

ment under heavy siege. Even otherwise tolerant spirits became savagely retributive. Treachery! Breach of contract! Block his pension! Put him on the watch list! Prosecution the moment he returns to England!

Down the market a little, those less rabid about their security took a kindlier view, though it was still uninformed. Well, well, they said a little ruefully, that was the way of it; name us a joe who didn't blow his top now and then, and specially one who'd been left in ignorance for as long as poor old Craw had. And after all, he'd disclosed nothing that wasn't generally available, now had he? Really, those housekeeper people should show a *little* moderation. Look how they went for poor Molly Meakin the other night, sister to Mike and hardly out of ribbons, just because she left a bit of blank stationery in her waste basket!

Only those at the inmost point saw things differently. To them, old Craw's article was a discreet masterpiece of disinformation; George Smiley at his best, they said. Clearly, the story had to come out, and all were agreed that censorship at any time was objectionable. Much better therefore to let it come out in the manner of our choosing. The right timing, the right amount, the right tone: a lifetime's experience, they agreed, in every brush-stroke. But that was not a view which passed outside their set.

Back in Hong Kong—clearly, said the Shanghai Bowlers, the old boy, like the dying, had had a prophetic instinct of this—Craw's High Haven story turned out to be his swan-song. A month after it appeared, he had retired, not from the Colony but from his trade as a scribbler and from the Island too. Renting a cottage in the New Territories, he announced that he proposed to expire under a slant-eye heaven. For the Bowlers, he might as well have chosen Alaska. It was just too damn far, they said, to drive back when you were drunk. There was a rumour—untrue, since Craw's appetites did not run in that direction—that he had got himself a pretty Chinese boy as a companion. That was the dwarf's work: he did not like to be scooped by old men.

Only Luke refused to put him out of mind. Luke drove out to see