

' 11 Nov '82

The Daily Telegraph, Thursday

ian target**PAYMENTS
BY KGB
ONLY****PIN-MONEY**

PRIME betrayed his country's secrets to the Russians for virtual pin-money in world espionage terms.

In 14 years as a traitor he was only paid a total of just over £8,000.

British Intelligence sources point out that Prime's miserly rewards back up his story that he got sucked into the top stream of espionage activities for ideological reasons.

His biggest payment, £4,000, would appear to have been made on his last visit behind the Iron Curtain, to Potsdam, almost exactly a year ago, when he was closely questioned about top secret Allied activities.

£400 sweeteners

His other payments, if his account is to be believed, were rarely more than £600 or £700. His first sweetener in 1968 was a mere £400.

He was usually paid on his trips to the Eastern Bloc, but according to him, he also collected cash at secret hiding places, once near a lake in Esher, and another time at a pick up point near Banstead Station, Surrey.

**TRIPS ABROAD
FOR MASTERS**

PRIME, codenamed Rowlands by the Russians, was first recruited by the KGB in 1968, while he served in the RAF in Berlin.

He made regular trips behind the Iron Curtain for debriefing sessions, his last journey being to East Germany only a year ago.

In 1975, just after he had been briefed by his employers to receive fresh high security classification, he attended a series of meetings in Vienna when he passed over photographic material

**Quiet 'loner' who
enjoyed football
and his family**

By ALAN COPPS

THE public face of Geoffrey Prime was that of a quiet family man. He doted on his three stepsons, aged 10, 14 and 15.

He enjoyed football matches and was something of an ace at crosswords.

His fascination with the Russian language and culture was obvious, but he rarely talked about politics and never discussed his work at GCHQ.

His taxi-driver colleagues called him a loner.

His home was a neat, modern detached house in a quiet lane behind one of Cheltenham's gracious crescents.

The front door of Laburnum Cottage in Pittville Crescent Lane, is the kind of modest facade behind which many secrets are stored in the Cotswold Spa, where at least one in 10 of the working population is employed at GCHQ.

In the years he lived there Prime made few close friends, but one man who got to know him better than most was fellow-driver Mr Glynn Priday, 32.

Computer tape

After Prime left GCHQ in 1977 he first worked for a company called Cheltax, a firm which still has a contract to transport computer tape from the Cheltenham bases to various destinations.

When two years later a dozen Cheltax drivers decided to set up their own company Prime and Mr Priday were among the leaders.

"We used him as a secretary, because we could pick his brains to write letters. He was very good with words," said Mr Priday. "There is no way he was a communist. He liked making money too much."

Prime put in a lot of work to help set up the co-operative called A 2 B taxis, but he did not socialise with the other members.

Chat and coffee

"The rest of the blokes would get out of their cars and come into the office for a chat and some coffee. But not Geoffrey, his car was his world

appeared as an exhibit at the Old Bailey.

At other times he would ask for evenings off so he could drive to London for Russian films or other cultural events?

"He said he'd left GCHQ because of the pressure of work. He got fed up with going to the same place day after day. He said he liked the freedom of being a taxi driver."

Geoffrey Prime left A 2 B taxis after a dispute over plans to turn it into a limited company. In November 1981 he went to work for a German wine company based in Bristol.

The shock of Prime's arrest was as great for his family as for his former colleagues.

Prime was born on Feb. 21, 1938. His father, Mr George Prime was described as a copper wire drawer of Humble Bec Bank, Alton, near Stoke on Trent.

He has two brothers. Mr Vincent Prime, the younger, a council roadsweeper, who still lives near Stoke, has not seen Geoffrey for about 20 years. Mr George Prime, the second brother, is a joiner at Blythe

Bridge, near Stoke. His sister lives in Uttoxeter, Staffs.

Geoffrey Prime went to the village church school until he was 14 and then to St Joseph's Roman Catholic Secondary School in Trent Vale, Stoke.

Language course

At 18 he entered national service with the RAF and was persuaded to make it his career. After serving in Kenya he was selected for a Russian language course at RAF Leuchars in Fife, where he also studied German.

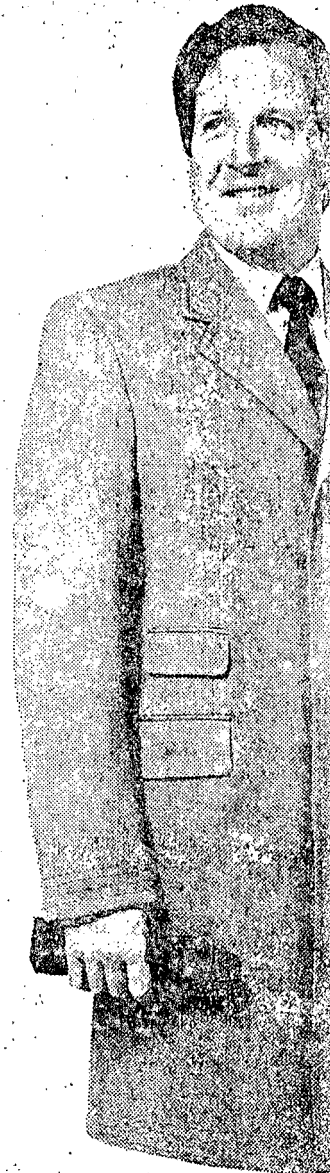
He qualified from that course in May, 1964, and the following month was posted to classified work at RAF Gatow in West Berlin. In 1966 he was promoted to corporal and in 1968 to sergeant.

It was while he was in Berlin, shortly before he left the RAF that he made his contact with the Russians.

In 1969 he was married for the first time to Miss Helena Organ in London when he was

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Repercussions of Prime's treachery may never be known

THE full scale of the damage Geoffrey Prime's treachery has done to Western intelligence will never be fully known.

But the "incalculable harm" of which the Lord Chief Justice spoke yesterday has possibly come closer to driving a rift between the United States and British intelligence services than any other known security leak.

For an enormous and vital proportion of all Western intelligence passes through GCHQ, which works in close co-operation with the American National Security Agency.

Mr Caspar Weinberger, American Secretary of Defence said the Cheltenham breach of Security was "serious but not catastrophic."

Privately at least one senior British official has said that the Prime case is nothing short of a "disaster" for the intelligence services.

The Americans are said to be angry that Britain has not yet provided a full assessment of the harm caused by Prime, although there have been assurances on this side of the Atlantic that Cheltenham is low thought clear of moles.

Advanced translator

Prime worked his way up to the most senior rank of Advanced Linguist Specialist, and became a section head. His job was to transcribe and translate Soviet communications intercepted by both British and American satellites and ground stations around the world.

Much of the information arrives in code and has to be put through Cheltenham's huge and highly-sophisticated decoding computers before reaching the hands of translators.

In his position, Prime would have been able to report to the Soviets not only which of their communications were being monitored, but his information would also reveal which of their codes had been broken.

In response, the Soviets could have done no things:

SHIFT the frequency or method of transmission to avoid interception, or

TRANSMIT misleading information, thus giving Western agencies a false basis for further action.

By ALAN COPPS

TIMES as saying: "You can never tell for sure what led the Russians to change encryption systems or switch to different channels. It's what you don't know in a case like this that scares you most."

That view was echoed by one British expert who had been involved in security at Cheltenham. "Prime would know the targets and the means of listening, possibly even the base from where communications were being monitored. That information is invaluable to the Soviets."

Crucial negotiations

When Prime's potential knowledge is set against the background of Western-Soviet relations during his time at GCHQ, the reasons for alarm are clear.

His career began at a time of extreme tension following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and lasted throughout the years of detente which included a series of crucial arms negotiations.

In drawing up negotiating positions at such conferences, the kind of intelligence gathered at Cheltenham would play a vital part—as it would in many other major foreign policy decisions on both sides of the Atlantic.

The talks which took place during Prime's employment included the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties, the Helsinki conference on European Security and Cooperation with all its implications for human rights and economic collaboration, and the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks aimed at reducing the level of conventional weapons in Europe.

A report in the WASHINGTON Post last month said Prime was thought to have passed on to the Soviets the locations of all British and US nuclear war-

might make the Americans more circumspect in their personal dealings with British agents.

An American intelligence expert said the episode had not destroyed the trust and the valuable working relationship that had been built up over the years.

However, there is concern that publicity over the issue and rumours of a split between the two espionage services could become a hot political issue in the United States with some congressmen using it to urge that the CIA and the NSA should not share their most sensitive secrets with Britain.

Such pressure would cause some bitter feelings, but in the long run is unlikely to succeed. For one thing, Cheltenham's specialised computers have the capacity to decode some information beyond the range of their American equivalents.

In addition, GCHQ has access to intercepts from some listening posts which the U.S., despite its satellite technology, would find difficult to replace.

The Senate Intelligence Committee was briefed on the case soon after Prime's arrest and is still trying to determine how serious the damage is.

But because of the laws which forbid publication of evidence in this country, the American public has until now been told far more about the implications of the case.

In July, following Prime's arrest, Mrs Thatcher made a brief statement in the Commons which gave only the barest details. She did say, however, that any security issues arising as a result would be referred to the Security Commission.

Panel reconstituted

She also said it was impossible to say with absolute certainty whether any other people were likely to be charged. Further evidence would be considered by the Director of Public Prosecutions in the normal way.

Several MPs on both sides of the House put down questions about security when the case first broke. But for one reason or another none was answered.

One comparatively minor change in the security procedure has however been linked with the case, mainly because of its timing last month just as the most alarming reports were coming out in America.

The three members of the Civil Service security appeals panel—Sir Richard Powell, 73, Sir Clifford Jarrett, 73, and Sir Richard Hayward, 72—were asked to resign.

Mr Justice Lloyd, 53, a High Court judge, was appointed as chairman and will serve with

The silent mole who changed the face of treason

THE fact that the treachery of Geoffrey Prime is regarded on both sides of the Atlantic with such seriousness, illustrates the dramatic way espionage has changed in the electronic age.

Prime had access to the vast files of Comint (Communications Intelligence) which flow into Cheltenham daily.

Comint replaced Humint (Human Intelligence) gathered by agents on the ground, as the staple fodder of the security services.

He was a quiet mole, listening to tapes and leafing through transcripts day after day in a leafy Georgian town.

His patient life was a sharp contrast to the action-man image of James Bond or the intellectual subversion of career diplomats like Philby, Maclean, Burgess and Blunt.

The scale of evesdropping is enormous. It includes monitoring of coded diplomatic and military messages, the recording of radio telephone and telex calls and the interception of microwave communications.

The Government Communications Headquarters at Cheltenham known as GCHQ, works jointly with its American counterpart the National Security Agency (NSA) based at Fort Meade, Maryland.

Army of linguists

Between them the two agencies have access to information from all over the world and they work in close partnership with similar agencies in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Nato countries.

To decipher all this information GCHQ employs a virtual army of linguists. About 8,000 people, almost one-tenth of Cheltenham's population work there.

GCHQ first moved to Cheltenham after the war and until 1976 was hardly ever mentioned in public. Then two journalists, Mr Mark Hosenball, an American, and Mr Duncan Campbell, who still specialises in intelligence matters for the



Sir Brian Tovey.

about GCHQ in 1978, Mr Campbell was tried under the Official Secrets Act and acquitted in a controversial case which was known as the ABC trial.

One of its most vocal current critics has been Mr Alex Lawrie, a Labour member of Gloucestershire County Council, who worked there for 22 years as a language specialist. He retired early a year go after being warned by security officers about breaking the civil service rule about speaking in public about his department.

His offence centred on speaking out at a meeting of the Fabian Society about GCHQ's lack of accountability.

Although the centre's official budget is listed in millions of pounds, even conservative estimates put its real expenditure at hundreds of millions most of which is "laundered" through the Defence Ministry and the Foreign Office.

During the time that Prime worked at GCHQ the centre had two directors. The first, Sir Leonard Hooper, was in charge from 1965-73 following a career in the Foreign Office and Defence Ministry. After leaving the communications base he spent five years as a deputy Secretary in the Cabinet Office

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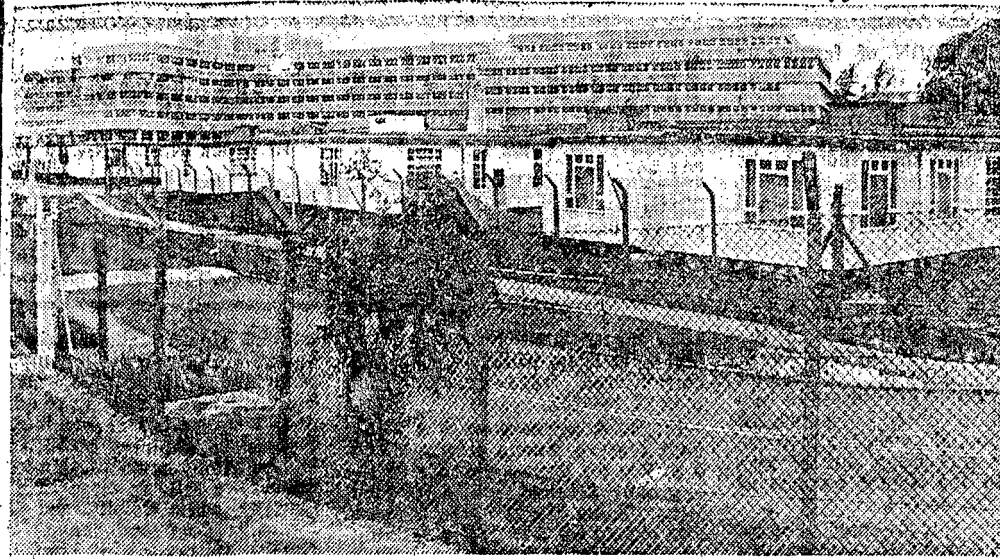
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The Government communications headquarters at Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

How he slipped through the net

GEOFFREY PRIME'S incredible secret life was allowed to continue for 14 years because he twice survived positive vetting — the procedure designed to protect against infiltration.

When she makes her Commons statement on the case today Mrs Thatcher is certain to face the fiercest demands yet for a thorough review of the system.

Only earlier this year the latest security review reported that positive vetting had worked well over the past 30 years and recommended a reduction in the number of senior posts subject to the procedure.

Yet in his confession, Prime admitted that he first felt the psychological problems which led him to become a Soviet agent when he was serving with the RAF in Berlin.

Neither that feeling nor the fact that a sexual attack by a male relative during his unhappy childhood had left him with feelings of sexual inadequacy prevented him from passing the positive vetting procedure when he joined GCHQ in 1968.

Mr George Carman revealed at the Old Bailey that in 1972 while engaged on sensitive work in London, Prime suffered from severe depression and was referred by his doctor for treatment by a consultant psychiatrist.

Sudden decision

Yet again in 1974 he passed positive vetting.

MPs will also want to know why no investigation was prompted by his sudden decision to quit GCHQ in 1977, just a year after being promoted to the rank of section head, in which he dealt with matters of the utmost secrecy.

A process of deindustrialisation

Ministers are already considering whether the vetting system should be changed. This follows a report from Lord Bridge, chairman of the Security Commission, who inquired into the case of Commander Michael Trestrail, the Queen's Police Officer who resigned in July after admitting a relationship with a male prostitute.

That report, together with any recommended improvements, may be published later this month.

The vetting system at Cheltenham, as at any other civil service establishment works on two basic levels. The "normal vetting" applied to those dealing with information up to the "confidential" level relies principally upon the information an individual gives when first employed, backed by checks for criminal records and so on.

Thorough check

But "positive vetting" applied to those such as Prime dealing with "secret" and "top secret" information is a much more thorough check. The individual will have an interview with a security officer, answer a long questionnaire about political views and out-of-hours activities, and have to provide two referees who will also be interviewed.

In addition, security officers may approach friends, neighbours and even the subject's family. The clearance of those subject to positive vetting should be reviewed every five years, although there is evidence that because of the number of staff employed at Cheltenham and a shortage of security officers it did not take place so frequently.

One former employee who served for more than 20 years could recall only two reviews during his service.

Ironically, since Prime's arrest the Civil Service Commission has advertised in this newspaper for security officers

at least 40, have served in the police at the rank of detective inspector or above or have already been investigating officers in the Civil Service.

One former security officer at Cheltenham pointed out that however carefully this positive vetting procedure was followed, if an individual had a bizarre sexual taste, had never been caught in an illegal act and did not talk about his perversion to others, then there was no way he would show up as a risk.

Some intelligence experts argue that the introduction of psychological tests might be more reliable in showing up such potential risks.

But this would increase still further the time needed before a possible recruit was given clearance to work in a sensitive post.

As it is the current vetting procedure may take months and security officials admit that many potentially worthy recruits are lost because they become impatient and turn to other sources of employment.

The vetting and review system is reinforced by internal spying carried out by department heads who are briefed to check on employees who appear to have too much money, or appear to be short of cash through gambling or any other activity or who "show an excessive interest in members of the opposite sex."

This system was introduced in the 1970s to prevent "moles" developing.

But employees admit that because sections are small and loyalties between staff and department heads are strong such reports are rarely made. Instead, the heads are likely to make superficial checks and file routine reports to keep the security men happy.

An added complication is the tension which frequently manifests itself between the civilian

Prime link ruled out in deaths at secrets base

From Our Correspondent, Cheltenham

The Government secrets base at the centre of the Geoffrey Prime spying scandal has broken its silence for the first time over the deaths of two workers there.

Sir Brian Tovey, the director of the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), Cheltenham, where Mr Prime spied for the Russians has told the 7,000 staff that there was no connexion between his activities and the deaths of Mr Jack Wolfenden, aged 56, a telephone expert, in July, and of Mr Ernest Brockway, aged 42, a radio operator, last month.

In an internal memorandum Sir Brian said: "Their deaths have been the subject of considerable interest and speculation by the media largely because of the conviction last month of Geoffrey Arthur Prime under the Official Secrets Act."

Sir Brian said that the implications behind the speculation has been that their deaths were connected with the Prime affair.

"I want all staff to be aware of the Prime Minister's statement on the matter on December 1 - that there was no reason to suspect they were anything other than loyal trustworthy

citizens and that neither had any reason to think they were under suspicion".

Sir Brian added: "GCHQ deplored the distress and suffering caused to the families of both men by various statements no doubt made in good faith."

The secrets base spokesman, Mr Donald Chidgey said that it was unusual to make any comment about GCHQ affairs but the decision had been taken because of the unusual nature of recent events.

Mr Wolfenden died when he crashed a powered glider into a Cotswold hillside in July - 12 days after Mr Prime was charged. An inquest in Cheltenham in September decided the death was accidental.

Mr Brockway was found hanged in his home in Fleckers Drive, Cheltenham last month. This renewed speculation about a connexion with Mr Prime but at an inquest last week at which a suicide verdict was recorded, Mr Brockway's solicitor, Mr David Leahy issued a statement saying that there was none.

An investigation by security services is still going on at the base, the hub of Britain's eavesdropping operation.

Polish leader muzzles communist hardliners

From Roger Boyes, Warsaw

The Polish authorities, acting swiftly before the expected suspension this month of martial law, have decided to close down the main outlet for hardline communist sentiment in the country and have launched a major reshuffle in the top echelons of television and radio.

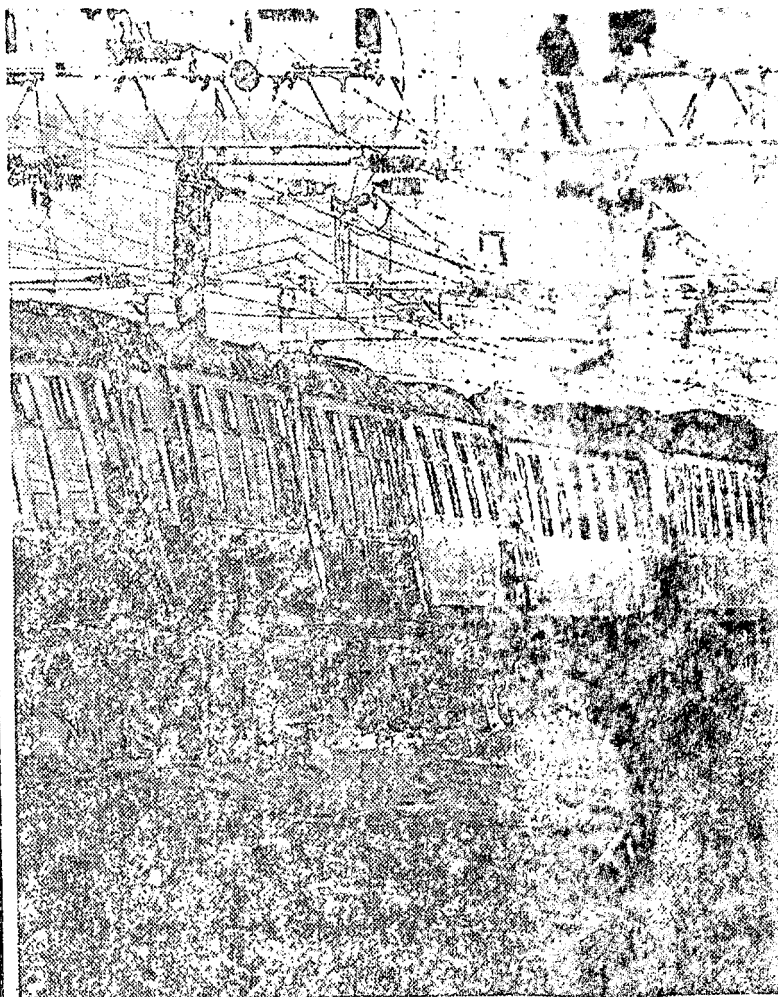
The moves are aimed at avoiding outbursts from party dogmatists in the sensitive months that will follow the suspension. They are also designed to make the propaganda machine produce a more credible message of cooperation for Poles.

Mr Ignacy Kacicki, the press spokesman of the hardline "reality" clubs, told *The Times* a decision to

highly critical of General Jaruzelski's leadership.

Sources in the television and radio headquarters said Mr Wladyslaw Loranc, the president, had submitted his resignation. The new line advocated by Mr Jan Glowczyk, the propaganda chief close to General Jaruzelski, is that television should not pretend that problems do not exist - and then advocate socialist solutions in a more forceful way.

Meanwhile Archbishop Jozef Glemp, the Polish Primate, is finding that his line of cautious conciliation with the Government is antagonizing many rank and file priests. A meeting with some 200 priests this week produced a number of critical

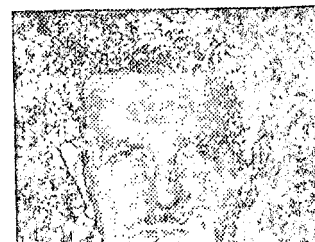


Driver dies in night sleeper crash

By Judy Foreman

The driver of a London-to-Glasgow express train was killed and his co-driver and one passenger were injured shortly after 2 am yesterday. A steel rail that had fallen from an earlier engineering train caused the express to be derailed outside Linslade tunnel, just north of Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire.

About 120 passengers, including a party of 24 schoolchildren aged between 15 and 18, who were returning from an educational trip to Boulogne to the Guilsborough County School in Northamptonshire, escaped unharmed.



The express, travelling at 75mph, was tilted by the derailment and, although the brakes were applied immediately, it hit the bridge continuing along the track for several hundred yards. Eleven of the train's 12 coaches were derailed.

Professor Sir John Walton, aged 60, an eminent neurologist and former president of the British Medical Association crawled through the back of the driver's cab immediately after the crash, and found Mr Plummer dead. Sir John then checked and calmed the passengers before leaving the scene, asking that his identity should not be revealed.

From their home in Gosforth, near Newcastle, his wife, Lady Walton, said yesterday, "He was on his way to Glasgow to give a lecture at the hospital. He told me it was absolutely surprising there were so few casualties considering the damage."

Mr William aged 46, of Barkby,

Man

had a railway years ago. Camber. His Hewitt, north "comf. Dunsta been fo tracks joined I