

## SPYING NEWS

CHAPMAN PINCHER has performed another service for M15. His latest book, *The Truth About Dirty Tricks*, is an attempt to exculpate Pincher's favourite security service — M15 — from the rather damaging charge that it spends most of its time thinking up and carrying out dirty tricks against left-wing people in general and Labour governments in particular.

Pincher's record in these matters is worth recalling. In general, throughout his life he has relied entirely on M15 for stories which he has published faithfully, claiming all the while that it was his own expertise as a newsbound which has sniffed out the facts. The problem with this technique is that M15's purpose has not always been consistent — with the result that Pincher has, again and again, been obliged to contradict himself.

In 1978 in his book *Inside Story* Pincher repeated the claim that the former Labour prime minister Harold Wilson had been bugged by M15. This claim had already been made by no less a witness than Harold Wilson himself in his interviews with Barrie Penrose and Roger Courtnour, reported in their book, ridicuously called *The Penrose File*.

In *Inside Story*, Pincher was quite untruthful about the matter: "The truth, which I have established by questioning witnesses and through personal involvement in certain secret episodes [standard Pincher drive for "I was told by M15"] is that the undermining activities which Wilson complained of were not only genuine but far more menacing than he revealed. Certain officers inside M15, assisted by others who had retired from the service, were actually trying to bring the Labour government down and, in my opinion, they could at one point have succeeded."

At that time (1978) it suited M15 to have this story circulated as further proof (if it were needed) that the Labour government was so much on the rocks that it had lost the confidence even of its

security services. But time rolled on and M15's priorities changed. Thatcher was elected in 1979 and Anthony Blunt was exposed as a former Russian spy. Pincher's next assignment was set up by Blunt's former friend and landlord, Lord Rothschild.

Terrified that he also would be identified as a Russian agent as his friend had been, Rothschild approached Pincher with the idea for a book exposing as a Russian spy the former head of M15, Roger Hollis. The story, Rothschild told Pincher, could be collected from a former M15 agent, Peter Wright. Generously, Rothschild paid for Wright to fly over first class from Tasmania to tell Pincher his story. Pincher got tremendously excited, and was soon on his way to Tasmania to copy out Wright's story. The result was *Their Trade Is Treachery* (1981) which made £30,000 for Wright and £30,000-plus royalties for Pincher.

Wright wasn't too pleased with the book since he had wanted Pincher to savage the Government for not bringing the (wholly innocent and dead) former director-general Hollis to book. So Wright wrote his own book in which he "revealed" that M15 had been trying to undermine the Labour government. This wasn't at all what M15 wanted to read, so the spooks first of all persuaded the Government to ban Wright's book (thus quadrupling its sales and encouraging it to be read all over the world) and then to pass the Official Secrets Act 1989, which has been flagrantly broken again and again ever since without anyone appearing to notice. Then they got their loyal old warhorse out of pasture. Thus, in his current book, Pincher turns on Wright and savages him with the same disregard for facts with which he reproduced Wright's nonsense about Hollis in 1981.

Another target of Pincher's is another of his former intelligence sources, Maurice Oldfield. He supplied Pincher with many of his M15 "scoops" in the past; but when Oldfield fell foul of the right wing of M15 after trying to stop its members assassinating their people in 1979 and 1980, Pincher rounded on his former source and exposed his boyhood homosexuality.

Oldfield is dead and Wright is in exile and so neither can answer Pincher back. But Pincher may have bitten off more than he can chew with his attack (in Chapter 16 of his book) on former army information officer Colin Wallace. Wallace has circulated a devastating document listing Pincher's innumerable mistakes. His "revelations" (most of which were passed on to him by M15 officials who are furious with Wallace for what they regard as his treachery in exposing their dirty tricks campaign against the Wilson government) are exposed over and over again.

Pincher, for instance, found himself able to "reveal" that "Wallace's telephones at home and in his office were tapped". This would have been very difficult since Wallace's home did not have a telephone. For 20 relentless pages, Pincher's mistakes are detailed in Wallace's document, which should be read carefully by the dwindling band of people who still believe a single word Pincher writes, not to say by his faithful publishers Stedgewick and Jackson who go on publishing his books without apparently realising the extent to which they contradict each other.



"Is there honey still for tea?  
And are there titts still on Page Three?"

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