

Ian Milner: The MI5 files

The seven MI5 files on Ian Milner released to the National Archives UK on 28 November 2017 (KV2/4370-6) cover the period from October 1934 to July 1964. They are incomplete in two ways. Clearly there are more files on Milner after 1964; and these released files omit any overt mention of the discovery from the Venona material in 1947 of Milner's actions in 1945-6 in passing classified information to the Soviet Embassy in Canberra. This adds a faint air of unreality to them. The Venona material would have been dealt with on another MI5 file, thus providing further evidence of how closely held it was. Andrew recorded at 380 that 'The value of VENONA as a counter-espionage tool was diminished, sometimes seriously, by the extreme secrecy with which it was handled.' (MI5 files concerning the Australian aspects of Venona and the consequent establishment of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) have also been released to the National Archives UK, and some of them are imaged: see KV4/450 to KV4/459.)

Perhaps the two major but unremarkable disclosures are that Milner was a member of the Communist Party while at Oxford; and that his main contact at the British Embassy in Prague was an MI6 officer, or a succession of them.

1934-48: mainly Oxford and London

The first entry on the file has Milner landing at Harwich on 6 October 1934. The attention of the immigration officer was caught by the fact that his passport contained a current visa to the USSR. This was deemed worthy of drawing to the attention of the Special Branch and thence of MI5. Milner's subscription to the *Daily Worker* in 1935 and his activities in the Oxford University Labour Club in 1936 were later noted. Twenty years later, the file recorded that 'a reliable source who was himself a member of the Communist Student Group at Oxford from October 1932 to June 1936' told MI5 that Milner was not only a member of the Group but also a member of the Communist Party and 'quite an expert on Marxist theory'. He tended to stay in the background however so far as overt Party activity was concerned.

In 1936 and 1937 two of Milner's telephone conversations with a B F (Ben) Bradley in London were intercepted, MI5 presumably having put a tap on Bradley's telephone. Who Bradley was is not shown. The conversations were very guarded and indeed the second appeared to be conducted in some kind of code. Similarly, a letter Milner wrote in 1937 to an Eric Cook - also not identified - was intercepted and copied. In 1937 it was noted that Milner had sailed for Singapore and in 1938 he was recorded as being in California.

1949-50: New York

The level of interest in Milner increased sharply in 1949, no doubt as the result of the Venona information. The leaks to the Soviet Embassy in Canberra had been known to MI5 since 1947, and early in 1948 the Director General of MI5, Sir Percy Sillitoe, went to Australia to alert the Australian Government. As set out in detail in chapters 3 and 4 of David Horner's official history of ASIO 1949-1963, Milner was identified as a likely source in 1948 and confirmed by further Venona information in 1949. By this time he was working in New York at the United Nations.

A letter from London to the MI5 Security Liaison Officer (SLO) in Australia dated 6 May 1949 began: 'We've had a certain amount of fun with MILNER recently which you'd probably like to know about.' It went on to say that MI5 had got 'clearance' to talk to the FBI about him - the clearance having no doubt come from GCHQ, the keeper of the Venona material, which was and is in Cheltenham and thus referred to by MI5 as 'our friends in the country'. It turned out that the FBI

was already on to Milner because of the Venona information and because of his connection with Mary Anne Keeney of the 1939 Speed case. She was a spy for the GRU and was later also undone by Venona. In other papers on the file the FBI recorded that Milner and his wife were also in contact with associates of Victor Perlo, also suspected of spying; and with Philip Jaffe and Kate Louise Mitchell, who were arrested by the FBI in 1945 at the offices of *Amerasia* magazine (to which Milner had been a contributor), where thousands of classified US Government documents were found (the investigation was found to be deficient: Mitchell was not charged, and Jaffe was convicted of only a minor offence and fined).

In 1949 Milner and his wife visited Australia and New Zealand. While in Australia, they were put under surveillance by ASIO. His five-volume ASIO file records his well-founded suspicions that he was being followed at that time - see, for example, a report by an ASIO officer (Part 1 of the file (A6119/17) pages 38-39) following a discussion he had had with Professor Bailey, then head of the Attorney-General's Department and Solicitor-General, who knew Milner and had also known his father. During their visit, Bailey had given a party which Milner and his wife attended. According to the report

MILNER seemed to Professor Bailey, at that time, to be "extremely frightened", and took elaborate precautions to avoid revealing the names of the people whom he said they were going on to meet after the Baileys' party. Milner appeared to suspect that he was being kept under observation, and to be very nervous about it.

The MI5 file records the SLO in Australia telling London of the visit thus: 'Despite my earlier and rather pompous assertion that the the ASIO were not indulging in flat-footed surveillance, it is with much regret that I have to inform you that as far as the Melbourne operation was concerned, it could not have been more flat-footed'. The SLO had ASIO call off the surveillance in Adelaide and Sydney, the Milners' next ports of call.

In April 1950 MI5 intervened and had cancelled Milner's appointment as political adviser to Admiral Nimitz on the UN Commission set up to investigate the Kashmir dispute. At the end of April, Milner visited London where he was interviewed by Professor Charles Manning for a position in the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics. Later papers suggested that Manning lost interest in Milner when he confessed to being a Labour voter. The interview was preceded by 'a communication in a somewhat suspicious manner', although nothing adverse was known about Manning.

In the same month MI5 sent to the SLO in Washington for discussion with the FBI a copy of the plan for the interrogation of James Hill, a former colleague of Milner's at the Australian Department of External Affairs, also known from the Venona material to have been passing classified documents to the Soviet Embassy in Canberra. He had been posted to the Australian High Commission in London so that he could be investigated by MI5. Against the possibility that Milner's name would come up, London also asked for 'all the information [the FBI] hold on MILNER'. A telegram to Washington of 5 June 1950 said that the Hill interrogation was set for the next day and asked that the FBI 'watch for any attempt to contact MILNER'. As the FBI later pointed out, while they 'took Milner home every night', it was impossible for them to keep an eye on him while he was at work.

The Hill interviews were conducted in June 1950 by William Skardon in what Horner rightly describes at 143 as an 'incredibly incompetent' manner, and Milner's name did come up. Although what followed is not recorded on Milner's MI5 file, the FBI file (Horner 295) shows that while consideration was being given by the FBI to interviewing him, Milner and his wife left New York on 28 July for Switzerland and then Prague. The SLO in Washington reported in September that the FBI had told him that Milner had informed his New York landlady that he would not be renewing

his leave, and that he had sought an extension of his leave from the UN Secretariat. The SLO added: 'From the above it would appear that MILNER has got the wind up and he may consider it better for his health to remain in Czechoslovakia.'

1950-1964: Mainly Prague

Milner got in touch with the British Embassy in Prague, but unbeknown to him, or perhaps not, the officer with whom he became most friendly worked for MI6. In a series of events which is not completely clear from the file, that officer provided information which led ASIO to believe in mid-1951 that Milner might be ready 'to turn King's evidence' as ASIO put it. Plans approved by no less than Prime Minister Menzies were accordingly drawn up by ASIO: a softening-up process and inducement in Prague (with MI6 assistance), then an interview in London to be conducted by Ron Richards, at that time the ASIO Director in Sydney and the officer who was later to debrief the Petrovs, who would be armed with 'Details Commonwealth legal powers and conditions e.g. Crown may be satisfied if subject turns King's evidence'. MI5 and perhaps MI6 also were less enthusiastic, however, noting that 'no close relationship' had been established between Milner and the MI6 officer, and that while the ASIO proposal was 'excellent in principle', it was nonetheless 'premature'.

The MI6 officer in Prague provided a long report on Milner in November 1951. Because of the advice of his wife's doctor that she needed further treatment in Czechoslovakia, and because they hoped in time to return to Australia or New Zealand, he had decided to resign from the UN. In order to support himself and to pay for his wife's treatment, he had been giving English lessons and had also begun teaching English literature at Charles University in Prague. The MI6 officer added that 'he no longer has the impression that [Milner] was hovering between East and West...his views were probably those more of a fellow-traveller than of a Communist...he has not irrevocably "gone over" ..if someone on his own plane of intelligence could discuss matters with him at length and in more propitious circumstances, the scales might be tipped back in the other direction'. An MI5 officer noted in the margin: 'Not "back". He's been a communist for years, even if he does waver a bit when he sees communism in practice'.

There was a further report in October 1951, after the MI6 officer had visited the Milners at their home. While 'nothing very sensational transpired', Mrs Milner seemed to be 'the bad influence and responsible for MILNER's own attitude, since he seems to be the weaker character'. A female American was also present, and this turned out to be 'Lina Maran Fruhauf', of whom more below under her correct name.

Nothing much seems to have happened over the next 18 months, except that Milner visited the UK. MI5 wrote to MI6 in April 1953 that they were considering the possibility of interrogating Milner during his next visit and asked for any further information 'your representative can produce about him'. For what turned out to be good reasons, MI5 expressed some scepticism about Milner's 'story' for going to Czechoslovakia, believing that it was 'much more probable that he took fright as a result of the interrogation of HILL.' It made a similar approach to the SLO in Washington, seeking further details of e.g. the genuineness of Mrs Milner's medical condition. The SLO in Australia was informed that Milner 'may (repeat) may visit U K for Coronation'. 'If he comes,' the message continued, 'we shall investigate him fully but not (repeat) not interview him unless we have positive evidence he has undergone complete change of heart. This will be decided in course of investigation.' ASIO's views were sought. The Coronation took place on 2 June 1953, but evidently Milner was not moved to attend.

In May 1954 the SLO Australia notified MI5 that 'Petrov has named Ian MILNER as key M.G.B. agent External Affairs during period 1945-1948. Code name BOOR. Now resident Prague.' The

message went on to say that about five months previously Moscow had instructed Petrov to discover the attitude of the Australian Government if Milner were to transit Australia on the way to New Zealand. (There is no other mention on the file of Petrov and the Royal Commission, these subjects too being dealt with on other MI5 files which have also been released to the National Archives UK: see KV2/3439-3454, the 16-volume personal file on the two Petrovs; KV2/3455-3474, containing information received from the Petrovs; Kv2/3475-6, containing top secret correspondence arising from the Petrov case; and KV2/3477-88, the report of the Royal Commission on Espionage, including copies of the original documents Petrov brought with him when he defected.)

In August 1955 MI5 became aware that Mrs Milner would be in the UK later that year and sought ASIO's advice as to whether she should be interviewed. Spry was in favour: he thought MI5 might discover 'what she has to say about her husband, in the light of the references to him in the Royal Commission report'. (The Royal Commission's report was released in September). Despite some doubts in MI5 - Spry's arguments were thought by one officer to be 'rather strained' - the interview went ahead on November 24. Mrs Milner was accompanied by her brother-in-law John Milner, whose correspondence with his brother was being intercepted by MI5. The MI5 interviewer was Peter de Wesselow, who had been dealing with Petrov and the Royal Commission. She declined to enter room 055 in the War Office, the usual venue for such interviews of outsiders, 'apparently on the grounds that she might be seen by the Czechs', and the interview took place in an unidentified hotel.

de Wesselow's account of the interview occupies nearly four single-spaced foolscap pages, and it is unnecessary for present purposes to discuss it in detail. (As mentioned below, she was subsequently interviewed by both the New Zealand and Australian Security Services). John Milner said that neither of them was aware that Petrov had involved Ian Milner until they had seen the Royal Commission report recently, and that the object of their coming was 'to make certain representations' in connection with the report and to ask what were the exact charges against Ian Milner. The MI5 man of course avoided the second aspect. He took Mrs Milner through her life with Milner, when she admitted having been a member of the Communist Party in Adelaide. In July 1950 they had been on holiday in Switzerland when she had had a bad bout of arthritis. 'A Czech friend of MILNER's who happened to meet them recommended a doctor in Prague..and they went there to try his cure'. Her health improved and they 'drifted on'. As a general comment, she said that he husband was 'a transparent character' and 'she is sure she would have known if he had concealed anything from her'.

de Wesselow asked her about Ian's friends and she confirmed the names in the Royal Commission report as having known him. She denied having known Clayton, did not know of Ian's friends in the New Zealand Department of External Affairs (an example of what de Wesselow called her 'lack of frankness') and also did not know the names of any British diplomats with whom he was friendly. Asked about Russians they had known in Canberra, she nominated Morosov (ROK in Venona) and de Wesselow told her he was a GRU officer, which caused her 'initial astonishment'. Of the US names put to her in connection with *Amerasia* (see above), she knew some only from the newspapers. In reply to a question from John Milner, de Wesselow said that Ian risked prosecution if he arrived in Commonwealth territory, and that if he came to UK he might be extradited to Australia.

de Wesselow concluded that Mrs Milner 'knows more than she has admitted and perhaps is putting over a prepared story, though she may not have known the full degree to which Ian is guilty'.

It is difficult to conclude that this was a well-conducted interview. de Wesselow failed to question Mrs Milner on why she thought the Czechs might have her under surveillance. He may have blown

Morosov by revealing what MI5 knew about him. He also avoided pressing Mrs Milner on the degree of her husband's associations with Hill and Throssell, another External Affairs officer mentioned in Venona, and their activities in Melbourne before they went to Canberra. Raising the possibility of Milner being prosecuted would have been unlikely to encourage him either to recant or to leave Czechoslovakia, when he might be interviewed. It turned out that this was the object of the exercise. The SLO in Australia later queried de Wesselow regarding the prosecution, and de Wesselow responded by saying that he had sought advice from MI5's legal officer before the interview; a prosecution was thought to be 'technically possible'. In any event it was partly designed to discourage Milner from entering the UK: 'We consider that his presence [here] would be a major embarrassment and unlikely in the extreme to pay us dividends. Indeed the case has certain analogies with the MACLEAN affair.' Returning spies were evidently as likely to cause trouble as departing ones.

ASIO though the interview 'useful' and quite reasonably suggested that if MI5 were able to have another run at her 'it may be possible to take a more forceful line'. It offered to 'prepare a detailed brief for the purpose'.

de Wesselow wrote also to MI6 after the interview, seeking further details of 'the American girl MILNER is intending to marry' and noting that Mrs Milner had mentioned that she and her husband were invited to every British Embassy party in Prague. 'This seemed to indicate' de Wesselow thought, 'that the British did not regard MILNER as a traitor' and suggested that 'it was inappropriate to continue these invitations'.

The Embassy in Prague may have discontinued official contact with Milner for some period, but he was present there for the Queen's Birthday reception in 1963, when he collapsed. The MI6 representative continued contact. She was telephoned by Milner in February 1956 seeking advice and they met in her flat. After some beating around the bush about his pending divorce, and some hypocritical pleading of poverty (see below as to his payments from the Czech State Security Service) - 'he relied on parcels from relatives and friends abroad for [clothes and similar items]' - he got on to the real purpose of his visit: the Royal Commission report and the 'smearing' references to him. He gave the same details he was later to give in his statement and sought advice on forwarding a statement through the British Embassy to the relevant Australian authority in London, including whether someone in the Embassy might witness it. There is a bizarre note in manuscript on the record of the interview which went to London: 'NB On 28/3/56 3 microphones were discovered in the flat in which this interview took place.' Subsequent papers show the statement (dated 1 March 1956) being received, witnessed and sent off to London and Canberra; but there is disappointingly little on the reaction to Milner's press statement of 9 April 1956, which essentially repeated his formal statement.

Milner's conduct at this point gives every appearance of having been contrived. There was first of all the delay. The Royal Commission report had been made public in September 1955, but Milner waited five months before approaching the British Embassy about making a statement. The nature of the approach was curious. Rather than presenting himself as a man wronged and full of righteous indignation, Milner beat around the bush for some time before coming to the point.

In a separate note, the MI6 lady recorded that Milner 'was quite open in admitting that when he went to Oxford as a Rhodes scholar he became a member of extreme left-wing circles'. He also confirmed his wife's statement that he had left the Australian Department of External Affairs because he could not be made permanent due to preference being given to ex-servicemen.

In August 1957 Milner did go the UK to attend a conference in Cambridge, thereby causing some fluttering in the relevant intelligence dovecotes. Did ASIO want MI5 to invite him to Room 055? If

so, would ASIO provide 'guidance for conduct of interview'? ASIO, however, saw 'little point in interviewing MILNER unless he shows signs of disillusionment and/or settling outside Iron Curtain'. Perhaps as a reaction to the de Wesselow interview with Mrs Milner, ASIO offered to send one of its senior officers to London to conduct the interview should it take place. In the end, MI5 agreed that there should be no interview and Milner proceeded without interruption. Having discovered who he was to visit, MI5 alerted the relevant chief constables and before making the decision not to interview him asked that he be kept under observation. This proved difficult in Oxford, where Milner was due to stay with the New Zealand-born scholar J A W Bennett who lived at Ferry Hinksey in a house well away from the road (Milner and Bennett had shared a house in Oxford in 1937). The local constabulary could not even ascertain that Milner was there, until the milkman was casually questioned and volunteered that the usual quantity of milk delivered to the Bennett house had recently increased.

Mrs Milner was also on the move in 1957, turning up in New Zealand in September when she arranged interviews in Wellington with Alister McIntosh, the head of External Affairs, and Brigadier Gilbert the head of the Security Service. McIntosh politely declined her request for employment. The interview with Gilbert (the SLO in Wellington, Reed, was also present) took place in a private room in the St George Hotel for over two hours on 9 October. Again, the record of the interview occupied nearly four single-spaced foolscap pages, and again it is not necessary for present purposes to dwell on the detail.

Some claims emerged which later turned out to be true. Milner (to whom she was not then speaking) was living with Jarmila Fruhauf, whom he would later marry, their association having begun in New York; and it was she who had suggested in 1950 that Mrs Milner get medical treatment in Czechoslovakia. Mrs Milner now denied ever having been a member of the Communist Party. She was 'visibly shaken' when it was put to her that there was prima facie evidence in the Royal Commission report that Milner had engaged in espionage when in the Australian Department of External Affairs, and was 'similarly shaken' when it was put to her that 'the escape procedure to Czechoslovakia' was in accordance with other cases of defection. She admitted that Jim Hill had been a close personal friend and at one point had been lent their flat in New York. She had seen or was to see old friends in NZ: Bill and Shirley Sutch, Winston Rhodes, James and Jean Bertram, Martin Finlay and Ruth Lake. Gilbert told her that it was likely that she would be interviewed by ASIO in Australia.

Mrs Milner was interviewed by ASIO in Australia, on 16 and 21 October, by Ron Richards, by then the Deputy Director General (Operations) who had debriefed the Petrovs and who was very familiar with Milner's background (see the ASIO file A6119, 343 on line, National Archives of Australia). Before joining ASIO Richards had been a police officer in Western Australia, and his experience manifests itself during the interview, part of which is transcribed. It may be relevant to note that for many interviews where admissions were being sought, MI5 used William Skardon, a retired police officer; but as Ball and Horner point out at 311, his fame greatly exceeded his effectiveness and he 'was really quite inept'. While he got Klaus Fuchs to confess, he had no success with among others Donald Maclean's wife, John Cairncross (the 'fifth man'), Kim Philby and Anthony Blunt - nor with Jim Hill, as noted above. ('His great strength as an interrogator - his ability, as in the case of Fuchs, to gain the confidence of those he questioned - was also his weakness.' Thus Andrew at 429).

In any event, Richards elicited some interesting facts during the interview, notably that Mrs Milner was in New Zealand from September 1945 to May 1946 - the period during which it is known that her husband was supplying classified material to the Soviet Embassy in Canberra. This may account at least in part for her assertions not only that her husband had done nothing wrong, but that she would have known had he done so. Richards concluded from the interview that there was no

available evidence that Mrs Milner knew any of the details of her husband's espionage activities 'except such as have been reported by the Royal Commission'. He made the shrewd observation that had she had such knowledge, it is unlikely that she would have been allowed to leave Czechoslovakia, particularly as her husband on her own account had recently been 'horrid' to her. Richards concluded also that Mrs Milner 'has not broken with communism' and 'is not yet moved by vengeful feelings towards [her husband]', as she had not given up hope of being reconciled with him.

There is no evidence on the MI5 file that a copy or report of the interview was sent to London.

In June 1958, MI5 drew up what it described as 'the gist' of information provided by the MI6 officer in Prague. This was to the effect that Milner had expressed disapproval of the current party line in Czechoslovakia; that he was unpopular at the University and not trusted by his colleagues in the Faculty of English; and that at one time he was considered to be a Czech agent but was now suspected of working for the Americans.

In October 1958 a person identified only as H.D.201, a New Zealand Security Service source, saw the Milners separately in Prague and produced a report, a copy of which is on the MI5 file. He thought that 'MILNER has undergone a considerable change over the last twenty years and is now a much more likeable person. He has lost his arrogance and dogmatism, though he is still ambitious...he expressed a longing to return to New Zealand... In speaking of his security record he persistently protested his innocence. He professed to be in no fear of prosecution if he returned to New Zealand or Australia...His attitude suggested that he was unlikely ever to admit that he had been disloyal to the Australian Government and had aided the enemies of the Western powers...It is suspected that concern for his own safety may well have been behind his move to Czechoslovakia in 1950...'

The source reported regarding Mrs Milner that 'she was convinced that [Milner] had done nothing wrong [pre-1950]...she was bordering on the edge of a nervous breakdown...she has a car and lives in a comfortable flat... which she was only prepared to give up if she was given comparable accommodation'. As the source noted, 'It was not clear how a foreigner, allegedly of no standing, is able successfully to make such a demand'.

The SLO in Australia said in response to the report that 'I do not think that ASIO really want MILNER back in Australia.'

There is nothing further on the files on any substance.

The ASIO and MI5 files contain suggestions that Milner had had legal advice in drawing up his statement, and suspicion fell on Ted Hill, the Melbourne Communist barrister and Jim Hill's brother, who had been in Prague at the relevant time. He might also have been influential in getting Milner to make a statement to aid the comrades back home. If a statement were made, and not contradicted by the authorities, then a propaganda victory would have been won. Such a victory would still have been won had the authorities responded, as they could not have revealed the basis for the allegations made against Milner. (It should be noted that while the FBI was able to conduct successful investigations arising from Venona information, leading to prosecutions, it did so on the basis of confessions while concealing the source of the information used: see Lamphere.)

Similar considerations might have applied to what seems to have been the attitude of ASIO and MI5 towards Milner visiting their countries and the question of interviewing him. Neither was able at that time to show its hand, and there were no lasting signs, if indeed there were ever any, that Milner might change sides. The same applies in reverse to the attitude of the Communist Party and

the relevant authorities in the USSR and Czechoslovakia. They knew at least by 1948 (Andrew 377-8) that Venona had broken the USSR codes and would have inferred that this was what had brought Milner undone. They would also have been directly aware from spies such as Philby that knowledge of Venona would not be made public and was therefore unusable for purposes such as prosecution. Milner might thus leave Czechoslovakia with impunity and be interviewed by MI5 or whoever with similar impunity: the evidence against him would not be produced. Thus did each wilderness of mirrors reflect the other.

To put the events from 1944 onwards in context, the following came out years later, from Czech Ministry of the Interior files, State Security Service (StB), to which the Czech scholar Peter Hruby got access in 1996 and 1997. The following quotations are from those files. The first few entries were clearly made by the KGB.

- 'During his employment in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Australia between 1944 and 1947, Ian Milner transferred to us through third persons valuable materials on political questions' (Hruby, 5);
- while Milner was at the United Nations, 'on 6 March 1949, [he] was won over for co-operation' (6);
- 'in 1950 we received information from the American counterespionage agency [the FBI] about a possible repression against Milner working for us as an agent. Therefore, a decision was made to relocate Milner to one of the people's democracies. In connection with it, under the pretext of his wife's medical treatment and his leave of absence, Milner left for Czechoslovakia where he is now working as a lecturer at Prague University' (6);
- 'On the basis of the services that he provided us with and also because he came to Czechoslovakia on our order, we are supporting him financially since his arrival [in Czechoslovakia] with 25,000 Czech crowns monthly' (7); as a university lecturer he would have been entitled to only 7,000 crowns monthly;
- a 1966 report said of Milner: 'During his stay in [Czechoslovakia], our collaborator was used for reporting on university personnel who had contacts with the USA and Great Britain. Until 1960, his collaboration was valued positively; he submitted a great amount of information on individuals... (a later statement said 'he submitted 110 reports'; Hruby gives a distasteful example of such a report at 34-39); the security authorities nonetheless must have had their doubts about Milner, as they arranged for his correspondence to be censored and his telephone bugged (9);
- 'Until 1959, the collaborator did not leave the country because of concerns of possible repression against him [but see above for Milner's visit to the UK in 1957]. In 1959, he had a short study trip to England, again in 1960, this time with his second wife. According to the brief he submitted, no foreign secret service showed interest in him, and he did not experience any unpleasantness' (12); the files also showed however that when Milner travelled abroad he was assigned targets (18-19);
- 'The co-operation was ended in March 1968 for health reasons' (18)

Hruby also got access to Milner's file at Charles University, which showed that he retired in 1976 on 62% of his salary, which took into account all of his working life, beginning with his employment in New Zealand in 1939-40 (22).

The StB also took an interest in Margot Milner (Hruby 40-44), at one stage considering 'enlisting [her] co-operation', although she does not seem to have taken up the offer. She was followed and her apartment searched. In 1958, she told an agent of her visit to the UK in 1957 and of her interview with de Wesselow; and of her visits to Australia and New Zealand and her interviews there. The files also recorded that during a visit to Prague in 1959, the Melbourne Communist

barrister Ted Hill expressed some concern about Margot, whom he thought knew a great deal about her husband's activities. He was aware that she had been interviewed by the security authorities in three countries, and even knew that Richards had conducted the interview in Australia. The file contained the following : 'Hill revealed that Milner actually transferred some information to our Friends, but there was no proof that could have been used against him in a trial'.

Margot was refused permission to go to England in 1959 and 1960, the security authorities having some apprehension that she was aware of her husband's contacts with them. (So Richards was right - see above: she evidently did not know of Milner's spying activities in Canberra and New York). In fact the records of interviews appear to show that she did not reveal the fact that the Czech security authorities were in touch with *her* (was she asked?). Their interest extended to one of its agents befriending her (Hruby 45-8). Jiri Bartos, recruited March 27 1959, became her friend. She taught him English and allowed him to use her car. Through her he met several people at the British Embassy ('his task', the file recorded, 'was to become friendly on amorous grounds with women employed by the British Embassy'). She also invited him to London but he was not allowed to leave Czechoslovakia.

Finally, Hruby's researches (44-6) showed that Milner's second wife, Jarmila, was - unsurprisingly - also working for the Czech security authorities. She was recruited initially in 1950 by the secret police agent and her lover, Josef Vins, when she was working at the UN Information Office in Prague. She provided the keys to the Office so that the police could copy them and gain access at will. Having been found to be 'not motivated enough', her work for the secret police came to an end in November 1956. It seems more likely than not that either these files were filleted or that there were other files, as her role in Milner's defection is well established - particularly the journey from Switzerland to Czechoslovakia - while her constant accompanying of Milner after their marriage can surely only be explained by her role being that of a minder. Even at his university seminars in New Zealand in 1971, McNeish reported at 334, 'Jarmila was always present'.. 'Jarmila was present whenever he spoke or gave an interview'; and more generally at 408, 'Ian, except when at the university, was seldom out of Jarmila's sight...she was the hidden policeman who monitored everything he did and said'.

What also emerged years later were details of a conversation between Milner's close friend, the Australian historian Manning Clark, Richard Hall, the author of *The Rhodes Scholar Spy*, a biography of Milner, and Professor Desmond Ball. The conversation took place at a funeral in April 1991, not long before Clark died, and was recounted by Ball in a newspaper article in 2011 (details below). Thus:

Clark told Hall that: "What you didn't know was how intimate was Ian Milner's connection with the Communist Party." Clark made it clear not only that he had known that Milner was "a secret member of the party", but also that Milner "had lied about his espionage activities for the KGB".

Clark then gave details - which he had got from Milner - of Milner's whereabouts at the beginning of December 1944, when his father died in New Zealand. He was at 'a secret meeting of the central committee of the Communist Party at Upwey in the Dandenong ranges, about 35km east of Melbourne, where the party maintained weekend camping facilities'. Ball said that he was later able to verify this account 'in various ways', and claims that

This was undoubtedly the occasion on which Milner received his instructions from Clayton about his secret activities. Clayton, in his capacity as "grand vizier" of the party's central

control commission, would have been the organiser of the Upwey meeting, and only Clayton could have invited Milner to the meeting.

Given his history, there is what William Blake would have called a fearful symmetry in the fact that Ian Milner is the father of ASIO: had he not leaked classified documents to the Australian Communist Party and through it to the Soviet Embassy in Canberra and thence to Moscow, the US and UK Governments would not have been sufficiently alarmed in the late 1940s to pressure the Australian Government - via MI5 - to set up a proper security organisation. What happened in New Zealand at that time would have been replicated in Australia. Despite doubts in London about New Zealand security, the New Zealand Security Service was not established until 1956 - seven years after ASIO.

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