


Another look at double  
agent deception

## MASTERMAN REVISITED

by  *A.V. KNOBELSPIESSE*

The advisability that we look more intensively at Sir John Masterman's descriptions of the double agent cases and the operational concepts that inspired World War II deception operations in Europe and the Mediterranean is suggested by recent developments—some happy, some unhappy—that are forcing intelligence, military, and political experts in the United States and in the West to give long overdue professional attention to strategic deception, its recognition, its use, and its counteraction.<sup>1</sup>

To begin with, the coming of the Yom Kippur War early in October 1973 has made the consideration of strategic deception a matter of urgent, current operational concern. Those events will undoubtedly intensify this critical, analogical re-thinking that had already gotten under way about the USSR and Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.<sup>2</sup>

But more appropriate to our purpose in this journal, it is a fact that more has appeared about deception as an activity in the past two years than at any time before or since World War II. The dearth of significant material to read and study contributed directly to the difficulties of building professional awareness and the skills and cadre to deal with it.

In the last two years we have had a book by the former deputy chief of the deception (Disinformation) component of Czech Security, Major Bittman.<sup>3</sup> There has been a flawed and controversial attempt by Ladislav Farago to recast the professional image of the German Armed Forces intelligence (The Abwehr).<sup>4</sup>

More recently there has been a study of German deception (or maybe more accurately, Stalinist self-deception) in support of the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, *Codeword Barbarossa* by Dr. Barton Whaley.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John C. Masterman, *The Double-Cross System in the War of 1939 to 1945* (New Haven, 1972). 203 pp. For a briefer review see *Studies*, Vol. XVII/1, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> See *Studies*, Vol. XIV/1.

<sup>3</sup> Ladislav Bittman, *The Deception Game, Czechoslovak Intelligence in Soviet Political Warfare* (Syracuse, 1972). 246 pp. *Studies*, Vol. XVII/1, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> *The Game of the Foxes. The Untold Story of German Espionage in the United States and Great Britain During World War II.* (N.Y. 1972) 696 pp. Farago's treatment is anecdotal, his research extensive rather than intensive, and uncritical. In a number of instances he is the victim of the very deceptions he ascribes to his protagonists. With this precaution, however, the book can be used with profit, particularly for getting at German double agent case data. *Studies*, Vol. XVI/3, p. 99.

<sup>5</sup> (Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1973). 376 pp. *Studies*, Vol. XVII/3, p. 17.

Masterman

There is much in these pieces that one may not agree with, but the important thing is that an open literature on political and military deception now is available, and people can get their minds to it. Masterman's book was the first in this new flow of public literature on deception, and the one that merits the appellation "seminal."

\* \* \*

A good way to begin to appreciate the substantive importance of Masterman's book is to recall an alleged operational story from the early days of World War II.

In the second and revised edition—1967—of Richard Wilmer Rowan's *Secret Service—Thirty-three Centuries of Espionage* (page 606), it is recorded that:

"Few wartime operations evolved with such foresight and planning as the one brought off by Alfred Wahrung. A former German naval captain, Wahrung had joined the military sector of the German Secret Service following the First World War and developed a legitimate cover by learning the watchmaker trade in Switzerland. In 1927, at the suggestion of his superiors, he settled in England, identified by his Swiss passport as Albert Oertel. After his British naturalization, the German agent opened a small jewelry shop at Kirkwall in the Orkney Islands, close to Scapa Flow, and filed occasional reports to Berlin describing the movements of the British Home Fleet.

"In October 1939, with the war in its second month, the jeweler known as Albert Oertel filed his most eventful single report: no anti-submarine nets shut off the eastern approach to Scapa Flow. On the night of October 14 a German submarine moved into the channel and sank the giant British battleship *Royal Oak* with torpedoes—a shocking loss Britain could ill afford in the melancholy early weeks."<sup>6</sup>

Some readers may remember this dramatic scoop, launched by Curt Riess in the *Saturday Evening Post* early in 1942.<sup>7</sup> It was a total fabrication, concocted by Riess for sale in a market hungry for spy stories. Canaris' successor, Walter Schellenberg, accepted and even embellished the story in his *Recollections*. Richard Deacon solemnly relates the same details to epitomize the sad plight to the Security Service in his *History of the British Secret Service* (1969) p. 263. And the story has become embedded in numberless other books, articles, monographs, and course lectures.

The Wahrung-Oertel yarn typifies the kind of nonsense that has been, and is being, written about intelligence and counterintelligence operations. As a fraud now probably ineradicable, it contrasts starkly with the lean, impersonal, under-

<sup>6</sup>This account was not a part of the first edition of the Rowan book. It was inserted by Robert Deindorfer, who revised and expanded Rowan's original work with World War II material.

<sup>7</sup>Curt Riess, born in Germany in 1902, edited a Berlin tabloid and went to Paris after Hitler came to power. In August 1950 he was involved in the surfacing of a spurious 32-page document purporting to be a draft peace treaty that the Soviets were "ready" to offer to a re-united Germany.

Masterman [REDACTED]

played facts put together about security and counterintelligence in the UK, in 1939 and after, by Masterman which show:

First, that no German agent dispatched to the UK after the beginning of September 1939 survived or worked except under control;

Second, that the controlled agents were led to elicit and develop data and other indications of intelligence value regarding the status and intent of the German war effort;

Finally, that the controlled agents were used systematically and successfully to deceive, mislead, and misguide their German Intelligence sponsors—the Abwehr—and the military and political apparatus which depended upon German Intelligence.

What appears to be a mercifully short book becomes, when you go into it attentively, something like one of those nested sets of Chinese boxes: there's always, seemingly, another one to explore, and by the time you're through, you've covered a tremendously larger surface than there originally appeared to be. But in compensation, it's worth noting, Masterman's book combines brevity and conciseness with donnish elegance and challenge. Where else do you find words like "parergon," "Danegeld," or "otiose?"

\* \* \*

Who is Masterman? What is his book about? How did this thing get published? Is there anything of interest about the appearance of this book in these times? Why should we be looking at it?

Sir John Cecil Masterman is an octogenarian, retired Oxford historian; successively a don, provost of Worcester College and vice chancellor—the administrative head—of the University. His bent would appear to have been administration and teaching, without concession to the rule of publish-or-perish, because as a historian his production is almost nil. But when one looks deeper, his image takes on that Protean touch expected of the Oxonian intellectual. He has published three detective novels (all, appropriately enough, set in the University) and a five-act play (about Marshal Ney).

His birth in 1891 should have made him eligible for World War I, but in August 1914 he was caught in Berlin as an exchange lecturer and he sat the war out in internment. This must have been galling for a keenly competitive man. He had a Blue in athletics, became an international team leader in hockey and tennis, and whole passages of his book are unintelligible unless you know the equivalents of Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig . . . in cricket. That's as befits a former president of the Oxfordshire Cricket Club. He is acknowledged as a master gamesman in Stephen Potter's book, *Gamesmanship*. His friends and colleagues are legion; in fact, without them his book could never have seen the light of day. For example, in the XX Committee work he counted as colleagues Colonel Peter Fleming and his brother Ian. The latter's 007 creation—which brought sex into spying, just as TV brought it into the home—is probably known to us all.

Masterman

So the World War II experience must have been a real reliving for a man of nearly 50, brought out of academia into MI-5, the British Security Service. Characteristically, however, Masterman's *Who's Who* biography covered his WWII career with this masterpiece of understatement: "Major, specially employed."

Masterman's book, superficially, is something like *The Mind of Adolf Hitler*, written by OSS researcher Dr. Walter C. Langer, and now declassified. The two books came out here about the same time. In other words, it's an official wartime document—a secret document of a secret service. It was written between July and September 1945, before Masterman left the service, as a summary of accomplishments. Only 125 copies were printed; 100 were immediately destroyed. Masterman retained Copy No. 3. He made successive efforts—in 1947, in the mid-50's, in the early 60's, and in 1967—to get the text released for publication. He was driven, he has said, by the desire to reflect deserved credit on the intelligence and security professions, which he believed needed it.

The manuscript's bureaucratic meanderings are a story in themselves—not relatable in detail here but interesting nonetheless. From Prime Minister to Foreign Office, to the Home Office, to MI-5 and MI-6 and the Chiefs of Staff, the study was vetted and then revetted. All these authorities agreed to publication at one time or other, but never did all of them agree together.

There were some original solutions designed to contain Masterman's pressure. The last one was an idea to incorporate the study in a larger, projected work about British Intelligence in World War II. Masterman regarded this as a ploy to give him time to die, because he knew that no such work would ever be authoritatively done, at least not in his lifetime. So he immediately went ahead to publish his piece abroad, and with that unerring affinity that binds all birds of a feather, he was placed in touch with the Yale University Press. The rest is a story of how a university press scores a lucrative scoop, for once. And once Masterman's determination was registered in a firm intent to publish abroad, the objections to internal publication evaporated and Her Majesty's Government, taking the better with the bitter, chucked the Official Secrets Act and licensed Yale to include publication in the UK as well as overseas.

It was a real "All's well" ending.

\* \* \*

Masterman's book is described as a book about intelligence in World War II, and the *London Times* judged, "There is no better book than *The Double Cross System* on wartime intelligence." Yet Masterman's book is not exactly just a book "on intelligence." It's really a book about counterintelligence, that part of intelligence work which is concerned about what *other* peoples' spies and spy services are doing to you, using those spies to find other spies, to gain intelligence information, and to deceive the spy masters and those dependent on them. Masterman's book registers the coming-of-age in World War II of counterintelligence as a co-equal professional activity with espionage and political action activity, and in that fact rests its underlying significance.

Masterman [REDACTED]

The book is a statement of a counterintelligence and security service's policy case, as well as the most informative recitation of the theory and practice of its counterintelligence accomplishments.

When it was written, in mid-1945, it must have had a direct meaning for whatever was going on in the reorganization of British Intelligence for the post-war long haul. Note its from-the-guts plea in a really moving final paragraph—moving because Philby was already placed as chief in Section V, MI-6 (the counterintelligence component of S.I.S.) where he could successfully do the most harm. It is a plea for unity of effort between the security and the intelligence services, even if only in the maintenance of common files. And, of course, the plea went unheard . . . until the 70's.

Coming now to the cases, and to the double agent techniques. It seems fair to say, in summary, perhaps they did not affect the course of history profoundly, but the double agent system caught spies, and when placed at the service of deception, it saved lives. And that says a lot.

The codification of operational principles which accompanies Masterman's double agent case facts makes this the only book of its kind in public print. It's actually far and away superior to anything available in the classified literature now being used in our intelligence schools and agencies. It's not just a matter of describing the care and feeding of double agents, but it's in explaining the "why?" of what went on operationally that the book makes its unique contribution. It goes without saying that the case and plan descriptions are important, *per se*, for the narrative reconstruction and interpretation of events in World War II, and they are things you will not find elsewhere, at this stage.

The underlying thrust of the methodological theory and wisdom set out in this book, however successful Philby was at this time in keeping alive the animus between MI-5 and MI-6, apply to any time and to any adversary. It's unfortunate we've had to wait so long for the message to get published.

And that is not all: Masterman in describing the utilization of double agents says more about deception as a professional practice than anything in public or classified print. Yet, on balance, it is necessary to note that this is not the definitive study of deception, either as practiced in WWII or as a set of concepts. Actually, we still need that kind of book.

Simply defined, a double agent is an agent in simultaneous contact with two (or more) intelligence services but working for (or under the control of) only one of them. No case, or few of them, turns out to be so simplistically definable; but this statement fixes the essential element of every double agent case.

The British distinguished a number of categories of double agents in WWII:

a. The classic double who was in personal, physical contact with two (or more) sides during his case—like TRICYCLE or SNOW in Masterman's account. One of the consequences of this predicament is that the double agent is inescapably in control of his own operation for longer or shorter periods. Thus the problem of his honesty, his *bona fides*, is a critical matter. The classic double is to be distinguished from



Masterman

b. the double agent who is not in personal physical contact, but uses intermediary communications that are under control (w/t—radio, s/w—secret writing). Both of these categories the British distinguished from

c. the penetration agent, a double who worked solely against other intelligence services to obtain information on their organization, personnel, methods, and operations. And all of these were to be distinguished from

d. the special agent, who was a double used solely for planting information on an enemy service (feeder).

Actually, this nomenclature—probably now archaic—is really the reflection of the evolution of the use to which double agents were put by the British from 1939 to 1945, ranging from the purely defensive early in the war to a very specialized offensive utilization in the last years.

However you define him, the double agent's bona fides—can you trust him?—is the central question before and while he's in contact with another service. A double agent is a condoned channel of communication with the enemy. Putting it that way immediately highlights it as a matter in which law and regard for law are important from the start, and it is clear that the legal aspects obviously require close, specialized and professional military and civilian coordination.

In the United Kingdom in 1939 (and still today), the responsibility for spies and spying activities within the country and the Commonwealth reposed in a Home Office professional organization known as the Security Service or more familiarly, MI-5, which, incidentally, does not have the power of arrest. MI-5 possessed not only the recommendation of legal sanction, but backed it up with the more practical consideration that it also had the necessary manpower to do the job and to do the coordination.

The outcome: after a year of *ad hoc*-ing it through the medium of a board of military service chiefs (the W Board which was set up immediately after the activation of SNOW), the Twenty Committee (XX Committee) was created on 2 January 1941 to do the nuts-and-bolts work of coordinating the build-up, management, and oversight of the DA teams. Nominally, this took place under the continuing oversight of the W Board, which in turn was under the purview of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (See Figure 1 for organization and staffings.)

This system grew and evolved, and not overnight. It was a genial solution to the otherwise impossible-to-manage departmentalization among security components that normally prevails in an open society (including our own). Masterman's book in large part is a log of the XX Committee's work but, most important, the idea itself was communicated to Britain's American ally and that fact has left an indelible mark.

Masterman piloted the XX Committee through meetings on Wednesday and Thursday each week—some 226 meetings in all—until it was disestablished on 10 May 1945. Masterman calls the committee an institutional anomaly—and it probably was—but it worked. Beginning with the 1939-40 accumulation of

Masterman

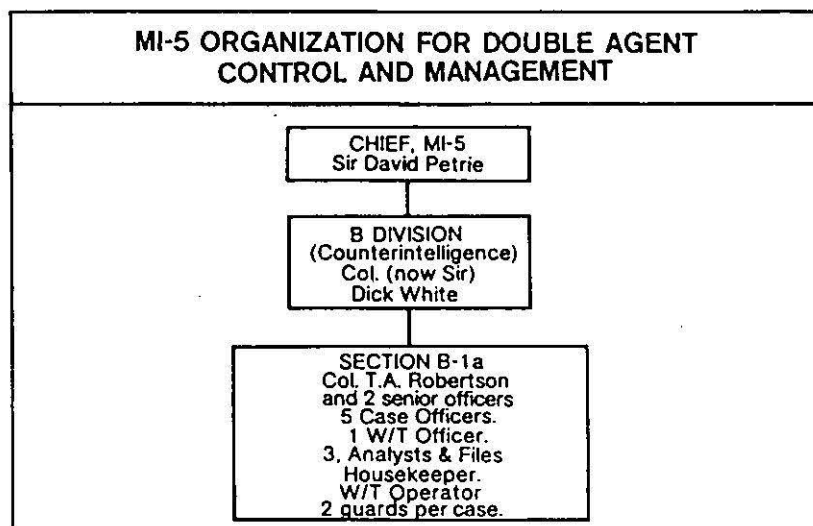
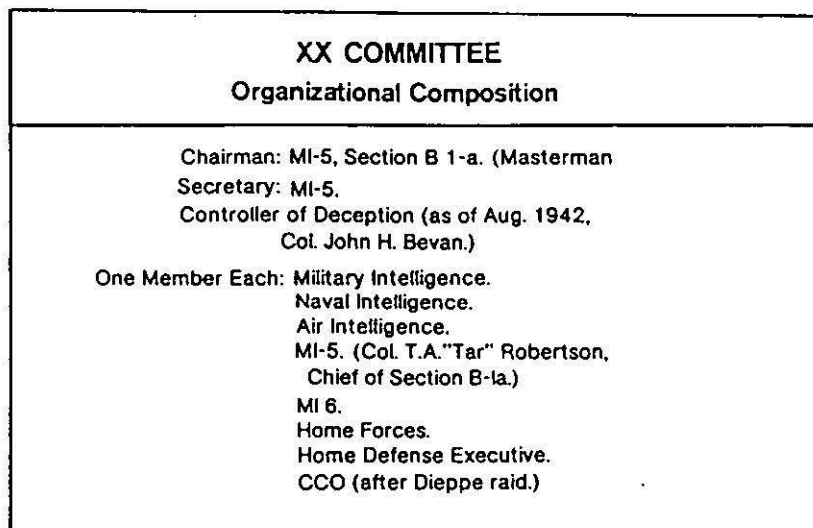
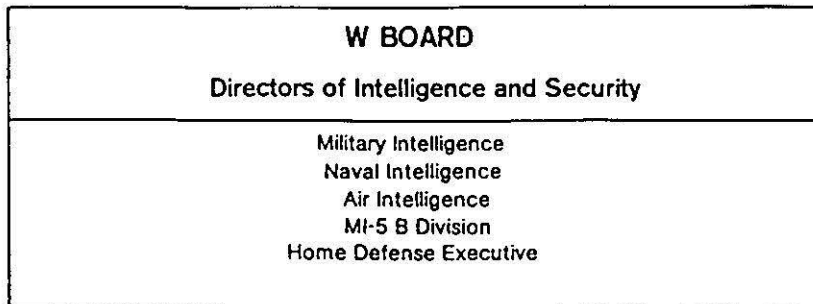


Fig. 1. The XX Structure.

Masterman

doubles and controlled enemy agents, the XX Committee ran more than 120 such cases up to 1945.

\* \* \*

Masterman's book contains the bare bones details on 39 cases—about one-third of the total. It takes up, with frustrating lack of detail, about a dozen more. It is clear, however, that these are the most important DA cases, and that the details, though scanty, are true. (This cannot be said about Sefton Delmer, in *The Counterfeit Spy*,<sup>8</sup> and Farago,<sup>9</sup> whose accounts of GARBO, for example, are on the one hand contrived to mislead about identities and contacts, and on the other totally wrong in the identifications.)

Yet this is not saying much, because it's a chore to keep up with the impersonalized volume of Masterman's case detail. The reader is inevitably driven to his own graphic resources. The result is a dandy chart which provides another dimension from which to view Masterman's presentation. (See Figure 2.)

On that kind of spread it's easier to see the evolution of the system, the relative importance of the agents, their longevity, their communications, their sex (their nationality, if one wanted), etc. Even the German Intelligence Service's errors are graphable. Inevitably, the Agents become more familiar and some even stand out:

*The Adam Agent*—SNOW: he came first. In the late 40's and early 50's, feeder material was called "SNOW" by British counterintelligence personnel and the word was used in stylish conformity by their American colleagues. Now, finally, the reason is clear!

*The Mail Order Spy*—RAINBOW.

*The Classical Sour Double*—SUMMER: he led them a merry chase and almost got away.

*The Classic Sweet Double*—TATE: an extraordinary performance which will be examined in greater detail.

*The Ephemeral Double*—GANDER: three weeks, short and sweet.

*The Continental Playboy Double*—TRICYCLE: he brought his whole family into the business.

*The Almost Coat-tailed Double*—DRAGONFLY.

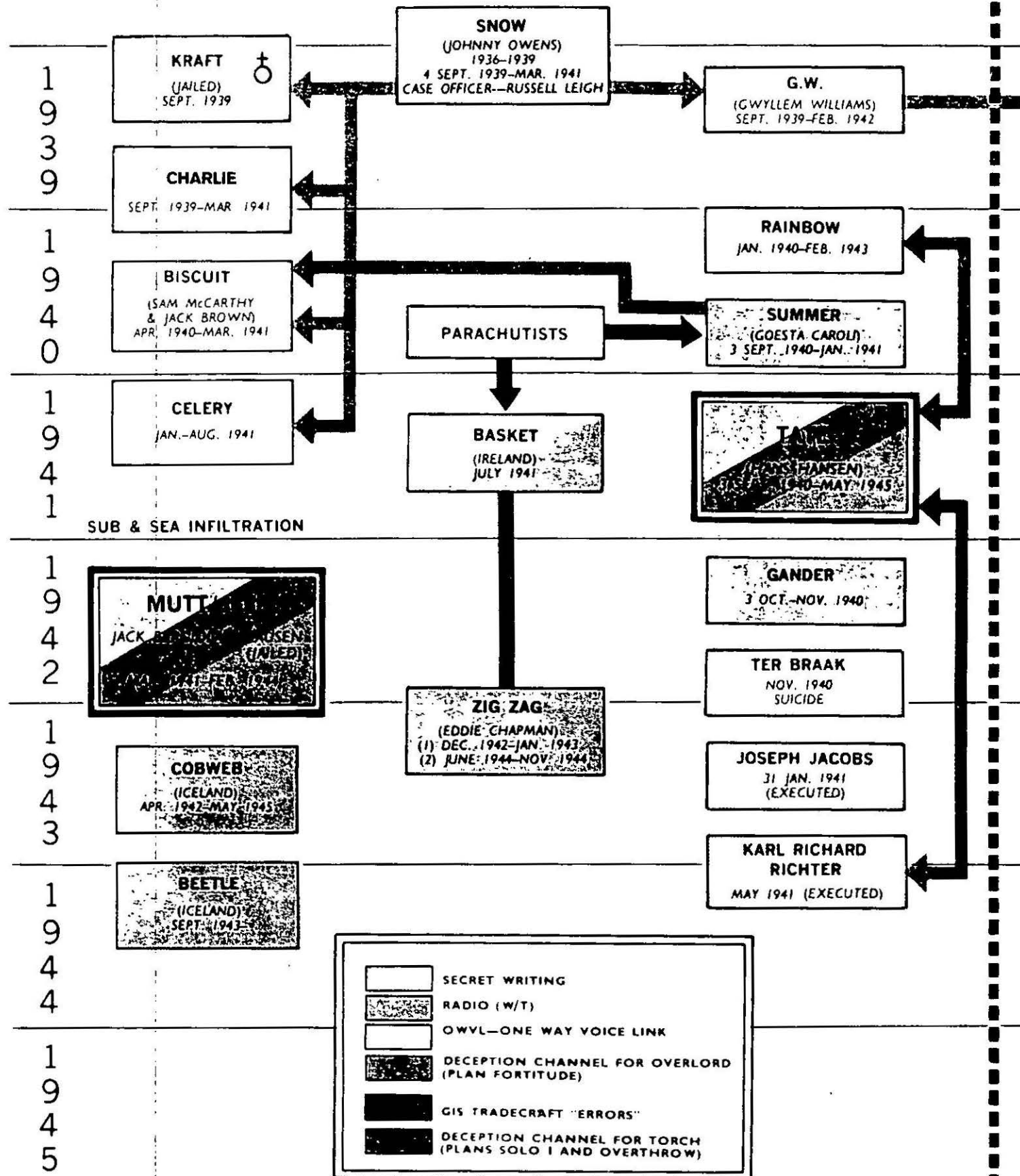
<sup>8</sup> (N.Y., 1971), 256 pp. An ill-starred venture, this book is concerned principally with the GARBO operation, to which Delmer refers under an alleged Abwehr cryptonym "CATO," which is not confirmed by the files. There are similar problems with Delmer's other operational identities. *Studies*, Vol. XVII/1, p. 80.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. Cit.*, chapter 50: "Power of Fortitude," pp. 609-29. Farago's identification, at p. 622, of GARBO as Louis Calvo, a Spanish journalist assigned in London under Embassy cover, is, totally wrong, and from that point his analysis is downhill. In a reference to "CATO," p. 615, he is apparently unaware of the identity with GARBO. Finally, Farago's index is not a useful guide through his inferno. Apparently the British case nomenclature he obtained in London was jammed into the text but was not indexed. Thus the Masterman book's main case names, starting with GARBO, are briefed at pages 289-90, 620 and elsewhere, but go uncited in the index.



EOT/NT

AOT



1  
9  
3  
9  
  
1  
9  
4  
0  
  
1  
9  
4  
1  
  
1  
9  
4  
2  
  
1  
9  
4  
3  
  
1  
9  
4  
4  
  
1  
9  
4  
5

Masterman

*The Odd Couple*—MUTT and JEFF: MUTT blew his top for years as an *authorized* saboteur and JEFF spent the entire time in jail—but had his revenge.

*The Half-Life Agent*—FATHER: he had an Out system of communication, but no means of getting instructions.

*The Parthenogenetic Double*—GARBO: The Best Double Agent of them all. Ironically, three times he had been refused recruitment by the British (MI-6) in Madrid and Lisbon. He literally forced his recruitment on the British despite themselves, and turned out to be pure gold. An extraordinarily diligent, self-generating, driving individual; moved by nationalist fervor, he was a Basque.

*The Once-A-Crook-Always-A-Crook Double*—ZIGZAG: Eddie Chapman—the only German agent dropped *twice* into the UK, but he was a better fraud the first time.<sup>10</sup>

*The Built-In Triple Cross Double Agent*—METEOR: very, very interesting.

*The Double Who Was Only a (Radio) Fist*—ROVER.

The periodization of these and the other cases, which have been tag-lined in this summary to tease a reading of the book, is painstakingly developed by Masterman year by year. The cases and the plans can be combined into the following brief scheme:

1. *The Phony War Period: September 1939 to mid-summer 1940.*

The German intelligence had no reserve assets in place for war; it relied on contacts and agents developed before 1939. MI-5 began DA operations with one of its most productive, SNOW—a Canadian named Johnny Owen—almost in coincidence with the UK's entry into the war. The consequence was the wrap-up of all German agents in place and the foundation of a DA system (SNOW, CHARLIE, BISCUIT, and RAINBOW) which would ensure the detection of new agents.

2. *The Operation Sea Lion Phase: Summer 1940 - January 1941.*

German intelligence dispatched new agents in anticipation and in support of their projected landing in England, employing parachute drops, sea plane infiltration, and refugee chains.

Forty or more newly prepared agents were dispatched on short-range missions. The German I.S. was clearly on the offensive. The fate of the "Lena" team (Abwehr's Aussenstelle Brussels) is a good model of what happened: in essence, SNOW paid off. (The following details are from sources other than Masterman.)

<sup>10</sup> Chapman was a case officer's heartburn, during and *after* the war. He has told his story very selectively in, Edward Arnold Chapman, *The Eddie Chapman Story* (Julian Messner, New York, 1954), 242 pp., and there has been the inevitable movie.

Masterman.

The "Lena" group consisted of 13 agents—12 men of motley origin, but on the whole brave officers, and one lady. All were dropped in early September in anticipation of the landing deadline.

Six were arrested on arrival, and five of these were executed (Waldberg, van den Kieboom, Meier, Druecke and Waelti). One was imprisoned (Pons). Item: Kieboom and Pons spoke little English; Waldberg not a word.

Number 7 escaped immediate arrest and made his way to London, where he was caught the day he arrived. He handed a Soho waitress food coupons together with his money in payment for a meal. The waitress called the police.

Number 8 also escaped arrest on arrival. But in purchasing a railway ticket to Bristol, which the clerk told him "would be ten and six," he handed over 10 pounds, 6 shillings. And again the police were called.

Number 9 was found dead, a presumed suicide, in a Cambridge AA shelter in November 1940. He had his w/t set still with him.

Number 10 was "Vera"—an attractive lady with pre-war antecedents in the UK and a couple of German Intelligence "friends" (Druecke was one). Vera simply turned herself in to the British authorities on arrival and was not further reported on—Masterman, at least, says nothing about the case.

Number 11 was parachuted on 7 September 1940 into the Manchester ship canal. He drowned.

Number 12 was SUMMER, the Sour.

Number 13 was TATE, the Sweet.

The outcome of the Sea Lion Phase sealed the fate of German positive intelligence operations against the British Isles. By the time it was over, the MI-5 had one of the finest doubles of the war, a not-so-melancholy Dane—TATE. They had added a prestigious continental con man, TRICYCLE, a Yugoslav. SNOW had put "G.W." (Gwellyn Williams) into direct contact with a (neutral) Spanish journalist (Del Pozo) in London, and a case they called DRAGONFLY had been initiated.

The security phase was in effect completed by the achievement of the first five of the operational objectives of the DA system, as spelled out by Masterman.<sup>11</sup> The Security Service had "contained" the German effort; but more, had developed the means to turn that effort back on itself. The organization had grown and was still growing.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. Cit.*, p. 8. There are seven double agent objectives worth engraving in the heads of all intelligencers: 1. Control adversary espionage and by so doing, in effect make him work for you. 2. Identify, neutralize, or suppress new agents and spies. 3. Secure information on the personnel and methods of the adversary service. 4. Secure access to adversary codes and ciphers. 5. Secure indication of the adversary's intention. 6. Lead, divert, or direct the enemy's intentions. 7. Use DAs systematically as deception channels.

Masterman

3. *The XX Committee Period: 1941 - 1945.* (Created as a subcommittee of the W Board on 2 June 1941.)

1941 - 1942 is a time of organizational shakedown and stabilization. The first experiments take place in deception ("controlled" sabotage by MUTT). Also the first failure occurs: SNOW's net collapsed because of his psychological instability (taking BISCUIT, CELERY, CHARLIE with him), but there are real laughs in this case. GARBO was acquired.

The latter half of 1942—This period marks the big shift into active deception. In July 1942 the XX Committee became full-time work, and Eisenhower and Stark were asked to put in officers for liaison. The Consulting Officer of Deception became the power figure in the picture: Colonel John H. Bevan took the job in June 1942. It should be noted there was no deception and cover plan in the Dieppe landing, but this gap was very quickly closed in the organizational changes made immediately after the operation. The North African landings (Torch) (8 November 1942) were covered by a deception plan, the first organizational piece of strategic deception, but still characterized by emphasis on security.

1943—Mincemeat, a contribution to the Sicilian landing (Operation Husky).<sup>12</sup>

1944—Culmination and total concentration on Overlord deception (Plan Fortitude). The key to the deception plan was not that landing was coming, but when, where, and how. Total success.

1945—Marked by the exploitation of the DA system to achieve deception of V-weapons targeting against London and to blunt the submarine effort against the UK.

The essence of XX Committee deception planning was common sense, daring and brain power. The ones that stand out as displays of real brain power (as well as of technical skill) are:

*Plan Stiff*—Never used, this was a very sophisticated scenario utilizing a drop of agent equipment, including cipher and communication plan, only; no agent. Purpose: to induce a radio playback by enemy

<sup>12</sup> Mincement was one of the operations—along with ZIGZAG (Eddie Chapman) and TREASURE (See Lily Sergeev, *Secret Service Rendered London* [William Kimber, London 1968] 223 pp.) that had gotten into the public domain before Masterman published. He does not, of course, mention any of these collateral readings, which appeared after he wrote his monograph.

The main work on Operation Mincemeat is by its artificer, Ewen Montagu: *The Man Who Never Was* (Lippincott, Philadelphia & New York, 1963) 160 pp. An entirely fictionalized account appeared earlier, written by the wartime Minister of Information, Alfred Duff Cooper, *Operation Heartbreak* (Viking, New York, 1951). See also Duff Cooper's memoirs, *Old Men Never Forget: The Memoirs of Lord Norwich* (London, 1953).

The significance of Mincemeat has recently been strongly questioned by the retired Wehrmacht General, Walter Warlimont, in a communication to the Irish Defense Journal, *An Cosantoir* (June, 1973). Warlimont explicitly documents the success of the operation in deceiving Hitler, but asserts it did not deceive the German High Command. Montagu, in private correspondence, has taken and documented strong exception to some of Warlimont's claims.

Masterman

that would positively be known to be such. (This idea still has charm and is worth mulling over.)

*Plan Mincemeat*—speaks for itself—an operational masterpiece.

*SNOW's passing* to the German Intelligence Service tainted UK documentation procedures in order to facilitate arrest of the follow-on German agents.

*GARBO's notional* Liverpool agent, "liquidated" before Torch. (Press notices were actually published of the "death" of this fictional person. The clippings were forwarded to the German and enhanced the credibility in the deception.)

Control of *The V-weapon and rocket* targeting by deception. Elegant. (Notional data indicating short misses were reported over controlled radios and in secret writing to coincide with German knowledge of the impact time of hits.)

*An anti-submarine deception*, effected by TATE, which closed off 3,000 square miles of the Atlantic approaches to the UK. These are real achievements of human ingenuity.

\* \* \*

It is certain that the day-to-day traffic exchanged with the Germans under XX Committee control is the true creative heritage of Double Cross. Masterman gives none of the agent traffic exchanged with the Germans, perhaps out of a sense of delicacy. But TATE's telegrams are available in the captured German archives. So, though the bones of TATE's case do indeed speak in Masterman's presentation, it is in the traffic that he waxes eloquent, and his case officer, Russell Leigh (who had also handled SNOW) makes himself felt.

TATE's name was Hans Hansen, a Dane, whose mother was a German. (He figures therefore in some records as Schmidt-Hansen.) TATE was the longest-lived double agent in the Double Cross business and he played a big game: perfectly straight for the British; demanding, and insufferably insistent with his Aussenstelle Hamburg control, a Major Karl Ritter, who made Lt. Col. on the case.

TATE logged more than 1,000 Out messages, all under British control. For the 1,000th he received a special Abwehr award—a gold medal, presented after a Blue Ribbon panel of experts, including one member of Abwehr counter-intelligence, had reviewed his traffic and certified him bonafide. (TATE had received the Iron Cross 1st Class six weeks after he had gone on the air in October 1940.)

TATE's message formula mixed hard, factual, but deceptive, reporting with straight-from-the-shoulder four-letter words.<sup>13</sup> Here's a sampling:

"You never let me know what you think of my work. An occasional pat on the back would be welcome. After all, I'm only human."

<sup>13</sup> Message texts are taken from Farago, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 258. There is every reason to accept Farago's reporting of these elements from the German official records.

Masterman

When asked by Hamburg to report on the quality, price, and taste of a loaf of UK bread: "Don't you have anything more important to ask? It tastes all right."

TATE and his British Case Officer worked the money side of the business—classically the major weakness of all operations into denied areas—until the pips squeaked: "What is delaying the man with the promised money? I am beginning to think that you are full of . . . ."

When he was asked to investigate the quality of British ration card clothing: "You can kiss my . . . ."

In September 1941 TATE asked for the then astronomical sum of £4,000 and unless they paid: "They could go . . . themselves." TATE's German control took the language to be "positive proof" that he was "as genuine as ever."

But no money was forthcoming. TATE then let go of a message *in the clear* that really rocked them: "I . . . on Germany and its whole . . . secret service." Again Major Ritter judged this to be "another characteristic Hansen outburst." And he moved to get the money to TATE . . . by neutral safe hand, thereby blowing the Japanese Assistant Naval Attaché in London; after which TATE radioed: "Won't be reporting for a couple of days, I'm getting drunk tonight."

Scatology aside, it is clear that if the whole of the TATE (and selected other DA) messages could be assembled, the intricacies of operational deception could be reduced to training formats, and cases could be studied and gamed against the baseline of what actually took place. This kind of approach to the problem of building awareness of deception, and of developing skills in dealing with it, is long overdue.

Only one man—A. J. P. Taylor, a fellow Oxonian and, one judges, a sorehead because of administrative slights suffered at Masterman's hand, stood up and spat in Sir John's eye. He wrote (*New York Review of Books*, 10 February 1972):

"Sir John Masterman spent his life teaching history and then became head of an Oxford college. He wrote detective stories and other agreeable trivia . . . this is an enjoyable book, though of no great moment. . . . Sir John Masterman's success was perhaps not as great as he thought in 1945. . . . I'd guess that Double Cross was only the beginning of the game, though I can't say that I have much interest in the operation one way or the other. Like other forms of intelligence and all forms of information, its main value was to keep those engaged in it from any real contact with the war. Just imagine what disasters those in charge of propaganda or spying would have caused if they had commanded tanks instead of words and fighting men instead of double agents."

And Malcolm Muggeridge—himself an MI-6'er in WWII—has it both ways in two places. Once for the *London Observer* (2 April 1972):

"Intelligence agents, in my experience, are even bigger liars than journalists, and in their reports are given to exaggerating their achieve-



Masterman

ments, as well as the importance of their opposite numbers, in order to magnify the feat of getting the better of them. . . . the manifold stratagems and knavish tricks they recount, in my opinion, played little, if any, part in the war's final outcome which would have been pretty much the same if there had been no Abwehr, no MI-5 or MI-6, and no OSS."

But to the *Washington Post* (13 February 1972) he said none of this. He pronounced the book, "serviceable" but "doubted" whether any of the expertise and experience it contained would "be required in any subsequent war."

It remained for the ecumenical touch to wrap it up. A reviewer in *The Commonweal* (8 December 1972):

"If John XXIII was right in declaring that international peace is to be based on mutual trust alone, something will have to be done about this breed of foxes which feeds upon and deliberately sets out to create distrust among men and nations."

Masterman's ultimate nested box encloses his conviction that double agents are the "safest and surest weapon of counterespionage, and the one most easily adaptable to changing conditions, changing problems and even changing enemies." This, written in July 1945, was a sharp eye to what the future would bring with Moscow, and it was a misfortune that the report was buried.

Trevor-Roper fixed on just this point in a masterly presentation (*New York Review*, 30 January 1972):

". . . many of us wondered in 1945, whether counterespionage is not the best method of espionage. For German spies were not only a means of deceiving the enemy about our intentions: they were also a means of discovering his own."

This is significant, and important because Trevor-Roper, too, was in the code-breaking part of things that made it possible to double German agents with surety and certainty.<sup>14</sup>

Ultimately, however, it can be said that the success of Double Cross rested not on the British and their superior wiles, but on the German Intelligence's will to believe: "The German system had a built-in bias toward credulity."<sup>15</sup> All deception takes place in the eye of the perceiver. Unfortunately the eye, as everyone knows, is a very fallible organ. Masterman, in effect, describes how an espionage system with a built-in bias for credulity became a dead duck by 1945. The same fate will befall an intelligence service that repeats the error today.

<sup>14</sup> This matter of critical importance is outside the scope of this review. For collateral reading, see Farago, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-198, 284. But for the facts, see Gustave Bertrand, *Enigma, ou, La plus grande énigme de la guerre 1939-1945* (Plon, Paris, 1973). Pages 15-97 of this account by the key participant sort out the credits among the British, French, and Poles.

<sup>15</sup> See J. W. M. Thompson, in the *Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 1972.