

## **New File Released Reveals Identity of ‘Fifi’ the Agent Provocatrice Employed to Test WWII Secret Agents**

- **Coincides with online digital release of more than 3,300 security service records on individuals under surveillance during the Second World War**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 GMT Wednesday 17 September 2014:** Today a new file has been opened revealing the previously dismissed use of an ‘Agent Provocatrice’ called Fifi in Second World War operations. She was employed by the secret service to test trainee secret agents. This file has also been made available online along with more than 3,300 files on individuals from the security and intelligence record collection covering the period of the Second World War on [The National Archives website](#).

Marie Christine Chilver codename ‘Fifi’ was also known within the Special Operations Executive (SOE) as ‘our special agent’. Speculation about the use of a renowned agent provocatrice by the security service has previously been dismissed and so her true identity has not been publicly known. The release of this file (HS 9/307/3) now reveals Fifi’s identity and her special talent for character assessment which enabled her to extract information from up and coming trainee secret agents. The file contains Fifi’s reports on trainee agents and handwritten correspondence from her relating to SOE training operations. Also contained in the file are details about the three stage approach Fifi should take as an agent provocatrice (p. 154-155 in PDF).

**Jonathan Cole, Researcher at the National Archives commented:** “‘Fifi’ was somewhat of a legend of the Special Operations Executive. Until now, her existence and the deployment of her services had been dismissed but with the release of this file, her identity, impressive skills and the important role she played in Second World War secret operations is now finally revealed.”

Typically, Fifi was sprung on the students by surprise. Expecting to meet an official SOE contact during their schemes, students were instead met by a stunning blonde; apparently, a French freelance journalist named ‘Christine Collard’ offering them help. A brush with Fifi could mean a promising student’s downfall. Within the file, there is the example of José Tinchant known as ‘Tas’, a talented young Belgian, who was well-regarded by his instructors until Fifi came along. She reported the details of their first meeting: ‘by the evening I had learnt practically all there was to know about him.’ (pg. 182 of PDF). The SOE ended Tinchant’s scheme and his employment following this report.

As part of this release, more than 3,300 personal records from the intelligence and security services collection, which until now have only been available in the reading rooms in Kew, have been made available online for the first time. They contain details of spies operating around the world, largely of British, German, or American origin, but also famous individuals.

**Highlights within the files include the following spies, famous individuals and organisations:**

**Cecil Day Lewis (KV 2/1385):** Day Lewis was a Communist Party member during the 1930s and was under surveillance until 1952. He later became Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom from 1968 until his death in 1972 and is the father of actor Daniel Day Lewis. This file contains remarks by MI5 on Lewis and his communist links, Lewis' application for a passport including his signature and Ministry of Information correspondence on Lewis.

**Ralph Baden Davenport Powell (KV 2/2075)**

Powell worked as a broadcaster for Nazi German radio 1942-1945 after taking over from "Lord Haw Haw". Powell was a relative of Lord Baden-Powell, creator of the Boy Scouts. This file includes copies of photographs of Powell and his application for a passport and an extensive MI5 report on his activities.

**William Joyce, alias Lord Haw Haw (KV 2/245)**

A senior member of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, he left to found the National Socialist League in 1937. He moved to Berlin in 1939 and throughout the Second World War broadcast anti-British propaganda, including trying to drive a wedge between Britain and the US, and published a pamphlet called "Fascism and Jewry". He was executed in 1946. This file includes press cuttings on Joyce with a Daily Herald newspaper report from 3 April 1941 where William Joyce admits he is Lord Haw-Haw.

**Sir Oswald Mosley/Lady Mosley (KV 2/884):** From 1932 Mosley was the leading figure in the British Union of Fascists and the Union Movement when it was formed in 1947. He was detained under Defence Regulation 18b in 1940 with his wife, Lady Diana Mosley, and released in November 1943. Before the war, Lady Mosley was thought to be Mosley's main communication link with Hitler and had frequent conversations with the Nazi leader. This file includes cuttings from a Blackshirts pamphlet and a poster advertising a public speech by Mosley.

**Rudolph Hess (KV 2/34):**

Papers relating to Hess's arrival in Britain in 1941 and his subsequent detention here during the Second World War. This file includes speculative letters sent to Hess from US and British citizens and intercepted by the authorities due to insufficient postal addresses.

**Emil Julius Klaus Fuchs (KV 2/1245):**

German/British atom spy, Fuchs, was an anti-Nazi agitator and communist in Germany in the early 1930s. He fled to the UK in 1933. After studies in Bristol and Edinburgh and research work in Birmingham, he became a member of the British team engaged in developing the atom bomb with US counterparts. He worked on this project in the US from 1943 to 1945, but in 1942 he also volunteered his services to the Russians. This file includes translated correspondence between German consulate in Bristol and the German Embassy regarding the issuing of a new passport to Fuchs, his registration card and photograph and details from his application for British naturalization.

**Grand Duke Vladimir Kirilliovitch, aliases Romanov, Mikhaylov (KV 2/1667):**

The heir to the Russian Romanov dynasty, Kirillovitch spent the Second World War principally in France. It was said by some that the Germans considered him a candidate for whatever monarchy they might have set up had their invasion of the Soviet Union succeeded. This file contains Foreign Office papers outlining Hitler's supposed plan to use Kirilliovitch as a puppet leader of Russia, newspaper cuttings outlining his disappearance and various letters regarding his possible whereabouts.

**Hans Karl Georg Wendt (KV 2/3655):** An active Nazi party member, in mid-1939 Wendt arrived in the UK, nominally as correspondent of a German newspaper but with an intelligence brief. He left in August 1939 before the start of the Second World War, his maid leaving behind an address book with Ribbentrop's and Hitler's private telephone numbers. In 1940 he was in Sweden in a propaganda role. This file includes his British registration card with photographs, German marriage certificate and documentation relating to his departure from Britain and what he left behind.

**For media enquiries please contact Press Office at The National Archives on 0208 392 5277 or by email: [press@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:press@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).**

**Notes to Editors:**

**Spokespeople available:**

**Jonathan Cole, Researcher at The National Archives** is available for any further questions relating to the details in the file and interviews Monday 15 – Wednesday 17 September 2014.

**Dr Stephen Twigge** is Head of the Modern Records Team at The National Archives. Stephen joined The National Archives in 1999. Stephen was formerly a Post Doctoral Research Fellow at the Department of International Politics, University of Wales, Aberystwyth and is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He has published a number of books and articles on cold war history including German Unification 1989-90, Berlin in the Cold War 1948-1990, British Intelligence, Avoiding Armageddon and Planning Armageddon.

**More on the [KV 2 file series](#):** This series contains selected files from the First and Second World War periods and the inter-war years on suspected spies and double agents, renegades and suspected renegades, German intelligence (Abwehr) officers, Japanese intelligence agents, communist sympathisers and Soviet agents, and other groups in which the Security Service took an interest (including pacifist and anti-conscription groups).

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