primary sources created by professional liars. We will explore the nature of espionage most cautiously by examining the lives, careers and deceptions of some of the most colorful spies in the world. They all sought to discover the truth, trust no one, falsify their identities and live their lives in the shadows until the end.

This class is classified and will meet in a secure undisclosed location. If you learn too much in this course, you may be terminated. False identities are encouraged. Drop boxes in secret locations may be used for communication purposes.

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Secrecy is recommended, security is not guaranteed, and surveillance by NSA is highly probable. Don’t tell a soul about this course. The watchers are everywhere.
1. Francis Walsingham, spymaster for Queen Elizabeth I (c. 1558-1590).

INFORMATION. Watchers, spies, agents, intelligencers, and scouts.
DISINFORMATION. Poses, disguises, moles, double agents, deceptions.
PREDICTION. Skryers, crystal balls, and future enemy behavior (forecasting).

Reformation England and a Catholic continent
“The Island”—Protestant nation state
Henry VIII and the Act of Supremacy (1534)
The Catholic enemy and Mary Queen of Scots
Queen Elizabeth I (ruled 1558-1603); an intelligence cheapskate
1559 Act of Supremacy and Act of Uniformity (prayer book)
Catholic France and Spain v. Reformation Europe
1568 Mary Queen of Scots finds asylum in England
1570 Pope Pius V excommunicates Queen Elizabeth I
Nation states and government secrecy: treason
Assassination plots against Elizabeth
Disguises and cover: channel ports (“passports”)

Francis Walsingham (1532?-1590)
Father a lawyer for Henry VIII; FW graduated Cambridge 1552
Protest move to France/Italy to avoid Catholic Mary Tudor
1558 returns to England upon QEI’s accession to throne
1563 elected to Parliament, patronage of Cecil, Lord Burleigh
FW in Padua, Paris, St. Bartholomew’s Night (1572)
1573 Secretary and Privy Councilor; 1577 knighted
Protecting the Queen and reasons of state
1579 FW sends Anthony Munday to English College, Rome, as mole
Opening the mail: seals and secrecy
Agent network
Forgery
Murder and assassination
Treason and torture
1584 Francis Throckmorton executed for treason
1585 Act for Queen’s Surety
Codes and Code Names
Ciphers and Secret Correspondence: Thomas Phelippes
The Babington Plot of 1586: entrapment
Mary’s ciphers and the “brewer express” to/from Chartley
Forging Mary’s response. Walsingham, Phellipes and the “bloody letter”
Babington and others tried and executed for treason
Mary’s execution (February 1587)
Preemptive intelligence of Anthony Standen and the Spanish Armada (1588)
July 12, 1588; Drake knew everything in advance
Christopher Marlowe: spy? murder?

The birth of British intelligence
Walsingham, not yet the state; he died bankrupt from funding spies
Low lifes and casuals, rogues and thieves, not yet professionals
Military intelligence (MI) and police (Scotland Yard) functions
Forgery and murder. Passport control officers.

John Dee (1532-1608) and the occult: esoteric secrets; cryptography
Queen’s astrologer; predicting storms for the Spanish Armada
Enochian language of “angels”; Enochian alphabet; secret messages
Astrology and occult knowledge
Predicting future enemy behavior, events, weather
Edward Kelly, forger and skryer

Spy motives: money or ideology?
Scots as agents of Empire; ghillies and scouts (hunting and fishing)
Intelligence and deception; wilderness of mirrors; forgeries and plants.
Espionage as an esoteric activity of coded secrets


Peter Pan and Long Tom in Neverland; boys always boys? Lost Boys live underground.


*My Adventures as a Spy* (1915). Butterflies and fortifications. Disguises, signaling, coded secret messages, tracking, mapping. Romantic invention and exaggeration. (Available on line.)

Meinertzhagen and ruses at war. Haversack ruse 1917 Allenby. Camouflage and dummy men, forts, tanks. "Be Prepared!" God and Country. Self-reliance, outdoor life, good health. Was B-P really a spy? MI officer? How is military intel different from espionage? Disguise and deception. Did B-P have any contact with espionage after 1908?


Travels in France, Britain, Spain on Dutch (neutral) passport 1914-6. Courtesan and stripper dependent on men for income. Holland as spyland, Dutch police chief paid by British. Arrested as suspected French agent by British at Falmouth Nov. 1916, interrogated by Basil Thomson of Scotland Yard (and “Blinker” Hall of NI) in London, sent back to Spain, not Holland. MI5 watching since Dec 1915. Vladimir Masloff affair. Georges Ladoux, head of Deuxieme Bureau, spy hunter. He recruits MH, also under surveillance.

German code read by the French. She is followed, phone tapped, mail opened. Why MH radiograms only ones in broken code? Entrapment by Ladoux?

July 24 treason trial. No evidence MH a German spy. She claims innocence. Consorted with spies of Russia, France, Germany. Never passed info of any value to anybody. Knew too much about French, German, Russian, British officer/lovers?

Room 40 and codebreaking. Signals intel. Blinker Hall. The Zimmermann telegram. The execution of Mata Hari October 15, 1917 by French firing squad. May have thought they used blanks, fearless. Wilhelm Canaris leaves Madrid by sub.

Was Mata Hari a spy? For whom? 1970s evidence shows she entered German service autumn 1915 under section III B chief Walter Nicolai. No evidence she reported much to anyone. Ignorant of war details. Was Ladoux a double agent who entrapped her? Was Canaris involved in Madrid? Hall and Thomson? Did they return MH to Madrid to compromise Kalle, Canaris and herself? What happened to her body?

3 films 1927, 1931 (Greta Garbo) and 1985. Corpse disappears.

4. Sidney Reilly: The Ace of Spies

Spying as a profession: “Trust no one.” False identities.
William Melville (1850-1918), Scotland Yard and the Russian immigration.
First wife Kate Reilly. London’s East End and the Ripper murders
Multiple false identities of Sigmund Rosenblum: Sidney Reilly, Sidney
Beren, George Bergman, John Gillespie, Konstantin Massino, Sidnei
Reilinsky, Georgii Repinsky, Sigismund Rosenblum.
b. 1872/3/4 Odessa? Birth certificate?
Fellow of the Chemical Society; study at Heidelberg U?
1896, Rosenblum & Co. at Bury Court (chemistry, patent medicine). Reilly
becomes informer for Melville in coop with Rachkovsky and Okhrana in
Ethel and Lucy Boole; The Gadfly (1897). Ethel m. Wilfred Voynich.
Ozone Preparations Co. 1897, patent medicines.
The unfortunate demise of Rev. Hugh Thomas (1898): murder?
The marriage license of August 22. 1898. “Sidney Reilly” b. 1872 County
Mayo, died in infancy. Melville creates fake birth certificate. Margaret
Callahan Thomas m. Sigismund Rosenblum.
Dec. 17, 1898 application to British Museum reading room as “Sigismund
Rosenblum”
2 June 1899 passport “S.G.Reilly”
Murder and forgery, tools of espionage
The Protocols of Zion and the Voynich Manuscript
Oil and aircraft


Tokyo to San Francisco, early 1915. NYC Equitable Insurance Co and Allied Machinery Co, both 120 Broadway. M. Nadine Zalesky (Massino) 16 Feb 1915 (bigamy). As MM SGReilly in Petrograd May-Sep 1915, then Russian munitions purchaser in US. Baldwin Locomotive Co. By 1917, made $3 mil?


Reilly joins MI6, C interview, March 1918, not before. MI6 asks MI5 who he is, “nothing recorded against.” C: “very clever-- very doubtful—has been everywhere and done everything”. To Russia as agent ST1, L750 in diamonds. May 7, 1918 arrives Kremlin, asks to see Lenin. “Konstantin Markovich Massino” identity The Reilly/Lockhart Plot (Aug 1918) and the Russian Civil War. Reilly escapes to Helsinki as “George Bergman” art dealer. Sees C Nov. 8. Sentenced to death in absentia in Moscow as British spy. May 18 1923 m. Petipa Bodillo; only the address and date are real. 1925: The Trust: police entrapment and the Russian emigration. Ernest Boyce, MI6 Helsinki. Assassination by the OGPU December 1925. The death of a spy? Who did Reilly work for anyway? Britain? Russia? Spy or con man? Who was “Sidney Reilly”? For whom did he spy? Money only motive? Model for James Bond?

Suggested: Andrew Cook, Ace of Spies. The True Story of Sidney Reilly (Tempus, 2002); Richard B. Spence, Trust No One. The Secret World of Sidney Reilly (Feral House, 2002).
5. Kim Philby: Soviet Mole and Double Agent

"Kim" as another invented identity for Harold A.R. Philby. Soviet espionage, from Okhrana to NKVD and GRU. "Friendship" in England. Moles and double agents. How could one of us be one of them?


Nicholas Elliott: Philby “a schizophrenic with a supreme talent for deception” The Anglo-German Fellowship as Philby’s cover. Journalists as spies, both seek information. Philby as Times Journalist in the Spanish Civil War. Met Canaris? Plan to kill Franco.
Times correspondent at Dunkirk 1940. SOE (Special Operations Executive) and “Set Europe Ablaze” (Winston Churchill). The “German House”. Philby trains SOE agents on tradecraft.

Hitler-Stalin pact 1939-41. From SOE to Section V, MI6 counterespionage. Did Philby pass names of Dutch agents to Moscow (then on to Berlin)?

The death of Walter Krivitsky (March 1941) and his 1940 debriefing by Jane Archer (“Mrs. Moore”) of MI5. Soviets have an “English journalist in Spain” who tried to kill Franco and a Scotsman “of good family” in the FO, HOMER. Could the Maclean/Philby leads have been followed?


1945. The Volkov affair. Betraying Albanians. How many agents did Philby betray and kill?

Philby to US 1949-51, works with CIA (Angleton) and FBI. Burgess comes to live with Philbys in DC. Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess flee 1951. MI5 learns from US that Krivitsky’s HOMER is Maclean. Philby warns Maclean and Moscow, triggers flight of B and M. Jane Archer finds MI5 file on Philby from 1939, starts investigation. James Skardon interrogates Philby 1951-5.


The woman who suspected it all: Jane Sissmore Archer (1898-1982), joins MI5 1916, creates Registry 1920s, Soviet espionage expert 1930, interviews Walter Krivitsky as “Mrs. Moore” of MI5, 1941 shifted from MI5 to MI6 for “insubordination,” (Jasper Harker incompetent) 1944 works for Philby in Section IX, he feels threatened, she is eased out. Suspected Fuchs 1947, Philby 1951 and earlier, Cairncross 1952. Philby knows Archer knows.

How did NKVD and GRU succeed in placing moles at the top of British intelligence? Could they have been identified earlier? Why was Philby not charged until 1963?

6. Klaus Fuchs: Atomic Espionage and the Cold War:

The Red Foxes of Germany (Kiel). Fuchs was a known communist when he fled Nazi Germany to England in 1933. Fuchs cleared 8 times by British security in 1940s despite known communist ties and membership.

Nuclear physics in Britain. Physics with Nevill Mott at Bristol, then Max Born at Edinburgh.

Enemy aliens and British internment. Fuchs in Canada 1940 as German, not communist, enemy alien.

Joins Rudolf Peierls and “Tube Alloys” at Birmingham U doing “war work” on the atomic bomb. (Melita Norwood the GRU spy is the TA Director’s secretary, not exposed until 1999.) Fuchs recruited by GRU handler Simon Kremer after Fuchs walked into the Soviet embassy in London and offered to help the Soviet war effort. Fuchs delivers documents to Ursula Kuczinski aka Ruth Beurlon; her first and second husbands also GRU. Met near Oxford and Harwell, British atomic center. She returned to (East) Germany 1950, also handled Melita Norwood at Harwell, not known until 1999.

The Manhattan Project. Einstein/Szilard letter to FDR. Oppenheimer and Los Alamos NM. Los Alamos NM, Hanford WA, and Knoxville TN. Fuchs comes to Los Alamos 1944 as British citizen and member of British mission with a security clearance granted by Britain, accepted by US.

Fuchs works on Plutonium bomb. Hydrodynamics and wave mechanics of “lenses.” Open science versus national security at Los Alamos. Seminars inside the barbed wire. PO Box 1776 Santa Fe.

Fuchs passes technical papers and reports to industrial chemist and spy Harry Gold whom he meets in NYC and Santa Fe. (Fuchs has a car...) Ultimately leads to the Rosenbergs.
The VENONA cryptography after 1943. Meredith Gardner, wartime Soviet decrypts studied at Arlington Hall, VA, where a key cryptographer is William Weisband, another Soviet spy (like Reilly, born near Odessa...) Codebreakers identify Fuchs and “Homer” (Donald Maclean) in 1949.


Harwell and the bomb. Jane Archer 1947: “Fuchs is a possible Russian agent [who] should be divorced from all contact with atomic energy.” Ignored.


Fuchs in Jail in England, model prisoner, released to East Germany (1959). Fuchs was the only scientist to work on atomic bomb for England, US, East Germany, Russia and China.

Does secrecy enhance or threaten security?
Does ideology or money motivate spies?
What motivated Fuchs? How much did he help the Soviets?
What is a spy anyway......?

Shell casing of Fat Man, the bomb tested at Alamogordo (July) and dropped on Nagasaki August 1945. Gun-type Uranium bomb dropped on Hiroshima first was not tested because scientists were confident it would work. It did.

Suggested: Robert C. Williams, Klaus Fuchs, Atom Spy (Harvard UP 1987).