

Ref: FO 371/150908

80301

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7. There are two points of interest on the publicity side. First the Government could have released the news about the arrest of the spy ring at any moment during the past three or four months. They chose to do so, however, just when the press was boiling up to a full-blooded campaign about the S.S. Cleopatra incident. The spy ring story effectively relegated the Cleopatra to second place as an item of news interest for some days, although it has now returned to prominence. It is possible that the Government wished to play down the Cleopatra case at least until the American Judge had issued his decision on the injunction, and released the spy story in order to swamp it. Secondly, we have been struck by the inordinate amount of space given to the spy case in the press. For three or four days all papers devoted many full pages to reports of the confessions of the accused, photostats of captured documents, photographs of bottles of invisible ink, etc., and editorials praising the vigilance of the United Arab Republic Intelligence Services. However important the spy ring may have been, it is difficult to understand why it got quite such lavish treatment.

8. The true significance of the spy ring may emerge to some extent during the trial. So far we get the impression that the whole affair has probably been exaggerated. There must be something in the accusations, but some of the evidence adduced seems too good to be true. Equally, we are reliably informed that the Dutchman, who has been represented as the Machiavellian leader of the ring, is in fact a rather stupid and unbalanced person who makes a practice of airing anti-Nasser views at the top of his voice in public places. Dr. Katz is also said to be a highly respected figure in Alexandria society.

9. We are enclosing an extra copy of this letter and are sending copies to the Chanceries at Bonn, Athens, The Hague and P.O.M.E.F.

Yours ever,

CHANCERY. *M.*

*He looks ga-ga*

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*As instructed  
As Maclean  
etc*

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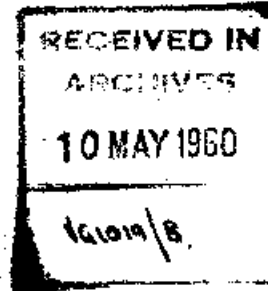


( 14/60)

BRITISH DIPLOMATIC MISSION,

CAIRO.

May 4, 1960.



*By Mr. John,*

With reference to our letter (1014/60) of April 26 about the recent arrests of foreigners and Egyptians on the grounds of alleged spying for Israel, you may be interested in the following.

2. The Netherlands Ambassador told me on May 2nd that he had seen his compatriot Meewis Goudswaard and he was pretty sure that he was guilty. He did not state, however, whether all the accusations against Goudswaard were true, or whether he was the master spy that he has been alleged to be. The Ambassador added that Israeli espionage methods seemed to be pretty inefficient. He also said that until the announcements had been made Goudswaard's treatment by the police had been extremely good.
3. The Ambassador went on to say that he was quite satisfied there would be no trouble from the Dutch unions over a boycott of U.A.R. ships. They would only have to be asked whether they wished to put a rope around the neck of their compatriot.
4. When I saw the Italian Counsellor last night I asked him about the Italians involved in the spy trials. I said I understood the Dutchman was thought to be guilty. Was this the case with the Italians too? Senor Orlandi said the Dutchman had confessed and he had denounced a number of the other people involved. He was not therefore very popular. As for one of the Italians - he did not specify which - it appears that he was in Italy when he received a telegram from Cairo asking him to return to give the department for which he formerly worked some advice. The telegram said his ticket would be available at the Misrair office and he would not need a visa. The man duly picked up his ticket and was arrested on arrival in Cairo.
5. This would hardly seem to indicate a guilty conscience. Moreover, the man had been a fascist and had supported the Germans after Mussolini's fall. At the end of the War he had escaped to Egypt. It seemed more likely, therefore, that he would be anti rather than pro-Jewish. Senor Orlandi thought, however, that he might have agreed to provide information about Russian technicians out of hatred of communism.

/s.

J.G.S. Beith, Esq., C.M.G.,  
Levant Department,  
Foreign Office.

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- 2 -

6. The German Embassy, on the other hand, have told us that they do not think that Dr. Fritz Katz is guilty. Katz, a Jew who is said to have been in Egypt since about 1932, is a bon viveur and was often to be seen, we are told, in Cairo and Alexandria society. Two things tell against him. First, he has undoubtedly been in touch with Israel, for he has a sister there whom he has been in the habit of meeting in Europe most summers. Secondly, he does not deny that when in Zurich he saw a person named Glaser, or something such, whom the Egyptian Intelligence think is an Israeli "spy-master", and put him in touch with Rizk, one of the Egyptian accused. Katz maintains, however, that as far as he was concerned this was a simple business introduction; and the German Embassy say that one of the judges has given them some reason to hope that the charges against Katz may not be pressed.

*Y. com.*

*Orin.*

~~(C. P. Crowe)~~

CONFIDENTIAL

SAME FILE IN 1959.

**V**  
 LEVANT DEPARTMENT  
 ARAB REPUBLIC

**V** G.1019/1.

FROM *from Graham Hall, the Society of Labour Lawyers*  
 No.  
 Dated *January 9.*  
 Received *January 20.*

SUBJECT: **EGYPT**  
*The Egyptian Political Prisoners Defence Committee has asked the Society of Labour Lawyers to send out an observer to the trials in Alexandria*

References

MINUTES

- 1. Please send journal act.*
- 2. Could I.R.D. please advise on the standing of the 2 bodies concerned. Is this more Curial manoeuvring?*

(Printing Instructions)  
 150908 ~~151578~~

*V. Div. for 1.*  
*I.R.D. for 2.*

(Outward Action)  
*Sold. Jan 25*  
*Soc. Society of Labour Lawyers*

The Society of Labour Lawyers is, of course, a most worthy body, as its letter heading suggests. It was formed about ten years ago by Sir Stafford Cripps and other socialist lawyers who wished to found a respectable, left-wing competitor to the fellow-travelling Haldane Society (another lawyers' organisation). This request for information should therefore be sympathetically treated.

(Action completed)	(Main Indexed)
<i>9.2.59</i>	<i>8.6.59</i>

The Egyptian Political Prisoners' Defence Committee has its headquarters in Paris. Its London representative Y. Amin, is operating from the Headquarters of the League for Democracy in Greece, 376 Gray's Inn Road; although its President is Sir Compton Mackenzie, an L.D.S. is a Communist front organisation. The Egyptian Political Prisoners' Defence Committee prints about 11 arrests and trials of the Egyptian Communists as usually publicised by Communist sources, and a Daily Worker has been Leipzig this campaign.

*R. Ewell - 4/2*

Number of copies.....  
 Number of copies of enclosures.....

(*Mr. Carless*)  
 I have discussed with Mr. Vallat~~t~~ and agreed that the best course is to write a ~~letter~~ *brief* letter on the lines of the attached draft, but omitting any reference to Communist front activities in case the letter were to be made use of in any way which would later cause us embarrassment. At the same time I would telephone the Hon. Secretary of the Society of Labour Lawyers and explain that in fact interest in the Egyptian trials of Communists is being exploited by Communist front organisations and the Communist ~~members~~ *press*. They can then draw their own conclusions.

If this is agreed I will <sup>to</sup> proceed.

*R. Arculus*  
 (R. Arculus)

I agree.  
*W. H. ...*  
 5/2.

*W. H. ...*  
 Feb 5

*Miss Hall took the point.  
 Draft to issue, soon.  
 H 42.*

A). Miss J. Graham Hall, Society of Labour Lawyers.  
 February 19.  
*H 22/2.*  
 1 R D <sup>all</sup> 29/2

# THE SOCIETY OF LABOUR LAWYERS

PRESIDENT: THE RT. HON. EARL ATTLEE, O.M., C.H.

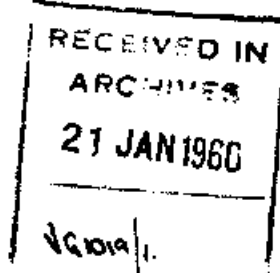
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ASST. SECRETARY:  
R. J. LOWRY

HON. SECRETARY:  
JEAN GRAHAM HALL  
TO WHOM ALL CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD  
BE ADDRESSED  
AT 8, KING'S BENCH WALK, TEMPLE, E.C.4.  
(TELEPHONE: CENTRAL 2801)

19th February, 1960

The Under Secretary,  
Foreign Office,  
Downing St.,  
S.W.1.



7 January

Dear Sir,

My Society has been approached by an organisation calling itself The Egyptian Political Prisoners Defence Committee asking us to send an observer to trials of political prisoners, which are being held in Egypt, the most recent being at Alexandria on 17th December, in camera before General Hilal Abdallah Hilal's State Security Tribunal.

Unfortunately, we are not properly informed about this organisation, or about the trials.

Our informants allege some breaches of procedure of the minimum requirements of a fair trial. We are always anxious to help or do anything we can to secure a fair trial wherever this may be needed. We would welcome information which you could give us to assist us in deciding what action, if any, we should take.

Yours faithfully,  
Hon. Secretary.

*Jean Graham Hall*

Registry No. *4210/1*

+0. *9/12*  
*9/11*

Top Secret  
 Secret  
 Confidential  
 Restricted  
 Open

*h*  
*3.2*

*Draft* letter

*The Society of  
 Labour Lawyers,  
 9, King's Bench  
 Walk,  
 Temple,  
 E.C.4.*

*Discussed  
 with Mr.  
 Vallat M.R.D.*

*Please see  
 minute on  
 jacket.*

*Shirley  
 5/4.*

Madam,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary-Lloyd to refer to your letter of January 19 about <sup>a</sup> trials of political prisoners in Alexandria. Nothing about this trial has appeared in the Egyptian Press. Foreign correspondents have ~~not~~ not been allowed to send reports and have not been able to obtain information. Apparently the accused were charged with being members of the Communist Party. It is understood that the Egyptian Political Prisoner Defence Committee operates from Paris.

I am, etc.,

*WJ*  
*FVH 5*

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

RECEIVED IN  
 DIVISION  
 -9 FEB 1960  
 SENT TO BY *9.8.60.*  
 BY *9.8.60.*

*United Nations Dept  
 Levant Dept.*

Parliamentary Question

440 \* 59 Dr. Alan Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if he will instruct the United Kingdom delegate on the Peace Observation Commission of the United Nations to inquire about the extent to which the propaganda activities of ex-Nazis now residing in Egypt are contributing to international tension.

*29.2.60*

*L.A.  
 Dumfries  
 Douglas*

ANSWERED 29 FEB 1960  
 REPLY ATTACHED.



1-MAR 1960  
*103/4*

Dr. Thompson has obviously introduced mention of the Peace Observation Commission merely in order to get his question on to the Order Paper. United Nations Department would not expect him to concentrate on the activities (or rather inactivity) of the Commission on any Supplementary Questions.

2. The Peace Observation Commission was established by the General Assembly in 1950 as part of the machinery which is known generally as "Uniting for Peace". There are 14 members (including the 5 permanent members of the Security Council). Briefly, the Commission

- (a) may be used by the General Assembly (or the Interim Committee when the Assembly is not in session) provided that the Security Council is not acting in the matter; it may also be used by the Security Council itself;
- (b) will go to a country only on that country's invitation or with its permission;
- (c) can appoint subsidiary bodies and observers.

It is not therefore possible for H.M.G. to instruct the U.K. Representative on the Commission to raise a matter; such an initiative would have to be taken at a meeting of the Security Council or by calling a session of the General Assembly. Moreover, the Commission has no power to investigate on the ground without the consent or permission of the Government of the U.A.R.

3. Dr. Thompson is clearly interested in the recent anti-Semitic campaign, to which he insinuates that ex-Nazis in Egypt have contributed. There are in fact some former Nazis in Egypt, who are doubtless useful to the Egyptians in e.g. military and propaganda capacities, but there is no evidence that they indulge in any significant political activity or that they have been active in the recent outbursts of anti-Semitism. We should not however go into this in our answer, since it would be construed as interference in the affairs of the U.A.R.

4. I submit a draft reply and notes for supplementaries concerted with U.N. Department and Western Department.

*J. G. S. Beith*  
 (J. G. S. Beith)  
 February 26, 1960.  
*W. B. Stevens*  
 26/2.



V

LEVANT DEPARTMENT

VG. 1019/7.

1960

FROM Idancay, Jain to  
 Levant Department.  
 Confidential.  
 No. 1014/60.  
 Dated April 26.  
 Received April 28.

SUBJECT:  
 Israeli spying in the U.A.R.  
 Press - summary of details as revealed by the press since April 21.

References  
 VR 1074/33 (60).  
 VG 1014/19.

MINUTES  
 Copy J.I.B.  
 The U.A.R. are obviously playing this up for propaganda purposes, probably both internal and external. As the reports on President Nasser's visits to India and Pakistan showed, he is anxious to enhance his standing at home. At present, any stick that can be used to beat the Israelis is being applied. As Mr. Crowe pointed out elsewhere this may make it more difficult to get Zerb out, though this is not necessarily so.

(Printing Instructions)

POSD (Mr. Day)  
 17/5  
 (R. Arculus)  
 April 29, 1960.

(Outward Action)  
 [Copied to J.I.B. on 29/4/60]

There has also been some mention in press reports of an Englishman "Peter" in Rome being involved (in what Mr. Day's comment on this).  
 2. The Israel Embassy has been received instruction from Jerusalem to say, in reply to press and other enquiries, that there is no truth in any of the Cairo allegations (not surprising).

(Action completed)	(Main indexed)
12.5.60	JH 8.61 84-

24/12  
 29/12  
 18/10

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BRITISH DIPLOMATIC MISSION,  
CAIRO.

April 26, 1960.

(1014/60).

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Department,

Would you please refer to paragraph 5 of Cairo telegram No. 49 Saving about the Israeli spy ring operating in the United Arab Republic. (This is, incidentally, the same affair which we reported in Cairo telegram No. 482 of November 21, 1959). *VR1074/33(5a)*

2. The following is a summary of the details as revealed by the press since April 21.

3. Ten United Arab Republic nationals and six foreigners have been arrested. The United Arab Republic nationals include mechanics in the United Arab Republic Air Force, an ex-pilot of Misrair and a lawyer. The foreigners consist of a Dutchman, Meewis Goudswaard, a German, Dr. Katz, two Italians (the Manager of a hotel in Alexandria and one other), and two Greeks (a waiter in one of Cairo's leading restaurants and a shop assistant). Goudswaard is a Dutch businessman who has lived in Alexandria and Cairo on and off for some years. Dr. Katz is the head surgeon at an Alexandria hospital. He is said to be a Jew.

4. According to the press the United Arab Republic Intelligence Services have been on the track of this spy ring for three years; arrests began late last year and the State Security Prosecution authorities have just completed a six months investigation of the case. The Intelligence Services are said to have penetrated the spy ring and to have passed false information through it to the Israeli authorities.

5. Houses and offices of the accused have been raided and equipment such as invisible ink, cameras, developing equipment, and wireless transmitters and receivers have been seized.

6. The accused are alleged to have been in contact with Israeli agents in Europe particularly in Rome and Geneva and to have been supplying information about the political and economic situation in the United Arab Republic, United Arab Republic relations with Russia and details of port installations, naval movements, airports, ammunition dumps and factories, and general military intelligence. The trial is due to begin on May 7 and the prosecution has demanded the death penalty for nine of the accused, including the Dutchman, the two Italians and the two Greeks. A confused story has also emerged that the Greek waiter was under orders to try to poison President Nasser.

/7.

Levant Department,  
FOREIGN OFFICE,  
LONDON, S.W.1.

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