

# A2 and the “Reds In Khaki”

*How the British State infiltrated and  
disrupted the Soldiers', Sailors' and  
Airmen's Union after the end of  
World War 1*

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Due to some OCR scanning, with its accompanying  
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contains some slight errors, especially in the Notes.  
Hopefully it doesn't impair it for yez.

# A2 And The Reds In Khaki

*'During the first three months of 1919 unrest touched its high-water-mark. I do not think that at any time in history since the Bristol Riots have we been so near revolution.'* (1) - Basil Thomson

Thomson's assessment of the political crisis which threatened the British Government has been echoed by many military and labour historians in their reviews of the period. The symptoms of the crises were characterised not only by widespread industrial action by striking railway workers; miners; Clydeside engineers; London and Belfast electricians but also the comparative weakness of counter-strike forces, including the police and the Armed Forces. Lloyd George's administration was also frightened by the threat of Bolshevism: events on the continent, and especially in Russia, gave little cause for comfort. The Russian revolutions of 1917 presented a frightening example of what could happen to a great empire if matters got out of control. (2)

The personal diaries and correspondence of many senior politicians and military commanders featured references to the rash of mutinies which infected the Army during the first six months of 1919. Mostly prompted by demands for accelerated demobilisation by war-weary soldiery, these incidents involved the other ranks in strikes, demonstrations and other forms of direct action on an unprecedented scale. About 250,000 troops stationed in Britain; mainland Europe; Egypt; Palestine; Mesopotamia; India and North Russia. (3)

British Official histories, with one exception, make no mention of these incidents and British Army historians tend to ignore or gloss over their significance. (4) Labour and socialist historians, either lament the lost revolutionary opportunity or attempt to conjure up heavily qualified links with Leninism. Walter Kendall summarises the former perspective: *'...if the soldiers and sailors had launched a co-ordinated movement, or established links with any of the trade*

*union struggles pending, then the whole future of the state might well have been called in the balance... the struggles of the soldiers and sailors and, to a lesser extent of the police force, went on unaided, and indeed to a large extent, unnoticed, by the socialist movement. Confronted with the greatest revolutionary opportunity in generations, the socialist movement showed itself largely unaware of its existence'. (5)*

The Communist Party veteran, Andrew Rothstein, unsurprisingly adopts the latter interpretation: *'When British soldiers began saying the job for which they had put on their uniforms had been done, that it was time for them now to go home, and they wouldn't stay in the "bloody army for another "bloody war", they were themselves paying an effective, if belated and unconscious, tribute to the October Revolution'. (6)*

Although neither Kendall or Rothstein fell prey to the simplistic sensationalism which notoriously dogs journalists' attempts to chronicle such affairs, neither seek to establish a chronological link between the post-war mutinies and similar events which occurred during the war. Yet the mode of the soldiers' post-war challenge and the Army's clandestine suppression of dissent may best be appreciated as an extension of war-time class confrontation. The mutinies which occurred in the British Army during the First World War were almost invariably brief affairs which were settled peacefully. This goes some way to explain why few soldiers convicted of mutiny faced either long prison sentences or the firing squad - as long as they had white skins. (7)

Where any kind of formal political ideology expressed by the mutineers may be identified, it was akin to the perspectives expressed by contemporary Trade Union activists. This could logically be expected since the war created a large conscript Army and blurred distinction between the soldier and civilian. This was acknowledged, for example, by General H.A.L Tagart Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General GHQ Home Forces, who commented: *'There is no longer*

*the definite hard and fast line which used formerly to separate the soldier from his brother in civilian employment.'* (8)

This blurring was also accentuated by the passage of wartime emergency legislation. The Defence of the Realm Acts & 1915 Munitions Act, prompted by military lobbying as well as civilian employers - combined to establish a kind of industrial marital law and sanctioned harsh codes of practice which were akin to military discipline. The State, for example, was thereby empowered to suppress any opposition to workshop practices in munitions plans. It also meant that wartime trade disputes were politicised as offences against the State, including disputes about wages, labour demarcation, staffing, machinery and above all, the dilution of craft workers' status and skills.

Industrial workers could no longer rely on pre-war Labour and trades union leaders for representation. Pre-war Labour leaders, like George Barnes (engineers), William Brace (miners), Ben Tillet (transport workers), Havelock Wilson (seamen), had opted to subordinate all to support the war effort. Nor was their support for the Government unenthusiastic. For example, after the socialist and leader of the Irish Citizen Army, James Connolly was executed for his part in the 1916 Irish Easter Rising, the Labour Party leader and wartime Minister, Arthur Henderson led a round of applause by MPs in a packed House of Commons. (9)

Some powerful trade unionists were less compromised, but:  
*'Individually, employers had been summoned to aid the government on a far greater scale than trades unionists or Labour's MPs. Lord Weir a senior member of the Federation of Engineering Employers, were made advisors on production, Lord Cowdray, Air Minister; Lord Rhondda, Food Controller; Lord Devonport, Shipping Controller; while the press Lords, Northcliffe, Beaverbrook and Rothermere took on political responsibility in addition to their function as moulders of public opinion. Thus the business community reached the centre of government in an unprecedented fashion.'* (10)

The shop floor opted to organise itself, particularly in the engineering, shipbuilding and munitions industries, and developed a national network of shop stewards' committees. Unlike their military counterparts, the civilians managed to develop and sustain the Shop Stewards' movement as widespread network via which the shop floor communicated its grievances.

The response of the ruling class to the shop stewards' movement was predictable, politically simplistic and indiscriminate. Typically, the Vickers' engineering magnate, Sir Vincent Caillard viewed the Shop Stewards Movement; British Socialist Party; No Conscription Fellowship; Union of Democratic Control and the ILP as subversive. (11) Other industrial barons simply referred to trades unionists, of whatever political complexion, as 'the enemy'. Employers' groups, like the Mineowners' Association and the State's secret services took a similar view, harassing and repressing industrial dissent. This partnership, aided by State censorship of communications, the media and wartime propaganda, developed an enormous, orchestrated campaign to suppress wholly legitimate trades union and other working class organisations.

The blurring of the distinction between soldier and civilian; officer and employer, also extended to the covert agencies which harassed the workers. Government Intelligence agencies, nominally controlled by the Ministry of Munitions; Ministry of Labour; Special Branch and Military Intelligence allied themselves with buccaneering patriotic organisations like the National Democratic & Labour Party and the British Workers' League. (11a) Raids, imprisonment without trial, arbitrary arrests, theft, blackmail, and the use of jingoist mobs, spies and agents provocateur were tactics freely deployed by this covert alliance to destroy socialist, pacifist and shop floor organisations. Even where they broke elementary rules of law and attracted public odium, the excesses of covert agency operations were uncensored by the State.

The Wheeldon affair, involving PMS2, the Ministry of Munitions

intelligence organisation, provides the best-known example of such operations. Headed by Major William Melville Lee, brother of the Parliamentary Military Secretary, PMS2 had originally been established in June 1916 to spy on aliens and labour agitators. Two PMS2 agents provocateur conspired to fit up Mrs Alice Wheeldon, a Derbyshire feminist and ILP speaker. She was alleged to have plotted to kill Lloyd George with a poisoned dart from an air rifle on Walton Heath. The affair, culminated in a show trial; the jailing of the Wheeldon family and the takeover of PMS2 activities by MI5 in April 1917. Although Munitions officials privately expressed a desire to distance the Department from the provocateurs, no-one was arraigned for what became an enduring scandal. (12)

The abuse of power exemplified by PMS2 was unnecessary in the Army, because the existing system of control was quite effective. This was not an outcome of the largely mobilisation of a 'nation at arms' suspending class conflict nor because officers had been transformed into democrats. The pre-war Army had been a class dictatorship and the war did little to change the class-composition of officer corps. (13)

Although diluted by an inflow of 'temporary gentlemen' volunteers and a few thousand NCOs promoted from ranks, senior pre-war regular officers controlled the apex of the command structure. They were, even by the conservative standards of Edwardian England, mostly authoritarian, political neanderthals with dictatorial powers which they freely exercised. Shorn of patriotic flummery and unquantifiable 'fighting spirit' and 'morale' the officers operated a crude but effective system of individual material rewards and coercion. Rewards for soldiers' obedience consisted of regular wages; purportedly good rations; occasional de-lousing, accommodation of varying quality; clothing; home or overseas leave; sports and entertainment; controlled access to alcohol and brothels, and medals. Penalties for wartime breaches of discipline, let alone collective protest, were extremely harsh.

Wartime Army courts-martial found 92% of men guilty as charged - and the Army made a particular point of ensuring that all ranks were regularly paraded to be told of the punishments. Penalties were codified in the Manual of Military Law were used, like the provisions of DORA and the Munitions Act, as a deterrent to the expression of collective grievances. (14)

There was also a carefully cultivated military counterpart to the divisions which fractured civilian trades union and labour organisation. This was expressed in traditional inter-regimental rivalries; distinctions between combat and non-combat units; technical and non-technical formations. At the top, this system was controlled by the War Council and various GHQ officers - whose ideology was informed by eugenicist perspectives associated with the gender, class, race and geographical catchment area from which units were notionally recruited. With few exceptions, the political perspectives of the British High Command were similar to those of Victorian Imperialists and the Tory magnates who controlled British Industry. Collectively, they constituted a corporate dictatorship which uninhibitedly exercised power over a subservient population which it simultaneously gulled and coerced. This depiction of the British State more than serves to explain why, for example, workmens' and soldiers' councils failed to develop after the 3 June 1917 Leeds Convention.

Not only did the gathering take place in the face of covert moves against the event, forming workmen's and soldiers' councils was never its primary objective. The Leeds Convention celebrated the end of Czarist tyranny but otherwise was: 'in essence an organisation formed in order to press for a negotiated settlement of the war rather than for revolutionary change or "dual power".' (15)

Public meetings, like the one held in Hackney's Brotherhood Church on 28 July 1917, which were subsequently held to convene Councils were dispersed by patriotic mobs. The latter were incited by newspapers like the *Daily Express*, leafletting and Government provoca-



teurs. It is hardly surprising that by mid-October 1917, Basil Thomson concluded that the Workmens' and Soldiers' Councils were moribund. (16)

The effect of the Leeds Convention on the Army rank and file was minimal. Troops stationed at Tunbridge Wells managed to produce a draft manifesto for a Workers' and Soldiers' Council, which General Tagart remarked was too clever for Lance Corporal Dudley, it's secretary, to have drafted. (17) The Tunbridge initiative was swiftly quashed when, as Basil Thomson recalled: *'The leisure which had made the agitation possible was cut short by the unit being called overseas, where they had other things to think about.'* (18)

The situation in the British Expeditionary Force in Northern France and Flanders was no more revolutionary. The BEF commander, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig briefly mentioned an exaggerated report of red flags being waved by the Etaples Base mutineers in September 1917 and hinted at possible links with Republican dockers. (19) A few months later, the Canadian Expeditionary Force were frightened into returning their Russian-born troops to Divisional Wings in March 1918. (20)

Rather more significant was an attempt made by soldiers of the 51st Highland Division to form a soldiers' and workers' council in early 1918. This affair involved other ranks, wearing armbands, stencilled with the letters 'SWC' disarming and imprisoning their officers. Further details of this incident have not emerged but after a couple of days the council was suppressed by a counterforce. (21)

For various reasons, including the impact of the British Army retreat of March 1918, the Brest Litovsk Peace Treaty negotiations and a formidable anti-Bolshevik campaign by the British press, Bolsheviks did not appear to have featured in any of the British Army mutinies during the rest of 1918. In any case, it is unlikely that mutineers would have called themselves Bolsheviks because it would not have assisted them in negotiations with their officers. However, for their

part, it is quite likely that most officers would have abused mutineers by calling their activities Bolshevik. This was because during 1918, the press use of the terms 'Bolsheviki', 'Bolshevik' and 'Bolo' became synonymous with what Thomson called 'advanced revolutionaries and pacifists'. Although he maintained: '*A few extremists ... adopt the term applying it to themselves*' (23), in December 1918, Thomson himself could not accurately explain the origins of the term Bolshevik. Lenin may have been in power for a year but most British soldiers would not even have known what a Bolshevik was. Even had their curiosity prompted soldiers to find out more about Bolsheviks, they would have found it very difficult to discover alternative definitions to the demonic and frequently anti-semitic imagery of Bolshevism peddled by the wartime media. This was encouraged by Ministry of Information propagandists and insufficiently challenged by the comparatively weak opposition press. (23) The *Herald* and smaller circulation newspapers which challenged official depiction of Bolshevism were smeared by rumours of subsidies from German or Bolshevik sources. However, in spite of Thomson's repeated efforts to ferret out damning links, they received no cash from enemy nor erstwhile ally. Though some historians have argued to the contrary, even Sylvia Pankhurst's pro-Bolshevik People's Russian Information Bureau, founded in September 1918, received no starting-up subsidy from Lenin. (24) The converse cannot, however, be maintained - for by March 1918, the War Cabinet had clandestinely bought up all the major Russian banks and indirectly, a control of the country's industry and grain trade. This operation was managed by Major General Poole and Colonel Terence Keyes, via the Petrograd financier Karol Jaroszynski. The significance of this highly confidential purchase goes a long way to explain the financial rationale behind British intervention in Russia, for, as Michael Kettle states: '*If the Bolsheviks could now be ousted by military intervention, Britain would have virtual control of the entire economy in the new White Russia.*' (25)

The history of the North Russian Expeditionary Force and clandes-

tine efforts made by British secret agents to subvert the Bolshevik Army have been well enough chronicled. (26) However, the domestic aspect of the Intervention has been less well-explored.

Ideologically, the intervention intensified the re-formulation of the British Government's ideological basis for suppression of working class organisations. Justification for sustaining the war against Labour shifted away from ill-substantiated German plots to the exposure of a succession of almost equally fanciful British Bolshevik intrigues. If the pattern of wartime unrest in factories was basically a continuation of pre-war unrest, it was replicated in post-war Secret Service operations which had been developed against the extra-parliamentary Left during the war. However, the armistice with Germany altered the situation in the Army. As far as the rank and file were concerned, the German surrender signalled the end of their reason for accepting wartime standards of discipline. This showed itself in a rash of minor confrontations and bust-ups in the closing weeks of 1918. These bothered the Army Council but they were most concerned about Bolshevik-agitators establishing a foothold in the ranks.

As well as intensifying press propaganda and spying on soldiers, the Army arranged for propaganda speakers to tell units about the evils of Bolshevism. This had hardly begun to develop in a major way when a massive wave of protests and strikes swept the British Army. Occurring principally in the South of England and Northern France during January 1919, most of these affairs focussed on the men's demand for immediate demobilisation. With few exceptions, notably the confrontations at Folkestone, Dover and Whitehall, the demobilisation mutinies were dealt with by local and regional Commands. Their cumulative effect was serious because it caused the Government to accelerate demobilisation. But even the most optimistic socialists never felt it was a prelude to revolution. For example, the British Socialist Party newspaper, *The Call*, on 16 January 1919, commented: *'The soldiers' strike has arisen primarily out of disgust with which the intelligent fighting man regards the attempt to deal with him on the question of demobilisation as with an unreasoning machine and that it is not the outcome of considered revolu-*

*tionary opinions, it would be foolish to dispute.’ (27)*

Though the Communist historian Andrew Rothstein has tried to politically inflate these events into a tribute to the Russian Revolution, where a mutinous flag was flaunted it was the Cross of St. George or the Union Jack, rather than a rebellious red banner. Furthermore, few politically significant links were sustained between the mutineers and their turbulent industrial counterparts. (28) However, it was not soldiers’ strikes but arising tide of industrial unrest and the re-activation of the Policemen’s Union which led to changes in the regional commands of the Home Defence Intelligence Corps surveillance network. In March 1919 the Corps re-graded the Assistant Competent Military Authorities. The ACMAs, senior officers who headed the dozen or so military areas into which the country had been divided during the war, were redesignated from being Deputy Assistant Adjutant General to GS02 (Intelligence). They were ordered:

1 To obtain information as to the industrial situation from Chief Constables, employers of labour, branches of the Labour Ministry, conversations with private acquaintances, and from the study of newspapers.

2 To make detailed reconnaissance and tabulate there from information as to vulnerable points liable to attack in the case of civil disturbance. (29)

This aspect of the British Army’s role in supporting the civil power during the post-war crisis has been written about in a number of books. Less well known, however, is the fact that the Commander in Chief of the British Home Forces, Sir William Robertson was also very worried about the attitude of the rank and file to the rising tide of civilian social and industrial unrest.

Recognising that successful Army operations in support of the civil power depended on reliable soldiers, Robertson was alarmed about reports that: *‘Determined attempts to undermine the stability of the troops by encouraging Bolshevik principles are being made’*. (30)

Robertson therefore sanctioned the establishment of an organisation to counter the threat. This organisation, whose existence was confined to senior Army Commanders on 4 March 1919, was designated A2 Branch GHQ G.B. A2 was accommodated in Whitehall in an office adjacent to Room 101, Horse Guards' Annexe, Carlton Terrace, the Intelligence Headquarters of Home Command. The man selected to recruit, organise and command A2 was Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Isham, Royal Engineers. Isham was an American who had enlisted in the British Army in 1916 and worked as a cryptographer until 1917. He was then was commissioned and saw active service in France as a lieutenant with the Royal Engineers. After being wounded, Isham returned to Britain and by December 1918 was reported to be combating mutinies, earning the reputation of being 'very successful in this class of work'. (31)

Isham was given a free hand to select his office staff, which consisted of a Major and six other officers. At its inception their work involved:

- 1 Talking to the troops and placing before them the real facts and the devastating effects of Bolshevism.

- 2 Investigating causes of unrest amongst the troops, in order to ascertain from what source the disaffection springs, and to suggest the means of eliminating such sources.

- 3 Keeping in close personal touch with Officers Commanding Formations and Unit Commanders, in order to co-ordinate for the benefit of all the experience, information and opinions of each. (32)

Senior commanders were informed that A2 Branch Officers would be detailed to visit their units on a routine basis but could also be made available on request. Aside from routine Army reports and information culled from the Home Defence Intelligence Corps, Special Branch and other Secret Service organisations, Isham's staff relied on two other sources for A2's daily intelligence precis. Firstly, they monitored newspaper reports, mostly via a subscription to a commercial clippings agency but key publications, like the Daily Herald and Workers' Dreadnought were personally scanned by A2 staff. Secondly, A2 also relied reports from other secret intelligence

organisations. These were mainly summaries and spies' reports forwarded to A2 by the Provost Marshal Corps, Special Branch and an employers' espionage network, the National Stability League. Isham seems to have considered himself well-informed from these sources but A2 also employed two full time spies. One was private Gray a the former leader of a mutiny by Royal Army Service Corps troops based at Kempton Park. Isham, then a Captain attached to HQ London District, had been ordered to investigate the outbreak in early January 1919. He dealt with the affair by getting Pte.

NoS420635 G.R. Gray to betray his supporters. Whether by persuasion or bribery, Gray soon became an enthusiastic A2 agent, providing reports on military units and left-wing civilian groups. (34) A2's other full-time agent was Jack Byrnes, who had formerly served with the Royal Engineers. Byrnes appears to have already been spying, possibly for Special Branch, on ex-servicemen when he was engaged by A2 at a weekly wage of 3 guineas plus expenses. Byrnes concentrated his efforts on infiltrating the British Left to report on revolutionary activities directed at subverting the Army. (35)

All incoming information gathered by A2 about revolutionary or Bolshevik activity was sifted into four geographically defined categories: the United Kingdom; Europe; America and Other Foreign Countries. This data was then collated-via a card index which was divided into two parts: '*General Information, excluding personal notes*' and '*Personal Notes of Individuals who are in any way concerned with Labour, Socialist or Revolutionary activity.*' (36)

A2's anti-Bolshevik propagandists, principally Isham, Major O.P.L. Hoskyns, Captain A. Cormack; Captain Percy J. King RE and Captain Stanley Parkes RE appear to have addressed meetings of officers and men of virtually every Home Command unit. Isham also conducted a lecture tour of the British Occupation forces in Germany. (37) '*The meaning of Bolshevism and what it has done to Russia*' was the subject about which they generally spoke but further details remain unknown. However, a sample of subjects retained in the A2 registry used to make these presentations, preserves a flavour of the speakers' perspectives: '*Some Pithy Remarks on John Maclean's Creed*'; '*Bolshevik Ethics - the Nationalisation of*

*Women*'; *'Hackenschmidt on Bolshevism - it means ruin*'; *'Proving Officers in the Army of Russia Were Loved Before the Regime of Tyranny Came*'; *'Lansbury is Helping a Corrupt Group of German Jewish Capitalists*'; *'Politics of Massacre. Destroying the Foundation of Russian National Life*' and *'British Bolshevik Conspiracy*'. A further article by an anti-Bolshevik British Trades Union Official, classified as 'very good', affirmed that 95% of children had died in Bolshevik controlled regions. (38)

A2 propaganda appears to have been an ill substantiated mess of Carlton Club tittle- tattle, laced with Northcliffe press paranoia and garnished with anti-semitism - but their efforts were hailed in numerous letters of congratulations from HQ Commands. However, as with many similar exercises, it is otherwise impossible to assess the effectiveness of this aspect of the A2's work. The work of Gray and Byrnes is rather easier to evaluate because reports make it clear that the principal organisation against which their efforts were targeted was the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Union (SSAU). (39) The original group of men who made up the SSAU came from The Discharged Consumptives' Society and Sailors' and Soldiers' Protection Society' (DCSSSPS). The DCSSSPS was an ex-service-men's welfare initiative, founded in late 1918 by Captain E. S. Donisthorpe (Machine Gun Corps). Assisted by his brother, Donisthorpe co-ordinated the organisation from a bell tent and later a small cottage in Midhurst, Sussex. (40) It was briefly re-named the Sailors' and Soldiers' Union in early 1919, just before the Folkestone mutineers' delegates joined Donisthorpe's organisation. Mutiny was being settled. The enlarged 2,000-member organisation elected a new executive committee and decided to change the name to the Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Union. (39)

The Union's association with the Folkestone Mutiny and co-option of mutineers onto its executive committee, drew the SSAU to the attention of other Intelligence agencies. For example, Basil Thomson's 10th March edition of *'Fortnightly Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom and Morale*



*Abroad', expressed particular concern about the SSAU. Compiled from Special Branch sources and circulated to the Cabinet, the Fortnightly Report recorded: 'THE SAILORS', SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN'S UNION ...a very active and mischievous body ... is becoming bolder. At first it followed the example of the "Comrades of the Great War" in inviting men actually serving to become Honorary members, but it has lately issued a leaflet urging that soldiers should not interfere in labour disturbances. The connection of Captain Donisthorpe, the President, with the Herald League, and the fact that Lieutenant-Commander Kenworthy, of the Royal Navy, whose wife lately inherited a considerable fortune, is believed to be financing the Union, invest it with an importance it would not otherwise deserve. The Executive of the Union are believed to have held a meeting in London a few days ago, at which Kenworthy, Fairchild and other revolutionaries were present. Plans for a coup d'état of a very childish nature were discussed, and Kenworthy is asserted to have declared that the Navy was ripe for mutiny. Other speakers talked of arms and bombs being secretly stored and of soldiers who were ready to join them in establishing a republic. There is no cause for alarm in this, for such talk is the stock in trade of these extremists when they get together; whenever men such as Stanhope, the secretary, for a speech to serving soldiers during the strike on the tube railways is already being considered.'* (41)

From its inception, the SSAU was openly supported by the *Daily Herald*. *Daily Herald* presses printed the SSAU manifesto and reported SSAU branch meetings, usually in the newspaper's 'Soldier's Notes' feature. The newspaper's editor, the ILP veteran and former MP, George Lansbury, also provided printing facilities at the *Herald* Offices in Gough Square, off Fleet Street - but otherwise left the Union to organise itself.

By the time A2 launched its covert offensive against the SSAU, the Union Headquarters had temporarily crossed the Thames to 4a Iliffe Yard, in Walworth. A recruiting handbill featuring that address proclaimed the SSAU to be an organisation run on Trades Union princi-



ples, with the endorsement of industrial Trade Unions and the Police Union. The SSAU handbill listed eight objectives, which included: improving the status of serving men; adequate maintenance for dependents; improved pensions; no victimisation of Union members; increased pay and shorter hours of duty; official recognition of the SSAU by the Government and the prevention of servicemen being used as strike breakers in industrial disputes. If the objection to troops strikebreaking were omitted, the SSAU programme would have been relatively unexceptional. But it was the key element of the programme which had been amplified in an article which was published in the Dreadnought on 15th February 1919. The author, a veteran ASE member and militant Shop Stewards' Movement activist and Special Branch informer, W. F. (Billy) Watson revealed a more extensive programme: *'They deserve the backing of the Shop Stewards Movement ... it is also intended, I am told, to link up with the Soldiers and Sailors of all other countries, which would easily prevent the League of Nations becoming a League of Capitalists.'*

The link with the shop Stewards Movement was further endorsed when the SSAU called a meeting at the Orpheum Theatre, Croydon on 12 March 1919. The theatre had recently established itself as a centre used by pacifists and local trades union militants. The police spied on the theatre's management and users -and had arrested industrial militants, like David Ramsay, after meetings held at the Orpheum. (42) The SSAU intended to use the rally express objection to the continuation of military conscription. However, according to the spy (possibly from the National Stability League) who attended the affair, it was not the SSAU General Secretary, Sergeant R.W. Stanhope, nor the President, Captain Donisthorpe, nor the Chairman, ex- Rifleman Henry MacDonald, who controlled the event. Though MacDonald had explained the SSAU objectives and Stanhope retold the tale of the Folkestone mutiny to the audience, the spy recorded that a Russian-born civilian named Eden Paul, *'one of W. F. Watson's gang and who writes in the Dreadnought was obviously in command of the proceedings'*. (43)

Eden Paul was described as, '*a gaunt, spectacled, long-haired crank, without a collar or tie*'. (44) Paul had delivered a speech which linked the recent trials of Watson and David Ramsay with the Rhyl mutiny and rioting which had occurred earlier that day outside Bow Street Police Station. (45) He announced that legal action had been taken to prevent the SSAU amalgamating with the militant Scottish Discharged Workers' Federation, which had supported the Clydeside Workers' Committee. Paul also added that the SSAU would shortly be producing a paper called *The Forces*, which he would be editing. (46)

Ex-Metropolitan Police Inspector Syme, expressing fraternal greetings from the National Union of Police & Prison Officers, delivered the final important speech at the Orpheum Theatre meeting. (47) He deprecated the arrest of David Ramsay, announced that the Government was preparing to deploy a military cordon around London to counter strike action. He finally urged the SSAU to improve relations with the National Federation of Discharged Soldiers and Sailors from whose ranks many members of the former had defected. This report was only one of many which ended up in the A2 registry but it was important because the speakers' statements highlighted issues of common importance to both soldiers and civilians. It was also significant for the absence of detailed references to Bolshevism. In fact the detailed five-page report included only two references to Bolshevism. The first was an indirect comment by Sergeant Stanhope, who complained about soldiers who had been forcibly drafted overseas to Russia. The second, more telling reference was made in the final paragraph of the spy's report which commented: '*The peculiarity of this meeting was that it represented the Union of extreme anti-British Bolshevism with men in and discharged from, the British Army. The resolution was somewhat of a blind and several speakers hardly noticed it. The real object of the meeting was to urge soldiers to mutiny if called upon to assist the civil power during coming disturbances.*' (48)

More publicly, the *Sunday Times*, on 16 March, featured an article

from a Trades Union Correspondent' headlined '*Undermining the Army - Bolshevik attempts in this country- scheme outlined*'. The text contained many references to A2 propaganda material and opened with a reference to Labour Party opposition to proposed Conscription legislation. It commented: '*Suspicion of the Government's motives have been engendered among all sections of the workers. Agitators have alleged that the real object of the Bill is to create a Conscript force to be used for the perpetuation of capitalism and the subjugation of the workers at home.*' (49) Echoing the Orpheum Theatre spy's conclusion, the *Sunday Times* correspondent proceeded to report: '*The Sailors' Soldiers' and Airmen's Union ... is being used for the purpose of spreading unrest among the armed forces. The wirepullers discreetly remain in the background in an advisory capacity, and leave the task of appealing for members to misguided ex-servicemen who believe the sold object of the union is to obtain better conditions for their serving and demobilised comrades. The union demands that soldiers shall not be used in any capacity in connection with industrial disputes or strikes, and is endeavouring to obtain recognition for "welfare committees" which are to be established in every unit to put forward the minor grievances of the rank and file. The handiwork of the revolutionary wirepullers can be detected in this programme. The "welfare committees" are to evolve into soldiers' councils of the approved Bolshevik pattern and are then to link up with the Shop Stewards and Workers' Committees, and so form a political body modelled on Soviet lines, which at the appointed moment is to replace Parliament.*' (50)

By way of substantiating this thesis, the correspondent referred to a politically speculative article in the Anarchist publication *Freedom*; scoffed at Leftist refutations of the 'nationalisation of women' under Russian Soviet Government - and ended by citing the report of two un- named delegates of the Norwegian Socialist Party who, at Lenin's invitation had visited Russia and returned to: '*tell the tale of a vicious circle of unemployment and starvation.*' (51)

Immediately after publication of the *Sunday Times* item, the SSAU

leadership fractured. This was principally over the issue of allowing civilians, especially supporters of wartime Conscientious Objectors (including Eden Paul) to join the Union. Stanhope, A2 noted, had been given a bundle of Socialist and Bolshevik literature to distribute to SSAU members by Paul, and was unsettled by the latter's 'politically extreme' views. When, at a meeting of the SSAU Executive, Stanhope openly stated his misgivings he was promptly sacked by his fellow members. (52) Captain Donisthorpe, the SSAU President, was then discovered to have spent a third of the £87 SSAU account on personal expenses. With a bank balance reduced to £3.00, the SSAU was forced to vacate the Iliffe Yard premises. Donisthorpe simultaneously tendered his resignation, which was accepted by the four-strong SSAU Executive Committee, which included Jack Byrnes. The ousted pair, Donisthorpe and Stanhope, voiced their disenchantment in different ways. Donisthorpe published a scathing article in *The Times* (23.3.19), entitled '*Undermining the Army - the truth about the SSAU*', and promptly departed for South Africa.

Stanhope, who was subsequently discovered by A2 to have been an Special Branch informer, went to secure redress via Special Branch Police Superintendent MacBrien. MacBrien, however, declined to assist Stanhope to regain control of the SSAU. The chagrined ex-General Secretary was later observed to be working for the Daily Herald, supervising the distribution and messenger staff, as well as, speaking at public meetings on behalf of the National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Soldiers and Sailors. (54) By the end of April, the SSAU was estimated by Army intelligence to be in a state of terminal decline, exemplified by a membership that had diminished to 5,000, of whom not more than 200 remained in the Army. From the near-bankrupt state of the SSAU exchequer, it was also apparent that hardly any members had paid their subscriptions (1/3 per week for ex- servicemen and 6d. per month for those still serving in the Armed Forces). (55) Tangible evidence of the numerical weakness of the SSAU was also apparent at the 1919 May Day demonstration in London. Although the procession which made its

way from the Embankment to Hyde Park involved 15,000-20,000 people, the SSAU contingent was estimated at a mere 200-300 men, of whom around half were serving soldiers. (56)

The A2 spy report on the Hyde Park rally, singled out ex-Rifleman Henry MacDonald and Regimental Sergeant Major Humphreys DCM of the Royal Fusiliers as key speakers delivering speeches from one of eight platforms. In addition to reciting familiar element of the SSAU programme, the spy noted that a resolution was read at all platforms. Prefaced by a bugle call, it *'protested against sending troops to Russia and demanded their withdrawal ...'*. (57) All the speakers had also urged the crowd: *'to observe a general strike on 11 May, as this date marks six months after expiration of hostilities, when the Government contract expires.'*(58)

It was on this basis, that A2 spy No.5 reckoned that civilian support for SSAU views was considerable. Isham was informed: *'The demonstration was in reality a great meeting on behalf of the SSAU. The attitude to the enormous crowd shows the present power of the union. All were absolutely in favour of the Conscription Act being repealed.'*(59) Logically, the low SSAU turn-out might be taken as evidence of an organisation on the wane, but this was ignored by the A2 report on the May Day gathering. Instead, Isham concluded that the SSAU had now become a surrogate of the much larger Herald League, whose immediate aim, according to A2 was: *'to foster discontent amongst all workers so that they may co-operate in any revolutionary movement which might aim at the overthrow of the present system of Society.'* (60)

As a national organisation, the SSAU could muster probably fewer than half a dozen branches in London and the Home Counties, with some links in Northern Command. As an autonomous political organisation, posing a direct threat to the Army, A2 candidly admitted that it was a little more formidable than: *'an extremist attempt at a counter blast to the loyal "Comrades of the Great War" and the "National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and*

*Soldiers”.*’(61)

Diminishing numbers of serving members caused the SSAU to become essentially an organisation for ex-servicemen. Accordingly, A2 should have handed over the task of combatting the SSAU to Basil Thomson’s newly-created Directorate of Intelligence. However, A2 continued to feel justified in viewing the SSAU as a ‘potential’ threat to military discipline and as such, Isham argued that A2 should continue to operate its spy network because of the handful of genuine SSAU activists who were the: *‘means of recruiting new members for the Herald League and of promoting a feeling in the Army hostile to the use of troops in industrial questions.’* (62) Paradoxically, the A2 mole, Jack Byrnes - who had succeeded Stanhope as the SSAU’s General secretary- worked hard to arrange secure accommodation and with some success extended the life of the organisation he was working to destroy. There was, of course, an ulterior motive, because the SSAU General Secretaryship also placed Byrnes in an important position to furnish A2 with intelligence about the organisations and personalities who made up London’s radical Left. Nor was Byrnes the only member of the SSAU who was a spy. The extent of penetration of the SSAU by Army Intelligence and Special Branch agents may be illustrated by the composition of the Executive Committee meeting held at Chandos Hall on 9 May. Of the fourteen people attending the meeting at least five may be identified from secret reports as either Government agent provocateurs or spies - namely, Pte. Gray, Jack Bymes, Pte. J.C. Greengrass, W. Mason and Maurice Facey. (63)

This covert surveillance was also matched by sustained overt harassment of both the SSAU and the Herald League. For example, on 8th May, Special Branch officers simultaneously raided both the SSAU offices and the home of ex-Rifleman Henry MacDonald. MacDonald, who also edited the servicemen’s advice column *Tommy’s Troubles* in the *Daily Herald*, witnessed the sequestration of all the associated correspondence, as well as the SSAU minute books, and papers. Neither he, or any SSAU leaders were arrested,

but MacDonald, an able and articulate organiser, left the SSAU a few days later. (64)

The raid was part of Winston Churchill, the Minister of War's response to MacDonald's May Day exhortations. MacDonald had repeated the call in the Daily Herald, reporting: 'that all men who had enlisted under the Derby Scheme should demobilise themselves on 11 May - six months after the armistice of 11th November 1918.' (65) Churchill told the Cabinet: *'It was possible that on this day soldiers might march out of camp and discard their uniforms. He had received information from the Adjutant-General as to the conditions in France, at the Curragh, Kempton Park, Winchester and other centres, to the effect that men might possibly demobilise themselves. The Daily Herald had fostered this campaign amongst the men, and the leaders who had been working the affair up had been to see General Childs and confessed to him that they were frightened at the turn events had taken. As for himself, although affairs were grave, he thought nothing untoward would happen. The commands had been notified and steps taken to meet any great outbreak that may occur.'* (66)

The raid on MacDonald's home provoked consternation in the dwindling ranks of the SSAU, who became alarmed at the prospect of further official harassment. (67) Members were also convinced that there was a traitor in their midst and correctly identified Private Gray. Gray promptly disappeared from London but A2 carried on paying him for his services elsewhere in England and Scotland. (68)

Gray's departure was soon followed by Commander Kenworthy MP disaffiliating from the SSAU on 22 May. Winston Churchill interviewed Kenworthy and intimidated the MP into severing links with the SSAU. The MP, fearing a raid by Special Branch, destroyed all SSAU associated correspondence in his possession. (69)

Kenworthy's resignation from the SSAU was a political blow because it meant the organisation now had not MP representing it's



interest in the House of Commons. It also damaged the SSAU's income because Kenworthy had been paying a subscription of 10/- per week to the organisation. (70)

These losses were not redressed by the links which simultaneously developed between the SSAU, Sylvia Pankhurst and the British Socialist Party (BSP). In spite of allegations of Bolshevik funding, direct financial and material support from Sylvia Pankhurst or her Workers' Socialist Federation never seems to have materialised. (71) However, the BSP did honour its promise of assistance with publicity, a limited measure of financial aid and office space at the BSP Headquarters in Whitechapel. SSAU negotiations with the BSP were advanced, if not actually initiated, by Byrnes. It follows that A2, at the very least, sanctioned this link which sealed association of the SSAU with the BSP.

The SSAU was now very publicly wedded to a socialist organisation, an alliance unequivocally committed to fostering revolutionary change. It was probably on this pretext, if no other, that BSP Secretary Lynes' house was raided by Special Branch a few days after the SSAU moved in with the BSP. (72) Although, the link-up with the BSP was hardly required as a pretext, the Army had also taken formal measures to weaken the SSAU at grassroots level. An Army Council Instruction, forbidding troops to join the SSAU, was promulgated in May 1919. (73)

It was at this juncture that the actions of at least two of the Army Intelligence spies became melodramatically provocative. As part of a range of SSAU expressions of solidarity with NUPPO Jack Byrnes had promised the full support of the SSAU for a proposed strike by the police on 1 June. The NUPPO action, backed by a ballot of its members, aimed to secure official recognition for the Union, a pay rise and reinstatement of a dismissed NUPPO activist.

A couple of days before the Hyde Park demonstration that could have launched the Police Union action, Byrnes had met with Sgt.



Hayes, one of the Police Strike leaders. An eyewitness summary, incorporated in a spy's account which was forwarded to A2 by the Provost Marshal's office, detailed what Byrnes had reported back to the SSAU Executive: *'...that although the SSAU are not yet in a position to call a strike of troops, every endeavour will be made to distribute suitable literature amongst the troops ... In the event of a Police strike, Byrnes said that the Triple Alliance will strike in sympathy, and that this action would result in the proclamation of Martial Law. Byrnes stated that he had studied the disposition of the Guards Division, which practically encircled London and that upon a promise of support from the unions in the Triple Alliance, would undertake to prevent the arrival in London of any of these troops ...both Facey and Byrnes produced revolvers and declared their intention to die fighting, in the event of Martial Law being proclaimed.'* (74)

Government contingency planning certainly did involve military aid to the civil power and a draft Bill had been prepared for quick submission to Parliament in any emergency, placing the police under a disciplinary code similar to that of the Army. However, Byrnes' was incorrect in asserting that support for NUPPO had been pledged by the miners', railwaymen and transport trade unionists who made up the Triple Alliance. In fact the Parliamentary Labour Party opposed the police strike and George Lansbury was the only major Left-wing figure to support the Police militants' abortive action when it materialised in August 1919. Byrnes' undertaking that he could, in the event of a Police strike, prevent the deployment of the Guards was fraudulent. (75)

In the event, few soldiers featured at the NUPPO Hyde Park rally on 1 June and ex- servicemen of the NFDSS were actually hostile to the Police. The friction had arisen after recent a violent confrontation outside Parliament between ex-soldiers and the police on 26th May. NUPPOs organiser, Hayes' subsequent press statement blamed the violence which occurred on *'militarism in the Police'* and called for *'closer linking up of the Police with organised labour'*, did little to

placate ex-servicemen. Byrnes' and Facey's behaviour contrasted sharply with the apparent quiescence of the SSAU during and after mid-June. This was borne out by another Army Intelligence spy's report, forwarded to A2 during June by Lieutenant Colonel S. H. J. Thunder from the Provost Marshall's Office. He stated: *'There is no intention on the part of members of the SSAU of creating any disturbance neither is any literature being prepared which would be likely to cause disaffection in any section of the community. The only literature in circulation at the moment is this month's issue of the Forces.'* (76) He added: *'Trades Unions are now rendering financial assistance and I understand that there is now no anxiety on account of funds... In future the Executive Committee will convene meetings in secret periodically and in such places as may be convenient; this measure is being taken to evade the attentions of the Police who are thought to be keeping observation upon the activities of certain members of the Union.'* (77)

Nor could SSAU Executive Committee members be assured of an appreciative audience when they made public their rejection of allegiance to the Crown. When, on 17th June, Private Greengrass exhorted a crowd attending an SSAU meeting at Hyde Park to: *'tear up the Union Jack as it only stood for tyranny and oppression and to scatter it to the winds'*. He was driven from the platform by angered listeners. Though he managed to make good his escape, SSAU members were unimpressed by his rhetoric, rightly concluding that Greengrass was really acting as an: *'agent provocateur for the Government'*. (78)

Another, more influential means of communicating SSAU propaganda was almost simultaneously blocked on 4 July, when the Army Council informed the Newspapers Association that because: *'the Daily Herald is deliberately trying to undermine the discipline of the Army, they have decided that they cannot continue to authorise the provision of funds for the distribution of this paper to the troops in overseas theatres of war.'* (79) However, an Army Council secret order for copies of the *Daily Herald* to be summarily incinerated at

Brigade Post Offices had been circulated to the British Army of Occupation in Germany a fortnight earlier on 23 June. (80)

The SSAU's own magazine, *The Forces*, remained the other main device by which the organisation's message could be publicised- but the third and final edition of the magazine was not produced by the SSAU Executive. Although, Byrnes was credited with authorising its production, it was W. R. Halls, a solitary, self-styled SSAU Organiser from Hornsey, London, who raised the 40 necessary to print the 5000 copies of *The Forces*. Of Halls, Byrnes reported: 'The general opinion is that this man is of unsound mind.' (81)

Despite the surfacing of occasional references in August, the Intelligence summary circulated to the Ministry of Munitions at the end of October 1919, reported: '*The Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Union, an association with extremist views is now practically defunct. Its leaders are now attempting to save it from dissolution by proposing to amalgamate with the International Union of Ex-servicemen, a small but vigorous Glasgow organisation.*' (82)

The amalgamation between the SSAU and the revolutionary INUX, which had first been discussed at a meeting in June, came to nothing. The threat, which Home Command declared the SSAU posed to good order in the Army, had ended. However, the clandestine activities of A2 continued at least for a further three months. A2's spies continued to scour public and secret gatherings of the Left even though it was apparent that there was no prospect of Bolshevik soldier's councils being established. Operations were maintained in spite of Field Marshal Haig's declared opposition to what became A2's principal activity after the demise of the SSAU - namely, infiltrating civilian organisations. (83) At a meeting with Basil Thomson in June 1919 Haig announced that he: '*would not authorise any men being used as spies. Officers must act straightforwardly and as Englishmen.*' (84) At the end of January 1920, the Intelligence section of GHQ Home Forces was declared to have been dismantled. A2 and Home Defence Intelligence Corps' responsibilities were

either taken over by M04 (X) (nominally a civil/military emergency liaison section under the command of General Romer), MI5 or Special Branch. (85)

In reviewing the brief history of A2's history, it has to be admitted that it succeeded in securing covert information about the SSAU and other radical organisations. However, A2 data was not superior to that secured in the same manner by Special Branch nor can it be said that A2 alone defeated the SSAU. To be fair, A2 never claimed sole credit for having destroyed the SSAU. Even before the May Day Rally, Isham rightly concluded that other developments had doomed the SSAU. He cited increased rates of pay and an accelerated demobilisation programme as the principal reasons why the appeal of the SSAU to service personnel declined even before SSAU membership was proscribed. Nor could Isham be faulted in his contention that the SSAU was out-classed, when it came to recruiting ex-soldiers, by bigger and better organised rival organisations like the NFDSS. However, Isham's simultaneous assertions that SSAU leadership was incompetent, given to squabbling and making political statements that alienated SSAU members have to be qualified. The key SSAU leaders were controlled by either A2 or Special Branch and sometimes claimed payments from both the War Office and Scotland Yard. Byrnes, Stanhope, Facey, Gray, Greengrass and kindred spies, repeatedly acted as agents provocateurs. Unchallenged, if not encouraged, by A2 officers, Byrnes and his associates breached the objectives which had been originally sanctioned by Robertson. A2 infiltrated the SSAU Executive and used the Union as an organisational Trojan Horse with which to penetrate left-wing civilian organisations. Aside from the political rhetoric expressed in SSAU speeches, and lurid allegations by A2 agents of secret revolutionary agendas, there is little evidence that the SSAU was originally anything more than what it purported to be - an initiative to secure a better deal for service and ex-service personnel.

The reported existence of Reds in the ranks during 1919 was not the consequence of contemporary Bolshevik intrigue; it was very much

a legacy of the British ruling junta and wartime propaganda. Reds in the ranks was also a convenient enough pretext to create A2. But it must be emphasised, A2 was only one of a succession of initiatives conducted by employers and Lloyd George's regime, by which it was intended to neutralise British working class movements during 1919. It is quite clear from numerous reports contained in Isham's papers (now deposited at Yale University) that a significant number of British left-wing stalwarts were actually provocateurs and their groups' revolutionary potential needs re-assessing.

The secrecy of A2s operations was preserved so that, unlike PMS2, it did not attract public criticism. However, the official covert congratulations A2 attracted from the War Office, including a C.B.E. For Isham, were unequivocal endorsements of official approval for A2s skullduggery against the British Left and latterly against Michael Collins and the IRA.

## Notes

1. B.H.Thomson - *Queer People* (London:1922) p. 424-5. Knighted in 1919, Thomson was Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police 1913-19; Director of Intelligence, Home Office 1919-21.
2. K Jeffrey, P. Hennessy - *States of Emergency* (London:1983), p.5.
3. 250,000 strikers - computed from various War Office and India Office communications and a survey of local press reports.
4. J.E.Edmonds, H.R. Davies - *History of the Great War: Military Operations, Italy 1915-1919* (London:1949) pp.386-7; W.F. Elkins - *A Source of Black Nationalism in the Caribbean: The Revolt of the British West India Regiment at Taranto, Italy* (*Science & Society* - Spring 1970, pp. 99 -103).
5. W. Kendall - *The Revolutionary Movement in Britain 1900-21* (London:1969), pp. 194-5.
6. A. Rothstein -*The Soldiers Strikes of 1919* (London:1980), p. 106.
7. Only three soldiers were convicted and shot for mutiny under the British Army

Act during the war. Egyptian and Chinese labourers were gunned down when they struck work in France during 1917 but no white New Zealand Mounted Brigade cavalymen were punished for massacring over 50 Arab villagers at Surafend on 10.12.18. See: J. Putkowski - *Toplis, Etaples & The Monocled Mutineer (Stand To! No.18:Winter 1986, pp. 89)*; N. Boyack - *Behind The Lines* (Wellington,NZ:1989), pp.163-7.

8. Intelligence Circular No.15, December 1917, p.1, Public Records Office (PRO), Kew: AIR 1/720/36/1.

9. R Challinor - *The Origins of British Bolshevism* (London:1977) p. 150.

10. K. Middlemas - *Politics in Industrial Society* (London:1979) p. 114

11. Ibid., p.112

11a. J. Hope - *Surveillance or Collusion? Maxwell Knight, M 5 and the British Fascisti* (forthcoming: Intelligence & National security).

12. N. Hiley, *British Internal Security in Wartime: The Rise and Fall of PMS2 1915-1917*; N. Hiley & J. Putkowski, *Postscript to PMS 2* (Intelligence & National Security, vol.1,1986); S. Rowbotham, *Friends of Alice Wheeldon* (London: 1986); M Durham. *Death of an English Socialist (Independent on Sunday, 13.9.92)*.

13. See: P.E. Razzell - *Social origins of officers in the Indian and British Home Army 1758-1962 (British Journal of Sociology, 14, No.3. Sept. 1963)*.

14. *Statistical Abstract of Information Regarding the Armies at Home and Abroad 1914-20* (War Office:1920), p.642.

15. S. White - *Soviets in Britain:The Leeds Convention of 1917 (International Review of Social History, MX, pt2,1974, p. 192)*

16. Report of Supt. P. Quinn, Special Branch, 28.7.17et a , *The Brotherhood Church Riot 1917*,PRO: I MEP03/150; K Weller - *Don't Be A Soldier!* (London: 1985), pp. 56-7.

17. Ibid. WO32/5455, p.4

18. B.H.Thomson 1. - *Bolshevism in England, 28.12.1918*, PRO: F0371/3300, p. 362.

19. Haig Diary, 22.9.17
20. Canadian Army Corps, A. & Q. 1915-19 War Diary, 5.3.18, 11.4.18, PRO: W095/1056.
21. Sir Philip Christison, unpublished memoirs, Imperial War Museum.
22. Ibid. FO371/3300, p. 365
23. C. Holmes - *Antisemitism in British Society 1870-1939* (London:1978).
24. M. Swartz - *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics during the First World War* (Oxford:1971), 181-7; in FO371/3300, p.367. Though Kendall (ibid.) maintains the P.R.I.B. Received funds for Bolshevik agitation, his allegation is unsupported by Thomson (ibid. 28.12.18, FO371/3300), who makes no reference to Pankhurst's receipt of such subsidies being forwarded from Russia.
25. M. Kettle - *The Road to Intervention* (London: 1988), Preface.
26. Ibid.; see also: J. Plotke - *Imperial Spies Invade Russia* (Westport USA:1993).
27. *The Call*, 16.1.19
28. Ex-Colour Sgt. Guff, *The Soldiers' Strikes- Review (Solidarity)*, London, No.14, Oct-Nov. 1980, pp. 145); G. Dallas, D. Gill - *The Unknown Army* (London:1985), Chs. 9 - 12; almost any contemporary local newspaper published in the South-East of England.
29. PRO: W032/553 March 1919.
30. Brigadier General D.A.G., Great Britain to G.O.C. in C. Aldershot Command, 4.3.19, Isham Papers: 1/1.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Organisation of the Branch Office - A2 Branch. G.H.Q. G.B., n.d, Isham Papers: 1/1,; 2/25.
34. PRO: W0329 Medal Roll; Isham Papers: 1/10; 1/ 11-13; 1/2
35. Isham Papers: 1/6.

36. Op.cit., 33.

37. Isham Papers: 2/15 Papers for France; 2/16 Lectures - Private Notes & Memoranda.

38. Isham Papers: 1/2 Precipos of Papers received in A2 Branch, 8.4.19 -circa 28.8.19.

39. Isham Papers: 1/6, Byrnes, John . [Agent No.81;I / 10,1,12,13 Gray, G.R.

40. Service Notes, 28.12.18- *Herald*; *Undermining the Army - Sunday Times*, 16.3.19; 233.19; *The Sailors' Soldiers' and Airmen's Union - Sunday Times* 6.4.19; Isham Pap : 4/42, S.S. & A.U. Meetings etc, March -June 1919.

41. Fortnightly Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom and Abroad, 103.19 in PRO. CAB 24/76 GUT6976.

42. "*Of Leicester, Dartford and Walthamstow. A dangerous agitator with criminal ideas closely resembling the methods of the I.W.W.*". Arrested and charged with inciting sedition for a speech at Croydon Orpheum Theatre, Ramsay, a pattern-maker, was jailed for 5 months on 8.3.19. Isham Papers: 2/40. David Ramsay, pp.1 - 4; *An Injury to All The Masses*, Vol2, No.1, April 1919.

43. W.F. "Billy" Foster Watson, an engineer and friend of Ramsay's, was a veteran industrial militant. He was president of the London Workers' Committee; assisted Sylvia Pankhurst to establish the P.R.I.B. And was arrested for making a seditious speech at the "Hands Off Russia" meeting at the Albert Hall on 8.2.19; Weller, *ibid.*, pp. 602. R.W. Stanhope, Royal Fusiliers, had been elected secretary of the Folkestone mutineers. MacDonald edited the *Herald's*, "Service Notes" and "Tommies Troubles" features.

44. Maurice Eden Paul was a professional translator and militant socialist

45. Report of the Meeting at Orpheum Cinema held Sunday March 9th 1919 National Stability League Report No.3230, p.3 in Isham Papers: 2/32. The Rhyl mutiny is detailed in J. Putkowski - *The Kinnel Park Camp Riots 1919* (Flintshire Historical Society Journal, vol. 32, 1989, pp. 55-107).

46. *Ibid.*

47. Inspector John Syme, dismissed from the Metropolitan Police in 1910 after complaining about his superiors; repeatedly jailed in his campaign against police



injustice and corruption; founder and secretary of the National Union of Police and Prison Officers (N.U.P.P.O.)191317. Ousted from the N.U.P.P.O. committee Syme was subsequently almost as critical of the organisation as he was of his former employers but he claimed he was at the meeting at the request of the militant N.U.P.P.O. organiser PC Jack 20llner. See G.W. Reynolds, A. Judge - *The Night the Police went on Strike* (London:1968); PRO: MEPO series contains a number of files on Symes' activities and N.U.P.P.O..

48. Ibid., 47, p5.

49. *The Times*, 16.3.19.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Report of No."5", Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Union, 12.3.19 - Isham Papers: 3/42

53. Untitled Memo., signed J.C.Byrnes, circa early June 1919, pp. 1-3. Isham Papers: 1/8.

54. Report of No."5", Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Union, 24.3.19. Isham Papers: 3/32

55. Memo: The Growth of the Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Union, Lt.Col H. de Watteville, GHQ GB, 25.19, para 22; Report by No."5", The May Day Procession and the SSAU, 15.19, Isham Papers: 3/42. Portsmouth Evening News, 12.3.19.

56. Ibid., Memo., 25.19.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Report by NO."5", The May Day Procession and the SSAU, 1.5.19, Isham Papers: 3/42

60. Ibid. 55, Memo:, para. 1 2

61. Ibid., para. 20.

62. Ibid., para. 21.

63. Ex-Pte. J. Cecil Greengrass RASC No. 360600,109, Bravington Road, London W9, nominally employed as a War Office clerk; W. Mason, 3, George Street, Romford, Romford SSAU Branch chairman; National Union of Ex-Servicemen Romford Branch member; worked as barrel cooper in Limehouse. J. Maurice Facey, 48, Cornwall Road, London W11, employed (December 1919) at the Labour Research Department, Eccelston Square, London SW1. Details collated from: Isham Papers: 1/7,1/8,1/11-13;2/25,21.8.19. *Romford Times* 21.1.20.

64. Isham Papers: 3/42, SSAU, 95.19.

65. *Daily Herald*. 9.5.19.

66. PRO: CAB 23/10/WC564,8.5.19.

67. Isham papers: 3/42,165.19.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid., 67.

70. Ibid., 23.5.19.

71. Kendall (p.246) maintains that Axel Zacharaissen and other Comintern agents brought large sums of money to fund subversion in London and hints that Sylvia Pankhurst received more than the £280 she admitted in the *Dreadnought* (16.8.19). Byrnes reported, '*The Norwegian has handed Sylvia Pankhurst £300. He was known to have brought £5 to £7000 also propaganda. In London two weeks*'. (22.7.19); '*Sylvia Pankhurst is suspected of being a Government agent and giving the Norwegian away*' (25.7.19). From A2 reports, proof of Comintern aid is far from conclusive but the allegations generated an atmosphere of suspicion in revolutionary circles. Zacharaissen's arrest at SSAU Executive member, ex-Pte. E. Penymen's home in Camberwell appears to have been Maurice Facey's work. Was "Red gold" circa 1919 a Special Branch disinformation exercise? Certainly no funds ended up in the SSAU exchequer. Isham Papers: 1/7,11.6.19;1/8,22.7.19,23.7.19 25.7.19; 2/25 21.8.19

72 Isham Papers: 3/42,39.5.19,26.19.

73 Isham Papers: *ibid.*, 22,5,19.

74. Ibid., 305.19.

75. G.W. Reynolds, A. Judge - *The Night the Police went on Strike* (London:

1968, p. 137.

76. Isham Papers: 3/42 Soldiers Sailors and Airmens Union and alleged attempts to create riots upon the occasion of the signature of peace... [poss. from No. 5, circa.] 20.6.19.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. *Daily Herald*, 4.7.19.

80. Ibid., 8.7.19.

82. PRO: MUN 5/55/300/47pt. 2, CP25: 29.10.19 The Labour Situation, p.374.

83. Haig took over from Robertson as Commander-in-Chief, Great Britain in April 1919.

84 Ibid., Jeffrey, Hennessy, p.14.

85. Ibid.; A.C. Bmwn - The Secret Smant (London: 1988),p.114 M W X ) was controlled by Major General CF. Romer, Major Torr from GHQ GB and Major Stewart Menzies (Churchill's future spymaster). Home Defence Intelligence Corps reports have been preserved in the PRO: AIR1/558/ 16/ 15/55 et seq.. See D. Englander - *Mutiny and Myopia* (*Journal of Labour History*, vol. 5 2 No. 1,1987) pp. 5-32.

**Military historian Julian Putkowski sheds light on one of the most controversial aspects of the British Army, uncovering a top secret spy network, set up at the end of World War 1, amid fears of that dissent in the armed forces was contributing to the possibility of an impending revolution in Britain.**