

SF452-51 LINK A VOLUME 3

BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY PLANS  
TO PROMOTE INDUSTRIAL STRIKES -  
INFORMATION PASSED TO  
GOVERNMENT DEPTS. REGARDING  
THE SEAMANS STRIKE, 1966.

3  
SF452-51 LINK A VOLUME

SEE ALSO LIST INSIDE COVER

Serial No	Star Designation	Date	Serial No	Star Designation	Date	Serial No	Star Designation	Date

S. 960 Edn2

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	67	
6.3.67.	From Australian Sec. Int. Org.	67a
	68	
7.3.67.	Loose Minute	68a
	69	
30.10.67.	Loose Minute	69a
	70	
22.1.71.	From Home Office.	70y.
25.1.71	F1A minute to Dir: F.	70z
26.1.71.	K6A note for file.	70a
	71.	
26.1.71.	To Home Office.	71a.

FILE CLOSED

RESTRICTED

71a  
PA

SF.452-51-LINK-A/DG/SEC

PA

26th January 1971

As spoken this morning,  
Sir Martin has no comments on  
pages 434 and 435 of Mr. Wilson's  
memoires. I am returning the  
papers herewith.

*Mary Nichol*  
Private Secretary

Mrs. J.M. Eden,  
Private Secretary,  
Sir Philip Allen,  
Home Office.

Enclosure

RESTRICTED

✓  
RC  
29.17

CONFIDENTIAL

Reference.....

70a

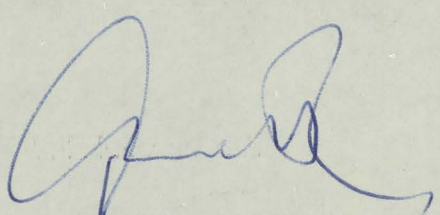
SF 452/24 - Communist activities amongst Merchant Seamen in British Ships

SF 452/51 Link A

Note for File

The Security Service contribution to NATO SECRET Document AC/46-D/1324 dated 26.9.66. included sections relating to the appointment of Bert RAMBLSON as Chief Industrial Organisation of the CFCB and the CFCB activities in connection with the Seamen's strike which took place during the period 16.5. - 1.7.66. The basic material is contained in the relevant volumes of SF 452/24 and SF 452/51 Links A & B, and Supps C-G.

2. The NATO document was compromised to the Romanian Intelligence Service by Francis ROUSSILHE (PF 607,585)



K.G.A.

J.E.A. Garnett

26.1.71

WARNING  
Information Compromised  
See S. Form 475

65/75  
281

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Reference Loose Minute.  
Copy: SF 452-51 Link A.

*D.H.W. 25/1*  
*F through F.4. 25/1*

*702*  
*704*

I have examined the draft of Mr. Harold Wilson's memoirs with F.4 Mr. Elliott. We do not think that there is any need to object to the passages on pages 434 and 435 regarding the meeting with Mr. Heath at which Mr. Elliott was present. It is well known in Party circles that the Security Service was concerned with the briefing of Mr. Wilson on this occasion.

2. We have also examined pages 430 and 436/7 where Mr. Wilson claims to be able to predict the actions of the Communist group in the National Union of Seamen (N.U.S.). As this ability was made known to Hogarth, the General Secretary of the N.U.S. (pages 436/7) no additional damage to our sources is involved.

*A.G.*  
*I agree with F.*  
*MS*

*F.1.A.*  
*25.1.71*

*Director General*

*I agree with paragraph 1, and with regard to paragraph 2 do not think it worth while raising any objection.*

*D.W.H. 25/1*

*F*  
*25.1.71*

CODE 18-78

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F.

Have you any comments?

D.G. Secretary

25th January 1971

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704  
HOME OFFICE  
WHITEHALL · S.W.1

22nd January, 1971

Rec. 22-1-71

Dear 

We have received from the Cabinet Office the attached Chapter XIV of Mr. Harold Wilson's memoirs. Sir Philip would be very grateful to have Sir Martin's comments on pages 434 - 435.

Yours sincerely,

JM Eden

(Mrs.) Judith M. Eden  
Private Secretary

ag/3

✓  
29.01

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November 2011



437

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*which was rejected previously for in the case of the*  
a ballot, for the election of the General Secretary, required a six-months period so that seamen in distant seas or ports could vote. Nor was a recall conference feasible. But he was uneasy that if I were right, all the progress made towards an agreement would be wrecked. I put a proposal to him, "What I have told you just now, the two moves that will be made on Thursday morning, I will dictate for you and hand to you in a sealed envelope. When the proposals are made I want you to open it, read it out and say how long the envelope had been in your possession."

In the event the sealed envelope was not needed.

Moderates on the executive got to work. For the first time there were other <sup>private</sup> meetings than those where the militants used their persuasion. Ted Hill, whom I had spoken to on the 'phone, and who by a strange rule was a member of the executive as a union trustee, threw his considerable weight into the fray. When the meeting began the usual group tried to stem the move to accept the terms for a settlement, and went on to make their proposals for a ballot or a recall conference, they were outvoted, Bill Hogarth did not need to show his hand. But despite an executive protest, there was general agreement that my action the previous day had caused a revulsion of feeling against Communist pressures, for rank and file members of the executive now knew what manœuvres had gone on.





430

- 36 -

I did not use the word "Communist" though no-one in the House, or in the Press who next morning headlined my words as a sensation, had any doubts whom I had in mind.

The fact was that the moderate members of the Seamen's Executive were virtually terrorised by a small professional group of Communists or near-Communists who planned their tactics with outside help and were able to <sup>impose</sup> improve their ideas on the mesmerised and timid secretariat and rank and file members of the executive. From various sources we began to receive undeniable evidence of what was going on, even to the point where we could predict the exact line the group would take at the next meeting, as well as the approaches made to communist sympathisers in unions whose support the seamen were canvassing.

I gave some of the facts to the House, eight days later when <sup>^</sup>challenged to produce my evidence.

I began by pointing out that there were no Communists on the executive, though this was not true of the negotiating committee. Indeed there were very few in the union as a whole not enough to man more than one or two picket lines. I was <sup>impressing</sup> ~~impressing~~ not the integrity of executive members, but <sup>their</sup> ~~its~~ lack of guts. I then went on.



434

39  
- 40 -

".. They live in Liverpool and South Shields respectively and over the past few weeks, when attending the executive council in London, they have stayed at the same flat as Mr. Jack Coward. Of course, they are free to stay where they like, but Mr. Ramelson has visited the flat when they were there and Mr. Norris has been in constant touch with them. They have been in continual contact with Mr. Ramelson and Mr. Norris.

".. I need no evidence, other than my eyes and ears, to recognise that these two have dominated the executive council throughout the negotiations. Again, they were predominant in the executive council's brusque and unanimous rejection of the appeal my right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour and I made to the executive council a week last Friday..."

That was more than a week later, and I quote it to show what we were up against.

~~with~~  
My statement led to strong denunciations from the left, and a challenge from the Press and Opposition to publish my evidence. Mr. Heath asked to see me and the Press were informed of his concern at my statement. He pressed me to give more facts and to produce the evidence on which I relied. This latter request put me in great difficulty since it would have revealed procedures which no Prime Minister should be pressed to reveal. I decided to make all the facts available to him on Privy Counsellor terms, and for good measure to bring to our meeting the senior people responsible for these matters, and one of the operators " in the field".

22nd  
June

In doing this I was following an action taken by Mr. Macmillan as Prime Minister, when I had just become Leader of the Opposition. At that time there was great public and



435

- 4d -

Parliamentary criticism of the Secret Service, following the flight to Moscow. <sup>I asked him to tell me</sup> I went to see him, <sup>he</sup> was accompanied by the head of M.I.6., whom the Prime Minister asked to tell me the whole facts. <sup>What</sup> ~~What~~ was public knowledge could not have justified the manifest failure of the Secret Service to keep Philby under control, one simple fact I was given made sense of the story. I was satisfied and I felt it my duty to say in the House without giving my reason, and to ask my hon. Friend to let it go. (I was promptly criticised in the Press for gagging them <sup>my back-bencher</sup>).

Mr. Heath was given every facility to satisfy himself on the nature and reliability of our evidence. I found it a matter for regret, therefore, when he did not follow up the meeting by saying so, as I had done. Indeed, knowing the facts and knowing exactly why I could not reveal my sources, he exploited my weakness. In addition to scarcely veiled press briefing, he followed my announcement of a State of Emergency with a question demanding that I give the House "more information" <sup>(and I)</sup> to justify my assertion that he doubted whether the executive of the N.U.S. was its own master". This was a few minutes after his meeting with me and the officials concerned.

I gave some of the facts later in the day to George Woodcock, without saying anything about my sources. When he met the press he rightly refused to say whether he accepted the allegations, but he commented that if they were true, it was "a crime against trade unionism. We can stand a hell of a



436

- 42 -

/a lot, but a crime is a crime. "

The talk with George Woodcock led to a meeting between Ray Gunter, myself and the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the T.U.C. who were in almost constant session at this time. We agreed that Lord Pearson, whom we had sounded out, should be asked to chair a meeting between the two sides. The T.U.C. persuaded the N.U.S. executive to attend. The outstanding problem was that of leave arrangements which under the Court of Enquiry report would be cut from 51 to 39 days a year. <sup>Lord Pearson's intervention</sup> This led to a move forward, and further meetings on the basis of an increased number of leave days in return for specific and measurable steps to increase production. It looked more hopeful, but the "politically motivated men" threw in everything to avert an agreement.

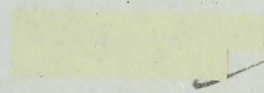
On the Monday hard information reached me that a new ploy was to be tried at the make-or-break meeting of the executive the following Thursday. I sent for Bill Hogarth, who was being pressed by T.U.C. leaders, and members of his secretariat to show more firmness against the militants. I told him what the group was proposing. First, a ballot of the entire union membership, and if this failed, second, a recall delegate conference.

Hogarth was clearly disbelieving. They couldn't make such proposals. Under union rules the only provision for a

69 SF 486/26  
copies to SF 452/24  
SF 452/51 Link A

NOTE FOR FILE

At Serial 68a on SF 452/51 Link A, it is noted by the D.D.G. that Sir Richard Powell at the Official Committee on 6th March, 1967, asked if the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Labour could be kept up to date with developments in the National Union of Seamen.



FIA/3

26th October, 1967

FIA/3  
✓

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Loose minute

Reference.....

68a

~~P.~~ <sup>25</sup>  
8/3

At the Official Committee on 6th March Sir Richard Powell commented that his Department had been very interested in the paragraphs on the seamen's strike ~~of~~ our report covering January to June 1966. The Board of Trade, and he felt sure the Ministry of Labour, would be glad to keep up to date with developments in the National Union of Seamen.

W. L. Williams

D.D.G.

7.3.67.

CONFIDENTIAL

~~W/L~~  
P/W/S  
9.3.67

SECRET



67a

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION

Office of the Director General

G.P.O. BOX NO. 5105 BB,  
MELBOURNE

2 / February 1967.

01955

Dear *D. Fick*, <sup>RS</sup> <sub>83</sub>

Thank you for your letter SF. 452-51 Link A/F of 25 January 1967, and attached paper on the Communist Party and the Official Strike of the National Union of Seamen, May - July 1966.

I found the paper very interesting. Our industrial officer has studied with profit the complexities of the dispute, noting particularly the tactics of the Communist Party of Great Britain towards a major dispute involving a union in which its initial influence was so limited.

With kind regards,

*Charles Spry*

(C. C. F. SPRY)

R. Thistlethwaite, Esq.,  
Box 500,  
Parliament Street B.O.,  
LONDON, S.W.1.

ENCL. \_\_\_\_\_

*HA* - 6 MAR 1967

TO: \_\_\_\_\_  
REF. SF 452/51 Link A.

Held RS

SECRET

*Handwritten initials and date*  
8-3-67

