CONFIDENTIAL

CABINET OFFICE

THIS FILE MUST NOT GO OUTSIDE THE CABINET OFFICE

HR 7/2/2

PART NUMBER 1

File to go for second review'94

History of S O E in Yugoslavia
by Dr Mark Wheeler

FILE BEGINS 7 May 1991 ENDS 19.4.95 | FILE No. HR 7/2/2 | PART NUMBER 1

INDEX HEADINGS

REFERRED TO	DATE	REFERRED TO	DATE	REFERRED TO	DATE

CLOSED
1995
CLOSED

CAB 103/813

Part 1 of 2

THERE IS AN ANNEX TO THIS FILE

6108407 2m 7/86 XBD S520

CONFIDENTIAL

FOLIO REGISTER-FILE No. HR 7/2/2

FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.	FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.	FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.
49	18.1.95	H095/35	56	6.3.95	H095/155	62	6.4.95	A095/1110
50	19.1.95	H95/44	57	15.3.95	H95/177	63	7.4.95	A 6161
51	26.1.95	H095/64	58	31.3.95	H95/238	64	7.4.95	A095/1145
52	27.195	H95/51	59	31.3.95	H95/236	65	11.4.95	H095/264
53	7.2.95	H95/82	60	4.4.95	H095/242	66	12.4.95	H95/293
54	8.2.95	H095/111	61	5.4.95	H095/245	67	19.4.95	H95/304
55	8.2.95	H095/112						

OS90 (6/89)D

FOLIO REGISTER-FILE No.....

FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.	FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.	FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.

FOLIO REGISTER-FILE No. HR7/2/2

FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.	FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.	FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.
						42	17.11.94	H094/928
			33	4.10.94	H094/793			
			34	4.10.94	H094/794			
27	15.8.94	H94/1119	35	4.10.94	H094/796			
						43	21.11.94	H94/1425
			36	10.10.94	NFR			
28	30.8.94	H094/690						
						44	23.11.94	H094/941
						45	23.11.94	NFR
			37	7.11.94	A094/3358			
29	16.9.94	H94/1207						
						46	15.12.94	FAX out
			38	9.11.94	H094/914			
30	20.9.94	H094/761	39	9.11.94	H94/1395			
						47	5.1.95	H095/2
			40	10.11.94	A094/3434			
31	28.9.94	H094/780 H13907						
						48	13.1.95	H95/26
			41	16.11.94	H94/1411			
32	3.10.94	H094/795				48M	17.1.95	H95/37
						(Transfer to 7/2/3)		

OS90 (6/89)D

FOLIO REGISTER-FILE No.....

FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.	FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.	FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.

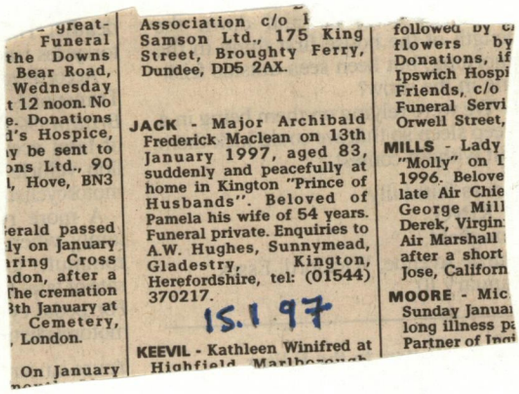
FOLIO REGISTER — FILE No. HR 7/2/2

FOLIO	DATE	CODE REF.
1	7+8.5.91	H091/315 {H091/318 {A5152
2	9.5.91	A091/1138
3	10.5.91	H091/330
4	14.5.91	H091/333
5	14.5.91	H091/334
6	14.5.91	A5603
7	10.6.91	H91/243
8	9.7.91	H091/443
9	25.7.91	letter
10	26.7.91	H091/476 A9212
11	26.7.91	H091/477
12	5.8.91	H091/481
13	20.9.91	H91/371
14	3.10.91	H091/597
15	26.3.92	H092/136
16	{12.5.92} {4.6.92}	A6947
17	15.6.92	H092/274
18	16.6.92	A092/1754
19	19.7.92	A9238
20	23.7.92	H092/390
21	24.7.92	A092/2178
22	1.8.92	A9978
23	13.8.92	H092/447
24	13.8.92	A092/2357
25	26.4.93	H093/345
26	4.7.94	letter

3754 346207 20,000 5/76 GL. 3917

HR 7/2/2

→ SOE Yugoslavia file



great-
Funeral
the Downs
Bear Road,
Wednesday
t 12 noon. No
e. Donations
d's Hospice,
y be sent to
ons Ltd., 90
l, Hove, BN3

erald passed
ly on January
aring Cross
ndon, after a
The cremation
3th January at
Cemetery,
, London.

On January

Association c/o
Samson Ltd., 175 King
Street, Broughty Ferry,
Dundee, DD5 2AX.

JACK - Major Archibald Frederick Maclean on 13th January 1997, aged 83, suddenly and peacefully at home in Kington "Prince of Husbands". Beloved of Pamela his wife of 54 years. Funeral private. Enquiries to A.W. Hughes, Sunnymead, Gladestry, Kington, Herefordshire, tel: (01544) 370217.

15.1.97

KEEVIL - Kathleen Winifred at
Highfield, Marlborough

followed by c
flowers by
Donations, if
Ipswich Hospi
Friends, c/o
Funeral Servi
Orwell Street,

MILLS - Lady
"Molly" on I
1996. Belove
late Air Chie
George Mill
Derek, Virgin
Air Marshall
after a short
Jose, Californ

MOORE - Mic
Sunday Januar
long illness pa
Partner of Ing

********** -COMM.JOURNAL- ********** DATE 13-JAN-1997 ***** TIME 16:16 **** P.1

MODE = MEMORY TRANSMISSION START=13-JAN 16:15 END=13-JAN 16:16

FILE NO.= 160

NO.	COM	ABBR/NTWK	STATION NAME/ TELEPHONE NO.	PAGES	PRG.NO.	PROGRAM NAME
001	OK	☎	7-2700345	003/003		

-HRS 0171 217 6010 -

********** - 0171 217 6010- **********

Nora Beloff

Foreign correspondent and political editor who scorned popularity in her search for distinction

NORA BELOFF, who has died aged 78, was for 30 years a dedicated and combative journalist on the *Observer*; during that time she became the first woman foreign correspondent in Washington, and also broke new ground as the paper's political editor.

She wrote with great authority and fierce conviction, though her ferocity could sometimes spill over. She did not take kindly to contradiction; tended to feel that anyone who disagreed with her was either a fool or a knave — probably both; and often took the trouble to let the offender know in person what she thought of him.

In a profession rife with jesters and jests, Nora Beloff conspicuously lacked a sense of humour. In 1969 Auberon Waugh, giving free rein to his fancy in a *Private Eye* column, suggested that she was frequently to be found in bed with Harold Wilson and other members of his Cabinet. Nothing improper occurred, he said.

"That suggests," Waugh volunteered, "she is a woman with whom sexual relationships would not be desired." Nora Beloff sued for libel and in 1972 was awarded £3,000. This was some compensation for the loss of another action she had brought against *Private Eye*, in which she charged the journal with printing a memorandum about Reginald Maudling she had circulated within the *Observer*. The costs, estimated at £10,000, were awarded against her.

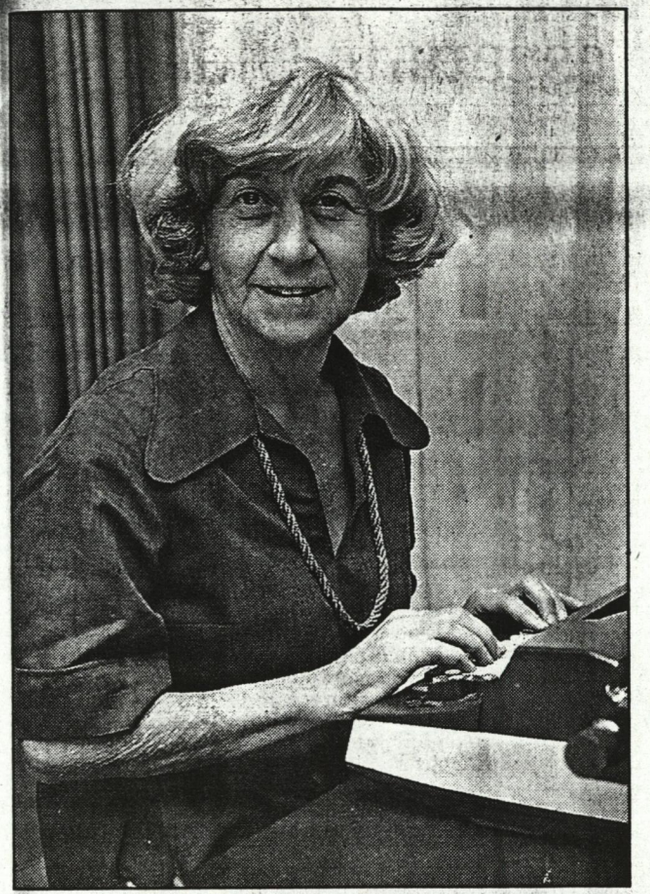
This litigiousness did not make Nora Beloff popular in Fleet Street — but then she never imagined it was her job to be popular. It says much for her talent and professionalism that, notwithstanding the conservatism of her own instincts, she held senior posts for so many years at such a determinedly progressive newspaper.

She might have lasted even longer but for an untoward incident. In 1978 she was plotting to unseat Donald Trelford, who had succeeded David Astor as editor three years before, when a letter she wrote to a would-be conspirator found its way to Trelford's desk.

Nora Beloff was born on Jan 24 1919 into a prosperous and cultivated Latvian Jewish family which made its home in London. The historian Lord Beloff is her brother. Another brother was professor of parapsychology at Edinburgh, while a sister, a biochemist, was married to Sir Boris Chain, who won the Nobel Prize for his part in the development of penicillin.

It is possible that Nora Beloff's grim determination to succeed in what was then very much the male section of journalism sprang from her anxiety to keep up with her siblings. At all events, she undeniably achieved recognition in her chosen field: David Astor, the editor of the *Observer* from 1948 to 1975, described her as one of his most valued colleagues.

Nora Beloff was educated at King Alfred School and read history at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. From 1941 to 1944 she served in the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, and then worked for two years at the embassy in Paris.



Nora Beloff: fierce conviction

She began her career as a journalist at Reuter's News Agency, before joining the *Economist* in Paris in 1946. Two years' later she found her life's work at the *Observer*.

David Astor surrounded himself with a rich array of talent, including Edward Crankshaw, Sebastian Haffner, Arthur Koestler, Isaac Deuscher and Lajos Lederer. It was difficult to shine in such company, but Nora Beloff managed to make her mark — first as correspondent in Paris, Washington, Moscow and Brussels, then from 1964 to 1976 as political correspondent, and finally in a roving capacity from 1976 to 1978.

Her years as political correspondent took in Harold Wilson's first two periods in office. The Prime Minister became convinced that she was conspiring with younger Labour MPs to undermine him, and tried to get her sacked; Nora Beloff's main concern, though, was that the Labour movement was being infiltrated and to an extent taken over by Trotskyites. Her colleagues thought her fears far-fetched, but on this issue she was proved right.

She also believed that Michael Foot, one of the idols of the *Observer*, was a sinister influence, and said as much in a hard-hitting book, *Freedom Under Foot* (1976). Nora Beloff disliked the way in which the lobby system worked as a conduit for leaks and was the first person to expose it. She was also to the fore in exposing the political influence of Marcia Williams.

She was particularly well informed about Eastern Europe and the Balkans; and in this respect too her views sometimes brought her into conflict with her colleagues. Lajos Lederer, for example, was a friend and admirer of Tito; Nora Beloff was neither.

She was outraged when the *Observer* sent a wreath to Tito's funeral in 1980, and when she wrote *Tito's False Legacy* in 1985 she noted in her preface that the book was "in part, a penance for unquestionably accepting the Titoist bias shared by most of my countrymen."

Always a fearless reporter, Nora Beloff so irritated the authorities during her years in Paris that the French Minister of Defence refused her permission to attend press conferences. In 1979 she was arrested on the border of the Soviet Union and Hungary, held for 24 hours and accused of "spreading hostile propaganda". In 1984 she was expelled from Yugoslavia.

She had good contacts, intense application, a faultless eye for the heart of a situation, and a lively provocative style. The author of several controversial books, she latterly stood forth as an impassioned defender of the Serbian cause in the Yugoslavian conflict.

For all her prickliness, Nora Beloff could be a stimulating companion; certainly she was a tireless conversationalist, quite unabashed by awkward situations.

One evening she was in full flow at a grand dinner party when she suddenly felt sick. Without rising from the table she vomited into her handbag, wiped her mouth and, after an apology to her hostess — "no reflection on your food, my dear" — continued with her conversation.

Nora Beloff had many friends and admirers, of whom Lord Goodman was among the closest. In 1977, when she was 58, she married Clifford Makins, the sports editor of the *Observer*. He died in 1990.

Squadron Leader 'Bunny' Rumills

DT. 21.1.97.

OBITUARIES

Major Archie Jack

SOE saboteur who fought with General Mihailovich's Cetniks in Yugoslavia

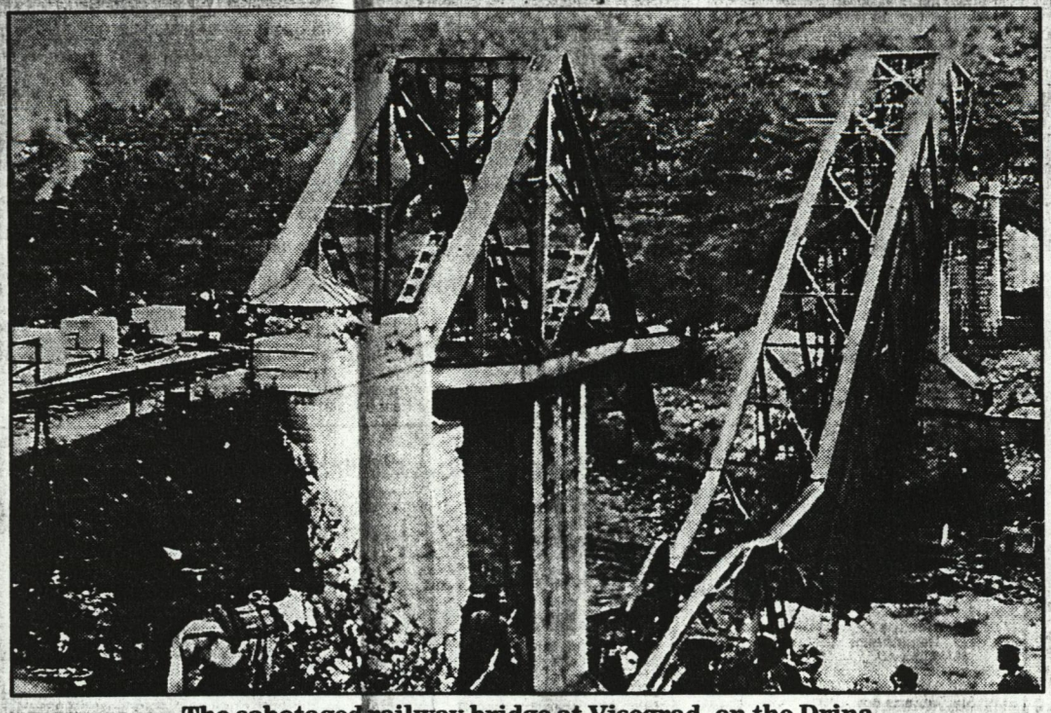
MAJOR ARCHIE JACK, who has died aged 83, was a brilliant wartime saboteur; he also represented Britain as a pentathlon competitor in the 1936 Berlin Olympics and was for a time captain of the Army water polo team.

From the outset Jack had a penchant for sabotage. He always claimed that on the night before the opening of the Berlin Olympics he upset Hitler by releasing the doves assembled for the event.

Dropped by the Special Operations Executive (SOE) into Yugoslavia in September 1943 to liaise with General Mihailovich and his Loyalist troops, Jack disrupted German chrome shipments from Yugoslavia and Albania by blowing up a series of five railway bridges. He was awarded an MC.

Then, to his abiding dismay, his career as a saboteur was curtailed by Britain's switch of support from Mihailovich to the future Marshal Tito and his Communist Partisans.

Along with the late Michael Lees, an SOE colleague who also served with Mihailovich, Jack always counted Britain's desertion of the Loyalist leader as a grave misjudgment and a dishonourable act.



The sabotaged railway bridge at Visegrad, on the Drina

Jack in Yugoslavia (1943)

At the time it particularly rankled that following his bridge exploits with the help of Mihailovich's men, his successful sabotage operations were erroneously — Jack believed underhandedly — attributed by the BBC to Tito's Partisans.

In fact, in the summer of 1943 Jack, supported by Mihailovich's Cetniks and observed by Brigadier Charles Armstrong, SOE's chief British liaison officer with Mihailovich, demolished the 450 ft single-span bridge over the Drina river at Visegrad, 100 miles south west of Belgrade and midway between Uzice and Sarajevo.

There followed, as Lees was to describe it in *The Rape of Serbia* (1990), Jack's "bridge blowing spree" with a force of 2,500 Loyalists. "Little good," Lees commented, "did it do him or Mihailovich or the Yugoslav people." Mihailovich was executed in 1946.

Archibald Frederick Maclean Jack was born on July 21 1913. After attending Greshams, Holt, he was awarded the Sword of Honour at Woolwich and commissioned in 1933 into the Royal Engineers before going up to Cambridge, where he read Engineering and won a fencing half-Blue.

In 1937 he was posted to India, where he served with the Bengal Sappers and Miners and on active service in Waziristan with the Tochi Scouts. On leave in 1938 he walked over the Himalayas to Lhasa, Tibet.

After further postings in India he attended the Mountain Warfare School at Tripoli in the Middle East before being dropped into Yugoslavia as a sabotage specialist.

In May 1944 as Mihailovich was abandoned and Jack and his SOE fellows were flown out of Yugoslavia by the US Army Air Force, Cetniks dutifully protected the airstrip — though the same aircraft had dropped supplies to Tito's Partisans on the flight in.

Subsequently, Jack served in North West Europe with the 5th Armoured Engineering Regiment. After VE Day in Norway he attended staff college, and in 1947 was posted to Palestine to combat terrorism.

Jack retired later that year, returning to England to farm in the West Country. He was president of the West Devon Parish Council Association, served as an income tax commissioner, and was a prison visitor at Dartmoor for more than 20 years.

In 1984 he moved to Annecy in France, but returned to Britain in 1991, settling in Herefordshire.

Archie Jack is survived by his wife Pamela, to whom he had been married for 54 years. There were no children.

Martin Redmond

SOE in Yugoslavia

Sir, – Since it is Mark Wheeler who has been allotted the official history of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), it is surprising and somewhat alarming that he writes (October 18) of the "facile . . . proposition that the [Yugoslav] communists owed their seizure of power . . . to Britain's abandonment of Draža Mihailović's Četniks . . ." during the Second World War.

Wheeler writes as though he is unaware of several books giving detailed description of exactly how Sir Fitzroy Maclean, Basil Davidson and others advised Churchill to abandon the democrat Mihailović and transfer all aid to the communist Tito. Furthermore, the SOE men involved have said in print that, *faute de mieux*, their advice to Churchill to pursue this policy would indeed lead to the imposition of communism in post-war Yugoslavia.

This is not encouraging to those who hope for a fully informed history of the hand-over of the Serbs, against their will, to communism.

JESSICA DOUGLAS-HOME
63 Hillgate Place, London W8.

25.10.91 TLS

Yugoslavia's plight

From the Marquess of Tweeddale

Sir, Whether it was right (as per Sir Fitzroy Maclean: letter, July 24) or wrong (as per Mr Lees, July 17) for the government to support the communism of Tito rather than the (more, or less?) Serbian nationalism of Mihailović during the second world war, it is surely wrong for the government to support – even tacitly – the communism *and* (blatantly and aggressively) Serbian nationalism of Milosević *now*. Our true friends in Yugoslavia deserve better.

Yours faithfully,
TWEEDDALE,
House of Lords.

The Times 29 July 1991

DT. 3.10.91.

Mixing up the facts in Balkan tinderbox

SIR—You too seem to have fallen victim of the neo-Ustasa propaganda. In your editorial "A Balkan pariah" (Sept. 24) you turn the facts on their head. It is the Croats who are endeavouring to create a state by force, as a prelude to driving out the survivors of the 1941 Ustasa genocide from their lands, which constitute about 30 per cent of the proposed second Independent State of Croatia.

It is ironic and shameful that you propose we support the Germans, whose forefathers installed the Ustasa terrorist Ante Pavelic when Hitler created the first Independent State of Croatia. As in 1941, the Ustasa purpose is a massive land grab.

The Yugoslav federation is still the legal authority, and the blockading and attacks on army barracks was provocation by force. As the chief debunker of Tito, I am horrified to see his victims, the Serbs, categorised as "communists".

MICHAEL LEES
Courtmacsherry, Co Cork

Yugoslavia's plight

From Mr Michael Lees

Sir, Sir Fitzroy Maclean writes (article, July 10) that the strong mutual antagonism which has developed between Serbs and Croats lies "at the bottom of Yugoslavia's troubles". He also implies that the loss of Tito's "uniting influence" has contributed.

Sir Fitzroy was terribly wrong when he persuaded Churchill in December 1943 to abandon the apolitical patriotic resistance movement of Mihailovic and give total support to Stalin's lieutenant, Tito, who promptly used it to carry out a communist revolution in which he slaughtered perhaps a quarter of a million of his countrymen.

Tito and the evil he brought to Yugoslavia are "at the bottom" of the country's troubles and his "uniting influence" was in reality an iron grip through a ruthless secret police. That his regime appeared materialistically much better than the other communist dictatorship was due to his bamboozling the West again in 1948 — when he pretended to break with Stalin — and obtaining a steady flow of grants and loans from gullible Western governments and banks.

After financing his opulent lifestyle, comparable with Ceausescu's, something was left for the people. But the bill has to be paid now.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL LEES,
Lislee House, Courtmacsherry,
Co. Cork, Ireland.
July 10.

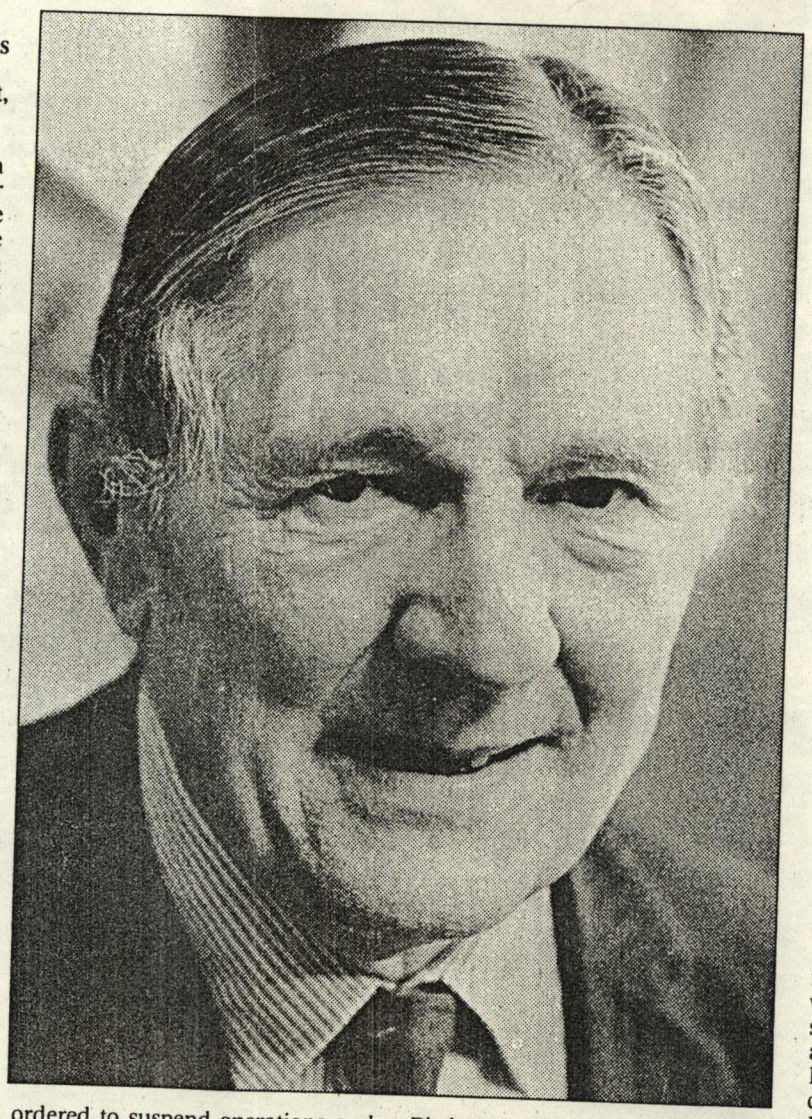
The Times 17 July 1991

For SOE file

OBITUARIES

MICHAEL LEES

Michael Lees, SOE officer and Serbophile, died at Milton Abbas on March 23 aged 70. He was born at Lytchett Minster, Dorset, on May 17, 1921.



MICHAEL Lees went directly from school into the second world war and the rest of his life was to be determined by the experience. He came of a Dorset landed family with a military tradition. He was the grandson of Sir Elliott Lees, Bt, a former MP for Oldham. His own father's career was cut short by premature death on service in Nigeria, and he was brought up by his mother, a Yorkshire Radcliffe.

After education at Ampleforth Michael Lees joined the Dorset Yeomanry and in India transferred to a parachute battalion which was then sent to the Middle East. In Cairo he heard about the Special Operations Executive and wangled himself into that organisation with its promise of exotic and unregimented action. In June 1943, at the age of 22, he parachuted into Yugoslavia as leader of a mission to the Chetnik guerrillas commanded by General Mihailovic. He was meant to replace an SOE officer captured by the Bulgarians, who occupied much of Serbia on behalf of the Germans. Within 48 hours of landing his mission was almost wiped out by Bulgarians who savagely murdered some of his men as they lay wounded.

Lees's force was reconstituted and ordered to attack the Niš-Salonika railway, a vital German link. At this time Mihailovic's commanders were under orders not to undertake actions which might result in further heavy reprisals against Serb civilians but to await the day of a national rising. Despite this, Lees persuaded the commanders in his area to support him in blowing up two long sections of the line, and in the derailment of six trains.

Lees was then hampered by the failure of SOE to drop him the supplies he needed. Britain had decided to withdraw support from Mihailovic and switch it entirely to Tito's Partisans. It was an action which Michael Lees criticised bitterly. In December 1943 he was ordered to suspend operations and pull out with all his fellow officers from the Mihailovic operation. SOE did not want him in Yugoslavia any longer. But it was to be five nerve-wracking months before most of them were evacuated.

At SOE headquarters in Italy Lees met Gwen Johnson, a FANY officer, and two months later married her in Bari cathedral. After the honeymoon he parachuted into Piedmont to join Italian guerrillas. After seeing some brisk action he was asked to escort two delegates from the Piedmontese liberation committee with an urgent report for the allies. Air pickup was impossible so Lees set out to lead the party into France over the Maritime Alps and across the line where Germans were fighting Americans. On the way he wiped out a German artillery post, and nearly stumbled into a minefield. But he got the delegates safely into allied territory — and out to Italy.

In January 1945 Lees parachuted on his third mission — to an Italian guerrilla division in the Appennine mountains west of Reggio Emilia. For the next two months he helped to prepare the division for the spring offensive, fighting off German and Italian fascist attempts to destroy it. In March he planned and led an attack on a German army corps HQ in a villa at Albinea. For this his Italians were joined by an SAS detachment commanded by Major Roy Farran, complete with piper. The attack was successful but Lees was brought down by four bullets on the staircase of the villa. Severely wounded and unable to walk, he was hidden for several days in a barn before the Italians could get him back into guerrilla territory, using an ox-drawn manure cart with a false bottom. He was picked up from a mountain terrace by an Italian pilot in a captured Storch spotter-plane and finally brought to a British hospital in Naples.

Lees was twice recommended for the DSO and once for the MC, but no award was made, nor was he promoted major. A series of operations failed to restore a severed sciatic nerve, and for the rest of his life he suffered disability and pain. He went into business and became managing director of an international company in London, but in 1971 his disability forced him into early retirement. He then took up cattle and fruit farming in Ireland.

In 1950, during one of his recurrent spells in hospital, Lees had written an account of his SOE missions and in 1986 it was published as *Special Operations Executed*. Researching to check details, he consulted SOE files in the Public Record Office and was so incensed by what he found about Yugoslavia that he embarked on what became his last mission. Like many of the liaison officers with the Chetnik Serbs he had always felt that they had been unfairly treated, and that Mihailovic had been first let down, then abandoned in favour of Tito, and finally branded as a traitor by the British.

Lees now believed he had documentary evidence which proved how this came about. It formed the basis of his next book, *The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power*. Its thesis is that Tito was able to seize power and impose communism on Yugoslavia for 45 years because of the British support he was given. Lees also argued that Churchill was persuaded into giving that support on the basis of one-sided information. The main sufferers under Tito were the Serbs who had remained loyal to their king and to the allies until the Chetniks were crushed and Mihailovic was executed. Because it involved the overturning of an account of history that had held official sway for 40 years, and called into question the judgment of certain British protagonists, no British publisher would accept the book. It was published in America in 1990.

The book was translated and published in Yugoslavia and became a best-seller. On a promotional tour Lees was fêted by grateful Serbs of all ages — from veteran Chetniks to young anti-communists who still see in Mihailovic a martyr-hero to inspire them in their struggle against the Milosevic hardliners. With Yugoslavia locked once more in civil strife, Lees took his stand unquestioningly alongside the Serbs, whom he feared were about to be let down again by the British. Virtually single-handed he set out to redress the general partiality of the British media for the Croats. He began a campaign of letters to the press, to government ministers and officials; he addressed meetings in Canada and in Britain, and helped to organise a lobby at Westminster.

Although his health was deteriorating Lees went to the Serb enclave of Krajina to visit the front together with his wife Gwen. In the past two months he had appeared in four BBC television programmes, two to plead the case for the Serbs in the current crisis, and two to put across his view of how Tito bamboozled Churchill.

Lees spent the day he died at his desk intent on his crusade. He had brought to it the great force of personality, the single-mindedness and the courage which had characterised his life. It is not given to many men to die happy in fighting a cause first embraced in youth.

HOW BRITAIN BLUNDERED IN THE BALKANS

Noel Malcolm reveals how our mistakes in Yugoslavia 50 years ago are finally coming home to roost

TEN THOUSAND people gathered on a Serbian hilltop in May this year for an unusual ceremony. It was the unveiling of a statue to Draza Mihailovic, the leader of the royalist resistance movement in Yugoslavia during the second world war. Vilified as a traitor by Tito, who had him executed by firing squad on a Belgrade golf course in 1946, he has had no memorial hitherto in his native land. But now his bronze figure stands, more than twice as large as life, looking out over the mountain region of Ravna Gora which was once his stronghold.

This public act of homage to Mihailovic marks an important stage in the reassessment of modern Yugoslav history. And it also symbolises the growth of a new semi-official ideology in Serbia itself, an ideology which is playing an ever more powerful role in the post-Yugoslavia political crisis. It is the ideology of Serbia the victim, Serbia abandoned, Serbia tricked into communism by a conspiracy between her Western allies (above all, Britain) and the Soviet Union. The motives of the ideologists may be suspect, and the actions they try to justify may be inexcusable; yet the ideology itself rests on a degree of historical truth that is only now being recognised.

Uncontested truths about Mihailovic are rare commodities, but the basic facts are these. A royalist and an Anglophile, he was a colonel in the Yugoslav army with a special interest in guerrilla warfare. After the German blitzkrieg against Yugoslavia in April 1941, he fled to the hills of Ravna Gora and began to organise a resistance movement, which became known as the Cetniks (the traditional term for guerrilla fighters). The communists under Tito were also organising themselves, though they only began to resist the Germans after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union in June. Later that year there were some attempts at co-ordinating the actions of the two movements; but these failed, and fighting broke out between them, gradually turning into civil war.

Mihailovic was made Minister of War by the Yugoslav government in exile, and a British officer was sent to liaise with him. Naturally, Mihailovic stood for the preservation of society and the restoration of the old order, while Tito aimed at social revolution. This difference affected their attitudes to German reprisals: Tito was much less bothered than Mihailovic by the destruction of whole villages or towns in revenge for the killing of German soldiers. In late 1942, the officers of British Special Operations Executive in Cairo (which sent men into Yugoslavia and analysed intelligence from the country) began to think that the communist Partisans were too active against Axis forces to be ignored any longer, even though they were viewed as revolutionaries by Britain's guest and ally, the young King Peter.

Early in 1943, Churchill was persuaded to authorise making contact with the communists. A British officer from SOE, William Deakin, was dropped to Tito's forces in May, and in September he was followed there by a young diplomat-turned-MP-turned-soldier, Fitzroy Maclean, who was sent as Churchill's personal envoy. Both these men filed reports praising Tito and stating that Mihailovic was not just quiescent, but actually collaborating with the Germans. Maclean's fullest report, written in November 1943, was circulated at the highest levels, and within a few weeks Britain abandoned Mihailovic and was channelling all its aid to Tito. Much of this military material was then used by Tito to finish off his destruction of Mihailovic's forces. After the Germans had retreated through Yugoslavia and Belgrade had been reconquered by the Red Army, Tito captured Mihailovic, subjected him to a show-trial and had him shot.

History, as we know, is written by the victors. Tito's official historians in Yugoslavia soon published volumes of documents proving that many of Mihailovic's regional commanders had made agreements, first with Italian occupying forces and then with the Germans. Much was made of the fact that Mihailovic himself, during his first period of fighting against the Partisans in November 1941, had met with German officers to try to negotiate a truce. (They demanded his capitulation; he refused, and the negotiation ended.) Nothing was said, however, about the similar negotiations which three of Tito's most senior advisers conducted with the Germans in 1943 (when Tito's representatives actually offered to help resist an Allied landing on the Yugoslav coast), or about the various 'par-

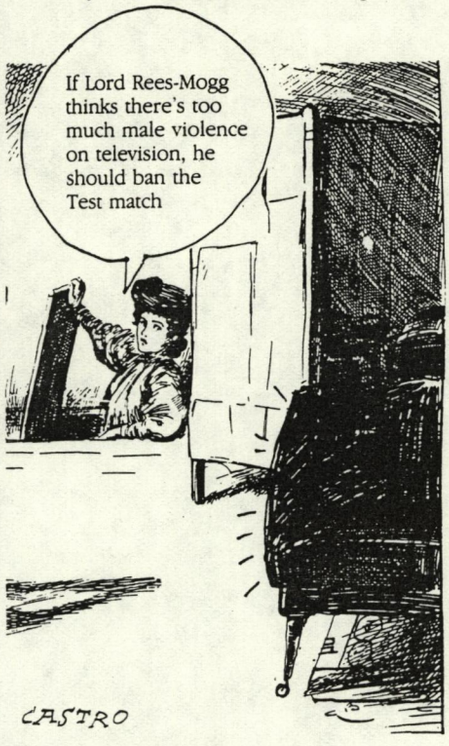
allel actions' which the Partisans had conducted with Axis forces against the Cetniks, or about the many occasions when the Partisans refrained from fighting Germans in order to fight Cetniks instead. Any underlying symmetry between the two resistance movements had to be distorted or suppressed at all costs.

In Britain, also, history was written by the victors. Both Maclean and Deakin were talented writers; Maclean has written three books which cover these events, while Deakin, an academic historian, became Warden of St Antony's College, Oxford, and Chairman of the British National Committee for the History of the Second World War. Other writers who had been associated with Britain's wartime support for Tito were also influential — among them Elizabeth Barker (who had worked for the Political Warfare Executive) and Phyllis Auty, whose admiring life of Tito became the standard biography. Known collectively to their critics as 'the Titophiles', they felt that the story they told was a success story for Tito, for Yugoslavia and for Britain. It was certainly a success story for them. Dame Rebecca West, who was no Titophile, used to tell how she was once asked by an aristocratic lady during the war: 'Can you tell me how I can get my son sent out to Tito? I'm told it's the thing for a young man to do if he wants to get on.' More recently, in the scholarly world, agreeing with the Titophile orthodoxy was also the way for a young historian to get on. One academic specialising in this subject tells the story of a job interview at which the chairman of the panel said: 'I see that you claim to disprove the findings of Sir William Deakin...' (Pause.) 'Sir William is an old friend of mine.' He did not get the job.

The vanquished in the Tito-Mihailovic civil war had less chance to give their version of events — especially the thousands of them who, at the end of the war, had been bundled into pits, their hands tied with telegraph wire, and machine-gunned. A trickle of émigré publications put the anti-Titoist point of view; but these were obscure works, mainly in Serbo-Croat, and they had little effect on the general orthodoxy. In the English-speaking world, the defence of Mihailovic was conducted for decades by a solitary American, David Martin, in a series of carefully researched and cogently argued books. After Tito's death in 1980, Martin gained some powerful supporting fire from other Western writers. One of these was Nora Beloff, whose *Tito's Flawed Legacy* (1985) was a classic exercise in demythologising (and remains by far the most penetrating study of Tito's life and deeds). Another was Michael Lees, who had himself been a liaison officer with the Cetniks in Serbia: his book *The Rape of Serbia* (1990) was the most passionate statement so far of the view that Mihailovic was betrayed by a combination of the romantic wishful thinking of Churchill, the gullibility of British officers and the plottings of a communist agent at the SOE office in Cairo. This is a work which really does have sentences beginning 'Why, oh why...' So passionate, indeed, is Lees's book that it was published in America only, for fear of Britain's ruinous libel laws.

This so-called revisionist view of British support for Tito was met with either silence or scorn. Few were more scornful than Basil Davidson, a pro-Tito man who had been head of the Yugoslav section at SOE Cairo in 1942-3 (though he left Cairo several months before the decision to ditch Mihailovic was taken), and who has himself written two books which praise the communist Partisans. Just as publishers' blurbs sometimes quote epithets from favourable reviews, joined up in strings of dots ('brilliant ...absorbing'), so Davidson's views can be cited as follows. On David Martin: 'legend... absurd... cannot tell fact from fiction... merely silly... merely insulting'. On Nora Beloff: 'dotty... farrago of fantasy... demonology... daft... worthless ... silly'.

In Britain, faced with such discouragements, the revisionist view gains ground very slowly. In Serbia, on the other hand, the works of Beloff and Lees are selling like hot cakes. Titophilia survives in Britain long after its death in Belgrade. The deathblows there were struck by a Serb historian, Veselin Djuretic, whose revisionist book *Saveznici i Jugoslavenska Ratna Drama* ('The Allies and the Yugoslav War Drama') was published in 1985 amid howls of protest from the communist press. Significantly, Djuretic's book was launched at a drinks party where 500 Belgrade intellectuals gathered as guests of the Serbian Academy of Sciences. This is significant because it was that Academy which, with its public petition in defence of Serb interests in Kosovo and its 'Memorandum' on Serbian nationhood and the Yugoslav constitution in the following year, built the edifice of nationalist ideology which has been inhabited by Slobodan Milosevic ever since. Djuretic's re-appraisal of Mihailovic and the Cetniks was one of the foundation stones of that whole edifice. So it is not surprising that Lees's and Beloff's works are accepted with such gratitude in Belgrade today. Their story of how Britain helped to destroy the Serbian hero, Draza Mihailovic, is a story that Serbs are keen to hear.



It may be popular; but is it true? Michael Lees looks at the actions of three people above all: Fitzroy Maclean, William Deakin and a junior officer at SOE Cairo, James Klugmann. Of these, Maclean appears to be the most directly responsible for the dumping of Mihailovic, since it was his so-called 'blockbuster' report of 6 November 1943 that finally made up Churchill's mind. Some of the statements in Maclean's report reduced Michael Lees to apoplexy. Maclean had claimed, for example, that Tito's forces numbered 220,000 men. This was a gross overstatement. It was twice the German estimate, and three times the figure reported by Deakin a few months earlier. Extraordinarily, it also contradicts the figure later recalled by Maclean himself from his first conversation with Tito, when the communist leader only claimed to have 'over 100,000' Partisans.

In his report, Maclean also wrote that Tito had 30,000 men in Serbia and Macedonia: another gross overstatement (perhaps ten times too large), and one which was central to the case for dropping Mihailovic, given that Serbia had always been regarded — correctly — as the heartland of the Cetniks. British officers and crashed American air crews who travelled hundreds of miles across Serbia in 1944 were to find popular support for Mihailovic wherever they went; yet Maclean reported that the Partisans had 'the whole-hearted support of the civil population', and that Mihailovic was 'thoroughly discredited in the eyes of most of the population'. Maclean, who did not speak Serbo-Croat and had spent less than three weeks at Tito's headquarters, was simply not in a position to make judgments about public opinion throughout Yugoslavia. In the words of one British officer who served in Serbia, Erik Greenwood, Maclean's assertion about Tito's popularity was 'manifestly a stupid statement'. Lees called it 'sheer rubbish'.

Recently, Maclean has stated, 'I had liaison officers with a great many Partisan formations in different parts of Yugoslavia and I got their reports, and from them I was able to tell what a contribution the Partisans were making. As for Serbia, I think it is quite true that the Partisans were relatively weak at that time.'

Maclean's November report was merely an extreme version, however, of the arguments which had been building up inside SOE Cairo for months. In furnishing the material for those arguments, Deakin's reports all through the summer and autumn of 1943 had probably had a greater effect. And the errors in Deakin's reports were in some ways more serious than Maclean's. He seems to have accepted the Partisans' claims that any local forces which collaborated with the Axis were 'Cetniks' and therefore acting under Mihailovic's authority. In his main report, sent in August 1943, he wrote that Cetnik collaboration with the Germans had been 'close, constant and increasing' for the past two years — a statement with which no present-day historian could agree. How had Deakin come to believe this? The answer clearly emerges from his own autobiography. He depended on the Partisans for his information. Lees claims that one of Tito's henchmen, Vlatko Velebit, has described how he used to take Deakin aside and apply a 'system of indoctrination' to him. Both Deakin and Maclean seem to have had that common failing of British officers and gentlemen, an inability to imagine that people — even foreigners — can be telling them outright lies.

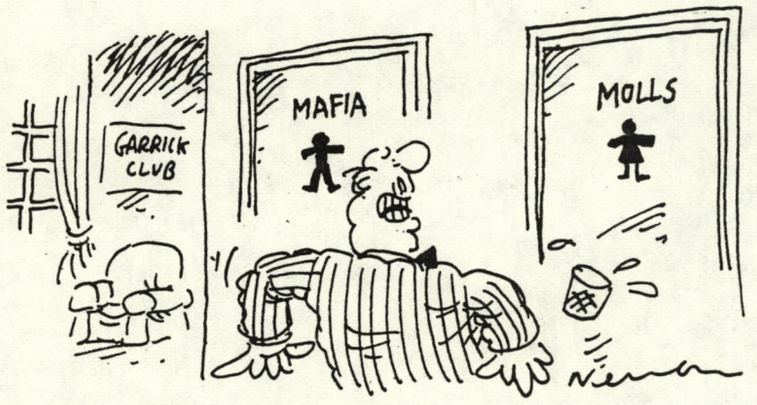
Before he went out to Yugoslavia in May 1943, Deakin had already spent several months at SOE Cairo, where he had become a pro-Tito man in an internal feud between supporters of the Partisans and the Cetniks. The most eloquent and persuasive Titoite was a junior officer, James Klugmann, a Cambridge communist, a friend of Guy Burgess and probably a co-recruiter for Soviet intelligence with Anthony Blunt. While others came and went, Klugmann remained in the Yugoslav section of SOE from February 1942 to July 1944, analysing and summarising reports, passing them on (or not, as the case might be) to London, briefing those who were going to be dropped into the country, and developing a curiously close relationship with the operational head of Balkan SOE, Brigadier Keble. The evidence accumulated by David Martin strongly suggests that Klugmann used his position to promote the Yugoslav communist cause and help bring about the decision to drop Mihailovic. Commenting on Martin's arguments, Basil Davidson has written: 'It is merely laughable to think that Lt. Klugmann could have influenced any such decision.' But the clearest statement of that 'laughable' proposition comes, oddly enough, from a book about SOE by none other than Basil Davidson, which describes Klugmann's brilliance and persuasiveness at length, and says of the period when the internal feuding began in Cairo: 'The fact is that politics moved in at this period... It could even be called the Klugmann period, and it changed a great deal.'

Exaggeration, misinformation and the exertions of an 'agent of influence': all these played their part. But the reports received and processed by SOE were not the only sources of information. There was also a large quantity of signals intelligence, including high-level 'Enigma' decrypts. In early 1943, these showed that the Germans still regarded the Cetniks as a real enemy. But by the time Maclean's report was circulating at the end of the year, signals intelligence was revealing a number of negotiations and deals between regional Cetnik commanders and the Germans. This, in the end, would have been decisive, even without Maclean's arguments. But why did those regional commanders feel obliged to seek the protection of the Germans in November 1943? The main reason was itself partly a consequence of British policy. The crucial turning-point had come with the surrender of the Italian forces in Yugoslavia in September, when the Partisans had seized their stocks of arms and munitions, thus acquiring a huge superiority in fire-power over their rivals, the Cetniks. In this the Partisans had been assisted by the British; but when the Cetniks tried to disarm an Italian division, they were prevented from doing so by their British liaison officer. At this stage, senior Cetniks already felt that Britain had transferred its backing to Tito — as indeed SOE Cairo had. By the time Britain broke officially with the Cetniks, its accusations of German collaboration were at long last true. A self-fulfilling prophecy had reached fulfilment.

Looking back on their support for Tito, most of the Titophiles involved have emphasised the purely military factors. A few have commended Tito's political programme, which Basil Davidson calls 'introducing the ideas and practices of an egalitarian democracy' — a somewhat rosy description of a one-party communist state. But there is one argument, aired from time to time by most of the Titophiles, which has acquired an 'I told you so' edge to it: the claim that only Tito's federal plan for Yugoslavia could have kept the country together. Mihailovic was, according to Fitzroy Maclean, 'Pan-Serb, anti-Croat and violently reactionary', and had 'no prospect of uniting the country'.

This argument contains some truth. Two of Mihailovic's most senior advisers, Moljevic and Vasic, were fervent advocates of a 'Greater Serbia'. A map drawn up by Moljevic (a Bosnian Serb) in 1941 has a painful topicality in the summer of 1992: it shows Serbia extended to include not only Montenegro and Macedonia, but also the whole of Bosnia, most of the Croatian and Dalmatian coast (including Dubrovnik), and parts of southern and eastern Croatia which correspond quite closely to the areas occupied by Serbian forces last year. A Cetnik proclamation of December 1941 (probably drafted by Moljevic) refers to the aim of creating 'an ethnically pure Great Serbia' and the 'cleansing of all national minorities from the state's territory'. That word 'cleansing' (*ciscenje*) is the one used today by followers of the Serbian extremist Vojislav Seselj, whose private guerrilla army, calling itself 'the Cetniks', has been responsible for some of the worst atrocities of the war.

Mihailovic signed that proclamation; so he can scarcely be dissociated from it. But some distinction can be made between him and his fanatical advisers. His first loyalty was to the King, who was King not just of Serbia but of Yugoslavia. Mihailovic's basic idea was to rebuild the country as a tripartite kingdom — Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia — with a large degree of autonomy for each part. No doubt the enlargement of Serbia which he envisaged would have been unjustified in its scope and unpleasant in its execution. But it is hard to imagine that a Western-allied constitutional monarchy would have inflicted as much suffering, murder and economic stultification as Tito's régime did. What is now abundantly clear is that the imposition of communism solved none of Yugoslavia's national problems, and merely encouraged them to rankle and fester. The suppression of national feeling has made it take new and more virulent forms. The suppression of historical truth about Mihailovic has had a similar effect. The consequence is a movement in Serbian politics which combines the ruthlessness of communist practice with the wildest extremes of Cetnik theory — the very worst of both worlds.



Seven deadly sins

Sir: Perhaps distance does lend enchantment. It certainly promotes objectivity.

As one of the English diaspora, I confess myself puzzled, if not astounded, as to why Mrs Thatcher should be promoted to the peerage. Is this just because she was prime minister?

There are numerous cogent and compelling reasons why she should not have been thus honoured, but I can only think of six right now.

The Falklands war: If anything was an unnecessary war this was. Mrs Thatcher provoked it by her mean penny-pinching, (the withdrawal of HMS *Endurance* from station), plus the denial, before the war, of British citizenship to the Falklanders.

Hong Kong: We were *not* required to give up the whole of Hong Kong in 1997 — only the New Territories. Apparently the Chinese communists were very surprised at the quite unexpected gesture of Britain in returning Hong Kong. To those who say Hong Kong without the New Territories was not viable economically or militarily defensible, the same held good for Hong Kong with the New Territories. At a stroke she made five million refugees.

Zimbabwe: I was in Zimbabwe immediately after Independence for three years. Mrs Thatcher backtracked on all her election promises and helped to install a communist government, which is now starving the people to death.

Northern Ireland: There may be an argument for Northern Ireland being part of the United Kingdom, or alternatively part of the Irish Republic. There is no sensible argument, in my view, for it being part of both.

Europe: Mrs Thatcher signed the Single European Act, the greatest abdication of British sovereignty in history. Now she poses as the anti-Maastricht champion!

Cambodia: Mrs Thatcher announced on *Blue Peter* our support for the Khmer Rouge coalition. British troops were employed in training guerrillas of the coalition, and according to General Tea Banh, Cambodia's Defence Minister, such training inevitably helped Pol Pot.

Monstrous. And yet in the last election there was no mention of 'the Cambodian Horrors and the Question of the East.' Would that we had another Gladstone.

That's six reasons. I have thought of a seventh — her lack of a true moral agenda. Presidents Reagan and Bush took on board the pro-life case, and before she was elected in 1979 Mrs Thatcher promised *Catholic Herald* readers that for her abortion would only be 'for the early months of pregnancy'.Yet now Britain has the most barbaric abortion law in the world (if you can call child-destruction abortion), with the Infant Life Preservation Act dismantled for all practical purposes.

Mrs Thatcher's legacy is all around you. In corruption, the slump, in the lost children of England, the battered babies, the paederastic social workers, the litter, mental and material, overflowing London, the uncouth generation.

I think the House of Lords should seriously consider the procedure for her impeachment. It is sickening to see her take her seat in the upper chamber, when the most distinguished parliamentarian of our time is left without a platform.

William Spring
P O Box 10868
Jubail
Saudi Arabia

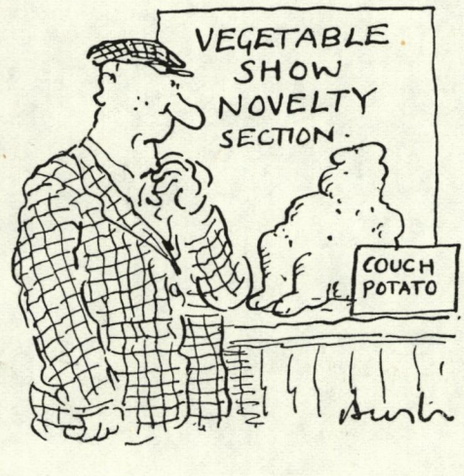
The Titophiles

Sir: I feel that I really must take issue with Noel Malcolm's comments on the Allies' analysis of the situation in Yugoslavia in 1942, 1943. ('How Britain blundered in the Balkans', 11 July).

Even with hindsight, something not available to Maclean and Deakin, Tito represented a better bet for the Allies than Mihailovic, partly because he was better organised and partly because he did have more men. To argue about the precise number of supporters each had is, to an extent, irrelevant in so far as ever Mihailovic admitted that Tito had more fighters. In any case the paramount cause was not the form of a post-war Yugoslavian government; rather it was winning the actual war.

In *Eastern Approaches*, Maclean's autobiography, he quotes Churchill as saying, '. . . the less you and I worry about the form of government the Yugoslavs set up, the better. That is for them to decide. What interests us is which of them [Tito or Mihailovic] is doing most harm to the Germans.'

In 1943, we can now see, the turning point of the war had been reached, but this was by no means as clear then as it is now.



The decision to support Tito was reached in the light of little empirical evidence but in the context of a very messy and uncertain theatre of war. Nevertheless, it proved to be the right military decision then, the Germans were forced to retreat, and 50 years on I still believe it to have been the correct decision.

Andrew Hayward
7 Lowood Court,
Farquhar Road,
Dulwich Wood,
London SE19

Sir: Am I alone in finding Noel Malcolm's long article on Britain's role in wartime Yugoslavia both distasteful and untimely?

As one who was close to the decision-making process in Cairo and later in Italy and knowing many of the protagonists in the article, I maintain that the truth is not nearly as conspiratorial as present day 'revisionists' would care to imagine. These lay great emphasis on numbers, both of the guerrilla forces and of the German and Italian divisions. But mere numbers were never the prime consideration, there was very much else.

The exigencies of war demanded harsh decisions and the present tragic break-up of Yugoslavia, and the role of Serbia in particular, cannot possibly be laid at the door of those who served their country so well 50 years ago.

Annette Street
Sulthorn,
Souldern,
Bicester

Free opinion

Sir: Kathleen Page (Letters, 4 July) poses a question concerning the Maxwell pension funds which I have seen posed elsewhere in the press but not answered. The question is: why do not the banks who have taken Maxwell pension fund assets as security for lending have to give them back just as a fence would have to give back stolen property? The legal principle invoked by Kathleen Page is correct and simple: a thief cannot confer title to stolen property on a fence or a purchaser from a fence.

The Maxwell case differs. Maxwell and any of his cronies who stripped the assets of the pension funds differ from the ordinary thief or fence in that they (as directors of the pension fund management companies) were authorised to dispose of assets of the pension funds *provided that they did so for proper investment purposes of the pension funds*. They could, therefore, validly dispose of the assets of the funds to lenders as security, as there are obviously circumstances in which pension trustees might legitimately borrow on the security of the

establish the author's place in history and thus excruciatingly tedious. They differed, however, in brutal frankness about his colleagues (no doubt written in by Sir Robert) which is the leaven that causes editors to be interested.

A few months later I was sent the manuscript for publication and found all the leaven had been removed. I was so angry that I threw it back at the publishers and said I would not pay a penny. I was even angrier when the serialisation was resold to the *Sunday Times*, also for £5,000, but with all the leaven restored.

It is not for me to discuss the dates of the various objections to the text raised by Sir Burke Trend, secretary to the Cabinet, as was his constitutional right. But I am quite sure that Lord Home, at that time Prime Minister, had no part in it. He had no constitutional right to be 'adamant', to 'wish passages to be deleted', nor would it have been in character for the greatest gentleman who has adorned that office this century. (He would never have employed Sir Robert to make his own memoirs interesting.)

Hartwell

36 Broadway,
London SW1

No comment

Sir: Your panegyric on Sir Michael Richardson ('A handshake too far', 27 June) sadly omitted one of the remarkable statements of the year (made by Sir Michael to the *Financial Times* on 3 December 1991):

> [We] did not make formal inquiries about Maxwell Communications Corporation before taking it on. The fact that I had dealt with the Maxwells for 27 years was a big factor. We certainly didn't put an accountant in and we did not consider it our business to look at the private companies.

C.T.Oram

38 Petersham Place,
London SW7

Expert witnesses

Sir: Noel Malcolm's article 'How Britain blundered in the Balkans' (11 July) is both accurately researched and timely.

It should have been clear to Fitzroy Maclean that Tito was lying to him, as the American, Farrish, dropped in to Tito at the same time, was given figures which halved the number of active Partisans and German divisions in Tito's area of operations, included in Maclean's 'Blockbuster' report to Churchill.

Churchill asked Bletchley to produce a report based on Enigma decrypts about the same time. Then, and thereafter, I wrote a weekly summary for him on all fronts. This was based on translated and untranslated German signals, which are still not available in Public Records. Nevertheless, the Imperial War Museum holds the secret German Staff Diaries which include Order of Battle maps and charts of divisional locations.

These war diaries make it clear, as we knew from Enigma decrypts, that Tito used Allied arms against Mihailovic's royalist forces, invited the Russians into his country, and raced to Trieste and into Carinthia in order to establish an enlarged communist régime.

I believe Noel Malcolm's conclusion that Churchill's romantic acceptance of Tito's disinformation, and the evil post-war annihilation by Tito of dissidents, has contributed to the present catastrophic situation in Yugoslavia.

Jean Howard

11 Knightsbridge Court,
Sloane Street,
London SW1

Sir: I take a much more kindly view of Noel Malcolm's article on Yugoslavia than do your correspondents Andrew Hayward and Annette Street (Letters, 18 July). It provides a useful corrective to the received wisdom that our support for Tito was unassailably right.

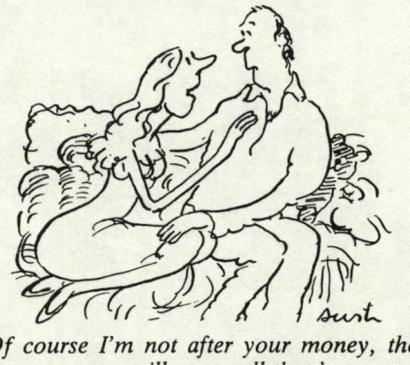
Tito and his works are fairly familiar to me. As a junior staff officer in May 1945, I had to record in our war diary messages relating to the wretched business of returning Cetniks and Domobranci to the Partisans, while paradoxically at the same time helping to draft orders designed to halt Tito's incursions into Carinthia. A few years later, as a diplomat, I was posted to Belgrade, and I returned there for a second posting in 1965.

It seems to me that the greatest mistakes by the West were not made in 1943 (or in 1918) but just the other day when we recognised not only Croatia (my generation remains haunted by the horrid spectre of Pavelic's 'Independent State') but Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is not a nation but a geographical expression. When people fight each other it does not mean that they cannot live in peace, so much as that they do not for the time being choose to do so. We should turn deaf ears to the plea 'For God's sake come and stop us fighting'. They will stop before long. Meanwhile we have thrown away the very idea of Yugoslavia, which was a noble idea.

My *Whitaker* (1989), spelling out in detail the population of Yugoslavia from census returns, gives the numbers of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Albanians, Macedonians (no Bosnians, please note) and '1,220,000 Yugoslavs'. These last are only about a twentieth of the total population but, even so, a large number. We have let them down badly.

Stephen J. Whitwell

Jervis Cottage,
Aston Tirrold,
Near Didcot,
Oxfordshire



'Of course I'm not after your money, the press will see to all that.'

Amazing grace

Sir: The Director of Christian Aid (Letters, 11 July) says that the 'patience and forbearance of . . . the ANC [in the face of apartheid] is a miracle of grace'.

I quote from the ANC's official organ:

> From the perspective of underground activity, a very important factor is the systematic assault on, and elimination of, policemen resident in the township, stooges and informers . . . This means that the masses have created some form of free zones in which underground activity by the liberation movement can be carried out . . . Here collaborators and informers live in fear of petrol, either as petrol bombs being hurled at their homes and reducing them to rack and ruin, or as petrol dousing their treacherous bodies which we set alight, and burn to a charred despicable mess. (*Sechaba*, November 1985.)

Is this what Mr Taylor means by 'patience and forbearance' and 'a miracle of grace'?

Jillian Becker

41 Gloucester Place,
London W1

The rest is silence

Sir: I enjoyed your *3 Pointless Things To Do This Week* (Classified, 11, 18 July).

Here are 3 more:

1.Read the *Guardian*.

2.Telephone J.D.Salinger.

3.Visit a Trappist monastery with Jilly Cooper.

Perhaps your readers can think of others?

Christopher Leach

Far Yew Tree House,
Over Tabley,
Knutsford,
Cheshire

'WHO IS KILLING THE MOST GERMANS?'

Fitzroy Maclean defends his, and Churchill's, war record in Yugoslavia

RECENT REPORTS from the Balkans lend relevance and topicality to Noel Malcolm's intriguing article on 'How Britain failed Yugoslavia' (*The Spectator*, 11 July) and on Winston Churchill's and indeed my own role there. It is, however, also necessary to recall the situation as it was at the time, as well as some of the events of the intervening half-century.

The directive I received from Mr Churchill in the summer of 1943 was quite clear. 'Your job,' he told me, 'is to find out who are killing the most Germans and how we can help them to kill more.' This may sound a rather brutal oversimplification, but remember that in 1943 the war was not yet won and German casualties were still a relevant consideration.

My own experiences on reaching Yugoslavia, those of Sir William Deakin, who after being dropped there at the end of May had from the start been involved in heavy fighting against the Germans, and those of the other members of my mission, taken in conjunction with the reports from our missions to Mihailovic, left me in no doubt whatever that Tito's Partisans were (and had long been) killing far more Germans than Mihailovic's Cetniks had ever done. These, it should be remembered, had long since reached what the Prime Minister called 'an accommodation with the enemy', of which enemy signals intercepted at the time and other German documents now available provide irrefutable proof.

It was on these grounds that in November 1943, two months after my first arrival in Yugoslavia, I recommended in my so-called 'blockbuster' report that we should urgently transfer our support from the Cetniks to the Partisans, who had up to then received no Allied support at all. In so doing, I was acutely conscious of the glaring anomaly that for two whole years the Special Operations Executive, brought into being to 'set Europe ablaze', had somehow managed to ignore what was probably the most effective resistance movement of the second world war.

In making my recommendation, which I repeated verbally to Mr Churchill, I emphasised that Tito was a Moscow-trained communist and could therefore be expected to establish a communist régime in Yugoslavia on taking power there, which to my mind he was bound to do once the war was over. In reply the Prime Minister asked me whether it was my intention to make my home in Yugoslavia after the war and, on being told that it was not, said that he didn't propose to live there either and should we not therefore leave the Yugoslavs to work their political future out for themselves.

It was, so far as I know, on this basis, as well as in the light of the far wider range of information available to the Government and Chiefs of Staff, that the decision was taken to drop Mihailovic and give all available support to Tito.

Mr Malcolm suggests that some of the information in my report concerning the relative strengths of Cetniks and Partisans and Cetnik collaboration with the enemy may have been inaccurate. I have, on the whole, been struck by the extent to which my conclusions on both subjects are borne out by the information from German and

Unlettered

A reader received this circular to Chief Education Officers from the Department of Education and Science, describing national rules for testing the English of 14-year-old children in secondary schools:

RULES FOR DETERMINING SUBJECT AND PROFILE COMPONENT SCORES

Legend: TA = Teacher Assessment
AT = Attainment Target
PC = Profile Component

English
Step 1: Determining the PC scores

a. For PC1 (Speaking and listening):
The PC score is the TA score.

b. For PC2 (Reading):
The PC score is the NC Test score.

c. For PC3 (Writing):
First examine the constituent AT scores, based on the NC Test results and the TA result in the case of AT4/5:
— If the TA in AT4/5 (Presentation) is at level 7 and the NC Test result for AT3 (Writing) is at level 8, then PC score is the AT3 NC Test score;
— if the TA in AT4/5 is not at level 7, but is higher than level 4, then the PC score is worked out as follows:
AT3 NC test score x 8
PLUS
AT4/5 TA score x 2
Divide THIS TOTAL by 10.
— if the NC Test result for ATs 4 and 5 is at or below level 4, the PC score is worked out as follows:
AT3 NC Test score x 8
PLUS
AT4 NC Test score
PLUS
AT5 NC Test score
Divide THIS TOTAL by 10.

Step 2: Determining the subject score

The subject score is worked out as follows:

PC1
PLUS
PC2 x 2
PLUS
PC3 x 2
Divide THIS TOTAL by 5

If you have an example of a crass, illiterate, ignorant, irrelevant or embarrassing letter or notice from a company or public body, send a copy to Unlettered, The Spectator, 56 Doughty Street, London, WC1N 2LL. £10 for each one printed.

Everyday dignities

NEIL CORCORAN

Bernard O'Donoghue

THE WEAKNESS
79pp. Chatto and Windus. Paperback, £5.99.
0 7011 3859 9

One of the strongest poems in Bernard O'Donoghue's first full-length collection is "Kindertotenlieder", which dangerously concerns itself with what is, I suppose, a common parental dread – that of a child's death. The poem excuses its morose imaginings with a distorted logic of the prophylactic ("Because we cannot see into the future, / It follows that what we anticipate / Can't happen"), but eventually comes to an apprehension of the way imagination has its own laws and logics too, over which the reason can maintain only a very precarious control. Exceeding anticipation, the poem goes beyond itself into a "Hyde life" which, far from warding off the deaths of one's own children, presses into consciousness the deaths of others:

> The mind too is a country
> Like Somalia. The fly that a slow hand
> Pushes from a lip, again, again,
> Will hold its ground and crawl towards an eyelid
> That fails at last to keep up appearances
> By opening to resume its death's stare.

O'Donoghue's is a quite unshowy poetry, but the revision of cliché in the penultimate line there is a not untypical instance of the way his language can suddenly warp perturbingly. The eyelid fails to keep up appearances since the eye can no longer see; but the poem too is failing to keep up its appearance of control in the face of its terrible imaginings. Trying to keep up appearances, the poem goes to pieces, let down by imagining the thing that will let us all down eventually, and badgered out of solipsism by a harsher geopolitics elsewhere.

"Kindertotenlieder" comes in the third, most solemn section of this well-planned book. Entitled "Maladies", these poems are preoccupied with various deaths and distresses: the farmer having a stroke or heart attack in "The Weakness" itself; the gypsy girl killed in "Round the Campfire"; the simpleton pathetically flattered by the unwonted attention he gets at his father's funeral in "The Fool in the Graveyard"; the flowers of "Kate's Roses" which begin as emblems of burgeoning munificence and end newly named as " 'Dearth', 'Tongue-tied', 'Poverty', or 'Childlessness' ". O'Donoghue registers these afflictions with an unflinching levelness of tone which never becomes sentimentalizing or condescending: the poems seem almost to keep their distance in the act of making their enquiry. The result is a kind of poetry whose initial relatively unarresting quietness of manner, in fact, works by stealth, leaving behind some exceptionally memorable moments and gestures, freezing its frames around such transitional states of newly dislocating knowledge or experience as are discovered in one of the "madonnas" in the fine poem of that title: "so far away / Her eyes which don't yet grasp their tragedy".

If the final section of the book is explicitly preoccupied with such "maladies", the other sections too seek out many of their anecdotes in the moments when some subtle or sharp definition is enforced by small crisis or accident. Many of these poems are set in the rural world of Co Cork, in which O'Donoghue grew up; and, although rural Ireland is hardly an untapped resource for the contemporary poetic imagination, these poems form a distinctive contribution to an Irish poetic social history. With something of the interest in character and episode of the good short story, they are not reverential towards the lives they describe but they do maintain a decent deference, recording a series of daily dignities and griefs. The disablements of twentieth-century Irish rural history are persistent but not prominent: emigration; the agricultural grind (work is everywhere in the poems, and even when "A Nun Takes the Veil" she's dropped off at the convent by a father taking cattle to market); entrapment in superstition and in the almost equally superstitious rituals of the Church, propitiating "God / In his infinite whimsy". These circumstances figure uninsistedly, and sometimes humorously, as the context and texture of individual lives and personal histories; the lives disturbed by the poems are never forced or obtruded into emblem.

That this kind of unappropriative hesitation before the objects of O'Donoghue's enquiry is a worked achievement of form and tone is clear from a poem on Roger Casement in which, in the space of a few lines, Casement is Oisin, Columcille and Orpheus. Fascinating and in some ways pivotal figure as he is, Casement can hardly bear this burden of mythologizing (even if it partly represents his self-mythologizing); but the rhetorical excess here makes plain the strength of many of the other poems in the book. They are genuine poems in which deep feeling has studied itself into appropriate articulation, and they stay reverberatively in the mind. It is unfortunate to have to say – but it should be said about a book from a large commercial publisher – that *The Weakness* suffers from an irritating rash of misprints.

Historical vulgarities

DAVID KENNEDY

Ian Duhig

THE BRADFORD COUNT
64pp. Newcastle: Bloodaxe. Paperback, £5.95.
1 85224 138 1

Ian Duhig won the 1987 National Poetry Competition with "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen", which imagined disrespectful letters from a Mexican transsexual to figures such as Freud and Yeats. The same "coarse history" and impiety, an alertness to the underlying crudity in historical events, and an often dizzying combination of play and gravity, are at the heart of Duhig's first collection, *The Bradford Count*.

Duhig is interested in history as parable and how in this respect small events can tell us more than those of accepted significance, how the forgotten and anecdotal continue to resonate through time. The impression is of someone going through a filing cabinet and retrieving all the items that have slipped down between the suspended pockets. Duhig is delighted and fascinated by Corsairs raiding the southern coast of Ireland to punish Irish pirate trespassers on the Barbary coast and the prosecution of an Australian magazine for obscenity in publishing a poet who, in fact, had never existed. There is perhaps an echo in all this of Geoffrey Hill's idea of the past commanding our "belated witness" – and Duhig's language is certainly similarly fortified, muscular and strange: there are not many poets using words like "manchet", "gaffles", "burked" and "pilch" – but he is vulgarly comic where Hill is pompous, and energetically curious where Hill's learned grandiloquence can appear as aristocratic hauteur. We romanticize history into something grand to counteract the absurdities of the human predicament. Duhig wants us to know that history just isn't worth it. Here he is rewriting the love of Apollinaire for Annie Playden:

> I remember the secretary's pear-shaped skull
> always in a cloud of shag – smoking a narcisse,
> his chest whistled like a pan of shellfish –
> but it is the Countess I'll never forget.
>
> Now you come with talk of Kostro's poetry,
> of Beatrice and Laura – my name is Annie
> and I'd like to hear about the Countess' daughter.

History itself, then, may be little more than a means of dealing with those essential absurdities but Duhig is after more than just balancing romance with healthy realism. *The Bradford Count*'s two epigraphs – "He is perfect for whom the entire world is a foreign country" from Hugh of St Victor and "I'm not impertinent . . . I'm lost" from Brecht – suggest that this retelling is also a quest.

As with the recent work of Ken Smith, the book of poems becomes the document of a counter-history in which the marginal moves to centre stage. This focus is in itself political, since it implies a rejection of the culture in which poets of Duhig's generation have come to maturity in the 1970s and 80s. In common with much of the more interesting poetry of the past ten years or so, Duhig's work seeks out new sources of inspiration and unspoiled historical correlatives. The daring mix of tones and registers and the deliberate mismatches of treatment and subject underline his position as an outsider.

The excitements and pleasures of *The Bradford Count* stem from Duhig's certainty that history and the act of poetry are inseparable and that the inheriting of culture is at the same time a deprivation, a bland recovery. "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" redresses the balance by reminding us that historical figures can be ridiculous, but it also floats a critique of Yeats through mimicry of his spiritual arrogance and its manifestation in his later work. "The Frog", which starts as a retelling of a legend about the first frog found in Ireland and the prophecy from its appearance of the enslavement of the country, is a similarly provocative revelation of how poetry cannot escape from history. Its last line, "It also shags that poem of Muldoon's", forces us to reconsider the other poet's frog legend – "The entire population of Ireland / springs from a pair left to stand / overnight in a pond / in the gardens of Trinity College, / two bottles of wine left there to chill / after the Act of Union" – and its conclusion that "There is, surely, in this story / a moral. A moral for our times." Duhig's point is presumably that Muldoon's poem fails because it fails to speak plainly. Poetry somehow gets in the way. The kind of socio-linguistic sounding perfected by Muldoon is merely an evasion or perhaps, more damningly, a connivance with the bland version of the past. History *is* crass, vulgar and obvious, usually at our expense; it does not exist to comfort us. Duhig wants us to wake up to that fact.

Seductive occasions

MARK WORMALD

Michael Hulse

EATING STRAWBERRIES IN THE NECROPOLIS
63pp. Harvill. Paperback, £5.95.
0 00 272076 0

Where exactly is the necropolis in Michael Hulse's new book of poems? The book itself provides one immediate, and beguiling, answer: its front-cover illustration is a detail from Hieronymus Bosch's painting "The Garden of Earthly Delights", where a strawberry makes an armful and the eaters go naked. A city in a garden? If the city is allegorical, and the garden "emblematic", yes: Bosch, like the other painters Hulse uses as sources for his poetry, is sufficiently lurid or at least remote from the poet's own contemporary medium to invite extravagantly rhetorical comparisons between the former's canvas and the latter's voice.

> Suppose I had ridden
> naked in the Garden in the cavalcade of men
> astride a sardonic gryphon,

the title poem begins, launching into a sentence which bewilders the reader unprepared for its "leopards and dromedaries and stallions, / chimaeras and unicorns", and which leaves one there, at "the rock / where Man had watched, lord of the wilderness". We and the poet have to try again, once more adopting the curiously casual tone of introduction to an extravagantly decadent but also half-recognizable world.

> Suppose I had ridden
> naked all night in the Garden of Delights,
> ridden around the water where the women
> parleyed with ravens and egrets, ridden
> till morning stood like a tree at the window.
> And, waking, wanted you.

Now that we are here, though, on the other side, apparently, of this emblematic quasi-Mediterranean landscape (it is "the Roman road" "I drove", "across the straight to Carmona"), we are likely to feel nothing so much as mystification or disappointment. We recognize the poem's inevitability, that what happens next in this dreamscape, or dawnscape, has no choice but to live up to its billing – "What else would I do", Hulse's persona wonders, pointedly heading towards another full stop rather than the expected question mark, "but walk to the poppied necropolis and sit . . . / eating strawberries from a paper bag."

But this is an essentially private satisfaction, of the poet-persona's own construction, and directed towards the object of his desire; if the fruit's "flesh was tender", and if its "juices bled to stain the imperial dust", it is hard not to feel that the "imperial" is there for the sake of completeness, of a dutifully rounded context for his personal moment rather than for any more psychologically imperative reason.

The pattern is repeated. From the start of the book, and the striking assertion in "Raffles Hotel, Singapore" that "history is seduction", Hulse's journeyings around the world and through history are, despite their obviously topical or public occasions, their references to actual historical manifestations of the necropolis – Tiananmen Square, the report of "An American Murder" read in the *Independent* – never far from a recurrent narrative trope of seduction, of a frankly physical love. Too many of the poems, which inhabit characters' – caricatures' – voices in contemporary urban America, or adopt the manners of the mass media, strike me as arch or unconvincing juxtapositions of, as one title puts it, "Fornicating and Reading the Papers". Verbal tics, however nicely caught, complicate narratives and distract from the arguments and sharp images these poems contain.

Michael Hulse is, by contrast, much more effective when he devotes his education and his obvious technical facility to the consequences and implications of an "inexpressible this": and when, in particular, he approaches the conclusion, in an admirable sequence of poems after the work of the late nineteenth-century American painter Winslow Homer, that the artist is his own architect, that imagination is its own sole inspiration in a moribund and Godless world.

Everyday dignities

NEIL CORCORAN

Bernard O'Donoghue

THE WEAKNESS
79pp. Chatto and Windus. Paperback, £5.99.
0 7011 3859 9

One of the strongest poems in Bernard O'Donoghue's first full-length collection is "Kindertotenlieder", which dangerously concerns itself with what is, I suppose, a common parental dread – that of a child's death. The poem excuses its morose imaginings with a distorted logic of the prophylactic ("Because we cannot see into the future, / It follows that what we anticipate / Can't happen"), but eventually comes to an apprehension of the way imagination has its own laws and logics too, over which the reason can maintain only a very precarious control. Exceeding anticipation, the poem goes beyond itself into a "Hyde life" which, far from warding off the deaths of one's own children, presses into consciousness the deaths of others:

> The mind too is a country
> Like Somalia. The fly that a slow hand
> Pushes from a lip, again, again,
> Will hold its ground and crawl towards an eyelid
> That fails at last to keep up appearances
> By opening to resume its death's stare.

O'Donoghue's is a quite unshowy poetry, but the revision of cliché in the penultimate line there is a not untypical instance of the way his language can suddenly warp perturbingly. The eyelid fails to keep up appearances since the eye can no longer see; but the poem too is failing to keep up its appearance of control in the face of its terrible imaginings. Trying to keep up appearances, the poem goes to pieces, let down by imagining the thing that will let us all down eventually, and badgered out of solipsism by a harsher geopolitics elsewhere.

"Kindertotenlieder" comes in the third, most solemn section of this well-planned book. Entitled "Maladies", these poems are preoccupied with various deaths and distresses: the farmer having a stroke or heart attack in "The Weakness" itself; the gypsy girl killed in "Round the Campfire"; the simpleton pathetically flattered by the unwonted attention he gets at his father's funeral in "The Fool in the Graveyard"; the flowers of "Kate's Roses" which begin as emblems of burgeoning munificence and end newly named as " 'Dearth', 'Tongue-tied', 'Poverty', or 'Childlessness' ". O'Donoghue registers these afflictions with an unflinching levelness of tone which never becomes sentimentalizing or condescending: the poems seem almost to keep their distance in the act of making their enquiry. The result is a kind of poetry whose initial relatively unarresting quietness of manner, in fact, works by stealth, leaving behind some exceptionally memorable moments and gestures, freezing its frames around such transitional states of newly dislocating knowledge or experience as are discovered in one of the "madonnas" in the fine poem of that title: "so far away / Her eyes which don't yet grasp their tragedy".

If the final section of the book is explicitly preoccupied with such "maladies", the other sections too seek out many of their anecdotes in the moments when some subtle or sharp definition is enforced by small crisis or accident. Many of these poems are set in the rural world of Co Cork, in which O'Donoghue grew up; and, although rural Ireland is hardly an untapped resource for the contemporary poetic imagination, these poems form a distinctive contribution to an Irish poetic social history. With something of the interest in character and episode of the good short story, they are not reverential towards the lives they describe but they do maintain a decent deference, recording a series of daily dignities and griefs. The disablements of twentieth-century Irish rural history are persistent but not prominent: emigration; the agricultural grind (work is everywhere in the poems, and even when "A Nun Takes the Veil" she's dropped off at the convent by a father taking cattle to market); entrapment in superstition and in the almost equally superstitious rituals of the Church, propitiating "God / In his infinite whimsy". These circumstances figure uninsistedly, and sometimes humorously, as the context and texture of individual lives and personal histories; the lives disturbed by the poems are never forced or obtruded into emblem.

That this kind of unappropriative hesitation before the objects of O'Donoghue's enquiry is a worked achievement of form and tone is clear from a poem on Roger Casement in which, in the space of a few lines, Casement is Oisin, Columcille and Orpheus. Fascinating and in some ways pivotal figure as he is, Casement can hardly bear this burden of mythologizing (even if it partly represents his self-mythologizing); but the rhetorical excess here makes plain the strength of many of the other poems in the book. They are genuine poems in which deep feeling has studied itself into appropriate articulation, and they stay reverberatively in the mind. It is unfortunate to have to say – but it should be said about a book from a large commercial publisher – that *The Weakness* suffers from an irritating rash of misprints.

Historical vulgarities

DAVID KENNEDY

Ian Duhig

THE BRADFORD COUNT
64pp. Newcastle: Bloodaxe. Paperback, £5.95.
1 85224 138 1

Ian Duhig won the 1987 National Poetry Competition with "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen", which imagined disrespectful letters from a Mexican transsexual to figures such as Freud and Yeats. The same "coarse history" and impiety, an alertness to the underlying crudity in historical events, and an often dizzying combination of play and gravity, are at the heart of Duhig's first collection, *The Bradford Count*.

Duhig is interested in history as parable and how in this respect small events can tell us more than those of accepted significance, how the forgotten and anecdotal continue to resonate through time. The impression is of someone going through a filing cabinet and retrieving all the items that have slipped down between the suspended pockets. Duhig is delighted and fascinated by Corsairs raiding the southern coast of Ireland to punish Irish pirate trespassers on the Barbary coast and the prosecution of an Australian magazine for obscenity in publishing a poet who, in fact, had never existed. There is perhaps an echo in all this of Geoffrey Hill's idea of the past commanding our "belated witness" – and Duhig's language is certainly similarly fortified, muscular and strange: there are not many poets using words like "manchet", "gaffles", "burked" and "pilch" – but he is vulgarly comic where Hill is pompous, and energetically curious where Hill's learned grandiloquence can appear as aristocratic hauteur. We romanticize history into something grand to counteract the absurdities of the human predicament. Duhig wants us to know that history just isn't worth it. Here he is rewriting the love of Apollinaire for Annie Playden:

> I remember the secretary's pear-shaped skull
> always in a cloud of shag – smoking a narcisse,
> his chest whistled like a pan of shellfish –
> but it is the Countess I'll never forget.
>
> Now you come with talk of Kostro's poetry,
> of Beatrice and Laura – my name is Annie
> and I'd like to hear about the Countess' daughter.

History itself, then, may be little more than a means of dealing with those essential absurdities but Duhig is after more than just balancing romance with healthy realism. *The Bradford Count*'s two epigraphs – "He is perfect for whom the entire world is a foreign country" from Hugh of St Victor and "I'm not impertinent . . . I'm lost" from Brecht – suggest that this retelling is also a quest.

As with the recent work of Ken Smith, the book of poems becomes the document of a counter-history in which the marginal moves to centre stage. This focus is in itself political, since it implies a rejection of the culture in which poets of Duhig's generation have come to maturity in the 1970s and 80s. In common with much of the more interesting poetry of the past ten years or so, Duhig's work seeks out new sources of inspiration and unspoiled historical correlatives. The daring mix of tones and registers and the deliberate mismatches of treatment and subject underline his position as an outsider.

The excitements and pleasures of *The Bradford Count* stem from Duhig's certainty that history and the act of poetry are inseparable and that the inheriting of culture is at the same time a deprivation, a bland recovery. "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" redresses the balance by reminding us that historical figures can be ridiculous, but it also floats a critique of Yeats through mimicry of his spiritual arrogance and its manifestation in his later work. "The Frog", which starts as a retelling of a legend about the first frog found in Ireland and the prophecy from its appearance of the enslavement of the country, is a similarly provocative revelation of how poetry cannot escape from history. Its last line, "It also shags that poem of Muldoon's", forces us to reconsider the other poet's frog legend – "The entire population of Ireland / springs from a pair left to stand / overnight in a pond / in the gardens of Trinity College, / two bottles of wine left there to chill / after the Act of Union" – and its conclusion that "There is, surely, in this story / a moral. A moral for our times." Duhig's point is presumably that Muldoon's poem fails because it fails to speak plainly. Poetry somehow gets in the way. The kind of socio-linguistic sounding perfected by Muldoon is merely an evasion or perhaps, more damningly, a connivance with the bland version of the past. History *is* crass, vulgar and obvious, usually at our expense; it does not exist to comfort us. Duhig wants us to wake up to that fact.

Seductive occasions

MARK WORMALD

Michael Hulse

EATING STRAWBERRIES IN THE NECROPOLIS
63pp. Harvill. Paperback, £5.95.
0 00 272076 0

Where exactly is the necropolis in Michael Hulse's new book of poems? The book itself provides one immediate, and beguiling, answer: its front-cover illustration is a detail from Hieronymus Bosch's painting "The Garden of Earthly Delights", where a strawberry makes an armful and the eaters go naked. A city in a garden? If the city is allegorical, and the garden "emblematic", yes: Bosch, like the other painters Hulse uses as sources for his poetry, is sufficiently lurid or at least remote from the poet's own contemporary medium to invite extravagantly rhetorical comparisons between the former's canvas and the latter's voice.

> Suppose I had ridden
> naked in the Garden in the cavalcade of men
> astride a sardonic gryphon,

the title poem begins, launching into a sentence which bewilders the reader unprepared for its "leopards and dromedaries and stallions, / chimaeras and unicorns", and which leaves one there, at "the rock / where Man had watched, lord of the wilderness". We and the poet have to try again, once more adopting the curiously casual tone of introduction to an extravagantly decadent but also half-recognizable world.

> Suppose I had ridden
> naked all night in the Garden of Delights,
> ridden around the water where the women
> parleyed with ravens and egrets, ridden
> till morning stood like a tree at the window.
> And, waking, wanted you.

Now that we are here, though, on the other side, apparently, of this emblematic quasi-Mediterranean landscape (it is "the Roman road" "I drove", "across the straight to Carmona"), we are likely to feel nothing so much as mystification or disappointment. We recognize the poem's inevitability, that what happens next in this dreamscape, or dawnscape, has no choice but to live up to its billing – "What else would I do", Hulse's persona wonders, pointedly heading towards another full stop rather than the expected question mark, "but walk to the poppied necropolis and sit . . . / eating strawberries from a paper bag."

But this is an essentially private satisfaction, of the poet-persona's own construction, and directed towards the object of his desire; if the fruit's "flesh was tender", and if its "juices bled to stain the imperial dust", it is hard not to feel that the "imperial" is there for the sake of completeness, of a dutifully rounded context for his personal moment rather than for any more psychologically imperative reason.

The pattern is repeated. From the start of the book, and the striking assertion in "Raffles Hotel, Singapore" that "history is seduction", Hulse's journeyings around the world and through history are, despite their obviously topical or public occasions, their references to actual historical manifestations of the necropolis – Tiananmen Square, the report of "An American Murder" read in the *Independent* – never far from a recurrent narrative trope of seduction, of a frankly physical love. Too many of the poems, which inhabit characters' – caricatures' – voices in contemporary urban America, or adopt the manners of the mass media, strike me as arch or unconvincing juxtapositions of, as one title puts it, "Fornicating and Reading the Papers". Verbal tics, however nicely caught, complicate narratives and distract from the arguments and sharp images these poems contain.

Michael Hulse is, by contrast, much more effective when he devotes his education and his obvious technical facility to the consequences and implications of an "inexpressible this": and when, in particular, he approaches the conclusion, in an admirable sequence of poems after the work of the late nineteenth-century American painter Winslow Homer, that the artist is his own architect, that imagination is its own sole inspiration in a moribund and Godless world.

Serb against Croat

The unravelling of the second Yugoslavia

MARK WHEELER

Mark Almond
BLUNDERING IN THE BALKANS
The European Community and the Yugoslav Crisis
41pp. Paperback, £6.50.
School of European Studies, 12/13 Royal Exchange, London EC3Y 3LL.

Christopher Cviic
REMAKING THE BALKANS
113pp. Pinter/Royal Institute of International Affairs. Paperback, £8.95.
0 86187 086 7

Aleksa Djilas
THE CONTESTED COUNTRY
Yugoslav unity and Communist revolution, 1919–1953
259pp. Harvard University Press. £27.95.
0 674 16698 1

Yugoslavia has twice failed either to endure or to satisfy sufficient of its citizens. Hitler destroyed the first – monarchical – Yugoslavia and set its peoples to killing each other. The second Yugoslavia – Tito's communist federation – has been unravelling since the death of its *pater familias* in 1980. That it, too, should be coming to a bloody end, and without the excuse of foreign invasion and dismemberment, has naturally given rise both to pointed recriminations and to general reflections on human wickedness. No third-time luck in getting the formula right seems possible. Those who, as late as June, still saw signs of life in the Yugoslav idea, or who at least regarded civil war as inconceivable, have been rendered silent and ashamed.

Was Yugoslavia a mistake? – an artificial construction which could only belie the illusions of its prophets and creators, disappoint the hopes of its friends and consign its peoples to despotic governments and sterile disputes? Or was it a necessity? – the least unworkable framework for attempting to reconcile a series of ethnic tangles, territorial claims, historical conflicts and developmental gaps, and the most promising means to hand for bringing national and geopolitical security to peoples and to a region long plagued by lawlessness?

The writers of the two crisis "fastbacks" argue that Europe and the South Slavs will be better off without a Yugoslav state such as it has existed over either the past seventy-three or forty-six years. Mark Almond, an Oxford historian, is indignant that any attempt to lump the heterogeneous Yugoslav peoples together should ever have been made. He is apoplectic over more recent American and European Community efforts to shore it up, going so far as to describe the West's insistence on Yugoslavia as a form of racialism. He appears unaware, however, of the more overt racism of the separate South Slav nationalist ideologies, whether in theory or in practice.

Christopher Cviic, on the other hand, a Croatian-born journalist long resident in England, has simply – like most Croats and Slovenes – given up on Yugoslavia. Unreformable in the absence of any domestic consensus and unnecessary since the end of the Cold War, Yugoslavia should split along the old Habsburg–Ottoman (or Catholic–Orthodox) frontier: the western republics (including tri-national Bosnia and Hercegovina) joining a loose *Kleinmitteleuropa* grouping for subsequent assimilation into the EC; the eastern ones entering a Balkan confederation ("Balkania") with which their former Turkish masters might also become associated.

Djilas is a convinced (and born) Yugoslav: the son of the Montenegrin Serb writer, revolutionary, reformer and dissident, Milovan Djilas, and of his Croatian second wife. Writing before Yugoslavia's descent into civil war gathered pace, and confining his detailed analysis of the communists' efforts to use, contain and resolve the national question to the period before they, in turn, became its victims, Aleksa Djilas none the less provides a more satisfying background to the crisis than do the others. His scholarly and sympathetic insight into the wellsprings of Serbian and Croatian nationalism – and of the communists' countervailing Yugoslavism – will give his monograph enduring value. It will also, perhaps surprisingly, temper the tendency to consign the entire Yugoslav communist experiment to the scrap heap.

Myths, errors and prejudices, special pleading and partial truths, infuse and inflame writing about Yugoslavia as much as they do the present fighting. Most historically-minded Yugoslavs (which means most Yugoslavs), like most foreigners, would probably subscribe to the erroneous thesis, advanced by Almond, that South Slav unification in 1918 came "at the behest of the victorious allies". He and Cviic give credence, too, to the equally facile but increasingly popular proposition that the communists owed their seizure of power and, hence, their success in reunifying the country during the Second World War largely to Britain's abandonment of Draža Mihailović's Četniks and other would-be leaders of anti-communist resistance.

A consequence of this baleful Balkan and imperialist habit of always blaming external forces for the region's fate (to which Djilas is a happy exception) is that Croats and Slovenes feel justified in demanding that the ex-*Entente* (or ex-Allied) Powers, having twice imprisoned them in a Serb-run jail, now have a duty to set them free. Serbs, on the other hand, not only expect France, Britain and America to stand by their "Versailles" handiwork, but to share Serb dread of a renewed *Drang nach Südosten* by the ex-Central (or ex-Axis) Powers. That many Serbs should simultaneously bewail the imposition upon them by the British of an alien communist (and Croat!) regime after 1944 is testimony to Slobodan Milošević's achievement in nationalizing Serb communism since 1987.

But Yugoslavs would also like to call in debts of longer standing. Serbs are, for example, mystified that there is no inclination on the part of the West to make amends for conniving at five centuries of Ottoman rule by now showing solidarity with their struggle to redeem Kosovo from another Muslim conquest. Croats, likewise, try vainly to remind Europe of their country's one-time appellation as the *antemurale Christianitatis*. They may have greater success in rallying world opinion if Zagreb or Dubrovnik is devastated in the fighting. Speaking recently to the *The Times*, one of Dubrovnik's luminaries summoned statesmen, artists and tourists to "join us patriots of Croatia and Dubrovnik, which Bernard Shaw described as a paradise on earth and which is now turned into hell, to save our beloved city from Serbian barbarians. We have not succumbed to much stronger enemies, so we have no intention of surrendering to Byzantine yokels." What this head of the newly-formed St Vlaho Fund for the Preservation of Dubrovnik wanted, however, was arms and volunteers.

Thus while Serbs vow to save Europe from Islamic fundamentalism and to put down the Ustaša helpmates of a "Fourth Reich", Croats pledge to defend the ramparts of western civilization and to extirpate neo-Byzantine "Serbo-communism". The Slovenes claim no such grandiose mission. Having humbled the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) in June, and thereby provided themselves with a typically tidy example of the blood baptism they missed out on in the nineteenth century, they ask merely to be let out of the Yugoslav madhouse and into the Europe to which they alone belong.

Historical memories may be long, but they are also selective. Croats like Cviic have forgotten that the Yugoslav idea was their nineteenth-century invention, and that life for them under Franz Joseph's Hungarian legates was no operetta. Slovenes, disregarding the fates of their minorities in Italy and Austria and the protection and relative prosperity which Yugoslavia afforded them, have hastened to be the first to abandon the sinking ship. While Serbs, ignoring their belated and incomplete conversion to the Yugoslav faith, pretended until this summer to be the heroic defenders of a state which they, in fact, have done most to vitiate, both between the wars and under Milošević.

By disavowing their ideological paternity – and disregarding the circumstances which made their leaders desperate to seek succour in the arms of the Serbian monarchy and army in 1918 – Croats affirm the illegitimacy of the resulting, Serb-dominated offspring. They see no contradiction, however, in magnifying the Croat contribution to Tito's war on behalf of a new, communist Yugoslavia, all the while complaining that the outcome, again, was Serb hegemony. Both propositions are exaggerated. Croats rallied late to the Partisan cause, abandoning the "Independent State of Croatia" only when its barbarism and impending downfall were obvious for all to see. A good many, even of the true communists among them, no doubt misunderstood the unitarian purposes of the Soviet-style federalism with which Tito proposed to solve the national question; but communist federalism was not Serb hegemonism in disguise. Rather, as Djilas shows, it was a genuine – if foredoomed – effort to create Yugoslav man in socialist form. There would, after all, have been no occasion for the Serbian backlashes led by Aleksandar Ranković in the 1960s or by Milošević today had it been otherwise.

The Croats' self-aggrandizing version of the war and their self-pitying view of its result stem instead from their continuing inability to come to grips with the enormity of the crimes committed in the name of Croatian sovereignty by the Ustaše. The communists' understandable effort during and after the war to confine culpability for the bloodletting to the Axis occupiers and their "bourgeois" collaborators among each of the Yugoslav peoples absolved Croats, in particular, of any real need to make an act of atonement. They were, of course, lectured constantly on the bestiality of the Ustaše; just as Serbs were reminded regularly of the sins of their former bourgeoisie in the old Yugoslavia. But repetition of the respective lessons was eventually counterproductive, especially as the communist teachers progressively lost both legitimacy and conviction, and their pupils were never compelled to see themselves among the forces of darkness which were held up for vilification.

Having, in any case, cast off all vestiges of collective guilt by the end of the 1980s – and having transferred a good part of their resentment of decaying communist rule on to the 600,000-strong Serb minority in their midst – Croats could neither comprehend the terror nor anticipate the vigour with which the survivors of the Ustaša's attempted genocide of the 1940s would react to the prospect of another independent Croatia. Although Cviic endeavours to explain Serb fears, he makes them appear unreasonable by virtue of his relatively anodyne account of Ustaše butchery. He refers in an end-note to two recent and sober attempts to calculate Yugoslavia's Second World War death toll, but ventures only that "many thousands of Serbs" – rather than his sources' agreed total of a third of a million – met their deaths in the Ustaša state. He omits to mention forced conversions to Roman Catholicism as the third component of the Ustaša's trinity of death, deportation and de-nationalization, and implies that the bulk of Serb victims died in concentration camps.

The reality was less well-ordered, more gruesome and highly relevant to what has been going on in Croatia's Serbian pale these past few months. Frenzied massacres of Serbs in their native villages, not assembly-line executions in death camps, were the Ustaše's preferred and technologically preordained means of attaining the "purification" they sought. The Serbs' formation last year of militias to counter the ethnically and ideologically "pure" special forces of the new Zagreb government – and their eager destruction of Catholic churches in this summer's fighting – are direct echoes of their Ustaša experience.

Had Franjo Tudjman bent over backwards in spring 1990 to reassure and conciliate the Serbs, Croats might not in recent weeks have been confronting the might of the JNA and the likelihood of territorial amputations. Instead, Tudjman and his colleagues, flushed with nationalist and anti-communist triumphalism, effectively demoted the Serbs to the status of a barely tolerated minority, which was precisely what Yugoslavia had saved them from being. Croats thereby delivered a veritable fifth column into the hands of their arch-enemy, Milošević. To have behaved more wisely would have been out of character for a nationalist ideology which, as Djilas writes about its nineteenth-century progenitor, Ante Starčević, regards "all those who have a different national consciousness, or those whose political ideas are a hindrance to the realization of complete Croatian sovereignty, expansion, and homogeneity" as "racially inferior

A twenty-year-old Yugoslav partisan, credited with the death of twenty German soldiers, standing beside a portrait of her leader, General Tito, at an Allied rest camp in Italy in the 1940s.

and fundamentally evil beings".

Starčević, of course, initiated no genocide. He simply denied the legitimacy of any Serb or Slovene presence on the territory he was pleased to regard as rightfully Croatian. The former, insofar as they existed, were schismatics to be brought back into the fold; the latter were "mountain Croats" to be weaned from their outlandish dialect. Nor is Tudjman a latter-day Ante Pavelić (the Ustaša *poglavnik* or *Führer*); but he does embody another and peculiarly morose strand in the Croat nationalist tradition which nourishes grievances, eschews responsibility and expects deliverance from abroad.

Serbian nationalism is, of course, neither more far-sighted nor more forgiving, even if it has usually demonstrated greater self-confidence and self-reliance. It has tended, moreover, to seek unification and solidarity (or homogeneity) through assimilation rather than exclusion, and to claim lands on linguistic rather than historical grounds. The concomitant worship of state power – a trait of East European nationalism generally – is, perhaps, less unattractive in those cases where there has long been a state to worship. What Milošević has done, however, is to substitute the chimera of "Greater Serbia" for Yugoslavia. He has thereby unleashed demons potentially as murderous as those which have disfigured Croatian nationalism. Intoxicated now with the vision of gathering in all their number, seizing rich prizes in Dalmatia and Slavonia and cocking a snook at the outside world, Serbs appear oblivious to the near-certainty that, in the short run, they will be able to maintain "Greater Serbia" only as a garrison-state which represses its several million non-Serbs, impoverishes its citizens and subsists as a European pariah. In the long run, the burden of empire will outweigh its satisfactions, especially among a people far from lacking in genuinely democratic traditions and impulses.

The trouble, as Djilas plaintively reminds us throughout his book, is that both the separate South Slav nationalisms and the would-be Yugoslav alternative have always placed a higher premium on integralism than on pluralism. Their élites have been positivist engineers rather than liberal democrats. Thus Tudjman claims an ideological affinity with Thatcherism while nationalizing firms, dismissing Serbs from their jobs for refusing to pledge allegiance to his regime and imposing his party's control on the print and broadcast media. Milošević, for his part, rails against Croatian fascism and trumpets his "anti-bureaucratic revolution" while perpetuating the communist order and allying himself with the resurrected Četniks of "Vojvoda" (Duke) Vojislav Šešelj. Meantime, in Ljubljana (of all places!), a graffito implores "Come back communists, all is forgiven." Such contradictions – and the civil war – are explicable only by reference to national ideologies which are simultaneously antithetical and indistinguishable. Whether they are also as manipulable by their leaders or as fervently held by their adherents as they now appear is questionable – and one of the few grounds for any optimism.

The European Community, certainly, has failed to find an opening. To date, every one of its ceasefires has resulted only in an escalation of the fighting. However intemperate and unfair Almond's attack on the Community's efforts, first to prevent and then to stop the killing, and however imperfect his underlying grasp of Yugoslav history and politics, he does at least make the valid point that, from the beginning, the EC has been out of its depth in Yugoslavia. It was no place either to find a quick fix for the disarray which characterized the EC states' policies during the Gulf War or to advance the agenda of the federalists among them. American and EC support for Yugoslav "unity" before June 25 – couched as it often was in woefully fuzzy language – no doubt encouraged the JNA to imagine that it could quash Slovenia's bid to take over its frontiers without any great hue and cry. But so, too, did the Germans' and others' support for "national self-determination" encourage the Slovenes and Croats to make their bids. In Yugoslavia, after all, the distinctions between terms like "nation" and "state", "federation" and "confederation", "nationality" and "national minority", "united" and "unitary" are vital – and worth killing for.

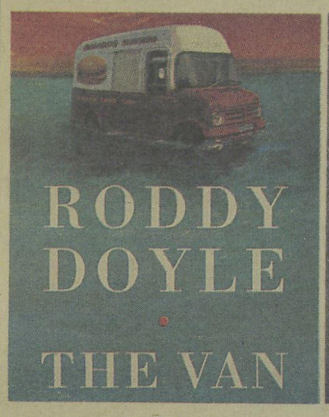
The Slovenes were well-prepared to defend themselves, and so make good their claim on independence. The Croats relied from the beginning on mobilizing Western support and internationalizing the crisis. Having refused to pay the price required to win the Serb minority's loyalty, and having failed subsequently to enforce their government's writ in the rebel-held areas, Croats gambled that the EC would do for them what they were powerless to do themselves: get the JNA out of Croatia and secure its territorial integrity. And so the EC has found itself wrestling a tar-baby. To do nothing, to attempt to broker ceasefires, to impose trade and aid bans or an oil embargo – all have the short-term effect of assisting the stronger side, the JNA and its Serb proxies in Croatia. For the JNA has clearly used the various ceasefires as mere respites to repair its own precarious unity before mounting new, albeit limited, offensives. On the other hand, to recognize Croatia (Slovenia is a different matter) would be to fortify Tudjman's intransigence and his expectation that armed support must inevitably follow. Actually to send a peace-making force would be to stimulate Serb resistance and to guarantee a politically unsustainable flow of body bags back to their countries of origin.

One way out might be for the EC (or Western European Union) to propose despatching a force large enough to oversee the withdrawal of JNA garrisons from Croatia. This would have the effect of breaking the current deadlock and calling the bluffs of the respective sides. The JNA would be forced to choose between its ostensible aim – the relief and honourable retreat of its besieged barracks – and its putative objective – the creation of a "Greater Serbia". Tudjman, on the other hand, would be obliged to choose between abandoning his most potent weapon and seeing the back of the JNA. Once the JNA's withdrawal (with agreed levels of armaments) had been secured, then the European force should turn its attention to protecting the Serb minority against Zagreb's wrath pending a political settlement. This would deprive Milošević of his most loudly trumpeted objection to Croatian independence.

There would be, of course, numerous objections to any such plan, the most salient of which is that neither Tudjman nor Milošević (nor the JNA) any longer exercises real control over the warlords commanding their respective irregulars. But it ought to be possible to maintain a ceasefire in the face of some local violations. Even in failure, however, the aims of the contending parties would be clarified; and if, as is likely, *both* sides scuppered such an initiative, then the EC could at least wash its collective hands of Yugoslavia until such time as mutual exhaustion, material deprivation and *coups d'état* in Zagreb and Belgrade usher in a real desire for peace and outside mediation. Only when Yugoslavs start thinking about the future – rather than paying tribute to the past – can peace prevail.

Mark Wheeler is a lecturer in Balkan History at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London. He is the author of Britain and the War for Yugoslavia, 1950–1945, *1980, and a contributor to* Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe, *edited by Tony Judt, 1989.*

BOOKER PRIZE SHORTLIST '91



THE VAN
BY RODDY DOYLE

Published by Secker & Warburg

Roddy Doyle's subject is everyday life in North Dublin, and the triumphs and tragedies of the Rabbitte family. Jimmy Rabbitte Sr. is unemployed. His best friend Bimbo, is made redundant and they are both miserable together. Then Bimbo buys a decrepit fish-and chip van, and asks Jimmy Sr. to be his partner. Set during the heady days of Ireland's triumphs in the World Cup, **The Van** is a tender tale of male friendship, swimming in grease and stained with ketchup.

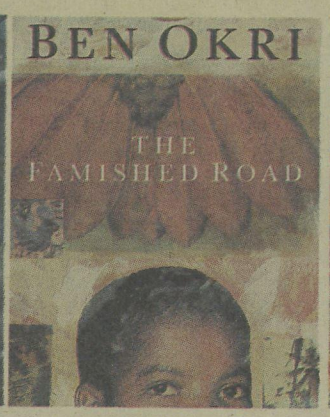
SIGNED COPIES
Price £13.99

TWO LIVES
BY WILLIAM TREVOR

Published by Viking

Two Lives comprises two major new novels by William Trevor linked by theme. These novels tell of the importance of fictions in two women's lives evoking in turn the landscapes of Ireland and Italy.

SIGNED COPIES
Price £14.99

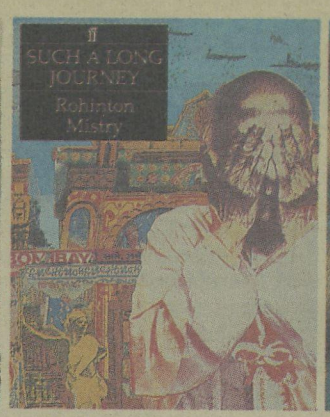


THE FAMISHED ROAD
BY BEN OKRI

Published by Cape

This is a major novel from a writer widely regarded as the most important African writer of his generation.

SIGNED COPIES
Price £13.99



SUCH A LONG JOURNEY
BY ROHINTON MISTRY

Published by Faber

Such a Long Journey is a brilliant first novel by one of the most remarkable writers to have emerged from the Indian literary tradition in many years.

SIGNED COPIES
Price £14.99

REDUNDANCY OF COURAGE
BY TIMOTHY MO

Published by Chatto & Windus

A story of sacrifice and friendship in terrible times, told with compelling simplicity, narrative drive, and unexpected humour. It contains the urgency of a thriller and a rare depth of political insight and compassion.

SIGNED COPIES
Price £13.99

TIME'S ARROW
BY MARTIN AMIS

Published by Cape

In Martin Amis's new novel, the narrator is trapped - and hurtling towards a terrible secret. Its resolution, and the dread revelations it brings, ally to give an excoriating vision of guilt.

SIGNED COPIES
Price £12.99

swift BOOKS
BOOKER PRIZE SHORTLIST '91

ORDER FORM

	PRICE	QTY.	TOTAL
REDUNDANCY OF COURAGE	13.99		
TWO LIVES	14.99		
TIME'S ARROW	12.99		
THE VAN	13.99		
SUCH A LONG JOURNEY	14.99		
THE FAMISHED ROAD	13.99		
		PLUS P&P	
		TOTAL	

On UK book orders up to £20.00, please include 10% postage. On UK book orders of over £20.00, please allow £2.00 postage. On UK book orders over £30.00 postage will be free. Please allow 20% of total book order as postage on overseas orders.

I enclose my cheque for £.....made payable to **Swift Books**.

Credit card No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Please tick: ACCESS ☐ VISA ☐

Please charge my credit card £.....Expiry Date:.....

Name.....Address.....

.....Country.....Postcode.....

PLEASE RETURN TO : **SWIFT BOOKS PRIORY HOUSE ST JOHN'S LANE LONDON EC1M 4BX**

A Fleet Street Balliol

ANTHONY HOWARD

Richard Cockett

DAVID ASTOR AND "THE OBSERVER"
315pp. Deutsch. £17.99.
0 233 98735 5

"The greatest British editor of the post-war era" – the tribute, quoted in Richard Cockett's book, comes from Sir Peregrine Worsthorne. Given the distinction of David Astor's twenty-seven-year reign at the *Observer*, it is clearly no wild or extravagant claim. Maybe, though, like many of Worsthorne's judgments, it is just a shade too sweeping.

If editorial chairs are to be translated into plinths, then Alastair Hetherington (editor of the *Guardian*, 1956–75) ought to be placed on one at least as high. In some ways, his achievement was even more formidable than Astor's. True, both of them, at exactly the same age (thirty-six), took over papers badly needing to be brought up to date. But, whereas Astor was lucky enough to inherit a paper that was already a Sabbath institution selling nearly 250,000 copies a week, Hetherington faced the more daunting challenge of turning a provincial daily with a circulation of little more than 150,000 into a national newspaper no longer rooted in Manchester but based in London. If the pedestals deserve to be of roughly equal height, then it is only fair to notice that one had to be built from a much lower base.

Compared with Hetherington (who before joining the *Manchester Guardian* served a journalistic apprenticeship first in Hamburg and then in Glasgow), Astor was fortunate in another respect, too. He had to impress no one but his father in order to get *his* job. By the time he took charge of the *Observer* – he became editor in 1948 but vicariously ran it from 1942 – all he had behind him by way of journalistic experience was a single pre-war year spent writing articles, mainly about hunting and riding, for the *Yorkshire Post*. Whatever the gifts he later displayed, his rise to an important editorial chair can hardly be seen as a shining advertisement for the meritocratic society.

To be fair, Astor himself was always a good deal more sensitive to this kind of criticism than his biographer appears to be. Nothing caused him to bridle more resentfully than the suggestion that he was editor-and-proprietor of the *Observer* rolled into one. He never tired of insisting – to anyone who would listen – that the trustees of the paper had it in their power to dismiss him any time they chose. (No doubt, they could have done had they been prepared, at least after 1956, to pick up the bills and underwrite the paper's losses.) The truth that Astor constantly found difficult to face was that he was just as much a hereditary Fleet Street princeling as Max Aitken, Michael Hartwell, Vere Harmsworth or any of the beneficiaries of the old feudal press dispensation.

What made him distinctive was not his privileged background – more socially imposing than that of any of the others – but the use to which he put it. Even if he did tend to believe in "socialism south of the Sahara", no one could have provided a more glaring exception to the general rule of Tory Little England conformity. It was his own mother, the redoubtable Nancy Astor, who famously complained that under his stewardship the *Observer* had become a paper "written by Germans for blacks" (or so runs the version given here – her original remark, at least according to *Observer* folklore, had even nastier racial overtones than that).

Easily the best part of Richard Cockett's narrative is the story he tells of how the young Astor gradually broke free not just from the powerful influence exercised by his mother but also from the whole conditioning of his grand upbringing as well. At the age of twenty-one, he even went formally to pay a call on his father at the Astor mansion in St James's Square to announce that he felt he had no alternative but to cut the painter with the family altogether. Fortunately for him, his father, the second Viscount Astor, not only understood his feelings – he secretly shared them, too. Indeed, Cockett plausibly suggests that it was at this interview that the foundations were laid for the eventual decision that led to control of the *Observer* passing not to Waldorf Astor's heir, Bill, but to his second son, David.

In the writing of his book, the author has attempted a very difficult exercise – combining a personal study with an institutional history – and he is not wholly successful in bringing it off. The first third is basically a sensitive piece of biography, if with some rather too transparent autobiographical inspiration. Astor's great hero, Adam von Trott, executed for his part in the July 1944 bomb plot against Hitler, gets, for instance, a whole chapter to himself. There is nothing necessarily wrong with that – though it does seem a little strange that this long chapter should stop short of mentioning the highly compromising (and still controversial) letter that von Trott sent to the *Manchester Guardian* specifically denying any persecution of the Jews a full year after the Nazis had taken over in Germany. Who, one cannot help wondering, found that kind of detail a distraction from the central idolizing theme of valour and nobility – Astor or Cockett?

By and large, however, the author succeeds in giving a compulsive enough portrait of his subject's early life. There is even one revelation in it – the intriguing disclosure that, having finished with the *Yorkshire Post*, the young Astor took himself off for two years to run a concert party in the Yorkshire seaside resort of Whitby. How the *Daily Express* would have delighted in that discovery in the years that it was conducting its running war against the *Observer*. Lord Beaverbrook, in particular, would surely have gone to any lengths to establish whether there were any "nigger minstrels" involved. (His favourite joke with rising young *Express* executives used, after all, to be to inquire of them whether they would like to meet David Astor. When they earnestly replied, "Yes, sir", he would mock them with the remark: "Well, you get a tin of boot-blacking and

you black your face and I guarantee you'll meet David Astor.")

Sadly, once the Second World War starts, the whole personal story tends to get subsumed into the history of the newspaper. Astor was first directly to intervene in it as a marine officer stationed at Mountbatten's combined operations headquarters in London during the war. His father's determined removal of J. L. Garvin in 1942 presented him with his opportunity. It has to be said that this particular episode – abruptly ending an illustrious editorship after thirty-four years – reflects no great credit on Waldorf Astor, who seems, to me, to have behaved like the worst sort of old-fashioned mill-owner.

At the beginning of his book, Cockett, quite properly, announces that "a prerequisite for understanding the paper [he edited] and the quality of its success was to understand David Astor himself". Alas, it is an intention, once promulgated, that the author appears progressively disinclined to pursue. There is no reference at all, for example, to Astor's first marriage, and even the fascinating detail about "his daily analysis with Anna Freud in Hampstead during the years of editorship" is merely recorded without any form of comment or explanation. *Observer* profiles – which Astor initiated – would surely normally have been expected to do rather better than that.

The fact is that, once his subject becomes actively involved with the *Observer*, an awful weight seems to descend on Cockett's shoulders. All the dreaded elements of a house-history lose no time in appearing – the admiring character sketches of staff members, the too often tired old anecdotes, the tedious rehearsal of (at least once) contradictory circulation figures. The case Cockett makes for Astor is that he had a genius for talent-spotting – and that is probably right. It was a gift, however, bought at a price. The paper, Astor himself confided to the author, existed to be "the Balliol I never had" (he had flunked out of Oxford after two years, having been warned by his tutor that he was in no shape even to contemplate taking schools). Although in many ways a touching personal confession, the very idea of journalists sitting around and providing an editor with an academic court cannot help seeming, at least from the perspective of the 1990s, an odd basis on which to run a national newspaper.

Sure enough, retribution was not slow in arriving. Cockett is surprisingly forthright about the commercial and economic pressures that eventually undermined David Astor's *Observer*. He makes much of the paper's "golden age" which, he argues, lasted well beyond Suez – but then has the temerity to suggest that, on its editor-proprietor's own formula, it had been able to prosper only through living in a sheltered and protected environment. So long as newsprint rationing persisted, while there were only two quality Sunday newspapers, before the coming of commercial television it was perfectly possible for a Renaissance Prince in Fleet Street to indulge his personal whims. With the coming of a harsher media world – which, so far as the *Observer* was concerned, roughly coincided with Roy Thomson's purchase of the *Sunday Times* in 1959 – that freedom immediately became circumscribed and threatened. Forced to abandon its intellectual high ground, the *Observer* was soon scrabbling in the colour-magazine, travel-supplement bargain basement along with the rest of them.

Cockett charts what he candidly calls (in a chapter heading) the "Decline and Fall" of Astor's *Observer* with an almost clinical detachment. He follows it up with another chapter entitled "A Tale of Two Takeovers" – largely concerned with the paper's two successive commercial saviours, Robert O. Anderson of ARCO and Tiny Rowland of Lonrho. Again, in marked contrast to the book's earlier pages, there seems to be a striking lack of any sense of engagement or emotional involvement.

It is, of course, a well-known characteristic of human beings that they often want to kill the things they once loved. The saddest impression left by this book is that today that probably applies to David Astor and the *Observer*. Certainly, the final message that Cockett seems anxious to convey is that the newspaper his hero and subject created is no more.

Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden, editors

INVESTIGATING VICTORIAN JOURNALISM
210pp. Macmillan. £35.
0 333 49761 9

Ever since the academic study of Victorian periodicals began in earnest in the late 1950s, researchers have been motivated by a utopian vision of completeness: to list and locate all titles, to know the identities of all contributors, and to use the contents of periodicals to advance (as nearly as possible) towards total knowledge of all Victorian history and culture. The major research projects in the field, like the *Wellesley Index* and the *Waterloo Directory*, have been monumental efforts of identification, enumeration and attribution.

Traditionally, periodicals research has served ancillary purposes in the work of other disciplines, and within the academy itself has been marginalized as a sub-category of "bibliography". But the editors of *Investigating Victorian Journalism* (the result of a conference sponsored by the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals) believe in the need "to shift attention from journalism as a source for other studies and to treat it as a subject in its own right". In our theoretical age, what this calls for is a theory of periodical studies, and a set of analytical methods appropriate to the subject, a theme echoed in several essays.

B. E. Maidment proposes discourse theory as a model for treating periodicals not solely as reflective but constitutive of contemporary ideology; Lyn Pykett argues for an interdisciplinary practice of periodicals research, modelled on developments in media and cultural studies, and stressing close reading of the text itself. Margaret Beetham notes that there are problems even in determining the object of study in periodicals research: what is "the text" of what may be a daily, a weekly, a monthly, a quarterly, or something even more irregular? Is it the run? the issue? the individual contribution – which itself may be news, an essay, a poem, or a fiction?

A more useful suggestion comes from Ann Humpherys in "Popular Narrative and Political Discourse in *Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper*". Arguing that fictional and factual writing are far from mutually exclusive categories in the Victorian press, she notes persuasively the ways in which the conventions of melodrama infect *Reynolds's* serial novels and political leaders. Oddly enough, the other essays that treat more specific matters as a group are rather out of keeping with the new interdisciplinarity so strongly urged in the theoretical pieces. Maidment, in "Victorian Periodicals and Academic Discourse", laments that the traditional academic disciplines, as well as newer ones like cultural studies, always discuss journalism as subservient to some other primary focus. Yet most of those in *Investigating Victorian Journalism* take a traditional tack, surveying titles, identifying and filling in the biographies of proprietors and editors, and discussing circulations and finances. This may be an indication that while it is easy enough to call for genuinely interdisciplinary scholarship, it is far more difficult to produce it.

It is clear that the old-fashioned projects of listing, finding, and even preserving Victorian periodicals are not finished. There may be as many as 20,000 titles yet uncatalogued; for many titles we do know about, no complete run has ever been found. And as Scott Bennett points out in a depressing essay on the need for massive preservation efforts, many of those runs are printed on high-acid paper that is crumbling by the ton even as I write.

F.S. SCHWARZBACH

other sources now available. Any figures we received from the Partisans we naturally took with a grain of salt; nor could it ever be easy to reach an accurate estimate of the strength of a resistance movement in enemy-occupied country, usually on the move and much of it underground. As regards mutual charges of collaboration, it is surely not realistic to compare, as Mr Malcolm does, a single casual conversation which took place between Germans and Partisan officers authorised to negotiate an exchange of prisoners and concerned with purely hypothetical events, with the Cetniks' known readiness to place whole units under enemy command for prolonged periods.

For my own part, I have no doubt whatever that, in the circumstances, the War Cabinet's decision was the right one. Writing half a century later, with the benefit, for what it is worth, of hindsight, Mr Malcolm chooses to blame on it everything that is happening in the Balkans today. His reasons for doing so strike me as totally unconvincing.

Attempting to look into the future, I suggested as early as 1943 that Tito might, in the long run, prove less amenable than the Russians had reason to expect. In my experience, he displayed an independence of spirit and a resentment of Soviet attitudes, which, in the light of two instructive years spent before the war in Stalin's Moscow, I found not only refreshing but highly significant. As in fact they were. Historically, Tito's decision to defy Moscow in 1948 and his subsequent survival were at least as important as anything he did in the war. They marked the first crack in the Soviet monolith. Indeed, it could be argued that they set off the train of events which ultimately led to the disintegration of the Soviet empire.

While attacking Churchill's decision to back Tito, Mr Malcolm does not, for his part, seem to have worked out the implications of any alternative policy. The Government's chief reason for dropping the Cetniks was the impossibility, despite the best efforts of the British officers attached to them, of inducing them to offer active resistance to the Germans. In spite of this, we could, I suppose, have continued to support them, however ineffective, to the exclusion of the extremely effective Partisans. Or we could have supported both, and backed both sides equally in what was already a civil war. Both these courses (however crazy) were certainly considered at the time. But, quite apart from diminishing Yugoslavia's potential contribution to the war effort, either would inevitably have reacted disastrously on our relations with Yugoslavia once Tito took power, as, to my mind, he was bound to. Indeed, as I pointed out at the time, in what I intended as a *reductio ad absurdum*, if we had really been determined to stop Tito taking power, we would have needed to employ more than the 20 divisions the Germans had used — scarcely a practical proposition in 1945. Moreover, the attendant civil war, complete with 'ethnic cleansing', would in all probability have been even worse and less controllable than what is happening today.

In the event, apart from the immediate post-war period, our relations with Yugoslavia continued uniformly good for more than 40 years, and in 1947 [redacted]1948 memories of our wartime relationship undoubtedly encouraged Tito to take a tougher line with the Russians than he might otherwise have done.

For all its bizarre innovations, no one could claim that the system of government which the Yugoslavs, under Tito's aegis, 'worked out for themselves' was a particularly good one. At the start, there was undoubtedly much repression, mostly directed against those suspected of sympathising with Moscow. But, by the same token, Tito's régime entirely lacked the most objectionable characteristic of most communist régimes, namely subservience to Moscow. Indeed, until quite recently Moscow continued to provide the salutary external threat apparently needed to keep Yugoslavs united. During his life- time, Tito relied on this and on popular memories of his wartime leadership to hold his country together. Rather surprisingly, it stayed together for a dozen years after his death, remaining an open, relatively prosperous, reasonably happy country, which, as millions of British tourists saw for themselves, compared quite favourably with many other countries and even more with what is left of it today.

Under one system or another, each with its own relative disadvantages, Yugoslavia existed for around 70 years. It would, I think, be hard to argue that the 40-odd years for which Tito (or, indirectly, Winston Churchill) can be held responsible were the worst of these.

If symptoms persist. . .

LAST WEEK, I did a clinic in the prison. As I arrived all eyes were upon me: I was the prisoners' hope of sleeping tablets, new shoes, unsupervised gym, an X-ray to pass the time, an apple after lunch, light work, a job in the kitchen, a fat-free diet and the thousand natural requests that prison doctors are heir to. As I approached my room, one of the prisoners waiting in the long line to consult me called out, 'Doctor, my ribs are buggered!' What on earth are buggered ribs? I wondered. They sounded like something Texans might eat outdoors on a moonlit night. Then a prisoner, whose first and only language was English, handed me a letter written in childish capitals. He gave it to me in a furtive, ferret-like movement. He did not want the supervising screw to see.

I B— H— KANT (can't) LIVE THE LIVE (life) AS A PRISONER HENY MOOR (any more) IF I STEY IN PRISON I WILL DEFNTLEY HEND MY LIVETH (life) I KANT GOW ON LIVING THE LIETH (life) AS I HATH BEN LIVING FOR SO LONG I WOOD LIECK (like) TO HELP PEPOL WITH THE SAME PROBLAMS AS MY HOTHER PEPOL AND STILL DOW THIS IS NOT BLACK MAEL THIS IS THE TROWTH I HOPE WON DAY I COOD BE COME A NERS (could become a nurse) AND DOW THE MARVLISS JOB THEY DOW FOR PEPOL LIECK MYSELF I HAME SORY A BOWT THE TEMPS (attempts) I HATH TAKON (have taken) ON MY LIETH SINS (since) I HATH BEN YER (been here) BUT I HAT DON 23 YERS IN JAIL AND I JUST KANT DOW HENY MORE JAIL BUT IF IT GOODS (God's) WILL FOR ME TO GOW TO JAIL FOR THE REST OF MY LIETH WELL HE AS THORT (has thought) THAT AND NOWS I WILL LEEV PRISN IN A BOCKS (knows I will leave prison in a box) BECAWS I WILL HEND IT OLL I CEEP REPET (keep repeating) MY SELTH I WILL HEND IT OLL I WILL HEND IT OLL I WILL HEND IT OLL I WILL HEND IT OLL I WILL HEND IT OLL. SELTH WITH HALCOLICK A BIWS (alcohol abuse) AND DRUG A BIWS AND BENIG A SIWER SIDOL (being suicidal) MY SELTH I DOW NOT DISBLTH (disbelieve) WON WERD (one word) YOU OLL (all) TEL ME BUT I CANT GET IT OUT OF MY HED THAT I WILL DETHIANTLY (definitely) HAF TO STEY IN THE SLAME (slammer) OLL MY LIETH I APOLA JIZE FOR OLL THE TROBL I HATH KOSD (caused) YOU BUT I PROMIS I WONT DOW HENY THING TIL I GET OWT OF ERE I HAM HONDER (under) A LOT OF STRAEN (strain) AND I HAM PRESHOW IT (appreciate) WAT DR DALRIMPL IS DOWING FOR ME BUT IF I HAM GIVON A CHANS WETH (given a chance whether) YOU BLEEVE ME OR NOT I WILL PROWTH (prove) TO YOU OLL THAT I HATH GOT A HART AND HAM NOT THE BIG UST BASTERD POPOL FINK I HAM I HATH HOLWIS WONTID (have always wanted) TO HELP

Shirley Williams and her splendid creation, the British educational system, strike again!

Theodore Dalrymple

Your letter HO95/264
dated 11 April 1995

Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

The SOE Adviser
Room 3/97, Old Admiralty Building
The Mall, London SW1A 2AZ

Telephone: 071-210-6735
Facsimile: 071-210-6340

19 April 1995

Miss Pat M Andrews
Historical and Records Section
Cabinet Office
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
London SW1P 4HW

CABINET OFFICE
H 95/304
24 APR 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

Dear Pat

I think that the best line to take on Mark Wheeler's notes is to say that we will consider them in the light of the situation at the time. One of the things that light might shine on is the fact that by then we might not be able to spare the resources to weed the notes. Another is that though the operational files will be on the point of release personal files, which he would previously have had access to will not be released until much later, if at all. I agree we should not be unduly obstructive, but I think it would be a mistake to commit ourselves this far ahead as to what exactly we might do. In the meantime, they are as you suggest, ours.

As for notification, I suppose that those present at the meeting which approved his appointment would qualify, with the exception of Christopher Woods, whose ex-officio place I have taken.

Yours ever

Gervase Cowell
SOE Adviser

Copied to G Cowell, FCO
18.4.95

CABINET OFFICE
H 95/283
18 APR 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

FOL 66

The Cottage,
Prospect Lane,
Kington,
Hereford, HR5 3BE
Tel. (0544) 230188

6460

12 Apr 95

C. Miss Andrew

Dear Sir Robin,

FOL 64

Thank you so much for your letter of 7th April, telling me that Dr Wheeler had now officially been de-commissioned: this news has brought to me an enormous amount of relief, as I am sure you realise.

As one of the few surviving members of the British Mission to Initiatorić & as someone who met him on several occasions, I felt that it was my duty to try and prevent the writing of the Official History by Wheeler, who was so fanatically pro-Tito and anti-Initiatorić. It was so depressing over the years to realise that in this task I was not going to succeed, but now suddenly the impossible has

Yours sincerely

Archie Jack.

Come to pass.

Those of us, who were members of that mission, were deeply indebted to Mihailović and his loyalists, for being so faithful to us for the five months after we had betrayed him and before SOE arranged our evacuation: these were German garrison towns not far away, but we remained on our mountain top. Knowing that Mihailović and his men would protect us absolutely. We all felt incredibly ashamed of Britain's conduct, particularly Jasper Rootham, who had been private secretary to Neville Chamberlain: Jasper was a most sensitive person.

Thank heavens the "phoney" Official History will not now appear and we can enjoy a happy Easter Day! Thank you so much for your help understanding.

FOI 65

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071 217 6050
Fax 071 217 6010

HO95/264

G Cowell Esq
SOE Adviser
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Room 3/97
Old Admiralty Building
The Mall
London SW1A 2AZ

11 April 1995

Dear Gervase

SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

Sir Robin Butler has advised the Prime Minister that Dr Mark Wheeler has withdrawn from his appointment as Official Historian to write the history of SOE in Yugoslavia.

In doing so Sir Robin said that HMSO had not ruled out continuing the project with Dr Wheeler at a later stage, albeit as a private project, not as an official history. On the question of publicity Sir Robin said that he would write to the most persistent of our correspondents on the matter - Mr Jack - and that the SOE Adviser would then simply let it be known to those interested in SOE. May I ask you now to take on this task?

As you know Sir William Deakin is aware of the situation but if you think there is anyone I should notify formally, please let me know.

I had a letter from Dr Wheeler dated 31 March in which he asks again about the disposal and/or ownership of his notes and xerox copies. He is in London from 8 April for ten days and says that he will telephone!

I assume the answer is that any notes or xerox copies relating to the now abandoned project belong to us but that should Dr Wheeler enter into another contract with HMSO we would be prepared to consider giving him access on the understanding that any resulting text is cleared with us before publication. Would you be content for me to take this line with Dr Wheeler if he telephones me? *

I am sending a copy of this letter to Philip Brooks, HMSO.

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

* Dr Wheeler phoned on 11/4 (before this letter had been sent!) I gave him the gist of the above + said if it changed greatly I would write to him. Obviously can wait till he visits London again in June.

FOL 64

CABINET OFFICE
70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS
Telephone 071-270 0101 *Facsimile* 071-270 0208

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
Sir Robin Butler GCB CVO

Ref: A095/1145

7 April 1995

C. Miss Andrews

Dear Mr. Jack,

In my letter of 10 November last I told you that I was consulting interested departments about the implications of the delay caused by Dr Mark Wheeler's absence abroad for the preparation of the official history of SOE in Yugoslavia.

Dr Wheeler has now asked to be released from his contract and, as you will know, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary decided some time ago that the official papers in the SOE archive were to be reviewed for release. Work is now well under way to prepare these papers for transfer to the Public Record Office when they will become available for general research. In the light of this there will be no replacement for Dr Wheeler in his capacity as Official Historian.

I thought that you would like to know of this, in view of your interest.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Butler

A F M Jack Esq
The Cottage
Prospect Lane
Kington
Herefore HR5 3BE

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal
10 APR 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

FOL 63

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Principal Private Secretary

7 April 1995

6161

C Mrs Anson

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

HISTORY OF THE SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

Thank you for your minute of 6 March about Dr Mark Wheeler's withdrawal from his appointment as Official Historian to write the history of the SOE in Yugoslavia, which the Prime Minister has seen and noted.

ACSA

ALEX ALLAN

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal
7 APR 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

6.4.95

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal....
- 7 APR 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No
FOLIO 62

Ref: A095/1110

(Miss Anaw

MR ALLAN

History of SOE in Yugoslavia

In 1987 the then Prime Minister approved the appointment of Dr Mark Wheeler, a professor at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London, as an Official Historian to write the history of SOE in Yugoslavia. Dr Wheeler, an American, has made wartime Yugoslavia his field of special study and has written a book on "Britain and the War for Yugoslavia 1940-43". He had the necessary linguistic qualifications and was highly recommended by, amongst others, Sir Fitzroy Maclean and Sir William Deakin.

2. Dr Wheeler's appointment ran into controversy before it had even begun. Miss Nora Beloff, and others, represented strongly to my predecessor that any book by Dr Wheeler would be heavily biased in favour of the "Titoists". Despite this my predecessor took the view that Dr Wheeler was capable of producing a balanced work; he was appointed and made a good and enthusiastic beginning. However, he found it difficult to combine the work with full time teaching at the School of Slavonic Studies and, after the first year or so, did not make good progress. He then sadly, ran into personal troubles and the upshot was that during the summer of 1994, without warning, he took up a job in Zagreb with Help Age International and told us that he would unable to make further progress with the history until his return.

3. This left a very unsatisfactory situation and, in consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Sir William Deakin, we have encouraged Dr Wheeler to withdraw from his contract to prepare the official history, which he has now done. Given that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is well under way with the preparation of the official SOE Archive for

release in the Public Record Office where it will be available for general public research, there seems little point in appointing a historian to replace Dr Wheeler, particularly as it seems highly unlikely that we should be able to identify anyone who would not be adjudged biased on one side or the other.

4. No formal announcement will be needed; the commissioning of the history by a 'private venture' method under which the author is contracted to a published (HMSO), was not announced when it took place. The only public money which has been expended is an advance of £3000 from HMSO which they do not propose to recover at present: they do not rule out continuing the project at a later stage with Dr Wheeler, as a private individual, not as an official historian. The Prime Minister will, however, wish to know of this unfortunate episode as Dr Wheeler was formally appointed by his predecessor; I shall notify the most persistent of our correspondents on this matter of the outcome and then the SOE Adviser at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will simply let it be known to those interested in the SOE.

added to draft

R.E.R.B

ROBIN BUTLER

6 April 1995

FOL 61

HO95/245/

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA - DR MARK WHEELER

Thank you for your manuscript note on my minute of 4 April about Dr Mark Wheeler and the termination of his appointment as an Official Historian.

The only money which has been paid to Dr Wheeler is a £3,000 advance from HMSO with whom he had his contract. HMSO take the view that it would probably be futile to attempt to recover the advance at the present time but, in terminating the contract, they have said that they may be prepared, at some future date, to consider with Dr Wheeler whether the project could be continued in a private capacity; if that came about the advance could be transferred to a new project, though this would not, of course, be an official history.

The only other expense which has been incurred is administrative - my time in setting up the contract and terminating it, and the SOE Adviser's time in providing research assistance, but this is all part of the ongoing administrative support to the Official Historians.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section
5 April 1995

4.4.95

See below for comments by Sir Robin Butler.

60

HO95/242/

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA - DR MARK WHEELER

Last year you agreed that we should work towards the termination of Dr Wheeler's appointment as an official historian to write 'SOE in Yugoslavia', following his unexpected departure to Zagreb for a year, his non-completion of the history by the due date, and the release of the SOE archive to the Public Record Office. You suggested that, following consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Treasury Solicitor and Sir William Deakin, I should write "more in sorrow than anger" to Dr Wheeler giving him the opportunity to withdraw from his contract, which is with HMSO and from his appointment as an Official Historian. This, you thought, would put us in a better position with critics such as Miss Nora Beloff and Mr Archie Jack who so opposed Dr Wheeler's appointment, but who would no doubt also criticise us were we to terminate the appointment ourselves, particularly if, as I suggest, we do not appoint a replacement.

This has all taken some time to achieve, mainly because Dr Wheeler proved very elusive, but he has now confirmed that he is not in a position to fulfill his contract with HMSO - he has written formally seeking release from it - and that we may now take whatever formal steps are necessary to terminate his appointment as an Official Historian.

Dr Wheeler's appointment as an Official Historian was approved in 1987 by the then Prime Minister, though it was subsequently agreed that such appointments need only be submitted to No 10 for approval in future if they had controversial elements on which the Prime Minister's authority was needed. It has not been the practice to announce the appointment of the SOE historians to Parliament or, indeed, to make any public announcement; this, I believe, was part of the distinction drawn between these so-called "private venture" histories for which the contract is between the author and the publisher, and those official histories which for which the contract is with the Cabinet Office and subject to approval by the group of Privy Councillors.

I suggest, therefore, that we need do no more than inform No 10 of the position with regard to Dr Wheeler.

So far as putting the decision into the public domain is concerned, Mr Archie Jack wrote to you in November last year asking when Dr Wheeler's history was to be published, although he already knew about Dr Wheeler's departure. In reply, you said that you were consulting interested departments about the implications of the delay caused by Dr Wheeler's absence and that you would form a view on the future of the history as soon as possible.

You did not say specifically that you would let Mr Jack know the outcome of your deliberations but you may nevertheless wish to write to Mr Jack telling him that Dr Wheeler has sought release from his contract and that, in the light of the release to the Public Record Office of the SOE archive, we are not proposing to appoint anyone in his place to write the history; the Foreign and Commonwealth Office strongly supports this line, mainly because of the release of the Archive, but also because of the contentious nature of this particular subject and the difficulty, almost impossibility, of finding an author who would not be seen as biased by one group or another.

I enclose a draft minute to N0 10 and a draft letter to Mr Jack for your consideration. So far as any further action is needed to make the decision publicly known, Mr Cowell, SOE Adviser, FCO, will "let it be known" that the history of SOE in Yugoslavia is not being proceeded with; no formal announcement is needed as the commissioning of the work in the first place was not publicly announced.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section
4 April 1995

CABINET OFFICE
H .....
-5 APR 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. .....

HO95/242

c Mrs Anderson (this page)

I am content to proceed as you propose but is there any abortive expenditure which will need to be written off. If so, I ought to mention it in my minute to the PM. BRCB 4/4

5960

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA - DR MARK WHEELER

Last year you agreed that we should work towards the termination of Dr Wheeler's appointment as an official historian to write 'SOE in Yugoslavia', following his unexpected departure to Zagreb for a year, his non-completion of the history by the due date, and the release of the SOE archive to the Public Record Office. You suggested that, following consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Treasury Solicitor and Sir William Deakin, I should write "more in sorrow than anger" to Dr Wheeler giving him the opportunity to withdraw from his contract, which is with HMSO and from his appointment as an Official Historian. This, you thought, would put us in a better position with critics such as Miss Nora Beloff and Mr Archie Jack who so opposed Dr Wheeler's appointment, but who would no doubt also criticise us were we to terminate the appointment ourselves, particularly if, as I suggest, we do not appoint a replacement.

This has all taken some time to achieve, mainly because Dr Wheeler proved very elusive, but he has now confirmed that he is not in a position to fulfill his contract with HMSO - he has written formally seeking release from it - and that we may now take whatever formal steps are necessary to terminate his appointment as an Official Historian.

Dr Wheeler's appointment as an Official Historian was approved in 1987 by the then Prime Minister, though it was subsequently agreed that such appointments need only be submitted to No 10 for approval in future if they had controversial elements on which the Prime Minister's authority was needed. It has not been the practice to announce the appointment of the SOE historians to Parliament or, indeed, to make any public announcement; this, I believe, was part of the distinction drawn between these so-called "private venture" histories for which the contract is between the author and the publisher, and those official histories which for which the contract is with the Cabinet Office and subject to approval by the group of Privy Councillors.

I suggest, therefore, that we need do no more than inform No 10 of the position with regard to Dr Wheeler.

So far as putting the decision into the public domain is concerned, Mr Archie Jack wrote to you in November last year asking when Dr Wheeler's history was to be published, although he already knew about Dr Wheeler's departure. In reply, you said that you were consulting interested departments about the implications of the delay caused by Dr Wheeler's absence and that you would form a view on the future of the history as soon as possible.

DRAFT MINUTE FOR SIR ROBIN BUTLER TO SEND TO:-

MR ALLAN, NO 10

HISTORY OF SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

In 1987 the then Prime Minister approved the appointment of Dr Mark Wheeler, a professor at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London, as an Official Historian to write the history of SOE in Yugoslavia. Dr Wheeler, an American, has made wartime Yugoslavia his field of special study and has written a book on "Britain and the War for Yugoslavia 1940-43". He had the necessary linguistic qualifications and was highly recommended by, amongst others, Sir Fitzroy Maclean and Sir William Deakin.

Dr Wheeler's appointment ran into controversy before it had even begun. Miss Nora Beloff, and others, represented strongly to my predecessor that any book by Dr Wheeler would be heavily biased in favour of the "Titoists". Despite this my predecessor took the view that Dr Wheeler was capable of producing a balanced work; he was appointed and made a good and enthusiastic beginning. However, he found it difficult to combine the work with full time teaching at the School of Slavonic Studies and, after the first year or so, did not make good progress. He then, sadly, ran into personal troubles and the upshot was that during the summer of 1994, without warning, he took up a job in Zagreb with HelpAge International and told us that he would be unable to make further progress with the history until his return.

This left a very unsatisfactory situation and, in consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Sir William Deakin, we have encouraged Dr Wheeler to withdraw from his contract to prepare the official history, which he has now done. Given that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is well under way with the preparation of the official SOE Archive for release in the Public Record Office where it will be available for general public research, there seems little point in appointing an historian to replace Dr Wheeler, particularly as it seems highly unlikely that we should be able to identify anyone who would not be adjudged biased on one side or the other.

No formal announcement will be needed, the commissioning of the history by a 'private venture' method under which the author is contracted to a publisher (HMSO), was not announced when it took place. The Prime Minister will, however, wish to know of this unfortunate episode as Dr Wheeler was formally appointed by his predecessor; if he is content I shall notify the most persistent of our correspondents on this matter of the outcome and then the SOE Adviser at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will simply let it be known [in appropriate circles.]

DRAFT LETTER FOR SIR ROBIN BUTLER TO SEND TO:-

A F M Jack Esq
The Cottage
Prospect Lane
Kington
Hereford HR5 3BE

In my letter of 10 November last I told you that I was consulting interested departments about the implications of the delay caused by Dr Mark Wheeler's absence abroad for the preparation of the official history of SOE in Yugoslavia.

Dr Wheeler has now asked to be released from his contract and, as you will know, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary decided some time ago that the official papers in the SOE archive were to be reviewed for release. Work is now well under way to prepare these papers for transfer to the Public Record Office when they will become available for general research. In the light of this there will be no replacement for Dr Wheeler in his capacity as Official Historian.

HelpAge
INTERNATIONAL

CABINET OFFICE
H 95/236/1
- 4 APR 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE NO
31/3/95

SOL 59

St James's Walk
Clerkenwell Green
London EC1R 0BE
Telephone: (44) 71-253 0253
Telex: 22811 HELPAG G
Cables: HELPAGE LONDON EC1
Fax: (44) 71-253 4814
Registered office as above

Chairman M.M. Sabharwal
Chief Executive Christopher Beer

Dear Pat,

Do nothing until forced to do so seems to be my rule these days. The enclosed letter has gone to Philip Brooks today by fax.

Have you, for your part, given any thought to the disposal and/or ownership of any asters and xerox copies?

I will be in London from 8/4 for ten days, and will give you a ring.

Yours ever, Mark

Regional Offices
Asia
c/o Faculty of Nursing
Chiang Mai University
Chiang Mai 50002
Thailand

Caribbean
"Homestead"
Belmont Road
St Michael
Barbados

Latin America
Casilla 2217
La Paz
Bolivia

Southern Africa
PO Box 66364
Kopje
Harare
Zimbabwe

HelpAge International was the first organisation to receive the UN Award for services to the UN Programme on Ageing.

Company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 1762840. Registered Charity No. 288180

OVS/HI 11A

HelpAge
INTERNATIONAL

Ozaljska 93/XVI
41000 Zagreb

Tel/Fax +385-01-565-273

copy

St James's Walk
Clerkenwell Green
London EC1R 0BE
Telephone: (44) 71-253 0253
Telex: 22811 HELPAG G
Cables: HELPAGE LONDON EC1
Fax: (44) 71-253 4814
Registered office as above

Chairman M.M. Sabharwal
Chief Executive Christopher Beer

31 March 1995

Mr. Philip Brooks
Head of Publishing HMSO
St. Crispins, Duke Street
Norwich NR3 1PD

Fax +44-01603-696506

Dear Mr. Brooks,

SOE in Yugoslavia

Your undated letter asking for confirmation by 31 March of my request to be released from my contract has reached me only today.

I apologise for failing to write before now, but I fear that I have been naturally reluctant to burn my bridges before knowing whether I might still be able one day to cross over them. If it is any consolation, Pat Andrews has had equal difficulty getting a firm answer out of me.

My future with HelpAge International remains uncertain beyond August. I may, in any case, be applying for another job. I still have until mid-May to decide whether or not to return to the University of London. Should I do so, I would certainly wish to discuss with you the possibility of continuing with the SOE book in an unofficial capacity. If I could find some means of exisiting in London without lecturing at SSEES, I would also be keen to restart work on the book. Can we, therefore, leave that possibility open for another few months?

In the meantime, many thanks for your forbearance, both in the matter of releasing me from my contract and for allowing me to hope that I might yet write a book for you.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mark Wheeler

HelpAge International is a Patron of the UN International Year of the Family (1994).

HelpAge International was the first organisation to receive the UN Award for services to the UN Programme on Ageing.

Regional Offices:
Asia
c/o Faculty of Nursing
Chiang Mai University
Chiang Mai 50002
Thailand

Caribbean
"Homestead"
Belmont Road
St Michael
Barbados

Latin America
Casilla 2217
La Paz
Bolivia

Southern Africa
PO Box 66364
Kopje
Harare
Zimbabwe

Company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 1762840. Registered Charity No. 288180

OVS/HI 2D

HelpAge
INTERNATIONAL

Ozaljska 93/XVI
41000 Zagreb

Tel/Fax +385-01-565-275

St James's Walk
Clerkenwell Green
London EC1R 0BE
Telephone: (44) 71-253 0253
Telex: 22811 HELPAG G
Cables: HELPAGE LONDON EC1
Fax: (44) 71-253 4814
Registered office as above

Chairman M.M. Sabharwal
Chief Executive Christopher Beer

FOI 59

31 March 1995

Mr. Philip Brooks
Head of Publishing HMSO
St. Crispins, Duke Street
Norwich NR3 1PD

FAO PAT ANDREWS.

Fax +44-01603-696506

Dear Mr. Brooks,

SOE in Yugoslavia

Your undated letter asking for confirmation by 31 March of my request to be released from my contract has reached me only today.

I apologise for failing to write before now, but I fear that I have been naturally reluctant to burn my bridges before knowing whether I might still be able one day to cross over them. If it is any consolation, Pat Andrews has had equal difficulty getting a firm answer out of me.

My future with HelpAge International remains uncertain beyond August. I may, in any case, be applying for another job. I still have until mid-May to decide whether or not to return to the University of London. Should I do so, I would certainly wish to discuss with you the possibility of continuing with the SOE book in an unofficial capacity. If I could find some means of existing in London without lecturing at SSEES, I would also be keen to restart work on the book. Can we, therefore, leave that possibility open for another few months?

In the meantime, many thanks for your forbearance, both in the matter of releasing me from my contract and for allowing me to hope that I might yet write a book for you.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Mark Wheeler

Mark Wheeler

CABINET OFFICE
H 95/238
31 MAR 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

HelpAge International is a Patron of the UN International Year of the Family (1994).

HelpAge International was the first organisation to receive the UN Award for services to the UN Programme on Ageing.

Regional Offices:
Asia
c/o Faculty of Nursing
Chiang Mai University
Chiang Mai 50002
Thailand

Caribbean
"Homestead"
Belmont Road
St Michael
Barbados

Latin America
Casilla 2217
La Paz
Bolivia

Southern Africa
PO Box 66364
Kopje
Harare
Zimbabwe

Company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 1762840. Registered Charity No. 288180

END

HR 7/2/2

Pat

HMSO

With compliments

Sent via Richard Bevins, LRD. 15.3.95.

Pat

Can you send to Mark at the embassy in Zagreb.

PHILLIP BROOKS
Head of Publishing

14 March, 1995

St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1PD

Telephone
0603 69
GTN 3014 5532

Switchboard
0603 622211
Fax 0603 695582
Telex 97301

HMSO

FOI 57

Your ref[redacted]

Our reference

Date 630957

St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1PD

Telephone
01603 69 5532
GTN 3014 *

Switchboard
01603 622211
Fax 01603 696506

Dr Mark Wheeler
HelpAge International
Ozaljska 93/XVI
41000 ZAGREB

Dear Dr Wheeler

SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

Pat Andrews has passed to me a copy of your letter to her dated 7 February from which I note your intention to write to HMSO confirming that you wish to be released from your contract to prepare the above History. To date, I have not heard from you. I much regret having to press you on this matter, but it does need to be resolved. Therefore, in the absence of any letter from you by 31 March 1995, I shall take your letter to Pat as that confirmation. Equally, you may also take this letter as releasing you from the contract.

Obviously I am sorry that the book we started following our meeting in London has turned out this way. However, if you do wish to continue this project in a private capacity after your appointment with HelpAge International has ended I shall be pleased to discuss a proposal with you.

Meanwhile, I offer you best wishes and good luck with your work in Zagreb.

Yours sincerely

Sonya Judd

PP PHILLIP BROOKS
Head of Publishing

cc Pat Andrews, Cabinet Office

CABINET OFFICE
H 95/1.7.7/...
15 MAR 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No

competing through quality

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071 217 6050
Fax 071 217 6010

FOL 56

HO95/155

P Brooks Esq
Head of Non-Parliamentary Publishing
HMSO
St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1DH

6 March 1995

Dear Phillip

Following our discussion this afternoon about Dr Wheeler, I have spoken to Michael Carpenter.

He thinks that you should write to Dr Wheeler straight away now saying that you have seen his letter of 2 February 1995 to me (which I sent to you under cover of my letter of 8 February 1995) and, as this matter needs now to be resolved, could he please confirm that he is formally seeking release from his contract adding that, if you do not hear from him within X days you will need to take his letter to me as that confirmation. You may wish to add, as we discussed, something to the effect that if he wishes to pursue the matter as a private project at a later date you will be pleased to discuss the matter with him.

Only when we have had confirmation from Dr Wheeler does Michael Carpenter think it would be safe for me to recommend Sir Robin Butler to inform No 10 and for the abandonment of the project to be made public knowledge by whatever means we decide to do that.

Michael suggests that, in order to get a response, we might ask the Foreign Office to send the letter via the Embassy in Zagreb. If you agree, perhaps you could send your letter to me and I will send it with a covering note asking FCO to do that.

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071 217 6050
Fax 071 217 6010

FOL/ 55

HO95/112 ✓

G Cowell Esq
SOE Adviser
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Room 3/97
Old Admiralty Building
The Mall
London SW1A 2AZ

8 February 1995

Dear Gervase

SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

I enclose a copy of Mark Wheeler's reply to my letter of 26 January.

We now seem to have succeeded in getting him to withdraw from the contract - as long as he does actually write to HMSO!

You will see that he asks to be informed in due course what will be the status of his notes etc in his cupboard in OAB. Presumably these will become our property but we shall need to decide whether he may have access to them if he does decide to write privately and, if so, on what conditions.

I shall need to let Sir Robin Butler know the outcome and it may be necessary to inform No 10 as Dr Wheeler was appointed as an Official Historian by the Prime Minister. I am hoping it will not be necessary to announce the abandonment of the project to Parliament but we should perhaps consider how best to get the information into the public domain! Perhaps we could consider this when we next meet?

16/2

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071 217 6050
Fax 071 217 6010

FOI 54

HO95/111 ✓

P Brooks Esq
Director of Non-Parliamentary Publishing
HMSO
St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1DH

8 February 1995

Dear Philip

I enclose a copy of Dr Mark Wheeler's reply to my letter of 26 January from which you will see that he is writing to you formally seeking release from his contract with you.

I think this is probably the best outcome we could hope for and it remains to be seen whether he will take up the suggestion of a private contract at a later date.

I shall consult Gervase Cowell on the question of the notes and photocopies to which Dr Wheeler refers; also on how we let it be known publicly that the project has been abandoned!

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

HelpAge INTERNATIONAL

FAX MESSAGE

St James's Walk
Clerkenwell Green
London EC1R 0BE
Telephone: (44) 71-253 0253
Telex: 22811 HELPAG G
Cables: HELPAGE LONDON EC1
Fax: (44) 71-253 4814
Registered office as above

Chairman M.M. Sabharwal
Chief Executive Christopher Beer

FOL 53

From Dr. Mark Wheeler
Ozaljska 93/XVI
41000 Zagreb

Tel/Fax +385-1-565-273

To Miss P. M. Andrews
Cabinet Office Historical & Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street
London SW1P 4HW

Fax +44-71-217-6010

Pages 1 7 February 1995

Dear Pat,

Your letter of 26 January reached me today via the Zagreb Embassy. The message you had to convey was far from unexpected, but it was no more palatable for that. I have, of course, agonised again over what I am doing. It is clear, however, that at this stage I really have no choice: I am already in default of my contract with HMSO and in no position to promise a remedy.

I am grateful to you both for exploring whether there might be some other way out and for throwing me the psychological lifeline of a possible future and unofficial book for HMSO. I will write to Phillip Brooks, asking formally to be "released" from my current contract. You, for your part, can now take whatever steps are necessary to "defrock" me. Please let me know in due course what will be the status of the thousands of pages of notes and photocopies still sitting in my cupboard in the DAB. As I will be in London to see my children later this month and, again, in April, we could meet if you were to feel that might be useful.

I started work on the DOE book both in good faith and with tremendous enthusiasm. Latterly, however, the disintegration of my personal life, of my career at SSEES and of Yugoslavia itself have pushed what ought to have been my central concern to ever more distant margins. This letter, alas, is the result.

Yours ever,
Mark

CABINET OFFICE
HP 95/82
- 8 FEB 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE NO.

HelpAge International is a Patron of the UN International Year of the Family (1994).

HelpAge International was the first organisation to receive the UN Award for services to the UN Programme on Ageing.

Regional Offices:
Asia
c/o Faculty of Nursing
Chiang Mai University
Chiang Mai 50002
Thailand

Caribbean
"Homestead"
Belmont Road
St Michael
Barbados

Latin America
Casilla 2217
La Paz
Bolivia

Southern Africa
PO Box 66364
Kopje
Harare
Zimbabwe

Company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 1782640. Registered Charity No. 288180

HMSO

RA
DL/
52

Your reference

Our reference

Date 27 January, 1995

St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1PD

Telephone
01603 69 5532
GTN 3014

Switchboard
01603 622211
Fax 01603 696506

Miss P M Andrews
Historical and Records Section
Cabinet Office
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
LONDON SW1P 4HW

Dear Pat

DR MARK WHEELER

Thank you for your letter dated 18 January 1995.

During a subsequent telephone conversation we agreed that your draft was right for the situation, subject only to the addition of a reference to the advance received for the SOE history being transferred to any new book Mark may subsequently write. This will act as a reminder to him that he has received £3,000, but clearly from his letter to you from Zagreb dated 13 January it would be futile to attempt recovery - at least for the moment!

We can discuss any further development when we meet next week at the Documents on British Policy Overseas launch. I look forward to seeing you then.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

PHILLIP BROOKS
Head of Non-Parliamentary Publishing

CABINET OFFICE
H95/51
30 JAN 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071-217
Facsimile 071-217 6010
(GTN 217)

FOL. 51

HO95/64 ✓

Dr Mark Wheeler
Ozaljska 93/XVI
41000 Zagreb
Croatia

26 January 1995

Dear Mark

Thank you for your letter of 13 January.

I have discussed with Phillip Brooks, HMSO, and with Gervase Cowell, your suggestion that either HMSO or the Cabinet Office might support you for the period necessary to complete SOE in Yugoslavia. I am sure you will understand that, whilst none of us wishes to be unsympathetic, funds for this are simply not available at the present time, nor would such an arrangement be compatible with the terms offered to your fellow authors.

Given that you are unable to fulfill your contract with HMSO, which was to produce the book by the end of 1994, I understand that it is necessary for HMSO to terminate <u>that</u> contract. It seemed, in the circumstances, that it would perhaps be marginally more acceptable to you if this was done by means of your withdrawal from the contract rather than for it to be terminated from this end. In the light of what you say in the last paragraph of your letter I should be grateful for your confirmation that you now wish to do this; your appointment as an Official Historian would cease at the same time.

When your period of appointment with HelpAge International has ended and you are available for other work it may be that HMSO would be willing to consider with you whether it would be possible for you to continue the project in a private capacity. In these circumstances HMSO would probably be content to transfer the advance already paid to a new project.

If this did prove possible I would be glad to do anything I could to help, albeit from the sidelines; consideration would, of course, then need to be given to the security clearance of the work you have already done.

If you wish to pursue this you should contact Phillip Brooks, Director of Non-Parliamentary Publishing, HMSO, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich NR3 1DH.

I should, however, be grateful if you would first confirm your withdrawal from the existing contract.

If I do not hear from you within two weeks I am afraid it will be necessary for a formal letter of termination to be issued so I do hope that you will reply shortly after receipt of this letter.

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

Your HO95/35 of 18 January 1995
to P Brooks Esq, Director of Non-
Parliamentary Publishing

Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

The SOE Adviser
Room 3/97, Old Admiralty Building
The Mall, London SW1A 2AZ

Telephone: 071-210-6735
Facsimile: 071-210-6340

19 January 1995

PERSONAL FOR:-

Miss Pat M Andrews
Historical and Records Section
Cabinet Office
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
London SW1P 4HW

Dear Pat,

DR MARK WHEELER

Thank you for letting me see the draft reply. I am not sure that in fact none of us wishes to be unsympathetic, if that includes me, but I am willing to pretend that being inconsiderate and irresponsible do not disquality him from sympathy from others more gracious than me.

If I might suggest two additions on the following lines

End of Para 1 ... nor would such an arrangement be compatible with the terms offered your fellow authors.

/End of ...

CLASSIC

CABINET OFFICE
H 95/44
24 JAN 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE NO

End of Para 3 ... (sidelines), although I could not at this stage say what the official view would then be regarding the security clearance of the work you have already done.

Yours ever

Gervase Cowell
SOE Adviser

CLASSIC

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071-217 6050
Facsimile 071-217 6010
(GTN 217)

HO95/35 ✓

P Brooks Esq
Director of Non-Parliamentary Publishing
HMSO
St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1DH

18 January 1995

Dear Phillip

DR MARK WHEELER

We spoke on Monday last about Dr Wheeler's letter to me (copy attached) in which he asks whether HMSO or the Cabinet Office could support him during the time it will take him to complete the history of SOE in Yugoslavia.

Since we spoke I have also discussed the matter with Gervase Cowell, SOE Adviser. He agrees with us that this idea is a non-starter and adds that it would be quite wrong to support one of the group of historians writing SOE histories and not the others.

It occurs to me however that, subject to your agreement, there would be nothing to prevent Dr Wheeler continuing work on the history as a private project when he returns; as most of the records will be publicly available in the not too far distant future we could not, in fact, prevent him from doing so if he wished. He would not be an official historian but he has had access to official records, some of which will not be released and, so long as he was prepared to submit his text for clearance of that part of it which is based on unreleased records we could probably permit him to use notes which he has presumably made and kept in his possession.

Dr Wheeler could, of course, approach another publisher but, in that case I think we would probably want to retrieve any material he has retained from his Official Historian's access.

I have tried my hand at a draft reply to Dr Wheeler and should be grateful for your comments.

I am copying this letter and enclosures to Gervase Cowell whose further comments would also be much appreciated.

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

DRAFT LETTER TO

Dr Mark Wheeler
Ozaljska 93/XVI
41000 Zagreb
Croatia

Thank you for your letter of 13 January.

I have discussed with Phillip Brooks, HMSO, and with Gervase Cowell, your suggestion that either HMSO or the Cabinet Office might support you for the period necessary to complete SOE in Yugoslavia. I am sure you will understand that, whilst none of us wishes to be unsympathetic, funds for this are simply not available at the present time.

Given that you are unable to fulfill your contract with HMSO, which was to produce the book by the end of 1994, I understand that it is necessary for HMSO to terminate <u>that</u> contract. It seemed to us, in the circumstances, that it would perhaps be marginally more acceptable to you if this was done by means of your withdrawal from the contract rather than for it to be terminated from this end. In the light of what you say in the last paragraph of your letter I should be grateful for your confirmation that you now wish to do this; your appointment as an Official Historian would cease at the same time.

When your period of appointment with HelpAge International has ended and you are available for other work it may be that HMSO would be willing to consider with you whether it would be possible for you to continue the project in a private capacity.

If this did prove possible I would be glad to do anything I could to help, albeit from the sidelines.

If you wish to pursue this you should contact Phillip Brooks, Director of Non-Parliamentary Publishing, HMSO, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich NR3 lDH.

I should, however, be grateful if you would first confirm your withdrawal from the existing contract.

MISS P M ANDREWS

HelpAge
INTERNATIONAL

St James's Walk
Clerkenwell Green
London EC1R 0BE
Telephone: (44) 71-253 0253
Telex: 22811 HELPAG G
Cables: HELPAGE LONDON EC1
Fax: (44) 71-253 4814
Registered office as above

Chairman M.M. Sabharwal
Chief Executive Christopher Beer

48

FAX MESSAGE

From Dr. Mark Wheeler, HAI Zagreb
Tel/Fax +385-1-565-273
385-41-565-273

To Miss P. M. Andrews, Cabinet Office London
Fax +44-71-217-6010

Pages 1

13 January 1995

Dear Pat,

Please forgive this extremely tardy reply to your letter of 23 November. I did not respond immediately because I did not have the faintest idea of the terms in which I should do so. Latterly, I have been spared both by constant travel and by more immediate preoccupations from having to think overmuch about the matter. Reports from "home", however, that you have again been chasing me make it impossible to avoid the issue any longer.

School of Slavonic and East European Studies

My dilemma is fairly straightforward: I do not want to return to SSEES, but nor do I want to abandon the SOE book. In any case, last year's experience demonstrated that full-time teaching and book-writing are mutually incompatible. If there were a way in which I could exist in London for the year that will be necessary to complete the history, then I should certainly return to do so. Can you suggest any such means? Would either HMSO or the Cabinet Office be prepared to keep me on a life support system for that long? The amount required may not be all that large, as the family house is likely to be sold and I may, as a consequence, have a bit of capital left over.

If no such escape is available, then I will probably - with great reluctance and considerable shame - have to ask to be released from my contract. Before doing so, however, I should much appreciate having your views and advice.

With best wishes,

Yours ever,

Mark

CABINET OFFICE
H 95/26
13 JAN 1995
FILING INSTRUCTIONS

HelpAge International is a Patron of the UN International Year of the Family (1994).

HelpAge International was the first organisation to receive the UN Award for services to the UN Programme on Ageing.

Regional Offices:
Asia
c/o Faculty of Nursing
Chiang Mai University
Chiang Mai 50002
Thailand

Caribbean
"Homestead"
Belmont Road
St Michael
Barbados

Latin America
Casilla 2217
La Paz
Bolivia

Southern Africa
PO Box 66364
Kopje
Harare
Zimbabwe

Company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 1762840. Registered Charity No. 288180

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071 217 6050
Fax 071 217 6010

FOI/PA 47

HO95/2 ✓

Dr Mark Wheeler
12 Deerbrook Road
London SE24 9BE

5 January 1995

Dear Mark

I enclose a copy of a letter which I sent to you in Zagreb in November; I also sent a copy to the School of Slavonic and East European Studies but have had no response to either. I have tried to contact you on the Fax/Telephone number you gave in your letter of 15 August but was unable to get through on either.

I am therefore sending this to the only London address I have for you in the hope that it will get forwarded. I should be grateful for an early reply.

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

NOTE FOR RECORD

We could not FAX this to Zagreb on the number given by Dr Wheeler. A copy has gone to the School of Slavonic & East European Studies asking them to forward it to his home address. Dr Clogg told me on 19/12 that Dr W was probably in this country for Christmas.

PSH
22/12/94.

CSDB COMPARISON REPORT

16 Aug 94 09:23

Series	Status	Period	Last Updated	Date	Old Value	New Value	Difference
AKWD	**FAC**	**A**	25 May 94 14:00	**0 changes**			
SAYE : number of accounts opened : TSB (000's)							
AKWD	**FAC**	**Q**	25 May 94 14:00	1994 Q2	NONE	0	
SAYE : number of accounts opened : TSB (000's)							
AKWH	**FAC**	**A**	25 May 94 14:00	**0 changes**			
SAYE : number of accounts closed : TSB (000's)							
AKWH	**FAC**	**Q**	25 May 94 14:00	1994 Q2	NONE	0	
SAYE : number of accounts closed : TSB (000's)							
AKWL	**FAC**	**A**	25 May 94 14:00	**0 changes**			
SAYE : accounts open at end of period : TSB (000's)							

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
London SW1P 4HW
Fax: 071 217 6010

ENQUIRIES:
071 217 6050

FOL 46

URGENT
YES/NO

FACSIMILE LEADER

NAME: DR MARK WHEELER

DEPARTMENT:

ADDRESS: Ozaljska 93/XVl, 41000 Zagreb

FAX No: 010 385 41 565 273

FROM: MISS PAT ANDREWS

DOCUMENT REFERENCE/TITLE: OFFICIAL H ISTORY

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES: 2 DATE: 15 12 94

MESSAGE:

I should be most grateful for a response to my letter of 23 November - copy attached in case it has gone astray.

FOL 44

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT REQUIRED YES/ NO

FDL/
45

NOTE FOR RECORD

I spoke to Sir William Deakin on Wednesday 23 November, as suggested by Sir Robin Butler, as I have now heard from FCO, T. Sol and HMSO about Dr Mark Wheeler's appointment as an official historian and contract to write the official history of SOE in Yugoslavia.

I asked Sir William if he had heard from Dr Wheeler. He had not although he had heard that he was "running an old folks home in Zagreb". He sounded quite shocked and expressed no surprise or dismay when I said it looked as though we would have to abandon his history.

Sir William said that Maurice Pearton knew all about it and was in touch with Dr Wheeler. He would be meeting Mr Pearton in Oxford over the weekend. He would find out more and let me know. We are to meet for lunch on 1 December.

PMA

MISS P M ANDREWS
23 November 1994

Sir W Deakin & I met for lunch on 8 December. He had no further information about Dr Wheeler. Mr Pearton had not heard from Lim, nor had anyone else. I told Sir W. that I had written to Dr Wheeler & had as yet, had no reply.

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071 217 6050
Fax 071 217 6010

FOL. 44

HO94/941

Dr Mark Wheeler
Ozaljska 93/XVI
41000 Zagreb
Croatia

23 November 1994

Dear Mark

You wrote to me in August this year informing me of your departure to take up a post in Zagreb.

I am sorry I have not replied before now, particularly as the reasons for your departure were so distressing; I was so sorry to hear about them. I have, however, as you will imagine, been consulting all concerned with the preparation of the histories of SOE about the implications for your particular project of your absence at such short notice.

I am sure you will understand that we cannot leave the matter open-ended and I therefore wondered, given your lack of progress with the history since at least 1991 (for the reasons explained in your letter), and your absence during this year, whether you would prefer to seek release from your contract.

I appreciate that your formal contract is with HMSO but, as you wrote to me and not to them in August, and as I am in close touch with them, I should be grateful if you would let me know whether you wish to take this course; I shall, of course, pass the information on to those concerned.

Although it has taken me some time to write, an early reply would be much appreciated. I should therefore be glad to hear from you within the next couple of weeks.

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

cc Mr G Cowell, SOE Adviser, FCO
Mr P Brooks, HMSO

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071 217 6050
Fax 071 217 6010

HO94/941

Dr Mark Wheeler
Ozaljska 93/XVI
41000 Zagreb
Croatia

23 November 1994

You wrote to me in August this year informing me of your departure to take up a post in Zagreb.

I am sorry I have not replied before now, particularly as the reasons for your departure were so distressing; I was so sorry to hear about them. I have, however, as you will imagine, been consulting all concerned with the preparation of the histories of SOE about the implications for your particular project of your absence at such short notice.

I am sure you will understand that we cannot leave the matter open-ended and I therefore wondered, given your lack of progress with the history since at least 1991 (for the reasons explained in your letter), and your absence during this year, whether you would prefer to seek release from your contract.

I appreciate that your formal contract is with HMSO but, as you wrote to me in August and as I am in close touch with them, I should be grateful if you would let me know whether you wish to take this course; I shall, of course, forward the information to those concerned.

Although it has taken me some time to write, an early reply would be much appreciated. I should be glad to hear from you, if at all possible, within the next couple of weeks.

MISS P M ANDREWS

cleared by SOE Adviser
who made the 2 small ms
amendments.

HMSO

Your reference

Our reference 630957

Date 21 November, 1994

St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1PD

Telephone
0603 69 5532
GTN 3014 "

Switchboard
0603 622211
Fax 0603 696506

Miss P M Andrews
Cabinet Office
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
LONDON SW1P 4HW

Dear Pat

SOE HISTORIES: DR MARK WHEELER

Thank you for your letter dated 17 November.

I believe the best course is for you to write to Dr Wheeler as suggested proposing that he should release himself from the contract with HMSO to prepare the official history of SOE in Yugoslavia. Not only is this action in line with Sir Robin Butler's wishes, but Dr Wheeler's response (or lack of it) may subsequently strengthen our own position in terminating his contract if it becomes necessary to do so.

If Dr Wheeler chooses not to release himself from the commitment, then we shall need to consider his reasons and the feasibility of any proposal he may put forward as the basis of a new contract. Otherwise, the existing contract will be formally terminated on the grounds that he has not provided the manuscript to time. We will, however, need to begin this action before the end of the year which is the time he agreed (in an exchange of letters) to complete the work. If nothing is done to explore the situation before then, our contractual position will become weaker.

Furthermore, I suggest that any letter which is sent contains a date by which a reply is expected. It should be made clear that failure to reply by that time will be taken as acceptance by Dr Wheeler of his terminating the contract.

Either way, I would, of course, like to recover the advance already paid to him. However, the likely problems and prospects of recovering money from someone who has chosen to work for a charity in Zagreb do not bode well for success! Nevertheless, I shall try (within reason) whatever happens.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

PHILLIP BROOKS
Head of Non-Parliamentary Publishing

competing through quality

CABINET OFFICE
H 94/1425
22 NOV 1994
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071 217 6050
Fax 071 217 6010

FOI 42

HO94/928

P Brooks Esq
Head of Non-Parliamentary Publishing
HMSO
St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1DR

17 November 1994

Dear Phillip

SOE HISTORIES: DR MARK WHEELER

I wrote to you on 30 August 1994 and we have spoken subsequently about the fact that Dr Mark Wheeler has gone to Zagreb for a year, leaving the official history of SOE in Yugoslavia in abeyance.

When we discussed the implications of this we agreed that, subject to Sir Robin Butler's approval, we would terminate Dr Wheeler's appointment as an Official Historian and that you would terminate his contract and seek to recover the £3,000 you have already paid to Dr Wheeler.

Sir Robin Butler agreed that we should work towards termination of Dr Wheeler's contract and appointment but, because of the controversy which surrounded his appointment in the first place, he would much prefer it if Dr Wheeler agreed to seek release from his contract; only if he will not, does Sir Robin think we should proceed towards termination.

I was therefore asked to consult the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Treasury Solicitor and then Sir William Deakin, who was instrumental in Dr Wheeler's appointment and is, in effect, his mentor.

The FCO said that Dr Wheeler's attitude towards his commitment leaves us with little alternative but to end his contract and to withdraw from him the status of official historian.

The reply from Treasury Solicitor was somewhat delayed but Michael Carpenter's letter of 16 November, of which I enclose a copy, suggests that because Dr Wheeler's formal contract is with you, the correct way to approach the matter is for you to terminate it and for the Cabinet Office subsequently, or simultaneously, to terminate his appointment as official historian. You may wish to discuss this with Michael (I understand he is your Legal Adviser as well as mine!) but I should be grateful if you would let me know whether you would be content to proceed in this way.

If you would be content to do so, in order to comply with Sir Robin's wishes, I must first tell Sir William Deakin what we propose. I must then write to Dr Wheeler, more in sorrow than anger, and suggest to him that, in the circumstances, he should seek release from his contract with you. If he declines, or simply does not reply, I shall, subject to your views, seek Sir Robin Butler's agreement to going ahead as proposed by Michael Carpenter.

Could you please let me know, fairly quickly if you can, whether I should now proceed as proposed above. (I fear that Sir Robin is not going to be pleased with the length of time this is taking to resolve - not helped by the delay in getting a reply from Treasury Solicitor!).

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

FOI 41

THE TREASURY SOLICITOR

Queen Anne's Chambers, 28 Broadway, London SW1H 9JS

Direct Line 0171 210 3450 Direct Fax 0171 210 3503

Office of Public Service & Science Legal Adviser

Miss P M Andrews
Historical & Records Section
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
London SW1P 4HW

Please quote: A810199/MC

Your reference:

Date: 16 November 1994

Dear Pat.

Official Histories

Thank you for your letter of 4 October. I am sorry that you have not had any reply before now.

I see no difficulty with your writing to Dr Wheeler to press him for a firm commitment to complete his manuscript by the end of this year. This may well be something of a forlorn exercise, but – without having seen the contract he has with HMSO – I would at this stage advise against terminating his appointment as an Official Historian. The risk is that if his appointment is now terminated Dr Wheeler will be able to argue that the Crown (in the form of the Cabinet Office) has made it impossible for him to perform the contract he has with another emanation of the Crown (ie. HMSO).

The correct way to approach this, if I may suggest as much, is for HMSO to terminate the contract it has with Dr Wheeler and for Cabinet Office subsequently (or simultaneously) to terminate his appointment as an Official Historian. HMSO should now indicate to Dr Wheeler that his contract will terminate (by reason of his breach) if the manuscript is not delivered by the end of 1994. Once HMSO has given this indication, the way would also be clear for you to indicate that his appointment as an Official Historian will be terminated at the same time as the HMSO contract is terminated.

As you may know, I also advise HMSO so please feel free to copy this letter to your contact there.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Carpenter

Michael Carpenter

CABINET OFFICE
H94/1411
16 NOV 1994
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
File No

FOL 40

CABINET OFFICE
70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS
Telephone 071-270 0101 *Facsimile* 071-270 0208

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
Sir Robin Butler GCB CVO

Ref: A094/3434 ✓

10 November 1994

C. Mig Thorpe

Dear Mr. Jack

Thank you for your letter of 3 November about the Official History of SOE in Yugoslavia.

I am afraid I am not able to give you an estimated publication date at the moment. As you will know, Dr Mark Wheeler is unable to proceed with the history this year. I am consulting interested departments about the implications of this delay and shall form a view on the future of the history as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Butler

A F M Jack Esq MC
The Cottage
Prospect Lane
Kington
Hereford HR5 3BE

copied to G Cowell, SOE Adviser.

Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

London SW1A 2AH

FOL. 39

9 November 1994

Miss P M Andrews
Cabinet Office
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
London SW1P 4HW

Dear Pat,

OFFICIAL HISTORY OF SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

Thank you for your letter of 4 October about this official history. Dr Wheeler's attitude towards his commitment leaves us with little alternative but to end his contract and effectively withdraw from him the status of official historian. There is, as far as I can see, no case for seeking to appoint a successor. The decision to release the SOE files removes the principal argument for writing an official history which, however well crafted, would in any event have been bound to stir controversy in one quarter or another. Any publicity surrounding the termination of Dr Wheeler's contract will be significantly less than that which might have attended such an announcement if it had been before the progressive opening of the archive.

Whatever personal considerations apply in Dr Wheeler's case I wonder whether the time has not arrived to review the prospects of the other SOE official histories? In so far as the release of papers is an argument, in his case, could it not be said to apply equally to the other titles?

Yours ever,

Richard

Richard Bone
Library and Records Department

cc: Mrs Yasamee
Mr Cowell

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
London SW1P 4HW
Fax: 071 217 6010

ENQUIRIES:
071 217 6050

URGENT
YES/NO

FACSIMILE LEADER

NAME ..... STEPHANIE PANTING .....

DEPARTMENT ..... CABINET OFFICE .....

ADDRESS ..... ROOM 101 .....

.....

..... FAX No 270 0208 .....

FROM .... PAT ANDREWS .....

DOCUMENT REFERENCE/TITLE ..... A JACK .....

.....

.....

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES .+ 2..... DATE ..9-11-94.....

MESSAGE:

Advice and draft reply to your minute of 4 November (A094/3358)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT REQUIRED YES/ NO

FOL 38

HO94/914 ✓

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

OFFICIAL HISTORY OF SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

In his letter of 3 November Mr Archie Jack asks for information about the date of publication of SOE in Yugoslavia by Dr Mark Wheeler in case he is asked this question following a lecture which he is giving at the Department of War Studies, Sandhurst on 14 November.

As you know Dr Wheeler has gone to Zagreb for a year to work for Help the Aged International. We are working towards termination of his contract to write the Official History and I am at the moment awaiting advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Treasury Solicitor on that.

The SOE Adviser, Mr Cowell, in response to an enquiry from Miss Nora Beloff, who knew about Dr Wheeler's departure, has said that we are considering the future of the history. Mr Cowell says that Mr Jack also knows about Dr Wheeler's departure and that the purpose of his letter is most likely to try to discover, in time for his lecture, whether we have made any decision.

We are not yet in a position to announce a decision and I therefore suggest a reply along the lines of the attached draft which is in line with what Miss Nora Beloff has already been told by Mr Cowell.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section
9 November 1994

DRAFT LETTER FOR SIR ROBIN BUTLER TO SEND TO:-

A F M Jack Esq MC
The Cottage
Prospect Lane
Kington
Hereford
HR5 3BE

Thank you for your letter of 3 November about the Official History of SOE in Yugoslavia.

I am afraid I am not able to give you an estimated publication date at the moment. As you will know, Dr Mark Wheeler is unable to proceed with the history this year. I am consulting interested departments about the implications of this delay and shall form a view on the future of the history as soon as possible.

FOI 37

Ref. AO94/3358

MISS ANDREWS

I enclose a copy of a letter which Sir Robin Butler has received from Mr Archie Jack, of The Cottage, Prospect Lane, Kington, Hereford. From my records, it appears that you will be familiar with his previous correspondence about the appointment of Mark Wheeler to be the official historian of SOE/Jugoslavia in World War II, during the period from May to August 1992.

2. I would be grateful for advice and a draft reply for Sir Robin's signature. In view of Mr Jack's timetable, I would be grateful if this could reach this office by close of play on Wednesday 9 November.

Many thanks,

Stephanie Panting

STEPHANIE PANTING
(APS/SIR ROBIN BUTLER)

7 November 1994

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal
- 7 NOV 1994
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
File No.

Personal.

15703

The Cottage,
Prospect Lane,
Kington,
Hereford, HR5 3BE
Tel. (0544) 230188

3 Nov 94

Dear Sir Robin,

It was certainly not my intention to bother you any further over the matter of the appointing of Mark Wheeler to be the Official Historian of SOE/Yugoslavia in W.W.II, for you have many matters of far greater importance to deal with.

However, I was invited some time ago to give a lecture on this subject to a set of Lieutenants & Instructors at the Department of War Studies, Sandhurst and I accepted the invitation. There will be about an hour of open discussion after the lecture and it will almost certainly be asked — "When is Mark Wheeler's Official History to be published"?

The lecture will take place on Monday week, the 14th, so perhaps you would be good enough to let me have this information in the course of the next few days: I have left this matter more or less to the last minute, so that the answer given will be really up to date.

I do hope that I am not putting you to too much trouble.

Yours sincerely

Archie Jack

Ref. A092

FOI
36

NOTE FOR RECORD

Gervase Cowell telephoned on Monday 10 October to say that he had had a message from Nora Beloff that she wanted to talk to him about SOE in Yugoslavia. She had attended a Conference at which she had learned that Mark Wheeler had gone to Zagreb for a year. She thought it unfair that he should have the monopoly on official information on SOE in Yugoslavia and have disappeared for a year.

Land others

Gervase was proposing to say that the implications for the history of Dr Wheeler's present position were being considered.

I spoke, later in the day, to Richard Bone, FCO. He said that he was awaiting advice from Gervase Cowell and Heather Yasamee, but that he was inclined to say that a line should be drawn under the history and, given the release of the records, that no replacement should be sought for Dr Wheeler. He did not think he needed to consult his hierarchy in order to say this but he would copy his reply to me to his Private Office.

I said I thought we should act fairly quickly. We had been delayed by HMSO initially and some two months had already passed since Dr Wheeler notified me of his departure. If we were going to "de-commision" him we should do so without too much further delay. He agreed.

PSA

MISS P M ANDREWS

10 October 1994

top copy on DCW file

FOI 35

HO94/796

c (t.p.o.) Miss Andrews
Thank you: noted. Getting Prof Watt to deliver was quite an achievement, even if the conclusion is that his work is not up to scratch.
R. Venning 5/10

MR VENNING

OFFICIAL HISTORIES

I should perhaps have copied to you my minute of 28 September to Sir Robin Butler about Dr Mark Wheeler (now attached). I did not do so because the histories of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) are in a different category to the ordinary Official Histories and somewhat semi-detached. The historians are paid by their publishers and they are accommodated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. All we do is to secure their appointment as Official Historians and pay a small amount towards the FCO's administration costs.

However, even this causes problems as you will see from my minute to Sir Robin, and I am copying the exchange to you now because of Sir Robin's comment on monitoring. His irritation is understandable and I hope my reply will mollify him but it is a little unfair to say that we did not notice that progress was not being made; I seem to have spent the last eight years of my life "noticing" that Professor Watt was not producing 'Defence Organisation'.

You will be interested in the last paragraph of my minute of today's date to Sir Robin in which I have reported on developments with Professor Watt; he is doubtless the "second case" to which Sir Robin refers and this, therefore, seemed an appropriate context in which to do so.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section
4 October 1994

CABINET OFFICE
H
- 6 OCT 1994
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
File No.

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071-217
Facsimile 071-217 6010
(GTN 217)

POL/ 34

HO94/794

M C Carpenter Esq
Treasury Solicitors Department
Queen Anne's Chamber
28 Broadway
London SW1H 9JS

4 October 1994

Dear Michael

OFFICIAL HISTORIES

In 1987 the then Prime Minister appointed Dr Mark Wheeler as an Official Historian to write an Official History of SOE in Yugoslavia.

Dr Wheeler's actual contract is with HMSO, who took it over from Macmillans in 1991. We make no payments to Dr Wheeler. As an accredited Official Historian, however, he is granted access to the official records and accommodation is provided for him by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the Old Admiralty Building which is where the Archive is housed.

We had hoped that Dr Wheeler would have completed the history before now and some urgency has come into the situation because some two years ago the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that the SOE Archive should be reviewed for release in the Public Record Office. As one of the reasons for commissioning Official Histories is to have them written before the records become generally available for research, I have pressed Dr Wheeler, via the SOE Adviser in the FCO, to bring his work to completion. I was told that the text of the history should be with me for clearance by interested departments by the end of 1993. This date passed and I was then told that the date had been revised to 1994 (not just for Dr Wheeler but for all four SOE histories currently being written). With Sir Robin Butler's approval I wrote to the four historians in July this year asking them to confirm that the texts would be with me by the end of this year, stressing the importance of this because of the immiment release of the records.

Dr Wheeler replied saying that for personal and work-related reasons he had not made any progress on the history for a year and that he was about to take up a year-long appointment in Zagreb with Help the Aged International. The history would, he said, have to "hang fire" until his return.

As this appointment with Help the Aged was taken up with no prior consultation with us, with the SOE Adviser, or with his publishers, HMSO, we canot be confident that Dr Wheeler will, in fact, return after a year. Even if he does, given that he says himself that he made no progress with the work for a year before he went (in August this year), it looks as if we are faced, not just with a year's delay but possibly with two or three years delay, during which time the records will become generally available to the public and the reason for having an official history will become void.

I have consulted Sir Robin Butler who feels that we should invite Dr Wheeler to relinquish his appointment and if he does not that we should seek to terminate his appointment. I enclose a copy of the letter of appointment and should be grateful if you could let me know whether there is any reason why we should not terminate the appointment or whether there are any steps we should take in advance of doing so.

HMSO had agreed delivery date of end 1994 with Dr Wheeler, which he obviously cannot now meet. They will no doubt be taking legal advice separately on what their position will be if we terminate Dr Wheeler's appointment as an Official Historian.

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

PERSONAL

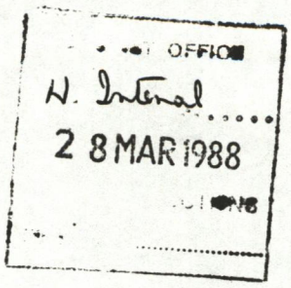
S.03063

CABINET OFFICE

Government Offices Great George Street London SW1P 3AL Telephone 01-233 270 6030

Principal Establishment Officer

Dr M C Wheeler
School of Slavonic and
East European Studies
University of London
Senate House
Malet Street
LONDON WC1E 7HU



25 March 1988

Dear Dr Wheeler

I am very pleased to be able to tell you that the formalities which we needed to undertake before appointing you as an Official Historian for the purpose of writing 'SOE in Yugoslavia' have now been satisfactorily completed. Therefore subject to your formal acceptance of the Conditions of Access I am pleased so to appoint you.

Two copies of the Conditions of Access, which you have already seen, are enclosed, together with two copies of the Official Secrets Act declaration. Would you be so kind to sign one copy of each and return the signed copies to me.

During the preparation of the Official History, to be completed in accordance with your own contract with Macmillans, your main contact will be with Christopher Woods, FCO, but if at any time there is anything that we can do to help please do not hesitate to get in touch with Pat Andrews at the Cabinet Office Historical Section, in Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1 (Tel No 211 6566), or with me.

May I wish you every success with your work.

Yours sincerely

J W STEVENS

CONDITIONS GOVERNING THE ACCESS TO AND USE OF OFFICIAL RECORDS NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

(1) You will be provided with accommodation for use during normal office hours and with suitable security furniture in protected official buildings, where you will be required to keep such records while working on them, and any copies or extracts which you may make in the course of such work. Typing services can also be provided if necessary. The Government will not accept responsibility for any other costs incurred in the writing of the history.

(2) You will be bound by the provisions of the Official Secrets Act, and will be asked to sign a copy of the Official Secrets Declaration.

(3) No information derived from your researches of closed records, including the manuscript of the history, may be disclosed without proper authority to any unauthorised person; and this prohibition extends to disclosures to Macmillans and to typing and other staff not provided by the Government Service.

(4) You may make use of the closed material to which you are given access solely for the purpose of writing the said history, and for no other purpose. You will be required to submit for official clearance the manuscript of the history.

(5) The right to decide whether or not the history should be published will rest exclusively with the Government who may, as an alternative to withholding permission to publish, grant such permission conditionally upon the omission or alteration of any parts of the text which are not acceptable in the national interest, or because they might give occasion for an action for defamation.

(6) The usual disclaimer will need to be included in the history on behalf of Her Majesty's Government in the following terms:

> "The author of this history, as of the other official histories of the Second World War, has been given free access to official documents. He alone is responsible for the statements made and the views expressed."

(7) All copies of the manuscript not approved for publication shall be surrendered to the Cabinet Office if you are so requested, and copies or extracts of any records made for working purposes shall be surrendered to the Department concerned, on completion of the manuscript or beforehand, if requested.

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071 217 6050
Fax 071 217 6010

FOL

HO94/793

R Bone Esq
Head of Library and Records Section
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Room W127
Downing Street West
London SW1A 2AL

4 October 1994

Dear Richard

OFFICIAL HISTORY OF SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

In 1987 the then Prime Minister gave approval to the appointment of Dr Mark Wheeler as an Official Historian to write SOE in Yugoslavia. With the approval also of the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary (following correspondence between the Cabinet Secretary and PUS, FCO, (Sir Patrick Wright) and security clearance), Dr Wheeler was formally invited to undertake the work in 1988.

As you know, since Professor M R D Foot wrote SOE in France, the SOE histories have been produced by the 'private venture' method ie the historians' contracts have been directly with their publishers, although we have granted access to the records and the work has been done on FCO premises under the auspices of the SOE Adviser. Dr Wheeler's original contract was with Macmillans but in 1991 it was taken over by HMSO who offered him better terms.

We have hitherto regarded progress with the histories as being the responsibility mainly of the publishers but, when it was decided that the SOE Archive should be reviewed for release, we became concerned that the histories should be published before the papers became generally available for private research and I asked for progress reports.

The texts of all four histories, including SOE in Yugoslavia, should have been with us for official clearance by the end of 1993 but this date was subsequently revised to end 1994. With Sir Robin Butler's approval I wrote to all four SOE historians in July and asked them to confirm that their texts would be ready for clearance by the end of this year. Dr Wheeler replied saying that for many reasons, some purely personal, he had made no progress with the history since the summer of 1993 and that he was about to take up a year's appointment with Help the Aged International in Zagreb. The history would therefore, he said, have to "hang fire" until his return.

As you will imagine, Sir Robin Butler is not at all pleased about this! Given that Dr Wheeler departed for Zagreb with no notice to anyone - he did not tell HMSO, nor Gervase Cowell, and I only got his letter when I returned from a week's leave, by which time he had gone - we cannot be certain that he will return after a year; whenever he returns he will have to pick up the threads again and, as he himself says he made no progress in the year before he left for Zagreb, we are looking at, I should think, a further two to three years delay. by which time the papers on Yugoslavia will very likely have been released.

With considerable reluctance I have suggested to Sir Robin Butler that we should consider termination of Dr Wheeler's appointment in which case HMSO would also terminate his contract. I have discussed the matter with Gervase Cowell who is in agreement and I shall need to check the position with Treasury Solicitor. As a first step, however, given that the appointment was made with the agreement of the Foreign Secretary Sir Robin has asked me to consult you.

You will know of course that Dr Wheeler'a appointment was much criticised by Miss Nora Beloff and others and there will no doubt be much crowing from that camp if we take this course. Sir Robin has suggested that, if everyone agrees, we might write more in sorrow than anger to Dr Wheeler and suggest that, in the circumstances, he might wish to be released from this responsibility.

If we decide to terminate Dr Wheeler's appointment, unilaterally or with his agreement, we shall need to consider whether to appoint some-one else to write SOE in Yugoslavia. Given that the records are to be opened and given the difficulty of finding anyone to write the history who would not be regarded as partisan by one side of this contentious issue or the other, my inclination is to leave it to private historians to make what they will of the records when they are opened and not to have an Official History at all. Sir Robin has not commented on this aspect so far and I should be grateful for any views you may have on it.

As ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

FOI 32

Miss Andrews

Thank you. I hope that they are not safe on Professor Watt but also that they can back up their view with solid evidence. RBS 4.10.

HO94/795

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

14133

SOE HISTORIES

Thank you for your manuscript note on my minute of 28 September about Dr Mark Wheeler. I have written to the Foreign Office and to Treasury Solicitor and await their replies.

With regard to monitoring, I have written into our new contract with Professor Alan Milward (UK Accession to the EC) a formal provision for regular progress reports to be made; I have also agreed separately with LSE that we will jointly review the situation at quarterly intervals. I hope that this will help us to avoid a situation such as that which arose with Professor Watt who, I assume, is the second case to which you refer, and to which I refer below.

The SOE histories however are rather different. We pay no money to the historians, whose formal contracts (as distinct from their appointment as Official Historians) are with their publishers; we have tended, therefore, to regard progress-chasing as the responsibility of the publishers. However, when the release of the SOE archive became a factor I began to 'chase' and was told that the texts would be with us for clearance by the end of 1993. It was when this date passed and I was told that the completion date had been revised to end 1994 that I sought your approval to sending the letters which brought forward Dr Wheeler's unexpected reply.

I shall keep pursuing the other three SOE historians; their replies did not give whole-hearted commitment to end-1994 completion, but at least they have not fled the country!

Professor Watt completed the last chapters of the Defence Organisation history within the three month final extension of his contract. The chapters have now been circulated to the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. I have asked them to look at the history as a whole to make absolutely sure that we are still justified, now that we have it all, in saying that it is not worthy of publication which was the MoD view earlier this year.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS
Historical and Records Section
3 October 1994

H Internal...
- 5 OCT 1994
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No

Miss Andrews

Thank you. I agree we should work towards termination

I suggest we proceed as follows:-

i. You consult FCO & Treasury Solicitor as you suggest

ii. You talk Bill Deakin what has happened and say that it looks as if Dr. Wheeler will not be able to fulfil his contract

iii. You write to Dr. Wheeler, more in sorrow than in anger, saying that we cannot leave the matter open-ended and wonder whether he would like to seek release from his contract, i.e. giving him the chance to resign but reserving our ability to take action if he does not. If he asks to be released from his contract, that puts us in a better position with the critics; i.e. I don't think I need report to the PM until we are either accepting his resignation or have to terminate.

Incidentally, I think we must also consider a better monitoring arrangement on progress. This is the second case in which things have reached a critical phase without our having notice that progress was not being made

RERB

29.9.

HO94/780

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

SOE HISTORIES

Dr Mark Wheeler was appointed as an Official Historian in 1988 to write the history of SOE in Yugoslavia. You will recall that his appointment was the subject of considerable criticism from people who regarded him as unsuitable because he was considered to be too "pro-Tito".

We considered the situation with regard to all the SOE histories during the summer in the light of the Foreign Secretary's decision to review the SOE Archive for release. With your approval, I wrote to all four SOE historians asking them to confirm that the texts of their histories would be with us for clearance by the end of this year at the latest.

Dr Wheeler's reply came as something of a shock. He wrote to say that he was, within days of writing, leaving the country to take up a year-long job with Help the Aged International in Zagreb; that SOE in Yugoslavia was no closer to completion than it had been a year earlier and that, therefore, it would continue to "hang fire" until his return.

Dr Wheeler wrote also of several personal and work-related problems which had affected his work on the history and which were, to some extent, being resolved by his decision to take up the post in Zagreb. There had, however, been no prior notice of his intentions either to me, or to HMSO with whom he has the publishing contract. The SOE Adviser, Mr Cowell, knew that Dr Wheeler was looking for another job and of his interest in the former Yugoslavia, but not that he was proposing to leave his responsibilities here in this manner.

Despite sympathy with Dr Wheeler in what is obviously a very unhappy time for him, I have to say that I think we should consider termination of his contract as an official historian. We do not know for certain that he will return from Zagreb after a year (probably Dr Wheeler does not know that). So far as we can tell he had made little progress with the history so we are not looking at <u>one</u> year's further delay but, more probably, two, or even three, by which time the records will be open for general research in the Public Record Office.

I have discussed the matter with HMSO. If we terminate Dr Wheeler's appointment as an official historian, they would also terminate his contract with them and seek to recover the £3,000 already paid to him. The delivery date agreed between Dr Wheeler and HMSO was end-December 1994; he obviously is not going to achieve that.

FOI 31

CABINET OFFICE
A 13907
29 SEP 1994
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. .....

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal
30 SEP 1994
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. .....

If you agree in principle that we should take steps towards termination of the appointment and contract, I would propose to consult the Foreign Office who were much involved prior to the appointment of Dr Wheeler and to check our position with Treasury Solicitor. Subject to their views we should let No 10 know what is proposed, as the appointment was made by the Prime Minister, and you may also wish to inform the group who decided on the history programme and agreed the choice of historian - Sir William Deakin, Sir Brooks Richards and Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker. Sir William Deakin in particular is a strong supporter of Dr Wheeler but I do not believe that he will condone his conduct in this matter.

If we take this course we shall then need to consider whether we should appoint another historian to write on SOE in Yugoslavia. The Foreign Office may also have views on this and you will no doubt wish to consult the above group, but you may think that as any appointment is likely to be controversial on one side of this very contentious subject or the other, <u>and</u> that the papers will be open for general research before the history is completed, the topic may be best left for private historians to tackle, using the newly released material.

The Archie Jack/Nora Beloff group which so opposed Dr Wheeler's appointment would, of course, regard a decision that he should not continue with the Official History as a great victory and vindication of their opposition to him but, to an extent, he has played into their hands and if we decide on this course we shall need to consider how best to present it publicly.

Subject to your views I shall consult the Foreign Office and Treasury Solicitor before preparing a minute for you to send to No 10, a letter to go to Sir W Deakin et al, notifying them of the position and seeking their views on the appointment of another historian, and a letter, to go either from you or from me, to Dr Wheeler.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section
28 September 1994

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071 217 6050
Fax 071 217 6010

FOL. 30

Your ref: 630957
Our ref: HO94/761

P Brooks Esq
Head of Non-Parliamentary Publishing
HMSO
St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1PD

20 September 1994

Dear Phillip

SOE HISTORIES

Thank you for your letter of 16 September following our meeting on the 15th.

Sir Robin Butler is away until the end of the month so I shall not be able to get his view on the Mark Wheeler situation until after then. I discussed the matter with Gervase Cowell, the SOE Adviser, last Friday, 16 September. He agrees entirely with our proposals.

I should just say, however, that the decision on whether another author should be appointed does not rest with me. I am prepared to advise Sir Robin that, for the reasons given, it would probably be better not to appoint another author for SOE in Yugoslavia but I cannot be sure that he will accept that recommendation! I will let you know.

You were going to check on the situation with regard to Sir Brooks Richards and publication of "Clandestine Sea Transport". The text was sent to Mr Petherick on 21 July and Sir Brooks is wondering when he is likely to be getting page proofs! I wrote to you on 21 and 25 July mentioning such things as editing, translation and foreign rights. I should be glad to know where we stand on all these matters.

Best Wishes

Yours ever Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

HMSO

FOI 29

Your reference

Our reference 630957

Date 16 September, 1994

St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1PD

Telephone
0603 69
GTN 3014 * 5532

Switchboard
0603 622211
Fax 0603 696506

Miss P M Andrews
Cabinet Office
Historical and Research Section
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
LONDON SW1P 4HW

Dear Pat

SOE HISTORIES: DR MARK WHEELER

Further to your letter dated 30 August, we met and agreed that you would propose to Sir Robin Butler that the contract with Mark Wheeler to write the history of SOE in Yugoslavia should be terminated. This follows his decision to take up a year long appointment with Help the Aged International in Zagreb thus leaving the SOE history even further to 'hang fire'. Moreover, because the SOE archive is about to be released to the PRO thus making it freely available to the public generally, another author would not be appointed.

If this approach is acceptable to Sir Robin you will let me know so that I can formally terminate the author's agreement and seek to recover the £3,000 already paid to Mark Wheeler. How far to pursue this is something I shall have to decide. Incidentally, the agreed date for delivery of the 'script was 31 December 1994.

All good wishes

Yours sincerely

PHILLIP BROOKS
Head of Non-Parliamentary Publishing

CABINET OFFICE
H 94/1207
20 SEP 1994
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
File No

competing through quality

FOL. 28

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071 217 6050
Fax 071 217 6010

HO94/690

P Brooks Esq
Head of Non-Parliamentary Publishing
HMSO
St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1DH

30 August 1994

Dear Phillip

SOE HISTORIES: DR MARK WHEELER

I promised to write to confirm what I told you on the telephone last week in respect of Dr Mark Wheeler, the Official Historian appointed to write SOE in Yugoslavia.

I wrote to all the SOE Historians, including Dr Wheeler, on 4 July, asking them to ensure that their texts were with us for clearance at the latest by end 1994; we had been promised them by end 1993 but none had materialised and, given the Foreign Secretary's decision to release the SOE archive to the public, the reason for having Official Histories at all is diminishing, particularly if we cannot publish them before the records are all available for general research.

Dr Wheeler's reply, dated 15 August, came as something of a shock. He told me that he was leaving London at the end of that week to take up a year-long job with Help the Aged International in Zagreb. Dr Wheeler explained that he had been finding it difficult to combine full-time teaching with work on the book and, since 1991, with several personal difficulties adding to the problem, it has proved impossible. His other difficulties have, apparently, been alleviated by his decision to go to Zagreb but at the cost, as he puts it, of delaying the SOE history even further; it will, he says, continue to "hang fire".

Although Dr Wheeler's contract is with you I understood from you that he has not had the courtesy to let you know of his decision; nor has he informed the SOE Adviser, Gervase Cowell! We need to decide what our attitude is to this development and I must inform Sir Robin Butler both of what has happened and what our view is of what action we should take.

/I see

I see from the draft contract which Jayne Wilkinson sent to me in September 1991 and on which I commented in a letter dated 3 October 1991 to Jim McGregor, that a delivery date was to be agreed - see bottom of first page in DELIVERY OF MANUSCRIPT. Was one ever agreed? I also note that, according to the draft, £3,000 was to be paid on signature of the Agreement; I assume this payment was made!

I think, as a first step, we need to consider whether Dr Wheeler is in breach of his contract with you. If he is, I would be prepared, subject to your agreement, to recommend to Sir Robin Butler that the contract be terminated. Whether we then appoint another historian to write 'SOE in Yugoslavia' would need to be considered by all those who were party to the original decision with regard to the SOE history programme.

If you would like to discuss this Gervase Cowell and I would be glad to meet you for this purpose. In any event, I should like to put Sir Robin Butler in the picture pretty soon so should welcome at least your intitial thoughts on the matter.

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

CABINET OFFICE
H94/1119
16 AUG1994
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No

School of Slavonic and East European Studies
University of London
Senate House
Malet Street London WC1E 7HU
Telephone 071-637 4934/38 Fax 071-436 8916
Extension 4079

FOI 27

15 August 1994

Dear Pat,

Please excuse both the handwritten form and the tardy despatch of this reply to your letter of 4 July. The handwriting is the consequence of having no word processor available at the moment; while the delay is the result of my having been abroad almost continuously since late June.

Richard Clogg and I had hoped to see you together this week to offer our joint and several excuses for failing to meet every target date set for our SOE histories. But now it is your turn to be away. As I will be leaving London again at the end of the week to take up a year-long job with an NGO in Zagreb, it has become urgent for me to explain not only why 'SOE in Yugoslavia' is no closer to completion than it was one year ago, but also why it will continue to hang fire.

Even before the outbreak of the Yugoslav wars I was finding it difficult to combine full-time teaching with the work on the book. Since 1991, that task has proved impossible. Grave personal difficulties — such as a failing marriage, family complications and a stymied career at SSEES — have also taken their toll. In my effort to break free of at least some of these I have pursued numerous job opportunities. Now I have been successful, and today go on the payroll of Help Age International (the international offshoot of Help the Aged).

Unfortunately, however much working with refugees in ex-Yugoslavia may contribute to solving several of my problems, it does so at the cost of delaying the SOE book even further. Gervase Cowell is aware of my attempts over the past year or so to find new employment, but I have not yet told him that I will be going to Zagreb for a year. I will do so this week, and make arrangements to clear my cupboard at the OAB

of the various official files it contains. This will at least remove one small impediment to the release of papers to the PRO.

As Richard Clogg will also be telling you, the likelihood that we will eventually complete our respective volumes would be much enhanced if we were to be allowed to work on them at home as in our offices. Surely, the pending release to the PRO of SOE materials ought now to make it possible for us to have our notes, photocopies, libraries and lives more closely unified. I am not suggesting that we (or I) be permitted to take the contents of our (or any) OBS cupboard(s) abroad, as in any case I doubt that I will have many spare moments for writing while in Croatia. But the physical consolidation of the materials required to write the book would aid the process once I return to London.

My address in Croatia will be Ozaljska 93/XVI, 41000 Zagreb. Tel./Fax. 010-385-41-565-273.

With best wishes,

Mark Wheeler

(26)

CABINET OFFICE
Historical and Records Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071-217 6050
Facsimile 071-217 6010
(GTN 217)

copy on p/f

Dr M C Wheeler
School of Slavonic and East European Studies
University of London
Senate House
Malet Street
London WC1E 7HU

4 July 1994

Dear Mark

It is now some time since we had any contact on the subect of 'SOE in Yugoslavia'. I understood from Gervase Cowell that the text was expected by the end of 1993 but that this was subsequently amended to end-1994!

As you will imagine we have recently been having to give some thought to the official history programme in the context of the preparation of the SOE Archive for release in the Public Record Office. Sir Robin Butler is anxious that the histories now in course of preparation should be completed before the Archive as a whole becomes publicly available.

The end-1994 date therefore becomes crucial and the purpose of this letter is to ask if you could confirm that the text of 'SOE in Yugoslavia' will be with us for clearance by then, if not before! If you would like to discuss please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

Shelley
To note all relevant files plse. Pat 26/4

7/2
7/2/ 1-5

HO93/345 ✓

NOTE FOR RECORD

Mr Gervase Cowell, SOE Adviser, told me on Thursday 22 April 1993 that he had spoken to the SOE Historians collectively earlier in the week. All but one, Professor M R D Foot, had said that their texts would be with us for clearance by the end of this year.

P M Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS
26 April 1993

NOTE FOR RECORD

Gervase Cowell told me on 1 April 1993 that Mark Wheeler has started writing SOE in Yugoslavia

Last estimate was that the text would be with us for clearance by the end of 1993.

PRA
1/4/93

With the Compliments of

CABINET OFFICE
Historical Section,
Great George Street,
London, SW1P 3AQ
Telephone: 01 - 233

PoIA 14/8

24

c - Kristy Andrews

CABINET OFFICE
70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS
Telephone 071-270 0101 *Facsimile* 071-270 0208

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
Sir Robin Butler GCB CVO

Ref. A092/2357

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal
14 AUG1992
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No

13 August 1992

Dear Mr Jack,

I am writing on behalf of Sir Robin Butler to thank you for your letter dated 1 August which arrived just after he left to go on holiday.

Sir Robin will see your letter on his return at the end of the month and your further and final comments on the question of the approval of Dr Wheeler's history before publication will be carefully noted.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Grauberg.

(Ms J C Grauberg)
Assistant Private Secretary

A F M Jack Esq MC
The Cottage
Prospect Lane
Kington
Hereford
HR5 3BE

23

HO92/447

MISS GRAUBERG

We spoke yesterday about the latest letter from Mr Archie Jack. I suggest a Private Secretary acknowledgement along the following lines:-

A F M Jack Esq MC
The Cottage
Prospect Lane
Kington
Hereford
HR5 3BE

I am writing on behalf of Sir Robin Butler to thank you for your letter dated 1 August which arrived just after he left to go on holiday.

Sir Robin will see your letter on his return at the end of the month and your further and final comments on the question of the approval of Dr Wheeler's history before publication will be carefully noted.

Private Secretary

I hope this will suffice to close the correspondence at least for the time being but shall not be surprised if it does not!

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section

13 August 1992

pp: plse

22

Personal.

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal...
5 AUG 1992
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. .....

CABINET OFFICE
A 9978 ✓
4 AUG 1992
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. .....

The Cottage,
Prospect Lane,
Kington,
Hereford HR5 3BE

1 Aug 92

c- Miss Andrews

Dear Sir Robin,

Thank you for your letter of 24th July (A092/2178) and for your repeated assurances. The following are, I trust my final words on this most painful subject.

As regards those people who will be selected to verify with care Dr Wheeler's draft Official History, will you please ensure :-

1. That they are carefully chosen for their open mindedness (none from the powerful pro-T.T. clique, please).
2. That their attention is drawn to the long list of contents & omissions that

have characterised Dr Wheeler's previous writings on this subject, which I have listed in the letters I have written to Dr Wheeler and in the Report of my interview with him: you have copies, now, of all these.

Please may I rely on you to do this?

These are my final lines to you on this subject. I should just like to say how very grateful I am to you for finding the time to correspond with me personally about this matter.

So many thanks and "Fare well".

Yours sincerely

Arelie Rack

Corri Box

PO/A 21

CABINET OFFICE
Internal
27 JUL 1992
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No

CABINET OFFICE
70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS
Telephone 071-270 0101 *Facsimile* 071-270 0208

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
Sir Robin Butler GCB CVO

Ref. A092/2178

24 July 1992

c- Miss Andrews

Dear Mr. Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 19 July and for sending me a copy of the report of your interview with Dr Wheeler. I have taken a copy and am returning yours to you with this letter. I note that a copy has also gone to Dr Wheeler.

I have taken careful note of the concerns which you have expressed in your letters and I am happy to repeat the assurances which I have given in mine that I, and others concerned with Official Histories, will do our best, at the appropriate time, to ensure that History presents a fair and balanced picture.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Butler

A F M Jack Esq MC
The Cottage
Prospect Lane
Kington
Hereford
HR5 3BE

20

HO92/390

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

Although in his letter of 19 July Mr Archie Jack repeats his now familiar complaint about Dr Wheeler's appointment as the Official Historian to write 'SOE in Yugoslavia' and his concern about the method by which Dr Wheeler's history is to be vetted before publication to ensure that it is a fair and honest account, he seems now to be accepting your assurances on these matters albeit, as he says, "with great reluctance". Mr Jack is eloquent and passionate about his concern that the Mihailovic side of the story should be given fair treatment in the Official History; he hopes that the more important of the facts mentioned in his record of his interview with Dr Wheeler (of which Dr Wheeler also has a copy) will be included and that he may rely on you to ensure that the Official History tells the whole truth even though some of it may not be to the credit of our country. You have given and re-iterated your assurance that you, and others concerned with Official Histories will, when the time comes, endeavour to ensure that the History presents a fair and balanced picture; I do not think we can do more than this.

There appears to be some confusion about the document enclosed with Mr Jack's letter. It is his record of his interview with Dr Wheeler in July last year. Mr Jack offered to send it to you in his letter of 12 May - an offer which you accepted in your letter of 16 June. Mr Jack now says that in fact the document was attached to an earlier letter dated 5 October 1991. We have no record of a letter of that date nor of having seen the interview record before. The copy now received is Mr Jack's only copy which he would like to have returned to him. I do not however think it advisable to get involved in a discussion about the apparently missing letter - Mr Jack has not mentioned it before and it seems odd that he did not 'chase' a reply to it. Nor do I think it advisable to be drawn into commenting on the interview report as suggested in Mr Jack's PS, this would open up a whole new area of correspondence and we would never, I believe, satisfy Mr Jack.

I recommend a letter which simply re-iterates once more the assurances you have given to Mr Jack, thanks him for the report and return it without comment on its substance.

Mr Jack makes fun of the fact that he was addressed as QC rather than MC in your letter of 16 June; this was a typing error.

I attach a draft letter for your consideration.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section
23 July 1992

DRAFT LETTER FOR SIR ROBIN BUTLER TO SEND TO:-

A F M Jack Esq MC
The Cottage
Prospect Lane
Kington
HEREFORD
HR5 3BE

Thank you for your letter of 19 July and for sending me a copy of the report of your interview with Dr Wheeler. I have taken a copy and am returning yours to you with this letter. I note that a copy has also gone to Dr Wheeler.

I have taken careful note of the concerns which you have expressed in your letters and I am happy to repeat the assurances which I have given in mine that I, and others concerned with Official Histories, will do our best, at the appropriate time, to ensure that History presents a fair and balanced picture.

Confidential.

C. Miss Andrews -
Grateful for advice and draft reply by 29 July please.

19

OFFICE
Internal
22 JUL 1992
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

J 21.7.

The Cottage,
Prospect Lane,
Kington,
Hereford
19 Jul 92

CABINET OFFICE
9238
A
21 JUL 1992
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

Dear Sir Robin,

Thank you for your letter of 16th June on the subject of Dr Wheeler, the Official Historian appointed by the Government to write "SOE in Yugoslavia".

I did in fact receive your letter of 22nd April 91, which I felt did not really clarify the situation. It seems to me that the Official Historian should be in a position similar to that of a Judge, perched on the Bench, high above all controversy. If the Government can impose such comportment on all Judges, I fail to see why Dr Wheeler can not be made to comply also.

But to begin with is the matter of Dr Wheeler's selection. In view of what he had written previously on the subject (please refer to my comments in the enclosed copies of my letter to him of 30th July 91 and of my Interview Report of 6th-8th July 91) one would have thought it apparent that his viewpoint was too angled to justify his selection as the Official Historian. One assumes, perhaps wrongly, that those who selected him had studied all Dr Wheeler's written work on the subject.

However, you have already told me in these matters that nothing can now be done and this I feel obliged to accept, though with great reluctance.

There remains the major problem of how to ensure that the Official History, when published in perhaps 5 years' time,

shall prove to be a completely fair + honest report.
In your letter you say that "I and others concerned with Official Histories" will do your best to ensure that this object is achieved. It is essential that the attention of all those concerned should be drawn to Dr Wheeler's past errors + omissions, which I have listed. So far as my own knowledge is concerned, in the papers herewith enclosed. These are facts of which Dr Wheeler is either ignorant, or of which he is aware, but wishes to suppress: he can not have missed so many facts of importance in his researched work, surely.

I do feel, personally, very strongly about this matter, having been a member of the British Mission to Mihailovic, whom I met on a number of occasions and for whom I had the greatest sympathy: I also knew all my staff, who served us well and of which there is only one survivor. After they were told that we were abandoning them, they provided effective protection for us, whilst we waited four long months before we were finally evacuated by the U.S. Airforce. I accompanied Mihailovic Loyalists on two important actions and witnessed the high casualty rate suffered by the Loyalists & the Germans. On one occasion my faithful Loyalist orderly was wounded and committed suicide in order to avoid capture. To those brave people we all owed our lives and so did the 450 American aircrew, whom the Loyalists picked up from all over Serbia + evacuated safely: yet by the pro-Tito clan they are classed as "Collaborators". We must return to the Mihailovic

loyalists their lost honour. To do this it is essential that the official History tells the whole truth.

Michael Lees has very suddenly, and sadly, departed: I enter my eightieth year in two days time, so I shall follow, no doubt, not far behind him. There is nobody else to whom the baton can now be passed. So may I please rely on you that this Official History really does tell the whole truth, though some of it may not be to the credit of our Country. It must in no way be doctored by the powerful pro-Tito clan. Furthermore it must include at any rate the more important of those facts which are mentioned in my enclosed papers: Dr Wheeler cannot plead ignorance of these facts and this was my precise reason for sending him a copy of my Interview Report.

If you would be good enough to give me the assurance that you will act as requested, I can not tell you how very relieved I would be. For I can now do no more to ensure that the Official History represents "the whole truth and nothing but the truth", however sad and shaming it may be.

I do appreciate the personal attention that you have accorded to this matter, knowing how heavily involved you must be in other matters of far greater importance: please accept my grateful thanks.

I was unduly honoured by the "Q.C." appended to my name in your last letter to me. My maternal grandfather, a renowned Q.C. in his time, would be tickled pink!

Yours sincerely
Archie Vack

Sir Robin Butler, KCB, CVO

P.T.O.

P.S. You say that you would like to have a copy of my Interview Report: this, though, accompanied my letter to you of 5th October 91. However, I enclose a further copy, which is my only one: would you please return it to me after you have taken the photo-copies which you require. As this is my only copy, I am sending this letter to you by registered post. In my letter referred to I did say that I would appreciate your comments on these papers: they would, of course, be treated as confidential.

CONFIDENTIAL

SOE/JUGOSLAVIA IN WORLD WAR II

A meeting on this subject was held at
Thorens-Glières, Haute-Savoie, France,
on 6th, 7th, 8th July 1991 at which

Dr Mark Wheeler interviewed Mr Archibald Jack
in the presence of
Sir Alexander Glen

(This Summary is written by Mr Archibald Jack
who has done his best to report correctly)

CONFIDENTIAL

1. The typescript of my Imperial War Museum interview of 18th March 1989 had been read by Glen and Wheeler: I asked for their comments which were as follows:-

(a) (Page 2). The SOE message for Mvić of 28th May 1943, ordering him to retreat into a small box in Serbia: I had stated that I did not know whether SOE had finally obeyed F.O's order that it should be immediately withdrawn. Wheeler said that, in fact, it had been.

(b) (Page 5). The order to Bailey to allow the Italian Venezia Division to retain its arms was not given, as I stated, by SOE (Cairo), but by the C-in-C. Wheeler added that the same order had been given to the Partisans, but they disobeyed it and disarmed the Italians themselves.

(c) (Page 6). Reference the F.O. memo of November 1943, stating that "Mvić has given orders to all Četnik units to co-operate loyally with the Germans." Wheeler claimed that this was merely a repeat of the Cope signal to SOE (Cairo) in November, which stated that Mvić had "ordered Djurić to co-operate with the Nedić Government". The text is cited in "The Web of Disinformation" (page 158) and the word "German" does not appear: is Wheeler's claim, therefore, correct?

(d) (Page 10). I state that there had never been any explanation as to why the evacuation of the Allied personnel with Mvić was abandoned by the RAF and immediately taken on by the U.S. Air Force. Wheeler said that the reason for this was a mechanical one, the American Dakotas having more engine power than those used by the British: this is a claim that could be verified.

(e) (Page 22). I added to Churchill's confession, which I cited, that of Eden quoted in a letter to the Daily Telegraph of 5 August 1990, that Yugoslavia had been his greatest blunder.

Apart from these comments, my paper appeared to be accepted.

2. I reported on the sabotage, which I had carried out (Mokra Gora, Visegrad) and the sabotage plans prepared by me (antimony mines at Zajaća and Krupanj; bridges at Zvornik, Šabac and in the Ibar Valley).

Wheeler had claimed to Mike Lees that the railway line at Mokra Gora/Višegrad was one of minor importance. I agreed that it was a line of small gauge, due to the fact that no normal gauge line could have coped with such a mountainous region; I pointed out that it was a line of some hundreds of kms in length with literally hundreds of bridges and hundreds of tunnels, and was the only railway connection between Belgrade via Užice and Višegrad to Sarajevo and thence on to Titograd and the Dalmatian ports of Ploče, Dubrovnik and Hercegnovi: South of Split it was in fact the only railway connection between Belgrade and the Dalmatian coast. If he had any further doubts on the importance of this line, I referred him to the opinion expressed on the subject by Deakin in "The Embattled Mountain" (pages 51, 57 and 58).

As regards the Ibar Valley operation, I stated that Mvić had given his assent; I showed him the detailed plans that I had prepared for a "coup-de-main" operation, amended by Brigadier Armstrong, which proved that this operation could have been carried - and certainly would have been - had not SOE (Cairo) forbidden it. Thus getting rid of Mvić was far more important than interrupting for some months this vital railway link with Greece.

3. I showed them the 1/100,000 maps of Serbia (SOE (Cairo) had issued to us, which in all cases were hardly legible and in many cases entirely illegible: they had been so very badly re-produced.

4. I produced some original German reprisal posters, which I had brought back from Yugoslavia, confirming in the text beyond doubt that the Germans regarded Mvic as an ardent enemy and not an ardent collaborator, as claimed by SOE (Cairo).

5. I drew their attention to a variety of papers, and books:-

(a) "Conversation with Djilas" ("Encounter", 1979). He speaks of the "malicious joy" he experienced at the thought of all the bodies, of the whole of an Italian battalion, massacred by the Partisans, floating down under the bridge at Mostar: then "there is nothing to prevent you from robbing, burning and slaughtering in the name of Truth, for you are doing it with a perfectly clear conscience": then of the German unarmed prisoner, whose throat he he slit and then clubbed to death, later affirming "I feel absolutely no sense of guilt": followed by other quotations. I said that these comments by one of their leaders confirmed beyond any doubt that the Partisans could hardly be considered as gentlemen!

(b) Julian Amery's "Approach March" in which he spoke of the situation in the SOE (Bari) office, which he found on his return from Albania on 26 October 1944 - staff members "revelled with masochistic glee in the destruction of Četniks and Loyalists ... Tito and Hodja, it seemed, could do no wrong: their opponents - Socialists and Peasant Party included -were incongruously branded Fascists or Reactionists": also he mentions Harold Macmillan's wish to evacuate Mvić from Serbia.

(c) Nora Beloff's "Tito's Flawed Legacy" - various extracts.

(d) Anthony Quayle's "A Time to Speak", in which he refers to a signal from M.E. HQ to the Albanian Resistance, "to prepare to support a major Allied attack across the Adriatic - Operation "Underdone" ... to strike N.E. across Jugoslavia towards the Danube". I said that I had never before heard of this operation: Glen stated that it had, indeed, existed - but as a Deception Operation.

(e) I showed them all my papers on Klugmann: they claimed that he was never in a position to do any real harm. I disputed this and asked them to cite any other Soviet agent, who had been inactive.

(f) On the heated question of enemy strength in Jugoslavia, I was able to refute Wheeler's exaggerated claims by showing them the official German figures (very kindly supplied by Jean Howard): I gave them a copy.

(g) As regards the 500 U.S. airmen rescued by Mvić, of which Wheeler has so far made no mention, I gave him a list of names and addresses of those he should contact in the USA (very kindly provided by David Martin). I pointed out to him that not a single one of those, who had given evidence before the Committee for a Fair Trial of Mihailović, had witnessed any act of collaboration on the part of the Loyalists, nor did they know of anyone who had. As for the Partisans' claim to have rescued 2,000 U.S. aircrew, Wheeler said that he would look into the matter.

(h) Walter Roberts' "Tito, Mihailovic and the Allies, 1941-1945" - various extracts.

(i) John Colville's "The Fringes of Power": referring to the 1945 Forced Repatriation. "It was agreed that no Četniks, loyal supporters of King Peter, but at one time prone to collaborate with the Italians, should be sent back to 'Tito-land'".

(j) "Harold Macmillan's War Diaries (January 1943 - May 1946)". Referring to Knezević and Todorović (Military Attachés in Washington), who had come to Italy in order to parachute in to Mvić in September 1944 - "these were dangerous and extreme Pan-Serbs ..... regarded here as undesirable" (an example of Partisan disinformation). Referring to Broad - "He is not himself so prejudiced as I feel Maclean to be". Referring to Brigadier Armstrong, whom he met in June 1944 - "I was not very impressed with him" he told me "that he was a simple soldier and did not understand politics." "In that case, I do not understand why he was chosen for a job, which is so largely political". I pointed out that it was more than likely that it was for this precise reason that he had been appointed by SOE (Cairo) - to ensure that the Mvić Mission failed. Referring to the SAC meeting of 24 October 1944 - "We managed to kill the Mihailović business all right, although the Americans rather hanker after him".

(k) The statement by Attlee to Bevin that he would not request the Jugoslav Government to accept the presence of British witnesses at the final trial of Mvić, as he felt that such action on his part would not have the support of the Labour Party.

6. I brought to their notice some statements from "La Révolution Jugoslave" by Branko Miljus.

(a) Pages 69, 70. Some examples of orders given to Mvić to lie low until an Allied invasion took place and one of General de Gaulle to the French in the same sense ("ne pas tuer les Allemands"). I asked whether there was any other resistance movement which had received the same demands for aggressive action as had Mvić, in spite of the reprisals he had suffered. They both answered that Poland was the only country in this category. But my information was that Sikorsky had, in fact, forbidden aggressive action on the part of the Polish resistance, because of the reprisals they had suffered.

(b) Page 95. Tito's order of 30 January 1942 that all the Četnik leaders in Montenegro "were to be exterminated, not allowing a single survivor".

(c) Page 104. A note from Eden to Maisky of 7 August 1942 stating that "The H.M. Government is convinced that the accusations made against Mvić (for collaborating) are only a propaganda invention of the Partisans".

(d) Jodl tells Hitler on 13 December 1942, that in Belgrade prisons between 15 and 30 Loyalists are being shot daily.

(e) Page 122. Hitler in a letter to Mussolini of 16 February 1943, stresses the importance of the Mvić movement and adds "Liquidating the Mihailović movement will be no easy task: the forces of which he disposes and the number of armed men under his command are, at this moment, considerable".

(f) The long text signed by the German general, Bader, published in Novo Vreme (21 June 1943), offering a handsome award for Mihailović's capture (and that of Tito), with photographs of both. The long text explained in detail why Mvić was regarded so seriously as an enemy of the Germans.

(g) Page 127. The German report of 7 July 1943 to the effect that Mvić has ordered his officers to prepare for an "Ustanak", which he will declare directly the Allied landing commences.

(h) Page 129. Several examples given of Partisan collaboration.

(i) Page 145. Velebit, appointed by Tito as the Liaison Officer to the British Mission, states "The British Liaison officers trusted the military and political information that we gave them and never attempted to organize their own information service" (also see M. Lees "The Rape of Serbia", page 217 ..."My system of indoctrinating Deakin was ...").

(j) Page 152. The British claim that Partisan effectives number 270,000 is contested by Stalin: "Clissold claims the figure to have been 30,000.

(k) Page 154. Roosevelt persists that the Serbs and the Croats will never be able to unite peacefully into a single nation.

(l) Page 161. In December 1943, Churchill speaking to Purić, accuses Mvić of collaboration, but, when pressed, admits that he has no proof.

(m) Page 163. At about the same time, Eden tells Stevenson that the F.O. has no conclusive proof of Mvic's collaboration.

(n) Page 178. In about April 1944, in a note to Churchill, Eden states "For Maclean, Tito is entirely white and Mvić entirely black".

(o) Page 180. 21 October 1944, Topalović, Mvić's envoy, who had been evacuated, proposes on Mvić's instructions, that 50,000 Mvić Loyalists should be placed under General Wilson's command: this proposal was ignored by Wilson, as was a repeated proposal.

(p) Page 187. Selbourne on 11 May 1944, warns Churchill about supporting Tito 100% and abandoning Mvić.

(q) Page 188. Churchill writes to Eden, 31 august 1944, voicing his fears that Tito will, after the War, impose his rule in Jugoslavia with the aid of all the arms we had supplied to him. Eden's written comment is that there was no need to write to the F.O. in this manner, as he had always warned Churchill of this likely eventuality, which Churchill had always disregarded in order to pursue his policy of supporting Tito to the very end.

(r) Page 193. In June 1944, when Maclean arrived for the first time in Serbia, he was very surprised to find such a small number of Partisans - ill-equipped and ill-disciplined.

(s) Page 194. On 20 November 1944, Churchill sends a telegram to General Wilson: "My confidence in Tito, already shaken by my meeting with him at Naples, is reduced now to zero". On 19 December (page 195), he writes to Eden: "I have come to the conclusion that, in Tito, we have been feeding a viper". At the same time, Eden writes to Subasić - "Had we foreseen what Tito's behaviour would be, we would never have abandoned Mvić".

(t) Page 207. Churchill declares before Parliament on 18 January 1945, "I have the firm conviction that he (Tito) will prove to be a real saver and unifier of his country" (how to reconcile this with his previous comments on the subject, let alone those that followed?)

(v) Page 230. Churchill's statement on 6 October 1945, at Brussels that his policy towards Tito had been "one of my worst mistakes during the War".

7 British Policy towards Wartime Resistance in Jugoslavia and Greece", the report on the Conference held in July 1973: we discussed this report and I raised the following points:-

(a) Elizabeth Barker claimed that the BBC and PWE were "unbiased": I asked how that could be reconciled with the views expressed by our Ambassador to Jugoslavia, Sir George Rendel, who labelled Harrison (Balkans' BBC Editor) as "Leftist", Hudson (not "Marko") as "very Leftist" and PWE as anti Mvić and pro-Partisan: he also said "many of the BBC speakers, such as Zlatoper and Petrović, are violently Leftist". Elizabeth Barker states that Mvić was in league with Nedić: I asked how this could be reconciled to the fact that, as early as July 1942, at Mvić's specific request, the BBC announced that Nedić's name had been included in the Government's list of traitors.

In a F.O. paper to the War Cabinet of 7 June 1944, on the subject of Russian policy regarding Eastern Europe and our policies in Jugoslavia, Albania and Greece, it stated "The Russians have merely sat back and watched us doing their work for them".

(b) Bailey stated that in September 1942, the C-in-C sent a message to Mvić urging him to undertake sabotage operations: I pointed out that two months later the orders received by Mvić from his Government were absolutely the opposite - he was to lie low. Bailey reports of an SOE signal to Hudson that they approved the Loyalists obtaining arms, food and clothing from the Italians, so long as they would turn on the Italians when SOE asked them to do so. Bailey states that he had "no evidence of direct collaboration between Mvić himself and the Germans, or Italians". He continues that in October/November 1943, after successful operations against the Germans in the Višegrad area, the Loyalists were then driven out of the areas taken by the Partisans. Bailey states that, in about December 1943, Mvić proposes to the British Government that it should arrange a meeting between Loyalists and Partisan leaders to bring the Civil War to an end: Mvić received no reply to this proposal and I asked "Why?". In Bailey's opinion, the breakdown with Mvić was caused by:-

(i) our not supplying him with the necessary arms and material;
(ii) our inability (unwillingness?) to understand Mvić's very strong concern about reprisals;
(iii) our lack of co-ordination between Government Departments and other institutions, notably the BBC.

Bailey refers to the draft White Paper he produced in summer 1946, which was abandoned. its object was to refute charges against HMG by Belgrade - I asked what had happened to it?

(c) Woodhouse stated that in Greece the Resistance from October 1943 to August 1944 was under instructions from SOE not to undertake offensive operations. I asked how this could be reconciled with the fact that SOE was ordering Mvic, in the country next door, to do precisely the opposite and at precisely the same time?

(d) Myers said that his instructions from SOE were that the Resistance should lie low until the invasion of Greece "which might not be until the end of 1943, or early 1944". I pointed out that this had always been precisely Mvić's policy. I added that, curiously enough, Brigadier Armstrong had in later years stated that he had been told by the C-in-C before parachuting into Jugoslavia in September 1943 that, in fact, no Allied landing in the Balkans would ever take place, but that this information should on no account be passed on, either to Mvić, or to any members of the British Mission.

(e) Clogg quoted Eden as stating on 10 February 1944 that ELAS "was a thoroughly unscrupulous gang of communist fanatics, out solely for their own ends" and Churchill, in a minute of 14 February 1944, as stating "Obviously giving them (ELAS) weapons will not increase their effort against the Germans, but only secure the domination of these base and treacherous people after the War", - and yet I said, could not these straightforward comments also have been applied to the Jugoslav Partisans, whom Churchill was then backing 100%?

(f) Maclean stated "how the enemy, Hitler and Mussolini, knew all about Tito and the Partisans - they knew exactly who all those divisions of theirs were fighting against". I remarked that this was clearly disproved by the Himmler to Müller signal of 17 July 1942, the Gen. Gehlen report of 9 February 1943, the Hitler memo to Mussolini of February 1943, and the report of the S.S. Chief of Police, Meyszner, in the last of which the Partisans are not even mentioned.

(g) Seton Watson said "Mvić's army existed only on paper": I said that there was no need to comment, in view of the German sources I had just quoted. Seton Watson added that the SOE (Cairo) office "became more representative of general feeling among the armed forces at that time: admiration for the Soviet war effort at least diminished hostility to Communists and even favoured the growth of a Popular Front state of mind" and he said that Klugmann was a quite exceptionally efficient staff officer. I said that I could only agree to the views expressed and they were more than amply confirmed from within by Davidson's first-hand evidence, for which we should always be most grateful.

8. A discussion ensued on E.W.D. Deakin's "The Embattled Mountain": I made the following comments:-

(a) In the Preface, Deakin says that this book should only be regarded as a "prelude" to what was to follow. I asked whether, in fact, anything had followed and Wheeler replied that Deakin was now engaged in writing a further book on the subject.

(b) Under "Acknowledgements", Deakin records having made use of Bailey's "surviving drafts and personal notes". I asked what had happened to them.

(c) Page 6. As regards the very important character, Velebit, being appointed by Tito as Liaison Officer to the British Mission, I drew attention to page 216 of Mike Lees' "The Rape of Serbia" - Velebit speaking - "One of my most important tasks, as I conceived it, was to convince him (Deakin) that the Četniks, the Mihailović people, not only did not fight the enemy, but they actually collaborated with him in many various and different ways. My system of indoctrinating Deakin was to take him to a stream nearby, very nice, cool and fresh water, where we used to bathe in the whole afternoon". That Velebit succeeded in his task there is now not the slightest doubt, I said: having learnt his lesson, had perhaps Deakin taken Churchill for a dip in order to convert him?

(d) Page 64. Speaking of sabotage operations, Deakin says that "Mihailović had refused to allow such operations in Serbia". I claimed that this was Deakin repeating a complete lie fed to him by Velebit 'et al'. Proof of this is to be found on pages 70 to 82 of David Martin's "Patriot or Traitor" in which he cites the reports of no less than 80 such operations, some minor ones, some major, carried out by the Loyalists between July and December 1943.

(e) Page 75. Deakin speaks of "Detailed material evidence" of "the active collaboration of Četnik groups under the direct and formal control" of Mvić. Indeed, I said, evidence is required; or could it, perhaps, be Velebit doing a very good job?

(f) Page 76. Deakin signals SOE (Cairo) that legal and illegal Četniks are "both under the supreme command of Mihailović": I pointed out that this was a completely false statement, for the term "Četnik" covered a variety of different movements.

(g) Page 77. I said that Deakin's comments about Mvić Loyalists were ridiculous beyond belief.

(h) Page 108. Mention is made of the arrival at Tito's HQ of a British M.I. officer, named Syers, but no mention of his being a hard communist and a Party member. I wondered what an important contribution he, an Intelligence Officer, must have made in the campaign of misinforming SOE (Cairo).

(i) Page 115. Deakin states "There had never been any question of British Officers taking command of guerilla bands". Of course not, we were just British Liaison Officers and nothing more. So why (page 65) does Deakin state "we (he and Stuart) were in principle to be expected to take direct command of guerilla bands"? What a muddle over a vital issue.

(j) Page 185. Mention is made of the Fascist Četnik leader, Kosta Pečanać, being captured and shot by Mihailović Cetniks, whom Deakin claims are collaborating: what a contradiction.

(k) Page 185. "There was no prospect of organizing local Četnik commanders in Serbia to undertake attacks on enemy bases or communications". All I can say, so far as the area in which I was concerned, is that Mvic gave his agreement to all our proposals, but it was SOE (Cairo) who often forbade us to carry them out - again refer to the 80 or so, operations cited in sub-para (d) above.

(l) Page 188/9. Deakin claims that the grossly insulting signal sent to Bailey on 28 May 1943, and purporting to come from the C-in-C, was drafted in London (he does not say whether it was drafted by the F.O. or by SOE). Deakin fails to mention that the F.O. were furious when they heard what had happened and demanded that it should be at once rescinded - a curious demand, if they had drafted it. David Martin states that Bailey, in an interview, told him that he was convinced that this damaging signal had been drafted by Davidson.

(m) Page 191. Deakin states that in April, 1943 "the Četniks were openly collaborating with the Italians in that area": he omits, perhaps on purpose, to say that this "accommodation" had the approval of SOE (see Nora Beloff's interview of Boughey).

(n) Page 101/225. Mention is made of Churchill's visit to Cairo in January /February 1943 and of the important information which he then received from SOE about the situation in Jugoslavia: he omits to say that, in fact, it was he and Davidson, who had put this information together in the last few weeks. Davidson, in his book, advances his theory that it was Deakin, already known to Churchill personally, who arranged for Keble to meet him. Even at that time, Davidson says that in those early days, "Deakin was in favour of helping the Partisans".

(o) Page 263. In December 1943, Deakin meets Churchill in Cairo and, on Churchill's instructions, makes a personal report to King Peter, to whom he says - "Those of us who had been attached to Tito's HQ were not only convinced that his forces were engaged in successful combat with the Germans, but that the followers of Mvić and his subordinate commanders were, in varying forms of intimacy, in contact with the latter". I pointed out that these false claims were based entirely on hearsay, not personal evidence; Staff Officers at HQs cannot witness personally what is taking place in the field and must rely on an honest, reliable lot of Intelligence Officers: the man who certainly does not come into this category is Velebit, Deakin's Liaison Officer, who was there to provide him with most of his information. Thus, Deakin's statement deserves no attention whatsoever, nor in the main does his book, for it contains nothing but savage attacks on Mvic and his Loyalists, which are unjustified, and ludicrously exaggerated praise for Tito and his Partisans, based on untruthful reporting from Velebit, Tito and others. I have noted a large number of omissions by Deakin of important evidence in Mvic's favour: it is difficult to believe that all these omissions are accidental.

(p) I stated that there was one outstandingly intelligent character, with whom Deakin had worked in SOE (Cairo) for some months before parachuting into Yugoslavia, again and more closely, on returning to Cairo and Bari and finally in Belgrade - James Klugmann the Communist agent. Deakin never once mentioned him in his book: was that to avoid possible embarrassment?

9. I said that Wheeler could not possibly write the Official History without studying carefully and then selecting extracts of importance from the following documents:-

(a) The Mansfield Report of 2 March 1944: a document of importance as it was written by an American Officer of integrity, who later became a Judge: he walked over a large area of Mvić held territory for 3½ months in order to gather the information for his report.

(b) The Farish Reports of 29 October 1943 and 28 June 1944 about his experiences with the Partisans, the latter being more realistic than the former, because he had then got to know them better.

(c) The McDowell Report of 23 November 1943: another document of importance written by Lt.Col. McDowell, an American expert on Balkan affairs, who led an American Mission to Mvić from 26 August to 1 November 1944.

(d) The Proceedings of a Fair Trial for Draza Mihailovic, which took place in New York commencing on 13 May 1946. The main importance of this document is the evidence of a number of American aircrew, who were rescued by Mvić's Loyalists, the total number rescued being a little less than 500. These witnesses affirmed that neither they, nor any rescued airmen, had ever heard of a single one of their numbers being betrayed to the enemy, in spite of the very high awards that the Germans were offering, nor had any of them witnessed a single act of collaboration on the part of Mvić's Loyalists. This mass of evidence must be accepted as yet further proof that the Partisans' charges that Mvić and his Loyalists were collaborators, are void.

10. "Eastern Approaches" by Fitzroy Maclean. There was insufficient time to discuss this book and the Maclean Report of 6 November 1943 (the "Blockbuster") The latter was written after Maclean's short stay at Tito's HQ, which hardly gave him enough time to hear all the lies which the Partisans wished to tell him. The report, in the first few lines states - "They (the Partisans) count on not losing more than one man killed for five of the enemy against Germans and ten against Ustaši or Četniks": this quite ludicrous claim does again not encourage one to read the report any further.

11. Finally, I made some comments on Mark Wheeler's "Britain and the War for Jugoslavia 1940-1943"

(a) Why did the period covered by the title come to an end in Spring 1943, when the Jugoslav pot was just coming to the boil, and thus only telling half the story? Wheeler replied that it was written as a Ph.D. Thesis and therefore could not cover the whole war period. I said that the Epilogue, which continues the narrative from Spring 1943, was only eleven pages long and did not begin to tell the whole true story.

(b) Page 106. Reporting on the Divci meeting, there is no mention of the Germans then pursuing Mvić for five months - a collaborator?

(c) Page 119. Mention is made of the Germans attacking Mvić's HQ in November 1941, killing 12 Loyalists and capturing 480. How can this incident be reconciled with claims that Mvić was a collaborator?

(d) Page 181. "His (Mvić's) intention to establish a Četnik dictatorship after the War". Surely this is pure Partisan propaganda?

(e) Page 182. Reports of Mvić's "collaboration" with the Italians: this should read "accommodation". What is omitted is that this "accommodation" was, in fact, sanctioned by the SOE (see Nora Beloff's interview of Boughey).

(f) Page 184. "A team of Jugoslav sappers was dropped over Western Serbia". I have not heard before of this operation and asked for details: dropped to Tito or Mvić? Under command of whom? With orders to do what? And what, in fact, did they do? Wheeler agreed to look into the matter.

(g) Page 197. "Draža Mihailović is a "quisling", just like Nedić, because Nedić works with the Germans and Draža with the Italians" - a comment attributed by Knežević to Peter Boughey of SOE. But Nora Beloff interviewed Peter Boughey years later and he said to her - "We certainly told Mvić to be in touch with the Italians. We knew the situation in Montenegro and wanted him to be able to get Italian weapons when the Italians withdrew, collapsed or surrendered". The Knežević statement is, therefore, a false one.

(h) Page 203. On the subject of Churchill's visit to Cairo in January 1943, I found it strange that no mention was made about the important part that Deakin had played in assembling the information and, according to Davidson's report, in its presentation. Did Churchill ask to see Keble, or was it the reverse?

(i) Page 204. Amongst this information was the claim that "other resisting elements" (other than Mvić's, therefore Partisans) were "said to be tying down 30 Axis divisions": this claim is quite ridiculously exaggerated and this could be confirmed beyond any doubt by an inspection of the Germans' own Order of Battle records in the I.W.M.

(j) Page 227. In describing the extraordinary occasion of the three important Partisan leaders meeting with the Germans in March 1943, no mention is made, until a few pages later and then somewhat cursorily, of the Partisans' treacherous promise to the Germans and to Stalin to resist any British landing in Jugoslavia. Furthermore, no mention is made of the signal from Kashe, the German Minister in Zagreb to Ribbentrop in which he said that "in all the negotiations with the Partisans to date" the "reliability of Tito's promises" had been "confirmed". "(The Web of Disinformation", page 92). That is definite proof of Partisan collaboration, which apparently had been going on for some considerable time.

(k) Page 228. Mention is made of the dropping of "a mission of Jugoslav/Canadians" into N.E. Bosnia, but the fact that they were all Communists is omitted.

(l) Page 235. Reference is made to the important signal received by Bailey on 28 May 1943 with instructions to pass it on to Mvić. This signal was such a gross insult to Mvić that the text should be cited in full, so that his natural reaction is understood. There is some dispute as to how this signal was drafted ("The Embattled Mountain" pages 188/9 and "Patriot or Traitor" pages 140/1): the matter needs to be clarified. Bailey's subsequent signal of 12 June 1943 should be cited for, after all this ghastly muddle, it does clarify the situation in Serbia at that time.

(m) Page 236. It states that Maclean "came out of Jugoslavia in November 1943", but Mike Lees states that Maclean left Tito's HQ for the coast on 5 October ("The Rape of Serbia", page 355). What was the precise date? Maclean landed with Tito, in fact, on 17 Sepember, not "in early September" as stated here, so he could only have been at Tito's HQ for about 17 days.

(n) Page 238. In December 1943, Maclean and Deakin met Churchill in Cairo: "They convinced him that any weapons given to the Partisans would be well-utilised in killing the maximum number of Germans" and "Mihailović, they told him, was irredeemably compromised by collaboration". That Churchill accepted this information, offered to him by two men of such irreproachable background, is perhaps understandable, but how could Maclean and Deakin possibly have allowed themselves to be deceived 100% by such characters as Tito, Velebit 'et al.' ? That is a question that only they themselves can answer and their answers should certainly be reported in the Official History.

(o) Page 239. Referring to the Morava and Ibar Valley bridge demolitions requested of Mvic, it mentions that the deadline for the operation was 29 December. This is untrue, the signal for Mvić from General Wilson stated "your <u>agreement</u> requested by 29 December" and this Mvić gave, much to the displeasure of the anti-Mvić clique, who hoped and expected

that he would refuse the request; for they were treating this request as an 'ultimatum', which it was not. Shortly afterwards, together with Brigadier Armstrong, I planned in detail a "coup-de-main" sabotage of the Ibar bridge, but was forbidden to carry it out by SOE (Cairo), who were determined to pursue their policy of ditching Mvić for good. I told Wheeler that all these important facts were missing from his text.

(p) Page 241. His claim, speaking of the possibility of evacuating Mvić towards the end, that "the United States proved un-cooperative". It is difficult to reconcile this claim with the evidence given by the American, Lalić, who parachuted into the Mvić area in August 1944, as a member of the McDowell Mission. He was the last member of the Mission to be evacuated and he suggested that Mvić should escape to Italy with him. Mvić's reply was "No, I have fought for four years and will stay with my people and fight to the end". In such circumstances most resistance leaders, facing certain defeat, would have fled, as Abas Kupi did from Albania: Mvić was a brave man, of that there is no doubt: what other Resistance leaders behaved in similar fashion?

(q) Page 241. "premonitions of a bloody conflict, in which arms supplied by Britain would be used to suppress the Serbs were not fulfilled": this statement is completely untrue.

(r) Page 243. In reference to the report on Mvić, which Eden commissioned Hugh Grey of the F.O. Library to prepare in the Summer of 1944, the comment is "This weighing of factors seems right": in fact this report is faulty to a degree, as Eden must later have realised, judging by the subsequent comments he made.

(s) Page 244. "It is equally difficult to understand how the British could have taken Mihailović so seriously for so long". I shall, with difficulty, refrain from comment, save to say that both the USA and France honoured Mvić with awards for his loyalty and gallantry. Britain abandoned him and consequently he was shot by our ally Tito.

(t) Page 271. "Berlin insisted that there could be no truck with the Serb Nationalists". This must be a reference to Mvić's Loyalists, in which case how on earth could the alleged collaboration between Loyalists and Germans have occurred?

(u) I had noted a number of important omissions in Wheeler's book, but only had the time to mention very few indeed.

(v) Similarly, there was insufficient time to draw Wheeler's attention to a large number of important statements made by American witnesses before the Committee for a Fair Trial of Mihailović, which he should take into account in his Official History.

11. A <u>general discussion</u> followed covering the following matters:-

(a) I referred to the French weekly T.V. documentary programme on the last War, "Histoire Parallèle", showing official German film, shot at the time: a recent part had covered the German invasion of Jugoslavia in 1941. It has shown scenes in Croatia of large hysterically gesticulating welcoming crowds, whereas in Serbia there appeared in the

streets only a few very surly Serbs. I said that this was strong confirmation of the claims often made to me in 1943/44 by the Serb Mvić Loyalists that, when the German invasion occurred, the Croat element of their Army had folded up completely. The strong feeling of animosity between Serb and Croat was, therefore, understandable.

(b) I said that the word "Četnik" should never be used in referring to Mvić's forces, the best term probably being "Loyalists". Mvić, himself, chose the title "The Jugoslav Army in the Homeland" and asked that the term 'Četnik' never be used, for it included firstly Jugoslav collaborators enlisted by the Germans and Italians, paid by them, accepting their orders, yet still bearing the insignia of The Jugoslav Army of the Homeland: in this way the Germans and Italians attempted to give to the general population the impression that Mvić's Loyalists were fighting alongside them as Allies. Secondly, the term 'Četnik' included the numerous bandit gangs, which some of our British escaped prisoners had encountered; they were outlaws, who lived by raiding and stealing, taking advantage of the very unstable situation which reigned everywhere. The use of the word 'Četnik' is, therefore, a clear indication that the person concerned is determined to smear Mvić and his Loyalists with charges of collaboration, which otherwise he could not justify.

(c) Similarly, a sharp distinction exists between the terms "collaboration" and "accommodation" and, again, someone who uses the former when he means the latter, is a person of doubtful attitudes.

(d) I asked how it came about that Maclean and Deakin were brought out to meet Churchill in Cairo in December 1943, in order to discuss Britain's future policy regarding Jugoslavia, whereas no-one was brought out from the Mvić Mission, in spite of requests from Sir Orme Sargent at the F.O. that this should be done. Wheeler replied that the representatives from the Mvić Mission could not be evacuated in time, because their evacuation required a long trek to the coast through enemy held territory. I, personally, wonder whether this is true, for a few months later we prepared a landing strip at Pranjani in two or three days and we could have prepared a landing strip on this occasion too at Pranjani, or elsewhere. Furthermore, in a signal of 4 September 1943, Bailey said "I feel that a month in Cairo and London would amply repay difficulties of evacuation and justify personal risk involved. It is impossible to give you the full picture without personal contact". SOE made no effort to evacuate Bailey: they clearly wanted nobody from the Mvić Mission to give evidence in person in Cairo.

(e) As regards freedom of movement accorded to Allied personnel with the Jugoslav Resistance, I stated that the evidence went to show that Mvić's Loyalists allowed these people absolutely free movement, whereas with the Partisans it was very strictly controlled and monitored. Glen said that, when serving with the Partisans, he had experienced no such restrictions. I replied that in the Danube area, which was very far removed from Tito's HQ and the majority of the Partisan forces, it would, perhaps, be understandable, if such controls were less strict.

(f) I recalled the several occasions when parachute drops to British Liaison Officers with the Loyalists, which in any case were most infrequent, contained the most absurd items - snake-bite medicine,

office gear, misprinted money and, reported by Bailey, one complete load of size six boots and, incredibly, one complete load of left-footed boots. Wheeler claimed that this was due to mistakes: I said that I felt that it could be nothing but intentional.

(g) Referring to the wall map, prepared by Davidson and Deakin in SOE (Cairo) in January 1943, I asked how such high grade intelligence was available to Cairo and, apparently, not to London: for Churchill was not aware of it.

(h) As regards Britain's policy to back Tito 100% and abandon Mvic, both Glen and Wheeler stated that in retrospect, they judged it to have been the best decision to take, for Tito had brought Jugoslavia together, which no-one else could have done, and had assured for it a period of relative prosperity. I disagreed with this view for several reasons.

(i) Furthermore, both Glen and Wheeler were in favour, in the present circumstances, of the national state of Jugoslavia remaining united and were against the idea of Slovenia and Croatia gaining their freedom. I was obliged to disagree once more: I said that if the Rights of Man meant anything at all, then a republic's population should be allowed to express their wishes and realise them; the people of Slovenia and Croatia had already expressed their wishes in referendums. If we were in general in favour of the Baltic Republics gaining the freedom, for which they had voted, then surely we should all agree that the Jugoslav Republics should now be accorded the freedom, for which they had voted.

(j) I said that both Churchill and Eden had confessed that Britain's Jugoslav policy had been a major error on their part: was it not now time that both Maclean and Deakin should come forward and honestly express their regrets for furnishing the misinformation, on which Britain's mistaken policy was formed?

(k) I explained that I was much in favour of a Scrutiny Committee being appointed by the Cabinet Office to vet Wheeler's book before publication : the Committee should consist of some of the "great and the good", supplemented, perhaps, by two representatives each from the Partisan and the Loyalist sides: it was essential that all members of the Committee should have access to the same information sources as Wheeler. Both Glen and Wheeler opposed this idea strongly, saying that the book should not be written by a Committee, but by an author with the right of free self-expression. I replied that I was not suggesting that the Committee should write the book: the right of self-expression naturally existed for any author writing a book on his own, but it certainly did not exist for an author who had accepted the task of writing an Official History - the word "Official" must surely have some meaning. I added that were I in Wheeler's place, I would welcome this idea, for the announcement in the Preface that the book was published with the approval of a Committee appointed by the Cabinet Office would give the Official History considerable extra authority, which would otherwise be lacking.

(1) I drew Wheeler's attention to his previous book on the subject, overwhelmingly and unjustifiably in favour of Tito and the Partisans. I drew his attention to all the information (with sources), which I had given him during our meeting and I asked him to make the maximum use of it, when writing his official book. I said that he was faced with a most difficult and unenviable task: all that we asked of him was that he should be absolutely honest and fairly balanced: we expected of him that he would ensure that "the truth, the <u>whole</u> truth and nothing but the truth" be told. In pursuing this target, I assured Wheeler that he would have my total support and, I felt sure, that of everyone else concerned.

I finally said that, as a result of Britain's Jugoslav policies in the last War, Mihailovic had lost both his honour and his life: we could not give him back his life, but it is now Britain's plain duty to give back to him his honour.

(Note: Wheeler remarked that it would probably be another five years before his book was published. The delay, he explained, is due to the fact the he can only devote such time for writing the book, as he can spare from his professional duties).

Papers of Harry S Truman
Confidential Files

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE LEGION OF MERIT
Degree of Chief Commander
Posthumous
TO

DRAGOLJUB MIHAILOVICH

General Dragoljub Mihailovich distinguished himself in an outstanding manner as Commander-in-Chief of the Yugoslavian Army Forces and later as Minister of War by organizing and leading important resistance forces against the enemy which occupied Yugoslavia, from December 1941 to December 1944. Through the undaunted efforts of his troops, many United States airmen were rescued and returned safely to friendly control. General Mihailovich and his forces, although lacking adequate supplies, and fighting under extreme hardships, contributed materially to the Allied cause, and were instrumental in obtaining a final Allied Victory.

/s/ HARRY S. TRUMAN

THE WHITE HOUSE

P.S. I enclose a copy of the General Mihailović citation for the American Legion of Merit, which you may not have seen.

La Collanche
74570 Thorens Glières,
France.

30 July 1991

Dear Mr. Wheeler,

I apologise for not having replied previously to your kind and most appreciative letter of 11th July. The fact is that, after your departure, I came to the conclusion that, considering the number of points we discussed together, it might be sensible to put it all down in writing before it was forgotten. This I have done, but it has taken some time having it typed by a kind friend in Geneva, corrected and then retyped.

I enclose a copy of this report for your retention which I trust that you will find reasonably accurate. I hope most sincerely that it may be of service to you, as also the typescript of my I.W.M. taped interview.

I also enclose my comments on the three papers that you kindly sent me. I have expressed my views quite frankly, as is my habit, but always without wishing to cause offence. I am sure that you will agree that views, which are not quite frankly expressed, are valueless. Anyway, and this is really all that matters, I hope that they may be of some value to you.

There is one matter that rather surprises me -- you never mention what the American attitude was in this affair. Firstly there is the documentation provided by the Mansfield, Farish and McDowell Reports; secondly the pages of evidence given by the U.S. aircrew rescued by the Loyalists; thirdly the Seitz/Mansfield plan to escape from Jugoslavia (without informing Armstrong) in order to report directly to Washington the truth, which they feared was not getting through (Todorovich in his book speaks of their disagreeing fundamentally with British policies); fourthly the

differences between Roosevelt's and Churchill's Jugoslav attitudes; fifthly President Truman's award of the Legion of Merit to Mihailovic, the main proponent being Dwight Eisenhower. I find it difficult to understand how you, an American, can ignore the fact that the U.S.A. was pro-Mihailovic.

I was very pleased to meet you and I only regret that there was insufficient time to discuss all that one wished to. I regard you as someone of exceptional intelligence and with a very widespread knowledge in the Balkan field. It is so very sad to see some one of your exceptional qualifications pursuing a track which remains always considerably to the Left of the straight main road. Please do get your track back onto the straight main road in your pursuit of the real truth and let no one, I really mean no one, mis-guide you over to the Left again. Please also cease forever to use the deceivingly disparaging word Cetnik, when referring to Mihailovic's Loyalists.

May I, amongst others, now have complete confidence in you to tell "the truth, the <u>whole</u> truth and nothing but the truth"? Your reply will, I very much hope, be in the affirmative, in which case I wish you most sincerely every good fortune. I am reminded of Paul's experience on the Damascus road -- there are similarities after all!

Yours sincerely,

/s/ Archie Jack

Comments on your Chapter Four in

"Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe 1939 - 1945"

	Page
1. The invasion -- mention should perhaps be made of the fact that in Croatia the Germans were given a rapturous welcome; in Serbia absolutely the reverse. Thus the fact that the Croatian element in the Jugoslav Army folded up without resisting is quite understandable -- they actually liked the Germans, but the Serbs certainly did not.	123
2. You state that Mihailovic "aimed to take control in the name of King Peter", but also and more importantly surely, "of the legitimate Jugoslav Government".	128
3. The Partisan movement did not come into being until 4 July 1941, as you say. What needs to be stated, in all fairness, is that Mihailovich' Loyalist movement came into being nearly two months before; there was a precise reason for that and it should be quoted.	130
4. I am so glad that you have recorded the fact that Mihailovich's policy was governed very largely by his wish to avoid horrific reprisals against the Serbs; Tito's policy was quite different.	134
5. What proof is there of Mihailovic having personal "established links with Nedic?" This reads strangely alongside his request to his Government that Nedic be classified as a war criminal.	136
6. As regards the Divci meeting, in all fairness it should be added that the Germans then pursued Mihailovic for five months. They obviously, therefore, did not regard him as a collaborator.	136

7. I am glad that you record the fact that from the end of 1941 "Mihailovic would hold virtually undisputed sway there (in Serbia) ... until early 1944". This contradicts the false claims made by Tito, which were faithfully recorded on the S.O.E. map which Rootham and I saw in Bari and which McDowell also saw a little later. 137

8. "Solidifying the Cetnik - Italian condominium". What does this mean? You know that Loyalists/Italian "accommodation" was official S.O.E. policy. 137

9. You refer to "the collaborator Mihailovic". This is a deplorably untrue accusation -- another example of pure Tito/Deakin 'speak'. 138

10. I find it strange your classifying "intellectuals" as non-Communists. You may remember my quote of Lenin referring to intellectuals as "useful idiots". 142

11. Your reference to Tito's order to the Croatian command --- "Liquidate Cetniks": I am glad you mentioned this. 143

12. Re the Partisan/German meeting in March 1943, I wonder why you do not mention the most important fact that the Partisans undertook to resist any Allied landing. Was not one of the prisoners, whose release was negotiated with the Germans, Tito's wife? Nor is any mention made of the German statement that they knew that they could trust the Partisans in view of the negotiations they had with them in the past. 147

13. "The Partisans were lucky in being able to impress their connected British Liaison Officer". Yes indeed, indeed. 148

14. "Arms and equipment" from the Italian surrender: mention should have been made of the fact that the Loyalists were denied these arms because they obeyed S.O.E.'s orders, whereas the Partisans dis-obeyed the orders, thus obtaining the arms. 148

15. You state that the Partisans' activity "obliged the Germans to maintain divisions in Jugoslavia that would have been available for service in Italy". But you make no mention of the Loyalists in this respect. Reference to the German order of battle would have shown you that most of these divisions were well under strength and were composed often of soldiers, who would have been pretty incapable of participating in full-scale warfare. 148

Comment: In general, I am afraid to say, there are omissions to Mihailovic's credit, as these are omissions to Tito's discredit. May I also repeat what I have said before -- the term 'Cetnik' has always been used, and still is used, only by those who seek to dishonour Mihailovic by claiming that all Cetniks were Loyalists under his command; nothing could be further from the truth.

Comments on your Chapter Eleven in
" Diplomacy and Intelligence During the Second World War "

1. I am surprised, in the story of MacLean's appointment that there is no mention of the bizarre Vellacott affair, with possible explanations. 184

2. What precisely was the "information damning to Mihailovic during late 1942" and what were the sources? 187

3. "The intractable Mihailovic"? but I know of no precise acts of sabotage demanded of him, which he refused to carry out. It was S.O.E. which halted sabotage action. 191

4. "The glimmer of an opportunity" -- Yes, indeed, seeing that for months S.O.E. had ignored Bailey's many requests to be evacuated in order to report personally. 191

5. "New proofs of Mihailovic's collaboration with ....Nedic" What proofs? How can this be reconciled with Mihailovic's demand that Nedic be classified as a war criminal? Amongst the Nedicefsi were a large number loyal to Mihailovic and awaiting to join him at the time of the Ustanak. I, personally, have been shepherded through German checkpoints by Nedicefsi, who knew I was British and also what I was about. 194

6. In your reference to Djuric, you make no mention of the fact that S.O.E. were misled in this matter by signals sent by Cope, a not very intelligent officer, who had been with Djuric for a very short time. Neither is any mention made of the fact that Mihailovic distrusted Djuric, had him arrested, that Djuric then escaped and deserted to the Partisans, Tito then promoting him. This Djuric was quite untrustworthy. 195

7. Churchill's comment "Please note that Mihailovic never did anything about the test operation". This is totally untrue; firstly it was not transmitted to Mihailovic as a test operation, but only as a 'request"; secondly, he gave his agreement to the operation; thirdly, I prepared the plans for the operation on the ground in the Ibar Valley and we were all set to carry it out; fourthly, the operation was then forbidden by S.O.E.(Cairo). That Churchill really believed what he was stating is a 100% proof of S.O.E. "cooking the books" -- an accusation which Churchill himself made shortly after. This is a disgraceful incident. 199

8. Why is there no mention of the S.O.E. signal to all Mihailovic missions, sent on 13 dec 1943, that they should abandon the Loyalists and set off to join the Partisans? This signal was sent without Brigadier Armstrong being warned and long before the so-called 'ultimatum' had expired. This is another disgraceful incident. 198 et seq

9. Bailey was a most curious character. He had no friendly relationship with Mihailovic, due to the very unpleasant signals that S.O.E. had obliged him to hand on to Mihailovic, who was understandably most deeply offended. My view is that Bailey, as a result, bore a grudge against Mihailovic, which led him later to propose in London the elimination of Mihailovic. 205

10. "The meeting agreed to canvas the remaining BLOS views about .... a palace revolution". But surely signals to this effect had already been sent to all B.L.O.s in early December -- three months previously? 206

11. Tito's promise not to introduce "a communist system" ---like all his lies, swallowed avidly by the British. 216

Comment: The use of the word "Cetnik" -- will say no more.
My further comments:
(a) Why no mention whatsoever of actions against the enemy undertaken by Mihailovic Loyalists? With the list provided of some 80 actions undertaken by the Loyalists between July '43 and Dec '43 (see David Martin's "Patriot or Traitor", in which the B.L.O.'s signals are quoted verbatim), how can this matter be totally ignored?

(b) Why no mention of the strong left-wing element that existed in the S.O.E. (Cairo/Bari) office, of which there is ample evidence that I have already given you, quite apart from the presence there of Klugmann, a Soviet agent?

(c) There appears to be no mention of the fact that the attitude of the U.S.A. in this field was fundamentally different to that of the U.K. What about the reports written by Mansfield, Farish (his second) and McDowell and the evidence of the U.S. airmen rescued by the Loyalists? What about the citation of the President's Award of the Legion of Merit to Mihailovic and the fact that Dwight Eisenhower, much admired for his integrity, was the main proponent?

(d) There are other matters, of perhaps lesser importance, but it just remains for me to say that a report of this nature which omits the post-war statements of admitted error and regret made by Churchill and Eden, is a report seriously lacking.

(e) I cannot conceal the fact that I find this report biased towards the Left.

NOTE FOR RECORD

Gervase Cowell, SOE Adviser, telephoned on 26.6.92. to say that Mark Wheeler expects to have completed work on the Archive by the end of 1992 and to have the text with us for clearance by the end of next year (1993).

PM Andrews
26.6.92.

With the Compliments of

CABINET OFFICE
Historical Section,
Great George Street,
London, SW1P 3AQ
Telephone: 01 - 233

Corr Box

18

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 071-270 0101

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
Sir Robin Butler KCB CVO

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal
17 JUN 1992
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

Ref. A092/1754 ✓

16 June 1992

c- Miss Andrews

Dear Mr. Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 12 May of which you sent a copy on 4 June, the first one having apparently gone astray.

In reply to the points you made about Dr Wheeler and his Official History of 'SOE in Yugoslavia' may I refer you to my letter of 22 April 1991 as it would seem from your latest letter that that too may have gone astray. I attach a copy.

You will see that in it I commented on the suggestions in your letter of 12 May which you also made in the earlier correspondence, namely that Dr Wheeler should be reprimanded for expressing his views, and that a Scrutiny Committee should be set up to look at his work in draft. I do not think the former is appropriate and I have given you my assurance that your recommendation with regard to approval of Dr Wheeler's work before publication has been noted. I and others concerned with Official histories will, when the time comes, do our best to ensure that the procedures adopted for approval ensure that the History presents a fair and balanced picture. I have nothing to add on these matters and I hope that you will accept my assurances.

I should, of course, be glad to have a copy of the summary of your interview with Dr Wheeler.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Butler

A F M Jack Esq QC
The Cottage
Prospect Lane
Kington
Hereford
HR5 3BE

— I had

are you happy to

29

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 071-270 0101

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
Sir Robin Butler KCB CVO

Ref. A091/968 ✓

CABINET OFFICE
Internal
23 APR 1991
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No

22 April 1991

Miss Andrews

Dear Mr. Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 11 April 1991. I note what you say and, as I said in my earlier letter, I appreciate your concern but I do not think it would be appropriate for me to reprimand Dr Wheeler in the way you suggest; he should be free to express his views on matters such as those raised by the correspondence to which you have drawn my attention.

On the question of the method by which the Official History should be approved for publication I can add little to my letter of 25 March. I, and others concerned with the Official Histories, wish to see that a fair and balanced picture is presented and, when the time comes, we will do our best to ensure that the procedures adopted for approval prior to publication are satisfactory for this purpose. I hope you will accept my assurance on this point.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Butler

A F M Jack Esq MC
La Collanche
74570 Thorens Glieres
France

17

HO 92/274

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

In his letter dated 12 May, the first copy of which apparently went astray, Mr Archie Jack largely reiterates the points which he made in letters dated 12 March and 11 April 1991. Mr Jack refers to the fact that Dr Wheeler comments in public on matters relating to Yugoslavia, (which he obviously thinks is inappropriate for an Official Historian) and recommends that you should "rap him over the knuckles and ensure that he behaves"; he also reiterates the suggestion which he and the late Michael Lees have made that a Scrutiny Committee should be appointed to which Dr Wheeler should be obliged to submit his work in draft. Mr Jack also refers to an interview which he had with Dr Wheeler last year and offers to send you his written summary of it.

It would seem from Mr Jack's letter that he did not receive your last letter dated 22 April 1991 written in response to his of 11 April. In it you said that you did not think it appropriate to reprimand Dr Wheeler in the way suggested as he should be free to express his views, and you referred to your earlier letter of 25 March in which you said that you had noted his suggestion about procedures by which the history might be submitted for approval before publication and assured him that all concerned would do their best to ensure that the Official History which emerges presents a fair and balanced picture.

Mr Jack says that Dr Wheeler told him a year ago that it would take another five years to complete his work and that it was therefore likely to be 1997 at least before it was published. I have not been able to check this with Dr Wheeler but it is roughly in line with the estimate we had early last year.

Sir Alexander Glen, who accompanied Dr Wheeler to France to see Mr Jack last year, told me when we met in Oxford last Autumn that Dr Wheeler was hardly able to get a word in during a two-day interview. Mr Jack was, he said, a charming host but absolutely obsessed. However there is no reason why Mr Jack whould not send a copy of his summary; Dr Wheeler already has a copy.

There is nothing new to say in response to Mr Jack's latest letter. I suggest that you refer to your last letter and invite him to send a copy of his summary. As before I should be glad to write on your behalf if you wish as Mr Jack seems likely to write in these terms every time Dr Wheeler does something to irritate him. I attach a suggested draft reply which can be adapted for my signature if you prefer.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Record Section
15 June 1992

(On a paper submitted with a letter dated 12 March 1991 Archie Jack was referred to as Major and you referred to him in this way in a letter to Michael Lees on 9 May 1991. He does not however use this rank on his letters and we, and the Foreign Office, have always addressed him as Esq.)

DRAFT LETTER TO

A F M Jack Esq MC
The Cottage
Prospect Lane
KINGTON
Hereford
HR5 3BE

Thank you for your letter of 12 May of which you sent a copy on 4 June, the first one having apparently gone astray.

In reply to the points you made about Dr Wheeler and his Official History of 'SOE in Yugoslavia' may I refer you to my letter of 22 April 1991 as it would seem from your latest letter that that too may have gone astray. I attach a copy.

You will see that in it I commented on the suggestions in your letter of 12 May which you also made in the earlier correspondence, namely that Dr Wheeler should be reprimanded for expressing his views, and that a Scrutiny Committee should be set up to look at his work in draft. I do not think the former is appropriate and I have given you my assurance that your recommendation with regard to approval of Dr Wheeler's work before publication has been noted. I and others concerned with Official Histories will, when the time comes, do our best to ensure that the procedures adopted for approval ensure that the History presents a fair and balanced picture. I have nothing to add on these matters and I hope that you will accept my assurances.

I should, of course, be interested to receive a copy of the summary of your interview with Dr Wheeler.

Rec'd

16

CABINET OFFICE
A 6947 ✓
8 JUN 1992
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

The Cottage,
Prospect Lane,
Kington,
Herefd HR5 3BE
4 Jun 92

c- Miss Andrews

Any Comments?

Dear Miss Granberg,

Thank you for your A092/1602 of 2nd June. CJ 8/6.

I enclose herewith a photo-copy of my letter to ~~Sir~~ Robin Butler of ~~2nd~~ 12th May, which apparently went astray.

I would be most grateful if you would now see that it gets attention.

Yours sincerely

A. Jack

CONFIDENTIAL

Change of address → The Cottage,
(We have returned to the UK Respect Lane,
for a [redacted] last lap and Kington,
final sprint!) Hereford HR5 3BG.
12 May 92

Dear Sir Robin,

We had a correspondence about a year ago about the appointment of the American, Dr. Wheeler, to write the Official History of SOE/Yugoslavia in W.W.II. The reference of your last letter to me was AO 91/721 of 25 Mar 91, to which I replied a few days later. 545/4

Anyone who has taken the trouble to scan Dr Wheeler's previous writings, will realise straightaway that he is considerably biased: it is difficult to understand, therefore, how he came to be appointed in the first place.

In addition, after his appointment, instead of keeping quiet as he should, he has become involved in disputes in the media, advancing opinions which clearly show how unbalanced he is.

In my letter of 12th March I drew your attention to my involvement in an argument in 'Borba', the Yugoslav newspaper. Recently he has participated on several occasions (at least three) in T.V. programmes. In the Daily Telegraph of four days ago a letter from him was published (copy enclosed), in which he calls for military action — "a surgical strike on the Mostar air-base". I would not for a moment imagine that this demand reflects the opinions of either Mr Major, or Mr Hurd, nor for that matter of President Bush. And who is it making this absurdly bizarre proposal? It is no less than the official

Historian, appointed by the Government to write a balanced history of Britain's past policies regarding this country.

Those responsible for selecting Wheeler were sadly unaware of Aristotle's dictum on the subject:—

"Those who would rightly judge of truth must be arbitrators not litigants."

I did request in my letter to you of Apr '91, that Wheeler should, if possible, be replaced, or otherwise that you should "rap him over the knuckles and ensure that he behaves". However, he is still far from behaving properly: did you, perhaps, not give him the "rap" as requested?

At his request Dr Wheeler came out to France about a year ago to interview me and we conversed for two days. I drew his attention to important omissions in his previous writings and provided much important information, of which he appeared to be ignorant: this information, I said, would need to be included in the Official History, if the whole truth is to be told. But can one rely on him to do so? That is the question.

Finally Dr Wheeler told me that it would take at least another five years to complete his work: with proof correcting and printing, it seems that the book will not appear before 1997 at the earliest. It was only a few weeks ago that, sadly, Mike Lees very suddenly passed away and it is doubtful that the remaining members of the Mihailovic mission, such as myself, will still be alive in 1997— and kicking: this is a situation which Dr Wheeler might very well welcome.

Once again we come to the final remedy — a carefully appointed Scrutiny Committee, to which Dr Wheeler should submit his draft, chapter by chapter and starting as soon as possible. Naturally the Committee would be accorded access to all the information and files made available to Dr Wheeler. Can you think of a single valid reason for not establishing such a Scrutiny Committee?

I wrote a summary of my interview with Dr Wheeler: I feel that the Scrutiny Committee should study it and ensure that the facts recorded are not omitted in the official History. Would you permit me, therefore, to send you a copy of this Summary?

Bearing in mind the appalling situation now prevailing in the former Yugoslavia, it is more important than ever that the True history of British policy in W.W.II towards Yugoslavia should be recorded. "Truth is mighty and will prevail."

Please treat this letter as Confidential and I would be grateful if you would not pass it on to the Foreign Office where Dr Wheeler would probably see it.

Your personal help in this somewhat messy matter would be very much appreciated, I assure you.

Yours sincerely

Archie Jack

PUBLIC
15

HO92/136 ✓

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

You may be interested to see the Obituary of Mr Michael Lees which appears in today's Daily Telegraph.

Mr Lees last wrote to you in April 1991 about 'SOE in Yugoslavia' about which he and Major Archie Jack have made several representations. They were very much against Dr Mark Wheeler's appointment as the Official Historian because of his "Titoist prejudices" and were concerned that his work should be submitted to a scrutiny committee before publication. In a letter dated 9 May 1991 you assured Mr Lees that we too were concerned to see that a fair and balanced picture was presented by the history and that we would do our best to ensure that the procedures adopted for approval prior to publication achieved this end.

You asked for a commentary on Mr Lees' own account of the Yugoslav story; this was provided by Mrs Heather Yasamee - I think you still have it.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical and Records Section
26 March 1992

7.4.92

APPRECIATIONS

Michael Lees

YOUR obituary of Michael Lees (March 31) leaves us with a comforting but unfortunately wrong impression that he died contented. He was, as you say, defending the Serb cause "first embraced in his youth", but the truth is that, especially in the last months of his life, he was deeply frustrated by his inability to breach what he saw as an impregnable barrier against any serious revision of the pro-Tito and anti-Chetnik view of war-time history.

You rightly recall that his last book "involved the overturning of an account of history that had held official sway for 40 years and called into question the judgment of certain British protagonists". But a reluctance to change course was not the whole reason why the British media and publishing houses refused to give voice to information that would invalidate so much of what our public had been led to believe. For Michael Lees's research at the Public Record Office cast doubt not only on the judgment but also on the integrity of some of the leading British pro-Titoists. And no responsible editor dared take that kind of risk, particularly after the award of £1.5 million against Nikolai Tolstoy, who used the same PRO files to challenge, unsuccessfully, Lord Aldington's reputation.

As part of his struggle Michael Lees spent much of his last year wholeheartedly cooperating with the BBC in preparing their two *Timewatch* one-hour programmes reassessing Tito. He was enraged when he saw the results: on the key issue of why the British switched from supporting the Chetniks to supporting Tito, not only was the essential part of his own testimony erased from the screen but also the whole of the evidence of another key witness, his friend, Mrs Jean Howard.

He was thus prevented from revealing that some of the reports presented to Churchill to justify changing sides were contradicted, not only by his own experience and research but also by the German intercepts which Mrs Howard had read at Bletchley.

Those of us who knew Michael Lees, whether or not we shared all his opinions, could not fail to admire his bravery and we were not in the least surprised to learn from your obituary that he had been commended twice for the DSO and once for the MC. In justice both to his memory and to the historical record, the Ministry of Defence should now go back to the files and reveal whether we are right in supposing that the authorities withheld these richly deserved decorations for fear of displeasing Tito.

Nora Beloff

Christos Halkias

er flinching in his loyalty to his adopted country.

Elderly seek state help to pay home fees

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
SOCIAL SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

THE collapse of the property market has led to a record increase in the number of old people in private residential homes having to rely on the state to pay their fees.

Income support payments to people in private homes rose by 47 per cent in the year to May 1991 as the number paying for themselves dropped for the first time — from 108,000 to 94,000. Total income support payments for residential care now exceed £1.8 billion, up by £600 million in a year. The figure was £10 million in 1979.

The number of residents claiming income support rose by 22 per cent over the year to 231,000 and the average claim by 21 per cent from £129 to £156. Seven out of ten residents of private homes are now paid for by the state.

Laing's Review of Private Health Care, the annual survey of the sector which published the figures, suggests that elderly owner-occupiers have been unable to sell their homes to pay the fees and are having to seek help from the state. Claimants are given six months — or longer in exceptional circumstances — to sell a property in which they are no longer living before it is taken into account in calculating eligibility for benefit. Those on a low income and with less than £8,000 in capital can claim help.

Shooting match: a Bosnian

Major a

Continued from page 1

most recently conducted poll, Harris for today's *Daily Express*, showed that the Liberal Democrats are maintaining their strong late run, with support for the party up four points to 21 per cent. The survey indicates a one-point fall in Labour backing, at 38

DT
26.3.92.

OBITUARIES

Michael Lees

MICHAEL LEES, who has died aged 70, distinguished himself as a Special Operations Executive officer in Yugoslavia in the Second World War and latterly became an outspoken champion of the Serbian cause.

Following his wartime service as a British liaison officer attached to the Mihailovich Royalist Chetnik movement — with which he carried out extensive railway sabotage — Lees waged a vociferous campaign to keep attention focused on Britain's lamentable abandonment of Mihailovich in favour of Tito.

He subsequently accumulated evidence of the wartime suppression of his and other officers' despatches about the right-wing leader from Yugoslavia, and put his case strenuously in a book, *The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power 1943-1944* (1990).

Lees's passionate protection of the Serbian interest made him a natural choice as a television pundit. In a recent BBC2 *Timewatch* programme on Tito, he insisted that the Marshal did not worry about German reprisals against civilians.

He countered charges that Mihailovich was a Nazi collaborator, with evidence that Tito's Partisans sought a deal with the Germans for a free hand to attack the Chetniks in Serbia; in return, he claimed, they received help in resisting Allied landings in Yugoslavia.

Lees also expressed his views in a number of trenchant letters to this newspaper. "None of the Yugoslav peoples wanted Communism," he wrote, "least of all the individualist Serbs. It was forced upon them in a civil war by Josip Broz Tito — a Croat."

It was typical of Lees that he always pronounced the latter word to rhyme with "goat".

A grandson of Sir Elliott Lees, 1st Bt, MP, of South Lytchet Manor, Dorset, Michael Lees was born on May 17 1921. His sister Dolores ("Dodo") Bennett, who died last year, also had an adventurous war: she was twice awarded the Croix de Guerre.

Young Michael was educated at Ampleforth and followed his father into the Dorset Yeomanry. At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 he was drafted to India, where he wangled his way into the Parachute Brigade.

He went on to serve in Egypt, and one day early in 1943 was in the bar at the Shepheards Hotel in Cairo, when he heard a drunken staff officer talking of the activities of "the tweed cap boys" to a girl friend.

Lees duly made his way to "MO4" — as SOE in Cairo was then known — and talked his way into the Yugoslav section. Briefed by Major Basil Davidson — "a good enough imitation of a regular soldier" — he was dropped into Yugoslavia carrying a brown-paper-covered volume of Serbo-Croat grammar.

When in late 1944 Roy Farran asked Charles Mackintosh, then commanding Special Forces in Florence, to sound out British liaison officers in the Parma, Reggio and Modena areas on his proposal to drop in some 50 SAS men, the only positive response came from Reggio where the "wild man" Lees reigned.

Lees: Mihailovich man

Lees pooh-poohed objections that SAS intervention would invite German retribution. He concentrated instead on the advantages of a lift for Partisan morale, and signalled: "Come on in."

At their first encounter "this dynamic, mountainous man" impressed Farran greatly. "Mike Lees arrived on a big brown mare," he recalled. "He was a huge man with excited, urgent eyes. In all the time I knew him he was never one to waste a minute."

Lees's first words were: "Have lots of targets for you." He then dismounted and led Farran along an icy track to his base at Secchio. On arrival they were welcomed by Lees's personal bodyguard of selected Partisans — big, brawny men who called themselves the "*Goufa Nera*" or "Black Bats".

After drinking copious quantities of *grappa* with the local Italian Partisan leader, Farran and his men were fully accepted, and negotiations were rounded off with Partisan songs. Lees sang his own marching song, too, which Farran recalled turned on a cow "kicking Nelly in the belly in the barn".

Farran would later stress that he had no reservations about Lees's value. He rated him "the best Partisan liaison officer in the whole of Italy".

But, as with his earlier exploits in Yugoslavia, Lees's activities in Italy involved him in controversy. He was criticised for turning a blind eye to orders that he postpone the Villa Rossi operation in Albinea — a message he did not receive — and for acting irresponsibly.

As Lees insisted forever after, he would have welcomed such an order because he was "ill at the time and in bad shape to march and to fight". Malaria, contracted in Yugoslavia two years before, had returned.

Possibly this matter contributed to the extraordinary decision not to award Lees with a DSO, or even an MC. Nor was he promoted from captain to major.

The attack on the German HQ, originated by Lees and led by Farran, must rate as one of the most ambitious and finely tuned operations carried out by resistance forces. One hundred men raided an HQ guarded by 300 troops.

Lees had no illusions but that, other than a 20-strong SAS component, his force was a "motley lot" of Russian deserters, some French, a Spaniard, a Yugoslav and Italian Partisans.

Nevertheless Lees's preliminary reconnaissance, according to Farran, was of such a high standard that the success of the operation was scarcely in doubt.

On that March night in 1945, as Lees rushed the villa accommodating two German generals and their staff, who were controlling the whole front from Bologna to the coast, the air rang out not only with the sound of machine-gun fire but also the skirl of pipes.

Despite Lees's protestations that it might bring complications, Farran had enlisted a piper, insisting that the effect on German morale of hearing the pipes 50 miles behind the lines would far outweigh any disadvantages.

Once inside the villa, Lees was attacked by a German soldier. He pressed his Sten gun into the man's stomach and killed him, then raced up the stairs, in the hope of finding the generals.

Hit again, Lees fell, and recalled, "I moved my hand down and clutched something that came away. It was a red beret drenched in blood and I pushed the dead body of its owner aside."

Inspired by the pipes, which were still playing, Lees roused himself and managed to crawl to a door. He was helped out of the villa just before it went up in flames. Italian Partisans and two SAS men dragged Lees to a farm barn, where he discovered he had been wounded in several places.

Then began an agonising journey. He was eventually lifted out by a captured Fieseler Storch, after a 30-mile drive through enemy checkpoints in an ambulance accompanied by an Italian Partisan doctor dressed in German uniform.

After the war Lees went into business; in 1950 he joined a firm which operated in Argentina and East Africa. Twenty years later his wartime injuries caught up with him and he returned to Dorset. Thereafter he divided his time between there and Co Cork, where he farmed.

In 1949 Lees was made a freeman of the city by the Reggio Emilia council; and in 1985 he was jointly honoured with Farran by the council of Albinea. In that same year he published his first book about his experiences, *Special Operations Executed*.

Last autumn Lees and his wife — the former Gwen Johnson, whom he had married in 1944 when she was an SOE FANY officer in Italy — visited the beleaguered Serbian enclave of Krajina, whose foreign minister had translated *The Rape of Serbia* for publication there.

He had two daughters.

The announcement of Lees's death described him as "a devoted friend of Serbia".

Prof J. S. Smillie | Elizabeth

14

CABINET OFFICE

Historical Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071-2176050

Our Ref: HO91/597
Your Ref: O 11 630957 1

3 October 1991

J McGregor Esq
Her Majesty's Stationery Office
St Crispins
Duke Street
NORWICH
NR3 1PD

Dear Jim

SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

Jayne Wilkinson very kindly sent me a copy of the draft contract which Dr Mark Wheeler has agreed to in principle in respect of SOE in Yugoslavia and said that you would be contacting me about it in due course. Before we speak on the matter I thought you might wish to have my preliminary thoughts.

Our main areas of concern with regard to these histories have been copyright and indemnity and, to a lesser extent, the disclaimer and the number of free copies of the book to be made available. You have obviously covered the question of copyright in the draft contract (section 15) and indemnity is dealt with in section 14. On the latter point it has been our practice to require the publisher to indemnify HMG, its servants or agents "against liability in respect of any claims which might be brought for defamation, arising out of the history" and the publishers have done so. My initial feeling is that I should formally seek an undertaking that the Controller would similarly indemnify HMG but perhaps we could have a word about this in the context of HMSO's agency status.

All Official Histories relating to the Second World War carry a disclaimer in the following terms:-

> "The author of this history, as of the other official histories of the Second World War, has been given free access to official documents. He alone is responsible for the statements made and the views expressed."

The requirement to include this disclaimer is contained in the "Conditions governing the access to and use of official records not open to the public" which forms a contract between the Cabinet Office and the author and which Dr Wheeler has of course already accepted in respect of 'SOE in Yugoslavia'. I attach a copy of the "Conditions" so that you may be aware of them.

You will see in (5) that HMG reserves the right to decide whether the history should be published. This is, in effect, covered by your section 2 but you may perhaps wish to consider our wording?

I mentioned the number of free copies of the book. In addition to the 6 for the author we have always asked for 14 for ourselves. We do not do this in respect of the other official histories which you publish for us and I am not sure whether it is proper to do so in respect of the SOE histories. Perhaps we could discuss this at some stage also, it does not need to affect the contract with Dr Wheeler.

My final point is about timing which is touched upon in your section 1. We had hoped that the text would be with us for clearance during 1992 indeed, in answer to a Parliamentary Question on 18 January 1981 (Hansard WA Col 612), we gave 1992 as the estimated completion date. However I understood in February this year that it was likely to be another three years before the text would be cleared and ready to come to you for publication. Have you any further information on this?

Yours sincerely

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

HMSO

Your reference SOE In Yugoslavia

Our reference 0 11 630957 1

Date 20 September 1991

St Crispins
Duke Street
Norwich
NR3 1PD

Telephone
0603 69 5522
GTN 3014 "

Switchboard
0603 622211
Fax 0603 695582
Telex 97301

Miss Pat Andrews
Cabinet Office
Historical Section
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
LONDON SW1P 4HW

CABINET OFFICE
H 91/341
24 SEP 1991
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

Dear Miss Andrews

SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

Further to my conversation with Richard on Thursday, I enclose a copy of the draft contract which Dr Wheeler has agreed to in principle for the above title.

Jim McGregor is currently on annual leave and will, no doubt, be contacting you in due course, but I thought you may find it useful to have sight of the agreement in the meantime.

If I can be of any further assistance in the intervening period, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Wishes

Yours sincerely

JAYNE WILKINSON
Publications

Enc

MEMORANDRUM OF AGREEMENT

This Agreement is made this
day of 19

BETWEEN Dr M C Wheeler

(hereinafter termed the AUTHOR which expression shall include the AUTHOR'S executors, administrators, assigns and or successors) of the one part

AND The CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE (hereinafter termed the CONTROLLER) of the second part

WHEREBY it is agreed as follows concerning a work prepared by the AUTHOR provisionally entitled SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA (hereinafter termed the WORK which expression shall include any part of abridgement thereof).

RIGHTS The AUTHOR hereby grants to the CONTROLLER during the legal term of Copyright the sole and exclusive rights throughout the World.

a. to produce and publish and sell the WORK either as a whole or in part in volume form in the English language;

b. to sell and exploit all manner of subsidiary rights as listed in Clause 11 hereunder (with the division of proceeds as set forth in that Clause).

DELIVERY OF MANUSCRIPT

1. The AUTHOR shall delivery a typescript(s) in a form specified by the CONTROLLER together with illustrations, ready for the CONTROLLER in a form acceptable to him. In the event of the AUTHOR failing to deliver the WORK to the CONTROLLER on or before the delivery date to be agreed, the CONTROLLER may, by written notice to

the AUTHOR, terminate this Agreement.

TYPESCRIPT PREPRATION AND REVISIONS

2. The CONTROLLER shall arrange for the manuscript to be approved by the CABINET OFFICE prior to the commencement of type-setting who shall have the right to propose any changes of whatever nature as they deem desirable and necessary provided that all such changes are submitted to the author for approval. In the event of any dispute between the CABINET OFFICE and the AUTHOR which cannot be resolved the CONTROLLER may, by written notice to the AUTHOR, terminate this Agreement. Upon such termination of this Agreement and subject to the WORK having been produced in good faith and with proper care, in accordance with the terms of the Agreement the CONTROLLER will make no claim on any monies already paid to the AUTHOR. Copyright in the WORK shall remain vested in the Crown.

Cd Off (HMG) decides re Publication

NUMBER OF WORDS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

3. The number of words, inclusive of captions and any illustrations, shall be approximately one hundred and fifty thousand. The AUTHOR shall be responsible for identifying and selecting the illustrations to be used. Any transparencies prepared for reproduction shall be at cost to the AUTHOR.

INDEX

4. The AUTHOR shall provide an Index at his own cost.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

5. The work shall be a description by Dr M C Wheeler of the history and work of the SOE in Yugoslavia. If the AUTHOR uses other than Crown copyright material the AUTHOR will be responsible for obtaining the necessary clearance for its use. Costs or fees connected with the use of non-Crown copyright material will be paid by the AUTHOR.

ABRIDGEMENT OF WORK

6. The AUTHOR shall not during the continuance of this Agreement without the written consent of the CONTROLLER publish any abridgement or part

of the said WORK in any form, nor shall the AUTHOR prepare otherwise than for the CONTROLLER any WORK which reproduces in identical or similar form any considerable part of the said WORK or is of a nature likely to affect prejudically the sales of the said WORK.

PUBLICATION

7. i. The CONTROLLER shall produce and publish the WORK at his own risk and expense within a period of time mutually agreed between the AUTHOR and CONTROLLER such time not to exceed 12 months after the delivery date and acceptance of the WORK by the CONTROLLER unless prevented by industrial action or other circumstances beyond the CONTROLLER'S control.

ii. The CONTROLLER shall have the entire control of the WORK including paper, printing, binding, jackets or covers and embellishments, the number and distribution of free copies for the press or otherwise at the CONTROLLER'S expense, the reprinting, pricing and terms of sale of the first and any subsequent editions of the WORK.

PROOFS

8. The AUTHOR shall read and correct proofs of the WORK and shall return them to the CONTROLLER within the time specified by the CONTROLLER failing which the CONTROLLER may consider the proofs passed for press.

CORRECTIONS

9. If the AUTHOR shall make or cause to be made any alterations in type, illustrations, or plates which are not corrections of a typographical or draughtsman's errors, and which shall cost in excess of 10% (ten per cent) of the cost of composition independent of the cost of the said alterations then the cost of such excess alterations may, at the CONTROLLER'S discretion, be charged to the AUTHOR.

FEES AND ROYALTIES

10. During the legal term of copyright the following

fees and royalties shall be payable by the CONTROLLER to the AUTHOR.

a. on the first printing no royalty shall be paid over a fixed fee, in advance of twenty thousand pounds (£20,000).

b. a royalty of ten percentum (10%) of the selling price shall be paid in respect of all sales made of any second or subsequent impression;

c. on cheaper editions or paperbacks editions (if any) in a different format published by the CONTROLLER, a royalty fee of ten percentum (10%) shall be paid on all sales made;

d. in the event of a sale to a book club one half of the difference between the cost of manufacture and the price received. Where book club rights are sold subject to a royalty one half shall be paid;

e. in the event of a sale of the translation rights into any foreign language, fifty percentum of the net proceeds received by the CONTROLLER shall be payable.

f. on sales of foreign editions a royalty of ten percentum (10%) of the gross receipts shall be payable;

g. one half of the proceeds obtained for the sale of Digest Book rights shall be paid.

RIGHTS

11. The AUTHOR hereby assigns to the CONTROLLER the undermentioned rights in consideration of which the CONTROLLER shall credit the AUTHOR the following percentages of all monies received by him in respect of the sale thereof:

a. First Serial Rights - seventy-five percentum (75%).

b. Second and subsequent Serial Rights - fifty percentum (50%).

c. Sound Broadcasting Rights, Television Rights (limited to verbatim reading only) - seventy-five percentum (75%).

d. Anthology, Selection and Quotation Rights, Digest Rights, One-shot Periodical or Newspaper Rights, Mechanical (including any other means of reproduction) Rights, Picturisation Book Rights - fifty percentum (50%).

e. On the sale of subsidiary rights of any other kind 50 percentum (50%) of any net sum received shall be payable.

ADVANCES

12. The CONTROLLER shall pay an Advance of twenty thousand pounds (£20,000) against all sums due from the CONTROLLER under the provisions of this Agreement in the following proportions:

i. Three thousand pounds (£3,000) upon signature of this Agreement.

ii. Nine thousand pounds (£9,000) upon approval by the Cabinet Office of the manuscript of the WORK.

iii. Eight thousand pounds (£8,000) upon publication of the WORK.

PAYMENT OF ADVANCES

13. i. The CONTROLLER will make payment of the amounts negotiated to

Dr M C Wheeler
School of Slavonic and East
European Studies
University of London
Senate House
Malet Street
LONDON WC1E 7HU

agreed, the CONTROLLER may, by written notice to

WARRANTY

14. The AUTHOR hereby warrants to the CONTROLLER and is assigns and licensees that the AUTHOR'S WORK is an origianl WORK, has not been published in volume form within the territories covered by this Agreement and is no way a violation of any existing copyright, that it contains nothing libellous or defamatory, that all statements contained therein reporting to be facts are to be the best of the AUTHOR'S knowledge and belief true, that the AUTHOR has full power to make this Agreement and will indemnify the CONTROLLER against any loss, injury or damage (including any legal costs or expenses and any compensation costs and dispersements paid by the CONTROLLER to compromise or settle any claim) in subsequence of any breach of this warranty or arising out of any claim alleging that the said WORK constitutes an infringement of copyright or contains libellous or defamatory matter.

COPYRIGHT

15. The AUTHOR hereby agrees that copyright in the work shall vest in the Crown on completion of the WORK and the confirmatory assigns will be executed at the request and expense of the CONTROLLER as the CONTROLLER shall require in order to vest in the Crown such copyright in all parts of the world.

REVISED EDITION

16. If in the opinion of the CONTROLLER a revised edition of the said WORK is desirable the CONTROLLER shall first ask the AUTHOR to supply all such materials that are necessary to ensure that the revised WORK is up to date and accurate. If the AUTHOR is unable or refuses to revise the said WORK then the CONTROLLER is entitle to employ at no expense to the AUTHOR some other person to complete the preparation of the revised WORK.

REMAINDERING

17. The CONTROLLER shall not less than two years after first publication be entitled to sell any surplus stock as remainder at the best price such remainder stock will fetch. If that price

is more that the cost of production, the CONTROLLER shall pay 10% (ten per cent) of the amount realised by such sale and this shall be in lieu of other royalties that may be payable. The AUTHOR shall be given an opportunity to buy copies at the agreed remainder price.

COPIES

18. The AUTHOR shall be entitled to receive on publication six presentation copies of the first edition of the WORK. Further copies of the WORK may be purchased on trade terms for personal use but not for resale unless agreed by the CONTROLLER.

What about us?

ACCOUNTS

19. The CONTROLLER shall render the accounts relating to the WORK as at 30 June and the 31 December each year following the date of first publication, and all royalties and/or fees of percentages due to the AUTHOR, shall be paid to the AUTHOR within three calendar months of the said accounting dates.

DETERMINATION

20. If the CONTROLLER fails to fulfil or comply with any provisions of this Agreement within one month after written notification from the AUTHOR the AUTHOR shall be at liberty to determine this Agreement without prejudice to any other claim which the AUTHOR may have either for monies due and/or damages and/or otherwise.

ARBITRATION

21. All questions or differences whatsoever which may at any time hereafter arise between the parties hereto touching this Agreement or the subject matter thereof arising out of or in relation thereto respectively (including the determination of any sum or sums which may be payable under any clause thereof) and whether as to construction for otherwise shall be referred to a sole arbitrator to be agreed upon the parties hereto and in default of such agreement all questions or differences shall be referred to the sole arbitrator to be nominated by the President of the Law Society London and in either case the arbitration shall be in

agreed, the CONTROLLER may, by written notice to

accordance with and subject to the provisions of the Arbitration Act 1950 or any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof for the time being in force.

INTERPRETATION

22. This Agreement shall be construed according to the laws of England.

For and on behalf of the CONTROLLER of Her Majesty's Stationery Office

_____

_____ (Witness)

For and on behalf of the AUTHOR

_____

_____ (Witness)

Disk: F21/114

CABINET OFFICE

Historical Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071-217 6050

FO 12

Ref: HO91481 ✓

5 August 1991

Mrs Heather Yasamee
Historical Branch
Library and Records Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Cornwall House
Stamford Street
LONDON
SE1 9NS

Dear Heather

Sir Robin Butler has asked me to thank you very much for the very helpful material you supplied in response to his request for a commentary on the points made by Mr Michael Lees.

I had of course already sent my thanks to you but Sir Robin's written request to express his appreciation was on my desk when I returned from leave this morning - hence this second letter.

Yours ever
Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

Richard
You may like to see the material in the Annex - if not, plse pass to Shelley to put away.
Pat 23/9.

CABINET OFFICE

Historical Section

Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071-217 6050

Ref: HO91/477 J

26 July 1991

Mrs Heather Yasamee
Historical Branch
Library and Records Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Cornwall House
Stamford Street
LONDON SE1 9NS

Dear Heather

Many thanks for the commentary on Michael Lees' letter which reached me yesterday evening - it should provide Sir Robin Butler with some holiday reading! I am most grateful for your help.

Yours ever

Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

Miss Andrews

c-~~FERB~~

CABINET OFFICE
A 9212
26 JUL 1991
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. .....

This is very helpful.
Pl. thank Heather Yasamee very much. I have kept the attachments for further reading FERB 26.7.

HO91/476

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

YUGOSLAVIA

During your correspondence with Mr Michael Lees earlier this year you said that you would like to have, for your education, a commentary from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) on an account attached to Mr Lees' letter of 27 April about British/Yugoslavia relations and, in particular, the Tito/Mihailovic controversy.

The attached commentary has been produced by the Historical Branch, FCO in consultation with the Eastern European Department. It draws heavily on the Official Histories and the relevant extracts are attached.

The FCO, in providing this material, say that a fuller point by point commentary would take a very long time to produce but if there are any particular points on which you would like further information they would be glad to provide it.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical Section
26 July 1991

CABINET OFFICE
H .....
29 JUL 1991
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. .....

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Cornwall House
Stamford Street
London SE1 9NS

Telephone 071- 217 2044

FOL. 9

Miss P M Andrews
Cabinet Office
Historical Section
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
London SW1P 4HW

Your reference

Our reference

Date 25 July 1991

Dear Pat,

I attach a short note on some of the points raised by Michael Lees on which Sir Robin Butler has asked for a commentary. For convenience we have numbered Lees' paragraphs on the annotated copy of his memorandum returned herewith. I hope this gives you enough to go on but, as I have already explained, a full blow by blow commentary would have taken time out of all proportion and I gather that, in any case, this is not what Sir Robin is after.

If there remains any particular point which Sir Robin would like more information on, by all means get back to me, bearing in mind that only Gervase Cowell can help you with the SOE angle.

Hope you have a good holiday
Yrs ever
Heather.

Heather Yasamee

cc Mr. Cowell SOE Adviser
Mr. Butcher EED.

text of reference at annex

BRITISH WARTIME POLICY IN YUGOSLAVIA - TITO OR MIHAILOVIC?

1. The full background to the unhappy story of the wartime struggle in Yugoslavia is a complicated one, beyond the scope of the present brief commentary on the memorandum sent by Michael Lees to Sir Robin Butler in April. The general thrust of Mr Lees' argument is that Britain was wrong to drop Mihailovic for Tito. More specifically he claims that the decision was taken unilaterally by Churchill in December 1943 on the basis of disinformation emanating from a communist-penetrated SOE Cairo and persuasion from friends like Fitzroy Maclean, who looked at Tito through rose-coloured spectacles. Mr Lees' own heavily biased view of what happened has been fully aired in his recent book, *The Rape of Serbia: the British role in Tito's grab for power 1943-44* (New York, 1990), which he is working hard to promote.

2. In so far as the FCO has had a view in recent years on the pro-Mihailovic faction (of which Mr Lees is only the latest exponent), it has been not to enter into argument but to refer enquirers to the official histories.* The old official line taken with the many PQs from 1944 to 1946 (the year of his trial) was to say that British aid to Mihailovic was withdrawn because he was no longer fighting the Germans and some of his subordinates were actively collaborating with them against Tito's Partisans. This is still true. (Woodward is particularly good on the finely balanced question of collaboration, pp. 308-311 & 315, note 1 - see also my minute of 3 June at Flag A).

3. As far as the history side of all this goes, Woodward and Hinsley show the Lees thesis to be mostly distortion with the odd grain of truth. In support of his main argument, Mr Lees marshals a number of facts and figures which do not altogether square with the official accounts. For instance he exaggerates Mihailovic's fighting strength by more than double. Although no one knows for sure the numbers on either side, the figure of 60,000 armed Cetniks plus 300,000 peasant reserves is a wild exaggeration for Mihailovic's strength at the end of 1943. Most other sources agree that 20-30,000 plus at best 150,000 reserves was the more likely strength. Lees' figure of 80,000 Partisans is probably not too far off the mark. 65,000 was the figure accepted in the Foreign Office in 1943 (little credence was given by the F.O. to Maclean's report of 200,000).

---

* F.H. Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, vol. 3, part i, pp. 137-172 (London, 1984)
Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, vol. iii, pp. 278-382 (London, 1971)
Michael Howard, *Grand Strategy*, vol. iv, pp. 479-495 (1972)
John Ehrman, *ibid.*, vol. v, pp. 75-82 and pp. 270-78 (1972).

VOL 16 9/1

4. Similarly Mr Lees appears to exaggerate by as much as ten times the quantity of supplies sent to Tito from the autumn of 1943 onwards, when compared with the figures supplied by Elisabeth Barker in her *British Policy towards South East Europe during the Second World War* (p. 164: Flag B). Even so no one denies that Tito received far more supplies than Mihailovic at a time when the Foreign Office was concerned to support both Cetniks and Partisans even-handedly. Lees says in his para. 4 that Mihailovic was abandoned. It is certainly true that he was not informed of the decision to end supplies (Woodward, p. 307, note 1).

5. Both Hinsley and Woodward make it clear that the withdrawal of British support from Mihailovic did not hang on a single decision by Churchill in December 1943, but was the result of a long process of inter-departmental and Ministerial consultation in which the full range of conflicting reports and advice was taken into account, eg. SOE London, the Chiefs of Staff, the JIC, SACMED and the Middle East Command. It does not appear that the information from SOE Cairo was a significant factor in the final decision taken in February 1944, when the military consideration of who was killing the most Germans was paramount. Hinsley (pp. 137-72) is the best published source for this and Elisabeth Barker's article in the South Slav Journal is also well worth a glance (Flag C).

6. It is true that Churchill, encouraged by Maclean and others, including Stevenson, the British Ambassador to the Yugoslav Government in Exile, whom Lees describes as 'fanatical', pressed for the withdrawal of both military and political support to Mihailovic in face of FO objections and the express reservations of the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden. In regard to Churchill at Cairo in December 1943, there is no record of the meeting on 10 December to which Lees attaches so much importance (his paras. 5-8: Woodward, p. 299). Although Churchill, undoubtedly influenced by Maclean, his son Randolph etc., appears to have been convinced from this date that Mihailovic was not worth supporting, inter-departmental arguments continued for some months. In February the final decision was taken to send no more supplies to Mihailovic and in May Mihailovic lost all political support. Afterwards neither Churchill nor Eden appear to have regretted the loss of a popular, but essentially failed, leader who possessed neither military strength nor political sense. Equally they had little enthusiasm for Tito who while killing more Germans, was also using British supplies to attack Mihailovic supporters and strengthen his own position with Yugoslavia. Every effort was made to find some political compromise between Tito and the King and to prevent Yugoslavia from becoming a communist state.

7. Other issues thrown up in what is becoming a private quarrel between Mr Lees and Dr Wheeler, include the barbarous treatment meted out by Tito to

thousands of Slovenes and political prisoners after the war. Many of these had been repatriated in error by British military authorities in Austria in May 1945. These refugees and prisoners of war were immediately slaughtered by Tito's men. The Foreign office acknowledged at the time that the repatriation had been 'a ghastly mistake' (minute by Mr. Addis, 30 August, 1945). Much capital has already been made of this in publications by Nikolai Tolstoy and Lord Bethell.

Heather Yasamee
FCO Historical Branch
25 July 1991

FOL 10
8

CABINET OFFICE

Historical Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071-217 6050

Ref: HO91/443 ✓

9 July 1991

Mrs H J Yasamee
Historical Branch
Library and Records Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Cornwall House
Stamford Street
LONDON SE1 9NS

Dear Heather

YUGOSLAVIA

Sir Robin Butler received a letter (copy attached) from Mr Michael Lees dated 27 April 1991 to which was attached a memorandum which he had written earlier summarising what happened during the war and what has happened since in respect of British relations with Yugoslavia. Sir Robin replied briefly to Mr Lees saying only that he, and others concerned with Official Histories, wish to see that a fair and balanced picture is presented by 'SOE in Yugoslavia' when it is published and that we shall do our best to ensure that the procedures adopted for approval of the history prior to publication achieve this end.

Sir Robin, having sent this reply, asked whether he could have, for his own education, a Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) commentary on the account attached to Mr Lees' letter. I sent this request to Gervase Cowell who replied drawing my attention to 'British Foreign Policy in the Second World War' Volume III for the political aspect and to Hinsley Volume III, Chapter 33 for the intelligence background. He also sent me a copy of your brief for EED dated 3 June 1991.

These references are all very useful as background but it is specifically an FCO view of Mr Lees' interpretation of events which Sir Robin is seeking and, your briefing apart, I cannot provide that by simply referring him to the Official Histories. Gervase is now on leave and I hope you will forgive me if I ask whether it would be possible for you, in consultation presumably with EED, to let me have the FCO commentary requested. If this causes problems for you could we have a word?

Yours ever
Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

Heather Yasamee 'phoned on 15/7 to say she hoped to have something with me by mid next week – approx 24/7. PMA 15/7.

CONFIDENTIAL

Lislee House,
Courtmacsherry,
Co. Cork, Ireland.
Tel: Bandon (023) 40126

CABINET OFFICE
A 4822 ✓
1 MAY 1991
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No .....

31

27th April, 1991.

Sir Robin Butler, K.C.B. C.V.O.
The Cabinet Office,
10 Downing Street,
Whitehall,
LONDON.

Dear Sir Robin,

My friend Major Archie Jack has been in touch with you on the subject of the official history for SOE in Yugoslavia. We both of us share great concern about the attitude of Dr. Wheeler and I myself wrote to your predecessor Sir Robert Armstrong - as he then was - objecting to the appointment, as did Nora Beloff also.

I have just returned from Belgrade where I was launching the Serbo/Croat edition of my book "The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power". My visit coincided with the students' demonstration; and meetings in Valjevo, Kragujevac and Belgrade, organised by my publishers as meetings to promote the book, turned into political meetings protesting against communism. This was inevitable since the theme of the book struck a chord with the Serbian people and coincided precisely with the purpose of the students' demonstration. The students were, of course, protesting against the government domination of the media, and particularly of the Belgrade television, and demanding a totally free press and an end to communist propaganda.

It was most encouraging that the Yugoslav Ambassador was sent for by the Foreign Office to get a dressing down about the shootings. Immense harm has been done by London, and the British Yugoslav society in particular, continuing to give the impression that the British still think Titoism was "a good thing" and that we would welcome a return to Titoist values and the rule of force in order to "prevent chaos" and hold Yugoslavia together with the barrel of a gun. Tito and Titoist values are out of fashion for good and all in Yugoslavia except for those few die-hard ex Partisan Generals and their cronies who draw down good pensions and enjoy special priviledges. I was asked time and again in Belgrade if the British Prime Minister would apologise for the harm done by Britain to Yugoslavia, and specifically to the Serbian people, as Mrs. Thatcher apologised to Havel in respect of the harm done to Czechoslovakia.

Getting the history right is now really important. It is vital that official circles in London are seen to accept: that Tito was a murderous monster and a disaster for the country and for the Balkans; that he only managed to survive economically by a combination of grant aid at first and then massive loans; that these gave an appearance of prosperity whilst camouflaging the gross inefficiencies, corruption and wasteful despotism of the Tito regime; that without an unobtrusive but ruthless and efficient secret police the regime

POLIO 8/1

could not have survived; and that the Yugoslav human rights record was one of the worst in Eastern Europe even after the West in general, and London in particular, was lionising Tito as a "good communist". The West, and London in particular, could also regret Tito's massive quarter million massacres in 1944 - 1946 instead of trying to fudge the figures as did Wheeler in his recent letter to the Telegraph (March 19th 1991). This gives forty thousand massacred Spring 1945 but ignores the killings which started already in Autumn 1944 and continued into the Spring of 1946. At the end of 1945 Tito called a halt because "no one fears death any more". His henchlings continued for a few months longer.

If the Serbs see that London still hankers after Titoism - and the recent Sunday Telegraph interview with Fitzroy Maclean and the appointment of Wheeler as official historian and his Titoist effusions in "Borba" give them good reason so to believe - then they have to ask themselves what hope have they, alone and unsupported, of getting rid of the evil Titoist despotism embodied today by Milošević and his mafia gang.

Peace is very fragile in Yugoslavia due to the religious and ethnic problems. They will always be there but the immediate cause of tension is the continuing communist influence in Serbia. Milošević has been using the ethnic problems in order to stir up nationalism and thus to obtain a measure of Serbian support. However most of the Serbs have seen through this now and they are very keen to replace him. He won the elections thanks to his manipulation of the ethnic problems but even more thanks to his domination of the media. The students recognised this and they are determined to bring an end to it; and it is significant that they have the support of nearly all the intellectuals in Belgrade and of most of the country. Milošević had to climb down because he could not count on the support of the army. One faction in the army wanted to impose martial law but another prevented this and Milošević was forced to give way. The struggle will continue and it must be in the interests of peace in Yugoslavia that the democrats win; and that Milošević and his gang become displaced. Only then will it be possible to find a solution which at least contains the ethnic problems. With this background the recent invitation of Admiral Mamula to address the R.U.S.I. and the nature of that address in which he referred to a possible reimposition of censorship and use of the army to maintain order was extremely unfortunate, and indeed provocative to democratic opinion in Belgrade.

One of the main problems arises from the fact that the opposition is divided and there is no outstanding alternative leader as a substitute for Milošević who has considerable charisma. As is evident in all East European economies there arises a great problem if all the communists disappear since no one else knows what buttons to press. However, finding a solution to these sort of problems is impossible if lies about what really happened in the past continue to be told. The truth about the past and about the mistakes have to be recognised if anything sensible is to emerge and, precisely because it is based on lies and because no one believes them anymore, communism has to be totally discarded. Furthermore communism as an ideology has to be shown up. There is no such thing. There never really was. There is just despotism and all the big communists were self seeking despots. And that appealed to their self seeking lackeys who did not go for the ideological fudge but who loved the trappings.

In this context it is not surprising that my book and my visit re seized on as a ray of hope and light. The atmosphere in the tings was inspiring. No one questioned my main theme. The stions turned on detail; on who was responsible for misleading Churchill; on whether or not Churchill had a natural antipathy to Serbia; on how the communists penetrated the British agencies and secret services; and in particular on why London continues to reach the Titoist disinformation when Tito and Titoism are totally discredited in Belgrade. It would be going too far to say that Wheeler is already a hate figure in Belgrade but it would not be going too far to point out that there is immense antipathy to him there. He is seen as the major exponent of Titoism in the younger generation of British historians.

If the British Government could be seen to break with its Titoist past and to give the democratic Serbs a fair hearing I sincerely believe that this would do a lot towards creating the atmosphere in which the diverse components of Yugoslavia could find the way to live together in peace.

I permit myself to attach a memorandum I wrote about four months ago which summarises what happened in the war and what has happened since in respect of British relations with Yugoslavia. I think it shows just how false is the information which has been put out by those who have a vested interest in justifying what was done when Churchill was persuaded to abandon our traditional allies the Serbs.

Thank you for your patience if you have read so far.

Yours sincerely,

MICHAEL LEES

Annotations are by Mjasnier FCO Historical Branch 25/iii

BACKGROUND

Yugoslavia

1. There were two resistance movements in Yugoslavia. That of Mihailović which started in the mountains in April 1941 immediately following the German conquest and that of Tito which started resistance in June 1941 when the Germans attacked Russia. Mihailović who was nominated Minister of Defence by the Royal Yugoslav Government in exile in London, had his main base in Serbia where his movement was predominant until the Summer of 1944. His army was primarily Serbian, loyal to the King and the exiled government, and based on the centuries old Četnik Homeguard tradition. Tito was a Croat, a lifelong international comintern apparatchik and the Soviet nominated leader of the communist party in Yugoslavia. His Partisan forces had their main base in Croatia but his recruits were drawn from all sources including quite a large proportion of Serbs. These came from the minorities in Croatia who were fleeing from the genocide programme carried out by the Ustaša. This was the pre-war Facist terrorist organisation of Ante Pavelić who had become dictator of the Independent State of Croatia created by the Axis. The Tito Partisans claimed to be a national army of liberation but were organised and totally controlled by the communists throughout the war. When, in 1943, the Italians capitulated and the ultimate defeat of the Germans became evident, substantial numbers of the Ustaša changed sides and joined the Partisans in Croatia. Despite their criminal record they were grabbed by the communists and in some cases given senior positions. The Partisans also recruited surrendered Italians in Croatia and Dalmatia.

generally accurate Mjasnier 25/iii

2. Thus at the end of 1943, whilst the Germans held the towns and the main lines of communication throughout Yugoslavia, the mountains and most of the countryside of Serbia were Mihailović territory but in Croatia and Slovenia the Partisans were stronger. At the end of 1943 Mihailović had about 60,000 men under arms and on active service, with peasant reserves, with some military training, of some 300,000, of whom perhaps the half had arms. Those forces were situated in Serbia commanding the main routes of communication from Slavonika to Belgrade and also the key mineral resources which were important for the German war economy. Tito's forces numbered perhaps 80,000 in total including 20,000 Italians, all of them mobile troops. He had no Četnik-style reserves.

No - more like 20-30,000

50,000 is the more usual figure

3. Tito's main forces were in the wastelands of Bosnia (in the new Croatian state) in a less strategically important area and his forces in Serbia were negligible, less than a thousand men.

yes

4. Prior to 1943 the British recognised only the Loyalist movement of Mihailović. However support given to him was negligible. The total supplies dropped to Mihailović from 1941 until the end of 1943 were about 200 tons. Then he was abandoned. In April 1943 the first contact was made with Tito following authorisation by Churchill personally in January. By the end of 1943 the Tito Partisans received about 1000 tons by air and nearly 20,000 tons

yes

No.

E. Barker CCS 113-115

1 only 1,853 accurately

by sea. The total deliveries to the Partisans in the war were around 20,000 tons by air and 30,000 tons by sea. These massive supplies were used primarily in the prosecution of the civil war against the Loyalists.

5 Churchill decided to abandon Mihailović and give exclusive support to Tito on 10th December, 1943. The decision was taken at a meeting between W.S.C., Brigadier Maclean, Col. Deakin and Ralph Skrine Stevenson. The latter was formally Ambassador to the Royal Yugoslav government but he was, in fact, a fanatical supporter of the Partisans and already active as Maclean's link in Cairo. Not supprisingly he later became the first Ambassador to Tito. Brigadier Armstrong had been dropped to Mihailović's Headquarters in September at the same time as Maclean dropped to Tito. The Foreign Office had intended that the two Brigadiers should study the two movements and then be brought out to report together. In fact, there was no representation from the mission to Mihailović and the long signal reports from both his British and American missions were deliberately held up in SOE Cairo so that they failed to reach either Churchill or Eden before the critical meeting. Indeed I believe that neither ever saw those signals. A determined effort by the American Liaison officers to evacuate and report was sabotaged by SOE Cairo. Thus Churchill took his decisions purely on the basis of information prepared by SOE Cairo and on the eye witness reports of Maclean and Deakin. Deakin had been all the time at Tito's Headquarters from end May when he dropped until early December, other than one visit to the coast in Croatia at the time of the Italian surrender. Maclean had spent less than a month in the country, also all the time at Tito's Headquarters, other than one visit to the coast to make arrangements for the reception of supplies by sea. Neither Deakin nor Maclean had set foot in Serbia, the largest and most important part of Yugoslavia and the key area of strategic interest.

6 It is now accepted fact that SOE Cairo was penetrated by communists and working throughout 1943 to persuade the British Government to abandon Mihailović and support the Partisans. The policy of the chiefs of staff decreed the provision of equal support to both movements after contact had been made with the Partisans. Yet Mihailović received only 150 tons in the whole of 1943 whilst the Partisans starting in June received 1,000 tons by air before the end of 1943 (apart from the supplies by sea). SOE controlled air supplies and deliberately switched supplies from Mihialović to the Partisans. When he dropped in Brigadier Armstrong carried a message from General Wilson the commander-in-chief Middle East to Mihailović which promised "more supplies". In fact SOE stopped all supplies to Mihailović two or three days before Brigadier Armstrong delivered the letter.

7 Apart from the malign SOE influence both Deakin and Maclean were totally captivated by Tito and his communist colleagues who were old hands at the art of bamboozlment. Their reports based on Partisan source information only, alleged that Mihailović was ineffective and a collaborator. They claimed that Tito was killing more Germans and that he would take over Yugoslavia in any case. Macleans report even went so far as to state that Tito had 220,000 active soldiers in all and 30,000 in Serbia and that Mihailovic had only one twentieth of the Partisan forces i.e. 11,000 men.

8 Churchill accepted these totally false figures and the arguments put up by Mackean, Deakin and SOE Cairo. He established a policy of total support to Tito in the hope and confidence of winning his friendship. He hoped that Maclean and Randolph, his own son, could together persuade Tito to have the King back, become a democrat and arrange free elections after the war. The communists bamboozled SOE Cairo, Maclean and Deakin and through them they bamboozled W.S.C. On 10th December, 1943 Yugoslavia's fate was sealed.

9 Throughout 1944 arms poured in to Tito's forces by sea and air and the BBC joined with the communist operated Radio Free Yugoslavia, which was broadcasting from southern Russia, in attacking the Loyalist Mihailovic movement and urging all good citizens to join the Partisans. The full logistical, political and psychological force of the Western Allies was harnessed behind Tito.

10 Nevertheless Serbia remained practically inviolate Mihailovic territory until the late Summer of 1944. The only change was that sabotage of the German main communications which had been building up under British Mission influence and leadership ceased when British support and the dribble of supplies stopped. In May 1944 British missions with Mihailovic forces coming from all over Serbia concentrated for evacuation from an improvised airfield at Mihailovic Pranjani Headquarters near Čačak in the Šumadija. Covering perhaps forty per cent of total Yugoslav territory these missions and some hundred crashed air-crew encountered no Partisans although, when they arrived in Bari, the fraudulent SOE maps claimed that the entire area was already in Partisan hands.

11 At the end of May 1944 Tito's Headquarters was attacked and over-run by German paratroops. Tito fled to Italy and was from then on installed on Vis, a Yugoslav island, but under British military and naval protection with a British airfield. He did not return to the Yugoslav mainland until the Autumn when he accompanied the Red Army. He sneaked out of Vis surreptitiously in September 1944 by air, without even telling his British hosts, in order to solicit Stalins help by diverting the Red Army into Yugoslavia to takeover the Partisans' job of driving out the Germans. This enabled the Partisans to concentrate their efforts on overcoming the Loyalists and establishing a communist dictatorship.

12 Before leaving Vis Tito had made plans with his British protectors for massive British help to be given for his invasion of Serbia. The Allied operation was named "Ratweek" and was mounted officially to catch the Germans retreating from Greece. In fact the German army made an orderly withdrawal and a major proportion of the allied efforts, including both strategic and tactical air support, was directed against the Loyalist forces. It was also used to terrorise the anticommunist population of the Serbian heartland. The Partisans avoided contact with the retreating Germans and concentrated their forces on the conquest of the Loyalist held areas in Serbia. Yugoslav fought Yugoslavs whilst the Germans retreated north westwards.

13 Ironically the major action fought by Yugoslavs against the retreating Germans was carried out by the Loyalists in the

Šumadija area near Mihailović's Headquarters near Čačak. Mihailović's whole strategy from 1941 on had been based on conserving his forces for a major uprising at the right time. Although abandoned by the Western Allies and desperately short of ammunition to defend himself against the Partisan invasion he nevertheless staged an "Ustanak" or uprising as he had always planned. His units met up with the Red Army who accepted their help and then turned them over to their Partisan enemies for disposal. The annihilation of the Loyalist forces and the elimination of all bourgeois and democratic elements of Serbian society was inevitable once the Red Army had cleared out the Germans and the Partisans were able to turn their full attention to the civil war with the major logistical and moral support of the Western Allies. Massacres were the order of the day. — Yes. V. Anti-Soviet Bulat influence!

14 The British policy fostered a civil war that could have been stopped. Indeed without the Western Allied support Tito could never have started any serious invasion of Serbia. The huge resistance potential of the martially inclined and fiercely patriotic heartland Serbs was utterly wasted. The Serbian people of the Serbian heartland, the major component of the Yugoslav population and our traditional allies, were decimated in a civil war in which they were attacked by a polyglot army of Croats, their Serbian cousins, ex-Ustaše, Italians and Bulgars who had been occupying Serbia on behalf of the Germans and who were turned around by Stalin for Tito's benefit. But the key to it all was the massive Western Allied support.

15 Worse still the British policy sacrificed the political future of Yugoslavia.

16 The claim that the British wartime policy of making friends with Tito influenced events in 1948 is utterly bogus. Tito's regime between 1945 and 1948 was about the most oppressive in Eastern Europe. When in 1948 Tito quarreled - temporarily - with Stalin the West sought to exploit this and pour in aid. Tito took the aid and used it to pretend that his regime was something better than other communist regimes. He gave absolutely nothing in return. Indeed his Third World initatives were consistently harmful to the West. His human rights record remained appalling and Yugoslavia now has the burden of his massive debts to service. The West gave Tito virtually everything he asked for, in the war and afterwards. Neither in the war nor since did Tito give anything in return.- other than the contempt which communists show to those they can deceive and whom they consequently despise.

17 The scene in Yugoslavia today is a direct consequence of the civil war. The Serbs are a proud people with an economy traditionally based on individualistic peasant holdings and they are the last people in Europe one would expect to embrace communism. Above all the Serbs are intensely nationalistic and proud of their history. It is a sad irony that the communist Nomenklatura - now calling themselves socialists - have managed to hold onto power in Serbia by harnessing the nationalism of the Serbs against the Albanian minority in Kosovo and against the Croats. Tito feared the Serbs and discriminated against them but the army is now trying to resuscitate communism; they claim in order to preserve the good aspects of Titoism; in fact to save their own position and privileges.

18 This is where history comes in. Both Churchill and Eden

ac[illegible]owledged publicly and unequivocally that their Yugoslav policy was a disaster. Regrettably they lost the 1945 election and the government lost any interest in the fate of the Yugoslav people. [illegible]ose who manoeuvered British policy into selling out Yugoslavia to communism hijacked history. Romantic fairy tales were published by participants in the war in Yugoslavia on the Partisan side and Tito's public relations men destroyed and created records to support anything they wanted to prove. In turn these romantic eye witness fairy tales and the Belgrade records became "sources" for historians. There was massive fellow-traveller and communist influence in the academic profession in the post-war years and symposia packed with Partisan protagonists were organised to create the false Red history. The events of 1948 gave this movement enormous momentum and it has never looked back. Having failed to get the Socialist government's support to give evidence in favour of Mihailović at his trial in 1946 the surviving members of the British Mission to Mihailović found themselves shouted down by the fanatical Titoites. The few Loyalists who escaped to the West were forced to keep their heads down for fear of being accused as "quislings". In Yugoslavia very very few Loyalist intellectuals survived the massacres of all those elements who might resist Tito. The Mihailović case went by default.

Hardly, there's been masses on Mihailović - but still not balanced treatment.

19 When the British records were released under the thirty year rule another spate of works appeared using these records further to ensure the perpetuation of the heroic Tito myth and another packed symposium was organised to reinforce them. Interestingly until David Martin - a lone American voice speaking out for Mihailović since the 1940's - and I, myself, discovered their significance, no one seems to have looked at the SOE files which were released, seemingly in error, and which blew the whole Tito myth apart. Maybe they were deliberately ignored.

Files released at PRO in class WO 202 and have certainly been used by others eg. David Stafford

20 Then the Cabinet office took the decision to appoint an official historian. This was followed by frantic manoeuvring. As was to be expected the selected candidate was a marked supporter of the Partisans, a young man, Dr. Wheeler of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, who had been a pupil of Deakin and whose whole training reflected the Titoite school of thought. His previously published work (Britain and the War for Yugoslavia 1940/43) demonstrates his total committment to the "Received Wisdom". Nora Beloff - author of Tito's Flawed Legacy - and I wrote to Sir Robert Armstrong of the Cabinet office expressing our concern at this appointment. We urged that an unprejudiced neutral historian be appointed or, better still, that no appointment be made and history left to those who wished to publish their views. However Sir Robert was adamant. We felt so aggrieved at the evident lack of consideration given to our arguements that we published the correspondence in the Salisbury Review with Sir Robert's agreement.

21 Since Dr. Wheelers appointment, I and others have endeavoured to provide him with material and give him every cooperation in order to help him learn the truth. But it is evident that his mind is grooved with Titoite prejudices.

22 As it was then obvious that the official history would just reflect the grotesque "received wisdom" I decided to write a book myself which was published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in America as British publishers felt it was too controversial or, perhaps, were warned off.

It is a fascinating fact that this book (The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power) was sought out and accepted for publication in Yugoslavia by BIGZ the largest semi-state publishing organisation in Belgrade, where the government in power is still communist, when all the British publishers we approached have shied away from it.

24 I visited Belgrade and found that there was immense interest in my book. Although it was then still in process of translation many intellectuals had obtained photocopies of proofs through contacts in the United States even before the book was published there and I was mobbed by the media seeking interviews and asking highly informed questions. There was immense interest in what they called "The new history replacing the only lying mythology". It was evident to me that there is a general desire to learn what really happened in the war and the largest opposition party in Serbia has made the rehabilitation of General Mihailovic one of its key election programmes.

25 I believe that it is our duty to tell the truth of what happened. Although Churchill and Eden both acknowledged their error in betraying Mihailovic the British Establishment has denigrated his patriotic Serbian Loyalists and accused them of being "quislings". Widows and children of good Serbian patriots have had to live with that slur for forty five years. Tito is dead and totally discredited in Yugoslavia even by those who still vote for the communists "in order to protect Serbian rights from the Albanians and the Croats and to avoid chaos". Great Britain has no longer anything to gain by perpetuating the forty five year old communist inspired lie. Never in the history of the world has it been more necessary to recognise the truth and denounce communist disinformation. I wrote my book in 1987 and 1988 before the events in Eastern Europe took place. I have not had to alter one word. The breakup of communism in Eastern Europe and the manoeuverings which are still going on by the old communist Nomenklatura and the members of the KGB, the Securitate and the Stasi and other evil oppressive organisations are now evident for all to see. The power of these evil organisations is horrifying. At least now we can recognise it and that is our major defence.

26 I am enormously concerned about the official history. An interview given by Dr. Wheeler to the newspaper Borba in Belgrade shows that he has changed his views hardly at all and that he is still caught up with the old Titoist Received wisdom. Dr. Wheeler is a young man and it will be a year or two before he finishes his work but when it is finished - if it is published - it will bear the imprint of the official histroy and for that reason it will be regarded by scholars and the public as more authoritive than books such as mine written by private individuals. The book has to be approved by the Government after it is finished but the arbitrary and cavalier treatment of the protests by Nora Beloff and myself at the time of Wheelers appointment are no great encouragement to believe that Government will be any more likely to listen then to protests or even that people like myself and Nora Beloff will have the opportunity to see the work before publication and comment.

27 There is still a very strong Titoite influence in the Special Forces Club who may be consulted by the Cabinet Office or the Foreign Office as the case may be. If we make no arrangements now to ensure that the history gets a proper objective review then it will assuredly be rushed through on the nod.

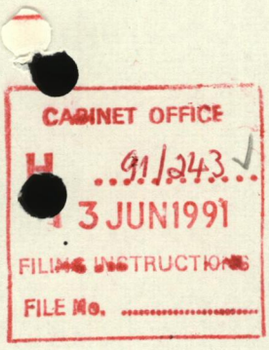
28 I believe that we should endeavour to obtain from the Cabinet Office or from the Foreign Office an unequivocal undertaking that the Official Historian's book will be submitted for vetting before publication to a committee composed of an equal number of representatives from the two sides with an independent historian as chairman. The obvious choice for chairman is Stevan Pavlowitch of Southampton University. Pavlowitch is recognised throughout the world as the leading expert and as a man of total objectivity. He should have been appointed official historian. He was rejected out of hand on the specious grounds that he had a Yugoslav name. He is in fact a British citizen educated in France and Italy where as the man who was appointed, Wheeler, is an American.

certainly one of the best in the field. Maclean 25/vi

29 I believe that were such a binding decision taken and minuted, it would in itself perhaps have a salutary influence on the history. The alternative which many of us would prefer is that there should be no official history of SOE in Yugoslavia. By any standard the performance of SOE Cairo was at best very dubious, at worst criminal and treacherous. The history therefore has to be either mendacious or condemnatory. To publish an official history deliberately putting the governments seal of approval on a perpetuation of the lies and myths which constitute the "received wisdom" would be shameful and will do nothing for Britain's reputation in Yugoslavia. The majority of Yugoslavs today reject what Tito stood for and what they call the "old lying mythology".

30 My other earnest recommendation is that consideration be given to honouring General Mihailovic with some decoration recognising his loyalty to the allied cause and his remarkable action in saving the lives of crashed bomber crews after we had abandoned him and were supplying his mortal enemies with arms to attack him. The Americans under Truman recognised the great injustice meted out to Mihailovic and did just that in 1948. An honour for Mihailovic precisely at this belated stage would clear his name and would have incalculably great psychological effect with the Serb people. The largest Serbian opposition party competing with the so-called socialists (who are openly communist. Nomenklatura under another name) has as a major point in its programme the rehabilitation of Mihailovic.

31 My own book, which has only just been translated and is not yet in print in Serbo-Croat, has nevertheless made an extraordinary impact already because the rehabilitation of Mihailovic is what the Serbian people want and what they believe in. We did terrible harm to Serbia in the war. To give them back the truth is surely not asking too much.



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

The SOE Adviser
Room 3/97, Old Admiralty Building
The Mall, London SW1A 2AZ

Telephone: 071-210-6735
Facsimile: 071-210-6340

10 June 1991

Miss Pat M Andrews
Historical Section
Cabinet Office
Hepburn House
Marsham Street
London SW1P 4HW

Your letter reference HO91/334 of 14 May 1991

Dear Pat

I note the wish of Sir Robin for a commentary on the assertions in Michael LEES' letter.

The obvious person to do so would of course be Mark WHEELER but it would be difficult to get his comments without involving him in a controversy we have just suggested he should avoid. It is also true, as Mark maintains, that SOE's contribution was not a deciding factor.

Within that contribution it is true that CHURCHILL was more disposed to listen to his own choice of Fitzroy MACLEAN together with Randolph CHURCHILL and DEAKIN than to the rougher diamonds which constituted SOE's assets with MIHAILOVIC, hampered as they also were by the misfortunes of poor supply and communications. Also there was a role played by KLUGMANN, while in SOE's Yugoslav Section in Cairo, in deliberately distorting the picture in TITO's favour.

For the broader picture may I set you some homework? The political aspect is covered in

British Foreign Policy in the Second World War Vol III;

and the intelligence background in

HINSLEY. Chap 33 Vol III Development in Yugoslavia.

/The question ...

The question has also been researched by LRD in a brief to EED who were fielding a letter from Mr Solly FLOOD asking HMG to make an apology for having made the choice they did. I attach a copy of their brief.

I realise that this is not quite the ball by ball riposte that Sir Robin is looking for but if you feel that is still required I will try elsewhere - but I think that one of the distortions which is inherent in Michael LEES' approach is to treat the question as if it were almost exclusively an SOE one, instead of a military/political question in which SOE were involved.

Yours ever

Gervase Cowell

Gervase Cowell

SOE Adviser
Room 3/97, OAB

/Enclosure

CLASSIC

Mr Butcher (EED W 128)

YUGOSLAVIA: LETTER FROM LT. COLONEL PETER SOLLY-FLOOD, OBE

1. I attach a draft reply to Lt. Colonel Solly-Flood's letter to the Prime Minister, on the lines of a previous response prepared for use by the Embassy in Washington. I do not think it is worth referring him to sources other than Woodward since he will be well aware of them from the Michael Lees book to which he evidently attaches importance. Lees, incidentally, omits any mention in his highly selective bibliography of the official history which was published some 20 years ago and gives a full and balanced account based on FO records. This long-running debate over the British decision to switch support from General Mihailović to Marshal Tito in 1944 was last raised in the Office in 1985, specifically in the context of the 'spy' allegations repeated now by Peter Solly-Flood, and dealt with by Mr. Cowell in paras. 5-6 of his minute.

2. As you know, General Draza Mihailović formed the Cetnik resistance movement from the remnants of the Royal Yugoslav Army which fled to the mountains of Serbia following the German invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941. Mihailović's efforts were recognised by King Peter II when he appointed him Minister of War in his Government-in-Exile. The first British contact with the Cetniks was made in December 1941 by an SOE mission led by Colonel Bill Hudson. Meanwhile a second resistance movement had been organised by Marshal Tito. Little was known of his Partisan bands until a joint SOE-Military Mission arrived at Tito's headquarters in May 1943. This Mission's reports, which cast doubts on the military effectiveness of the Cetniks, led to a more senior mission being despatched to Yugoslavia in September 1943 under the leadership of Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean who was briefed to report to Churchill directly. By November, Churchill was convinced that British (and Allied) interests could best be served by channelling all military aid to the Partisans. Despite giving the Cetniks clear indication of British misgivings, and further opportunity and supplies with which to demonstrate in practical terms their commitment to the Allied cause, the necessary action was not forthcoming and British support for the Cetniks finally ceased on 25 February 1944.

3. British policy was determined primarily by military considerations. On the strength of the evidence available, Churchill and Eden became convinced that Tito was the most effective source of resistance. Political considerations were an important, albeit secondary factor. The Foreign Office believed that if the King were to have any chance of returning to Yugoslavia after the war he would have to broaden his base of support beyond the Serbs. The situation was complicated further when Tito declared, in November 1943, that his Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation (AVNOJ) was *de facto* the provisional government of Yugoslavia. Given the fact of Tito's broad basis of support and effectiveness against the Germans, Churchill and Eden (who were not blind to the possibility of open civil war in Yugoslavia) were convinced that the King's best chances lay in a union

between his Government-in-Exile and Tito's AVNOJ. Since the Partisans and Cetniks remained ranged against one another, it followed that King Peter would also have to sever his links with Mihailović. This he was duly persuaded to do. Although Tito refused persistently to deal directly with the King, a union between the King's Cabinet and AVNOJ was established under theTito-Subašić Agreement of November 1944.

4. These developments are fully covered by Woodward who explores Churchill's rôle in policy making on Yugoslavia and traces the differences between the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden. Basically, Churchill wanted to drop Mihailović earlier than Eden and the Foreign Office thought prudent. By the spring of 1944, however, Eden agreed that Mihailović stood in the way of the reconciliation within Yugoslavia which the Foreign Office was working hard to promote. Contrary to what Lt. Colonel Solly-Flood and others have said, there is no direct evidence to show that either Churchill or Eden regretted the decision or later expressed remorse. In his memoirs published in 1952, Churchill refers to Mihailović as a tragic figure and the Mihailović-Tito struggle as 'a tragedy within a tragedy'.

5. We have not looked for FO papers earlier than 1985, but can confirm that there have been no PQs on Mihailović since 1946, the year of his execution by the Yugoslav government as a traitor. I have looked at some of the many Parliamentary exchanges about Mihailović between 1944-6 in which the decision to drop him was defended by Churchill, Bevin and other Ministers in terms of his failure to fight the enemy and collaboration of his subordinates rather than his own alleged collaboration, e.g.

> 'He has not been fighting the enemy and, moreover, some of his subordinates have made accommodations with the enemy from which have arisen armed conflicts with the forces of Marshal Tito, accompanied by many charges and counter-charges, and the loss of patriot lives to the German advantage', Churchill, 24 May 1944
>
> 'I am certainly inclined to consider that the decision which we made some time ago, to dissociate ourselves from General Mihailovic, was in every way justified', Churchill, 18 July 1944
>
> 'There can be no doubt that during the last half of 1941 General Mihailovic rendered useful services to the Allied cause. Nevertheless, as time passed it became clear that Mihailovic was engaged in fighting Marshal Tito's partisans, who for their part continued their struggle against the occupying forces. By the end of 1943, His Majesty's Government were convinced that General Mihailovic was no longer fighting the Germans and that some of his lieutenants were actively co-operating with them against the partisans. They therefore ceased to provide Mihailovic with arms and supplies', Ernest Bevin, 3 April 1946.

6. The groundswell of sympathy for Mihailović at the time of his trial led to renewed pressure on the British government to defend the record of Mihailović

Ministers resisted pressure to go beyond asking the Yugoslav government for assurances of a fair trial and transmitting written testimony on Mihailović's behalf from five former British Liaison Officers. The British government declined to assist these five officers in their abortive endeavours to give oral evidence and also declined to publish in a White Paper details of such reports as we had of the trials or evidence on which the British decision to drop Mihailović had been based. Although Ministers promised in June 1946 to look into the question of publication, no further Parliamentary statement to this effect has been traced. The publication of Woodward's official history in 1971 coincided, more or less, with the opening of the British wartime archives under the newly introduced 30 year rule. Most of the FO material has now been available for nearly 40 years, although some papers on relations with Mihailović have been retained. (Woodward's history was based on access to all papers). SOE archives also remain closed.

7. The main point of controversy in recent years has undoubtedly been the allegations that Communist sympathisers in the SOE in Cairo falsified reports on activities in Yugoslavia to tip the scales towards Tito and away from Mihailović. Elizabeth Barker, in an excellent paper published in the *South Slav Journal,* showed that these reports were an insignificant factor in the decision to drop Mihailović as long ago as 1979. Michael Lees goes to town on all this in his colourful *Rape of Serbia* (1990). I do not think we have heard the last of this story. Most recently the book was in the news when taken up by Christopher Booker in his *Sunday Telegraph* column on 17 March 1991 (copy attached) and, as elsewhere, in East and Central Europe, the current political turbulence in Yugoslavia is reviving historical controversies which have been, officially at least, under wraps for the last 40 years. If Lees' book contains anything of interest I shall let you know.

8. Mr. Cowell has asked that there should be no reference in the reply to Lt. Colonel Solly-Flood of the official history of SOE in Yugoslavia which is being written by Mark Wheeler. It is public knowledge that Dr. Wheeler has been commissioned to write the history and indeed Michael Lees draws attention to this on pp. xi-ii of his acknowledgements (and hopes on p. 13 that he will use his access to closed papers to write a definitive study of the whole story). Nonetheless, the choice of author has been controversial in the ever-active Yugoslav community and mention of his name may provoke the Colonel into further correspondence.

HJ Yasamee

Heather Yasamee
Historical Branch, LRD
CW 310 217 2044
3 June 1991

cc Mr Bone LRD
Mr Lockhart
Mr Cowell
Miss Little RAD

CODE 18-77

R. You will probably like to see the attached but it hasn't got much bearing on the Lees / Tarr correspondence. P 20/5.

Lislee House,
Courtmacsherry,
Co. Cork, Ireland.
Tel: Bandon (023) 40126

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal....
17 MAY 1991
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. .....

VOL 10
6

14th May, 1991.

C-Miss Andrews

Sir Robin Butler, KCB, CVO.
Cabinet Secretary,
Cabinet Office,
70 Whitehall,
LONDON, SW1A 2AS

CABINET OFFICE
A 5601
17 MAY 1991
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. .....

Dear Sir Robin,

I permit myself to write to you yet once again on the subject of Yugoslavia. I have just been in Toronto to address the Canadian Serbian Council at their celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the start on Ravna Gora of Yugoslav resistance against the Axis invaders. The speech at the banquet which followed was made by Ambassador Scanlon who served in U.S. embassies in Eastern Europe for sixteen years in all, doing two stints in Yugoslavia, the second as Ambassador from 1986-89. He is now historian/diplomatic adviser at the Military Academy and uniquely qualified to speak on the Yugoslav situation. I was so impressed at the statesmanlike quality and penetrating analysis of Ambassador Scanlon's speech that I immediately asked him for a copy and for permission to send this to you. I believe that you may want to send a copy to the Foreign Office as well.

I do not need to emphasise that I agree with every word that Ambassador Scanlon writes. It is a remarkable encapsulation of a moving situation, which must change. Although this is incidental, I think it supports certain aspects of the points I made to you previously.

Yours Sincerely

Michael Lees

MICHAEL LEES

P.S. I just received your letter of May 9. Thank-you.

SPEECH

CANADIAN SERBIAN COUNCIL CONFERENCE

"THE SERBIAN NATION: THE ALLY WHO LOST"

SHERATON CENTRE HOTEL

TORONTO, ONTARIO

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 1991

JOHN D. SCANLAN
AMBASSADOR

MY TASK TONIGHT IS AN EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT ONE, MADE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT BY THE EVENTS OF THE PAST TEN DAYS. SOME TIME AGO I AGREED TO COME TO TORONTO TO DISCUSS WITH YOU THE PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE OF YUGOSLAVIA: UNEASY UNION OR DISINTEGRATION. ONE MIGHT HONESTLY ASK, DOES YUGOSLAVIA HAVE A FUTURE? OR DO THE EVENTS OF THE PAST TEN DAYS SIGNAL THE BEGINNING OF THE END? HAS DISINTEGRATION NOW BECOME INEVITABLE, OR IF NOT INEVITABLE, THEN MUCH MORE LIKELY? WILL RATIONAL HEADS PREVAIL? IS A PEACEFUL SOLUTION STILL POSSIBLE, WHETHER IT BE A DIFFERENT AND LOOSER FORM OF UNION OR DISSOLUTION? OR WILL MILITANT NATIONALISTIC HOTHEADS PREVAIL AND LEAD YUGOSLAVS INTO VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS WITH ONE ANOTHER IN THE NAME OF ONE FORM OR ANOTHER OF TWISTED NATIONAL PRIDE.

SURELY THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF YUGOSLAVIA, WHATEVER THEIR NATIONALITY, WHEREVER THEY LIVE, DO NOT SEEK AND DO NOT WANT VIOLENT CONFRONTATION. WHAT THEY WANT IS A CALM AND HOPEFUL FUTURE. THE SHAPE AND NATURE OF THE POLITICAL ENTITY IS PROBABLY OF LITTLE CONCERN TO THEM AS LONG AS IT IS DEMOCRATIC AND POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY VIABLE. A CONTINUED UNION DOES NOT HAVE TO BE UNEASY IF IT CAN BE THE RESULT OF AN OPEN COMPROMISE WHICH TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE CONCERNS, HOPES, AND ASPIRATIONS OF ALL OF THE NATIONALITIES AND ENJOYS THE ACCEPTANCE OF A CLEAR MAJORITY OF EVERY PARTICIPATING NATIONALITY. SUCH A COMPROMISE CANNOT BE ACHIEVED IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF INFLAMMATORY POLITICAL DEMAGOGUERY. EVERY YUGOSLAV NATIONALITY PERCEIVES ITSELF AS HAVING BEEN AGGRIEVED IN SOME MANNER AT THE HANDS OF

ONE OR MORE OTHER YUGOSLAV NATIONALITIES. IT SERVES NO USEFUL PURPOSE TO DEBATE THE HISTORICAL RECORD HEATEDLY AND ENDLESSLY. THIS ONLY INFLAMES PASSIONS AND MAKES MORE DIFFICULT THE TASK OF ACHIEVING THE COMPROMISES THAT ARE NECESSARY TO ENSURE A PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE.

THE BURDEN IS UPON THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF YUGOSLAVIA, AND PARTICULARLY UPON THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF THE VARIOUS REPUBLICS. THIS IS A TIME THAT CRIES OUT FOR COURAGEOUS STATESMANSHIP, NOT ANGRY AND INFLAMMATORY MILITANT NATIONALISTIC RHETORIC.

IT IS NOT FOR US TO SAY WHETHER YUGOSLAVIA SHOULD CONTINUE TO EXIST IN SOME FORM OF UNION, OR WHETHER IT WILL SPLIT UP INTO SEVERAL SEPARATE AND SOVEREIGN POLITICAL ENTITIES. THAT IS A DECISION FOR THE YUGOSLAVS ALONE TO MAKE. BUT THEIR POLITICAL LEADERS SHOULD NOT DELUDE THEMSELVES INTO BELIEVING THAT DISSOLUTION SOMEHOW OR OTHER OFFERS AN EASY OUT. THE COMPROMISES NECESSARY FOR SUCH A SOLUTION WILL BE JUST AS DIFFICULT AS THOSE NECESSARY FOR A CONTINUED UNION OF SOME KIND.

WHILE THE YUGOSLAVS SHOULD AND MUST DECIDE THEIR OWN FUTURE, WE WHO CONSIDER OURSELVES FRIENDS OF YUGOSLAVIA HAVE A STRONG AND UNDERSTANDABLE INTEREST IN A PEACEFUL OUTCOME AND ALSO IN SEEING AN OUTCOME THAT APPEARS MOST LIKELY TO BE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE AND BENEFICIAL FOR ALL OF YUGOSLAVIA.

EVERY WESTERN ECONOMIST I KNOW WHO FOLLOWS EVENTS IN YUGOSLAVIA IS CONVINCED THAT YUGOSLAVIA WILL PROSPER BETTER IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE AS ONE COUNTRY THAN AS A COLLECTION OF MUCH SMALLER SEPARATE COUNTRIES. AND WHILE ALL OF THE DRAMA OF THE CURRENT YUGOSLAV SCENE APPEARS CONCENTRATED IN POLITICAL AND ETHNIC TENSIONS, IT IS REASONABLE TO BELIEVE THAT THESE TENSIONS WOULD BE GREATLY REDUCED AND MUCH MORE EASILY MANAGEABLE IF THE YUGOSLAV ECONOMY WERE PROSPERING, IF UNEMPLOYMENT WERE SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER, AND IF THE STANDARD OF LIVING WERE RISING RATHER THAN SINKING RAPIDLY.

BUT THE ECONOMY IS IN BAD SHAPE AND THE PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT AT THIS TIME ARE DIM AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO GET ANY BETTER AS LONG AS YUGOSLAVIA REMAINS IN A STATE OF POLITICAL TENSION AND IMPASSE.

TWO HIGHLY INTRACTABLE TERRITORIAL ISSUES LIE AT THE HEART OF THE YUGOSLAV PROBLEM, ONE IN SOUTHWESTERN SERBIA--KOSOVO, AND THE OTHER IN NORTHWESTERN CROATIA--KRAJINA. BOTH INVOLVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS OF LARGE SERBIAN POPULATIONS LIVING AS MINORITIES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS. THE KOSOVO PROBLEM HAS THE ADDED DIMENSION OF THE UNREQUITTED ASPIRATIONS OF A LARGE AND BURGEONING ALBANIAN MAJORITY POPULATION. NO ONE HAS YET COME UP WITH A GOOD SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS IN EITHER AREA AND THE SITUATION IN BOTH AREAS HAS DETERIORATED SIGNIFICANTLY DURING THE

PAST TWO YEARS. SOMEHOW, SOME SORT OF ADMINISTRATIVE MECHANISM WILL HAVE TO BE DEVISED TO DEAL WITH THE LEGITIMATE CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLES OF BOTH AREAS. RECENT HISTORY CLEARLY INDICATES THAT SOLUTIONS THAT FAIL TO RECOGNIZE AND DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF ALL CAN NO LONGER BE SUCCESSFULLY IMPOSED BY FORCE.

I SAY NO LONGER, BECAUSE THE HISTORY OF POST-WORLD WAR II YUGOSLAVIA UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY HAS BEEN OF POLITICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS IMPOSED FROM ABOVE BY THE RULING COMMUNIST REGIME WHICH SEIZED POWER BY FORCE IN 1944 AND HELD IT THEREAFTER BY THE USE, OR THE THREAT OF THE USE, OF FORCE.

ONE OF YOUR DISTINGUISHED AFTERNOON SPEAKERS WAS MR. MICHAEL LEES, THE AUTHOR OF THE DISTURBING BOOK,"THE RAPE OF SERBIA." AS DISTURBING AS IS HIS ACCOUNT OF HOW COMMUNISTS, COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZERS, AND NAIVE WESTERN MILITARY AND POLITICAL LEADERS AIDED AND ABETTED THE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER OF YUGOSLAVIA AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II, EVEN MORE DISTURBING IS THE FACT THAT THE STORY OF THE RAPE OF SERBIA DOES NOT END THERE. MANY WOULD SAY THAT IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, IT HAS CONTINUED SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR II. THE PARTICIPANTS HAVE BEEN MANY AND VARIOUS, BUT THE PURPOSE HAS USUALLY BEEN THE SAME: TO KEEP THE LARGEST ETHNIC GROUP IN YUGOSLAVIA FROM DOMINATING YUGOSLAVIA. WHILE THE INTER-WAR PERIOD CAN BE SAID TO PROVIDE SOME JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS OVERBLOWN FEAR, A CAREFUL EXAMINATION OF THE HISTORICAL

RECORD SUGGESTS THAT POLITICAL DEMAGOGUES HAVE CALLOUSLY STIMULATED AND INFLAMED ETHNIC PASSIONS ON THIS ISSUE IN ORDER TO FURTHER THEIR OWN POLITICAL GOALS. THAT WAS TRUE OF THE WARTIME LEADERSHIP OF THE AXIS PUPPET STATES OF CROATIA AND ALBANIA, OF THE TITOIST COMMUNIST REGIME, AND MORE RECENTLY OF SOME OF THE POLITICAL LEADERS OF THE NORTHERN REPUBLICS. FOR FIFTY YEARS THE BATTLE CRY HAS BEEN THE SAME--KEEP THE SERBS UNDER CONTROL.

NOW IT IS FAIR TO ASK, SHOULD THE SERBIAN NATION DOMINATE MULTI-ETHNIC YUGOSLAVIA? OF COURSE NOT. BUT SERBS SHOULD BE ABLE TO PLAY THEIR FULL POLITICAL ROLE IN A DEMOCRATIC YUGOSLAV FEDERATION OR CONFEDERATION. SERBS, AFTER ALL, HAVE HAD MUCH MORE HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE WITH MULTI-PARTY GOVERNMENT THAN YUGOSLAVIA'S OTHER NATIONALITIES.

EVEN BEFORE WORLD WAR I THERE WERE SEVERAL ACTIVE POLITICAL PARTIES IN SERBIA AND THIS ACTIVITY INTENSIFIED IN THE INTER-WAR PERIOD. MEANWHILE, IN BOTH SLOVENIA AND CROATIA, WHICH HAD ENJOYED NO SERIOUS INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTIVITY AS AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN PROVINCES PRIOR TO THE CREATION OF YUGOSLAVIA, THE INTER-WAR POLITICAL SCENE WAS DOMINATED BY SINGLE ETHNIC PARTIES: THE CLERICAL PARTY IN SLOVENIA AND THE RADIC BROTHERS AND THE PEASANT PARTY IN CROATIA.

THIS HISTORICAL FACT, AMONG MANY OTHERS, IS IGNORED BY THOSE WHO REPORT ON CONTEMPORARY EVENTS IN YUGOSLAVIA FOR THE

WESTERN MEDIA. A GROSSLY DISTORTED IMAGE OF A TRADITIONALLY DEMOCRATIC NORTH AND A TRADITIONALLY AUTHORITARIAN SOUTH IS PRESENTED TO THE WESTERN PUBLIC. DEMOCRATIC SLOVENIA AND CROATIA VERSUS LINGERING AUTHORITARIAN COMMUNIST RULE IN SERBIA. ONCE AGAIN, SERBIA IS PORTRAYED AS THE PROBLEM.

IN FACT, THERE IS A VIGOROUS AND ACTIVE POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN SERBIA. TWO SIGNIFICANT PARTIES CHALLENGE MILOSEVIC'S RULING SOCIALIST PARTY, AND A RECENT BORBA POLL SHOWS THE SOCIALISTS A DISTANT THIRD AMONG BELGRADE'S YOUTH.

WHEN TENS OF THOUSANDS OF BELGRADE'S YOUTH DEMONSTRATED IN MARCH, THEY DID NOT DEMONSTRATE AGAINST CROATIANS, SLOVENIANS, OR ANY OTHER ETHNIC GROUP. THESE WERE PRO-DEMOCRACY DEMONSTRATIONS. THEY DEMANDED GREATER MEDIA FREEDOM, AND WON.

YET IF YOU KNEW NOTHING ABOUT YUGOSLAVIA EXCEPT FOR THE IMAGES PRESENTED BY MEDIA SOUND-BYTES AND PRESS GENERALIZATIONS YOU WOULD BE LIKELY TO BELIEVE THAT ALL OF THE RIGHT THINKING DEMOCRATIC FORCES WERE IN THE NORTHERN REPUBLICS WHILE SOMETHING RESEMBLING POST-STALINISM LINGERS ON IN THE SOUTH, IN SERBIA.

WHILE OUR MEDIA REPEATEDLY CHARACTERIZES THE SERBIAN AND MONTENEGRAN GOVERNMENTS AS COMMUNIST IT DOES NOT INFORM US THAT THE PRESIDENTS OF THREE OF THE OTHER REPUBLICS ARE FORMER

COMMUNISTS. I DO NOT WANT TO SUGGEST THAT FORMER COMMUNISTS CANNOT BECOME DEMOCRATIC IN THEIR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES. I MERELY WANT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT WESTERN REPORTING ABOUT YUGOSLAVIA HAS TENDED TO BE SKEWED TOWARDS A NEGATIVE IMAGE OF SERBIA AND A POSITIVE IMAGE OF CROATIA AND SLOVENIA.

THE FACT OF THE MATTER, OF COURSE, IS THAT SERBIA WAS LESS INCLINED TOWARDS COMMUNISM DURING THE ENTIRE COMMUNIST PERIOD THAN WERE THE OTHER REPUBLICS, PARTICULARLY THE NORTHERN REPUBLICS. THE NON-COMMUNIST RESISTANCE DURING WORLD WAR II WAS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY SERBIAN. IN THE FIRST POST-LIBERATION ELECTIONS IN YUGOSLAVIA, ONE THIRD OF THE SERBIAN ELECTORATE VOTED AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS, DESPITE HEAVY-HANDED COMMUNIST PRESSURE TO VOTE PRO-COMMUNIST. NINETY PERCENT OF THE CROATIAN AND SLOVENIAN ELECTORATE VOTED COMMUNIST. TITO, OF COURSE, WAS NOT SERBIAN. AND HIS TWO KEY THEORETICAL ADVISERS ON POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURE WERE BOTH SLOVENES, EDVARD KARDELJ AND BORIS KIDRIC. MOST OBSERVERS OF THE YUGOSLAV SCENE DURING THE COMMUNIST PERIOD FOUND THE CROATIAN COMMUNIST STRUCTURE MORE RIGID AND LESS YIELDING THAN THE SERBIAN STRUCTURE. AND MOST OF THE MOVEMENTS FOR ECONOMIC AND MANAGERIAL REFORM, ACADEMIC FREEDOM, AND PRESS LIBERALISM DURING THE 1960'S, 1970'S, AND 1980'S ORIGINATED IN SERBIA.

ANOTHER BIT OF MYTHOLOGY APPARENTLY ACCEPTED AS GOSPEL AND WIDELY DISSEMINATED BY THE WESTERN MEDIA IS THE CHARACTERIZATION OF ETHNIC ANIMOSITIES IN YUGOSLAVIA AS BEING CENTURIES OLD. THERE WERE NO ETHNIC ANIMOSITIES AMONG SERBS, CROATS, AND SLOVENES UNTIL AFTER THE CREATION OF THE YUGOSLAV STATE FOLLOWING WORLD WAR I. ETHNIC TENSIONS DEVELOPED IN THE INTER-WAR PERIOD BETWEEN CROATS AND SERBS PRIMARILY BECAUSE THE FORMER FELT THEY WERE BEING DOMINATED BY THE LATTER WHO WERE MORE NUMEROUS AND ON THE BASIS OF WHOSE ALREADY INDEPENDENT KINGDOM THE NEW STATE HAD BEEN FORMED. THE SERBS PROBABLY DID DOMINATE POLITICALLY BUT THE RECORD SUGGESTS THAT THE CROATIANS DOMINATED ECONOMICALLY. BUT THE SERIOUS ESCALATION IN ETHNIC TENSIONS WAS THE RESULT OF THE BRUTAL BEHAVIOR OF THE CROATIAN USTASHA DURING WORLD WAR II IN PERSECUTING AND MURDERING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF SERBS.

ETHNIC TENSIONS BETWEEN SERBS AND SLOVENES IS OF EVEN MORE RECENT ORIGIN AND IS BASED ON POLITICAL PERCEPTIONS AND EMOTIONS, NOT ON ANY CASE HISTORY OF ONE NATIONALITY SUFFERING AT THE HANDS OF THE OTHER. AS A MATTER OF FACT, SERBIAN-SLOVENE RELATIONS DURING THE INTER-WAR PERIOD WERE CLOSE AND EXCELLENT. AND WHEN THE NAZIS EXPELLED 50,000 SLOVENES TO SERBIA IN 1941, THE SERBS WELCOMED THEM AND FOUND JOBS AND HOUSING FOR THEM. I WOULD DATE THE BEGINNING OF POLITICAL TENSIONS BETWEEN SLOVENES AND SERBS AS ABOUT 1986 OR 1987 WHEN THE VERY DEMOCRATIC AND REFORM-MINDED

SLOVENIAN ALTERNATIVE MOVEMENTS BEGAN TO GAIN MOMENTUM AND PERCEIVED THE ARMY AND RISING SERBIAN NATIONALISM AS BARRIERS TO RISING SLOVENIAN NATIONALISM. SLOVENES ALSO BEGAN TO CHAMPION THE ALBANIAN KOSOVO CAUSE AND THAT LED TO FURTHER STRAINS IN RELATIONS WITH SERBS.

THE TRUE PICTURE OF YUGOSLAVIA'S INTERNAL DIVISIONS IS, THUS, FAR MORE COMPLEX THAN THAT PRESENTED BY THE MEDIA. BUT WHILE THE ETHNIC TENSIONS ARE IN MOST CASES OF MORE RECENT ORIGIN THAN DEPICTED BY THE MEDIA, THEY ARE NONETHELESS VERY REAL IN THE MINDS OF MOST YUGOSLAVS. THOSE TENSIONS HAVE LED TO TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES IN THE PAST FEW DAYS IN CLASHES BETWEEN CROATIANS AND SERBS IN CROATIA, JUST AS THEY DID EARLIER BETWEEN ALBANIANS AND SERBS IN THE KOSOVO. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THE NATIONAL AND REPUBLIC LEADERS WERE SHOCKED INTO A RARE DISPLAY OF STATESMANLIKE COOPERATION IN AN EFFORT TO RESTORE PEACE, CALM, AND ORDER AND TO TAKE MEASURES TO REDUCE THE POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE OUTBREAKS OF INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE.

IT IS AS YET UNCERTAIN HOW WELL THE MEASURES WILL BE OR EVEN CAN BE IMPLEMENTED. BUT THE FACT THAT THE COLLECTIVE PRESIDENCY UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A STATEMENT CALLING ON SERBS AND CROATS TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES BY NEGOTIATION AND EMPOWERING THE YUGOSLAV ARMY TO DISSARM CIVILIANS AND UNSANCTIONED PARA-MILITARY UNITS "IN CRISIS AREAS" IS A SOLID STEP BACK FROM THE

BRINK AND AN INDICATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEED FOR COOL HEADED STATESMANSHIP.

THERE ARE DIFFICULT DAYS AHEAD AND THE POTENTIAL FOR SMALL INCIDENTS TRIGGERING RENEWED ETHNIC VIOLENCE IS LIKELY TO REMAIN ON THE SCENE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. ONE CAN HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS DEMONSTRATION OF RESPONSIBLE AND DETERMINED UNANIMITY OF ACTION BY THE PRESIDENCY AND THE DISCIPLINED DEFENSE OF THE PUBLIC ORDER BY THE YUGOSLAV ARMY WILL SERVE TO INHIBIT HOTHEAD EXTREMISTS.

FOR THE MOMENT, CHAOS, ANARCHY, AND AN ESCALATION OF INTER-ETHNIC VIOLENCE HAVE BEEN AVOIDED. THIS NARROW ESCAPE FROM A GREATER TRAGEDY HOPEFULLY WILL SERVE AS A WARNING TO THOSE WHO WOULD WILLINGLY EMPLOY VIOLENCE TO FURTHER THEIR POLITICAL GOALS.

UNTIL NOW THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE INCLINATION ON THE PART OF ANY ETHNIC LEADERSHIP GROUP IN YUGOSLAVIA TO SEEK POLITICAL COMPROMISE. THE EXTREMISTS HAVE ON ALL SIDES HAD A FIELD DAY AND THE PASSIONS THEY HAVE INFLAMED HAVE NOW PRODUCED TRAGEDY FOR MANY YUGOSLAV FAMILIES.

THE VERY NATURE OF COMPROMISE MEANS THAT EVERYONE BACKS OFF OF EXTREME POSITIONS. EVERYONE GIVES UP SOMETHING. NOBODY WINS IT ALL. NOBODY CAN WIN IT ALL IN YUGOSLAVIA. IF ALL FACTIONS WILL ENTER INTO SERIOUS NEGOTIATION IN THE PROPER SPIRIT OF MUTUAL COMPROMISE, DISASTER CAN BE AVOIDED. THE FUTURE OF YUGOSLAVIA DOES NOT NEED TO BE A CHOICE BETWEEN UNEASY UNION OR DISINTEGRATION. YUGOSLAVS WORKING TOGETHER CAN FORGE A MORE PERFECT UNION IN WHICH EVERYONE'S RIGHTS ARE RESPECTED, BUT IT WILL SURELY HAVE TO BE A DIFFERENT KIND OF UNION THAN THE CURRENT ALMOST DYSFUNCTIONAL ONE. PROBABLY IT WILL HAVE TO BE A LOOSER UNION, A CONFEDERATION OF SOME KIND. IF THAT IS NOT ACHIEVABLE, THEN THE SEPARATISTS AND SECESSIONISTS WILL HAVE TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE COMPROMISES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS WILL BE JUST AS DIFFICULT.

FOR THE MOMENT, THERE IS HOPE IN THAT RATIONAL VOICES HAVE COME TO THE FORE. LET US HOPE THAT THEY CONTINUE TO SPEAK OUT LOUDLY AND CLEARLY AND DROWN OUT THE DISSONANCE OF THE MILITANT HOTHEADS WHO WOULD PULL YUGOSLAVIA APART ANY WAY THEY COULD. FOR I AM PERSONALLY CONVINCED THAT YUGOSLAVIA IS VERY RICH IN HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES. IF YUGOSLAVS CAN RESOLVE THEIR POLITICAL DIFFERENCES PEACEFULLY, THEY CAN MOVE RAPIDLY AND SUCCESSFULLY INTO THE WEST EUROPEAN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MAINSTREAM.

AS I SAID EARLIER, NOW IS THE TIME FOR COURAGEOUS, STATESMANLIKE LEADERSHIP. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME ENCOURAGING SIGNS OF THAT THIS WEEK. LET US HOPE IT CONTINUES SO THAT YUGOSLAVS WILL HAVE A MORE APPEALING FUTURE TO LOOK FORWARD TO AND NOT BE LIMITED TO A CHOICE BETWEEN AN UNEASY UNION AND DISINTEGRATION.

FDL/C
5

CABINET OFFICE

Historical Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071-217 6050

Ref: HO91/334 /

14 May 1991

G Cowell Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Room 3/97
Old Admiralty Building
The Mall
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Dear Gervase

SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

I mentioned to you that Sir Robin Butler, having replied to Major Archie Jack personally, had received a letter along now familiar lines from Mr Michael Lees.

Sir Robin accepted my advice to send a brief letter in reply to Mr Lees but he has asked if he could have, for his own education (and no doubt for mine) a commentary from the FCO on the account attached to Mr Lees' letter.

I enclose a copy of Mr Lees' letter and the attachment; also a copy of Sir Robin's reply. I should be grateful if you would consult the appropriate desk and let me have the commentary asked for by Sir Robin.

Yours
Pat

MISS P M ANDREWS

PS You will see that Mr Lees has marked his letter CONFIDENTIAL. I assume, though he does not say so, that this means he would prefer it not to be shown to Dr Wheeler - at least by us!

POL C 4

Quite thanks.
Thank ya. I am content with this action.
CKC 14/5.

HO91/333

SIR CHRISTOPHER CURWEN

OFFICIAL HISTORY OF SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

In your minute of 30 January 1991 you said that you thought it essential for the author of SOE in Yugoslavia, Dr Mark Wheeler, to have a full briefing on the Security Service papers about the role played by Klugman. I thought you would be interested to know that the SOE Adviser told me recently that he has now received permission to show the relevant documents to Dr Wheeler. I had the impression that you thought something more than simply showing him the papers might be necessary - if so may I leave it to you to make any necessary arrangements with Mr Cowell?

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical Section
14 May 1991

FOLIO 3

CABINET OFFICE

Historical Section
Hepburn House, Marsham Street, London SW1P 4HW
Telephone 071-217 6050

Ref: HO91/330

10 May 1991

Dr M C Wheeler
School of Slavonic and East European Studies
University of London
Senate House
Malet Street
LONDON WC1E 7HU

Dear Mark

When we met on 23 April we touched on the problems faced by SOE Historians who are not officially funded as regards travel etc and I have, as I promised, been trying to think of any possible way of giving help. I have not come up with any bright ideas as yet but I am still thinking!

In the meantime I understand from Gervase Cowell that there is something in prospect which he will be discussing with you when he next sees you which sounds helpful at least in the short term.

I still feel that a transfer of your contract to HMSO would probably be beneficial if it could be arranged and I would be happy to do anything I can to help on this.

Yours
Pat

MISS P M ADREWS

FOLIO 2

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 071-270 0101

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service
Sir Robin Butler KCB CVO

Ref. A091/1138

9 May 1991

Miss Andrews

CABINET OFFICE
H Internal
10 MAY 1991
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. .....

Dear Mr. Lees,

Thank you for your letter of 27 April 1991 about the Official History of SOE in Yugoslavia.

As I said to Major Jack, I understand the concern which he and you have expressed and I entirely agree that it is important to get the history right. I have assured Major Jack and I repeat my assurance to you that I, and others concerned with Official Histories, wish to see that a fair and balance picture is presented by 'SOE in Yugoslavia' when it is published. We shall do our best to ensure that the procedures adopted for approval of the history prior to publication achieve this end.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Butler

M Lees Esq
Lislee House
Courtmacsherry
County Cork
Ireland

CONFIDENTIAL

Thank you. I am content to write now in these terms; but I should also like a commentary from the FCO on the account attached to Mr. Lees' letter for my own education on the subject.

CABINET OFFICE
A 5152
8 MAY 1991
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. .....

HO91/318

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

I had already prepared the attached minute and draft letter before I received your manuscript note of 4 May. I hope you will not mind if I simply attach a covering note rather than amend the minute.

FERB 9.5.

I had discussed Mr Lees' letter with Mr Cowell, the Foreign Office SOE Adviser. His opinion is that Mr Lees' statements are exaggerated and reflect the opinion of only a comparatively few people. You will see also Sir Brooks Richards' comments on Mr Lees which I have included in the minute below.

My own view is that Mr Lees is jumping on the bandwagon to take advantage of the fact that his friend Mr Jack has established contact with you. I would suggest that a brief reply along the lines suggested should be sent to Mr Lees. If, however, representations about Dr Wheeler's unsuitability for his task continue, a formal Foreign Office assessment might be sought.

Dr Wheeler is dealing with the onslaught, of which he is fully aware, very patiently indeed. It is not at all pleasant for him but he knew when he accepted the task that it was a controversial one. His view is that whilst nothing will satisfy Messrs Lees and Jack et al except his one hundred per cent agreement with their line he must listen and take note.

The SOE Adviser has told me that he has at last received permission to show to Dr Wheeler the Security Service papers which indicate the extent of James Klugman's role on behalf of the Communist Party when he was in the Cairo Office. The influence of the Cairo Office is something which has featured in the Lees/Jack correspondence. Sir Christopher Curwen referred to the need for Dr Wheeler to be fully briefed on this aspect when I consulted him about your reply to Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker in January. I will let him know that the approval has now been received.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical Section
8 May 1991

CONFIDENTIAL

HO91/315

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

SOE IN YUGOSLAVIA

I have been asked to advise on and provide a draft reply to Mr Michael Lees' letter of 27 April 1991.

Mr Lees is a former member of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), who served with the Mihailovic forces in Yugoslavia, and subsequently in Italy. Mr Lees, together with Mr Archie Jack and Miss Nora Beloff, forms the nub of the anti-Wheeler lobby. He wrote several letters along similar lines to Lord Armstrong in 1987, the last of which, dated 14 December 1987, Lord Armstrong replied to briefly saying, inter alia, "I am afraid that we are unlikely to be able to agree on this matter" (see copy letter attached).

Sir Brooks Richards, writing to Lord Armstrong in June 1987, mentioned that he had met Mr Lees in Bologna. By contrast with Dr Wheeler and Dr Pavlovitch, both of whom he had also met and found to be reasonable men, Sir Brooks thought that Mr Lees had " a most tremendous chip in his shoulder about both SOE in Yugoslavia and SOE's treatment of him in Italy". The then SOE Adviser, Mr Woods, told me that the "chip" was due to the fact that a mishap in one of Mr Lees' later tasks with the organisation in Italy led to forfeiture of any decoration at the end of his service to which his earlier courageous exploits should probably have entitled him. Mr Lees writes at length also to the SOE Adviser and to the Special Forces Club; Sir Douglas Dodds-Parker sent you a copy of a letter he had received dated 4 January 1991, to which you referred in your letter of 6 February 1991 (AO91/293). Sir Brooks Richards has commented recently that Mr Lees has gone beyond his anti-Wheeler stance to expouse the whole Serbian cause; he has recently published a book entitled "The Rape of Serbia; The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power".

In his latest letter, but mainly in its attachment Mr Lees re-iterates both the complaints about Dr Wheeler's appointment and the suggestion of a scrutiny committee to which the history should be submitted before publication. He also inveighs against the "arbitrary and cavalier treatment" of his and Miss Beloff's protests about Dr Wheeler's appointment and suggests that British publishers might have been "warned off" handling his book. "The Rape of Serbia". I do not think that the personal attention of the then Secretary of the Cabinet can be called arbitrary and cavalier treatment despite the brevity of his last letter, and, so far as I am aware, there was no "warning off" of British publishers; certainly the Cabinet Office knew nothing of the book until after its publication. Mr Lees has been in touch with Dr Wheeler and has provided him with material. He does not appear to think that this will have much effect upon what he sees as Dr Wheeler's "Titoist prejudices". I suggest a brief letter drawing upon those already sent to Mr Jack should be sent to Mr Lees. It would not be possible, nor, I think, appropriate, to try to comment on Mr Lees' own interpretation of events either current or historical. I attach a draft for consideration and shall, if you agree, send a copy of the correspondence to the Foreign Office's SOE Adviser for information.

Pat Andrews

MISS P M ANDREWS

Historical Section
7 May 1991

DRAFT LETTER FOR SIR ROBIN BUTLER TO SEND TO:-

M Lees Esq
Lislee House
Courtmacsherry
CO. CORK
Ireland

1138

Thank you for your letter of 27 April 1991.

As I said to ~~your colleague, Mr~~ Major Jack, I understand the concern which he and now you have expressed and I entirely agree that it is important to get the history right. I have assured Mr Jack and I repeat my assurance to you that I, and others concerned with Official Histories, wish to see that a fair and balanced picture is presented by 'SOE in Yugoslavia' when it is published. We shall do our best to ensure that the procedures adopted for approval of the history prior to publication achieve this end.