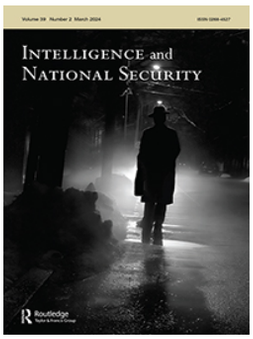

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Alan Burton

ABSTRACT

During the inter-war period, there appeared numerous spy memoirs, offering surprising insights into the recently fought secret war. These had a noticeable impact on the writing of spy stories, which under the influence of new detail and knowledge tended to become more realistic. The following article examines the influence of spy memoirs on spy fiction in the period, revealing that both critics and the reading public were now forced to disentangle fact from fakery and trying to pinpoint where truth bled into fiction. Attention is given to the three 'spy memoirs' of Bernard Newman, *Spy* (1935), *Secret Servant* (1935) and *German Spy* (1936). These unjustly forgotten works of fiction disguised as fact generated some confusion and debate at the time and served to draw attention to issues of authenticity when treating 'writers in intelligence'.

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Prelude

> 'Was there any British intelligence officer who in the last war answered to the description of Mr Bernard Newman, veritably a king among patriotic spies?' A.J. Cummings. 'Sensational Story of an English Spy'. *News Chronicle*, 18 February, 1935

In February 1940, the famous Foyle's bookshop in London held one of its celebrated literary luncheons. Devoted to 'Secret Service', it boasted three illustrious spies of the Great War: the Briton Sir Paul Dukes, the German Capt. Franz von Rintelen, and the Russian Col. Victor Kaledin. The event was to have been presided over by E. Phillips Oppenheim, the doyen figure of British spy story writers. However, unable to travel from his French home due to wartime difficulties, a suitable substitute was found in Bernard Newman, an up-and-coming writer of popular spy fiction who had caused a stir with his first novel *Spy* in 1935.[1] Dukes, von Rintelen and Kaledin had all published notable memoirs of their espionage activities and were, to a greater or lesser extent, public figures.[2] Newman claimed some experience of intelligence during service on the Western Front, thus positioning himself as an author-spy, and went on to pastiche the memoir form with a trilogy of spy stories in the mid-1930s, and later developed this approach in the novels *Maginot Line Murder* and *Death to the Spy* (1939), which continued to feature the author-spy, now working alongside the veteran French counter-intelligence officer Papa Pontivy against the Nazis.[3]

The luncheon with its principal guests and speakers shone some light on the public history of espionage as it stood by the time of the Second World War. Moreover, the happy accident of having Bernard Newman reside over affairs brought into consideration the slippery relationship of espionage fact with spy fiction. The memoir had become an established form of writing about secret agentry in the inter-war period. Such recollections were a significant and valuable source for writers of spy stories, and the unsubstantiated nature of the material meant that

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distinguishing fact from fiction was a tricky business for readers. The following article will examine the emergence of the spy memoir and the uncertain boundaries between truth and fiction in writing about espionage in the 1930s. A particular focus will be devoted to Bernard Newman, a new-style writer of spy stories who artfully exploited the ambiguity inherent to writing about a secret world.

Introduction

> 'A good deal of espionage literature has been written as a consequence of the Great War'. Review of Maj. Georges Ladoux's *Marthe Richard, the Skylark. Edinburgh Evening News*, 2 November, 1932.

It will long remain a mystery to science as to how Bernard Newman (1897–1968) accomplished so much in his life. Full-time civil servant, intrepid traveller, prolific author, lecturer, broadcaster, and noted authority on espionage, Newman never seemed to slacken in his diverse endeavours over a period of 40 years. *Round About Andorra*, his first travel book, appeared in 1928. With *In the Trail of the Three Musketeers* (1934), Newman virtually invented a new travel genre, setting off to explore foreign parts on his trusty bicycle 'George' and publishing his experiences. Numerous other cycle tours followed and appeared with such titles as *Pedalling Poland* (1935), *Cycling in France (Northern)* (1936) and *Ride to Russia* (1938). Newman became well known as a writer, lecturer and broadcaster, recounting his varied adventures on 'George', publishing his last travel book as *Turkey and the Turks* in 1968.[4]

Also resulting from these extensive travels were a series of books discussing contemporary political problems, beginning with *Danger Spots of Europe* in 1938. These further demonstrated Newman's keen interest in regions and their peoples, and the many perplexing contemporary issues with which countries grappled, material that could be put to good use in his spy fiction. In the course of his travels and research for his 'Background' books, Newman met many world leaders and prominent individuals, including Adolf Hitler, President Roosevelt, Marshall Tito, King Zog of Albania, the Czech leaders Jan Masaryk and Edvard Beneš, the Polish military and political leader Władysław Sikorski, General Douglas MacArthur, Mahatma Gandhi, Paul Robeson (in Russia), Nelson Mandela (in gaol in South Africa) and Walt Disney. His travel stories were the subject of popular broadcasts on BBC radio and television, which he commenced in the later 1930s.[5]

The indefatigable Newman also tried his hand at fiction, where he similarly broke new ground. His counter-historical *The Cavalry Went Through* caused a stir in 1930: in this he rewrote the history of the final period of the Great War, showing how a considered use of the tank could have brought victory for the allies in 1917. The novel caught the imagination of military thinkers in several countries and was favourably reviewed and later cited in his own writing by Britain's leading strategist Basil Liddell Hart (*The Daily Telegraph*, 10 February 1930; *The Times*, 27 February 1968). *Armoured Doves* (1931) was styled as a future fiction, in which a collective of scientists uses its authority to end war, an approach similarly adopted in H.G. Wells's more famous *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933). Later, future fictions included *Shoot!* (1948), which imagined a third world war, and *The Blues Ants* (1962), which anticipated a breakdown between the two great communist states of Russia and China, the novel offering up, as its subtitle states, 'The first authentic account of the Russian-Chinese war of 1970'.

In 1935, Newman tried his hand at a spy novel and characteristically conjured up a singular approach; one in which the boundary between fact and fiction was vague and ambiguous, and as a result, perplexed reviewers and led to much interest and some controversy. *Spy*, an immediate success which eventually ran to 18 imprints and was translated into 12 languages, established for Newman yet another series. He would publish on average an annual espionage thriller for the next four decades.[6]

Bernard Newman managed all his writing, publishing, lecturing and broadcasting while serving at the Ministry of Works. Amazingly, he published around 140 books, bringing out a new title about every 12 weeks.[7]

Authenticity and British Spy fiction

> 'Mr Maugham is, as far as I know, the first person to approach the Secret Service in a spirit of detached, unemotional realism … No ornament, no dramatic apparatus, none of the machinery of "excitement" in the usual sense'. Review of *Ashenden: Or, the British Agent. The Sketch*, 18 April, 1928

A dominant critical interest in spy stories has centred on the issue of authenticity. As Brett F. Woods has pointed out, fundamental to the genre is its 'dependence upon world geopolitical alignments and relevant historical contructs'. The approach at its best requires a 'subtle blending of fact and fiction … in which documents, dates, operational procedure, technology, and other representations of reality seamlessly coexist with invented characters and events'. Thus, 'the spy novelist, with an eye to structure, pacing and character development, bends the documentary record and constructs carefully crafted narratives that, to all intents and purposes, assume complete historical authority'.[8] Verisimilitude, the feeling that all this could be real, is clearly one of the pleasures of reading spy fiction. Several critics have recognised this key dimension to the genre's popularity, noting its importance in particular for British authors of espionage stories and its bearing on the national tradition of 'agent-novelists'.[9] Accordingly, prominence has been given to those writers who either came to wartime intelligence (Somerset Maugham, Compton Mackenzie, Dennis Wheatley, Graham Greene) or intelligence officers who later took up the profession of authorship (Ian Fleming, John le Carrè).[10]

The period before the Great War was characterised by what has been called the 'Diplomatic Spy novel', perpetuated by such popular writers as William le Queux and E. Phillips Oppenheim, and characteristically presented in Allen Upward's *Secrets of the Courts of Europe. The Confidences of an Ex-Ambassador* (1897) and *Secret History of Today. Being Revelations of a Diplomatic Spy* (1904). John Atkins has dismissed the style as one in which characters are largely engaged in 'uttering patriotic tosh in the Chancelleries of Europe'.[11] While le Queux, Oppenheim and their adherents would continue to write in this manner into the peace, elsewhere the experience of the war gave impetus to greater realism in British spy fiction. As David Stafford has observed, 'The massive expansion of the intelligence services during the First World War created a new breed of espionage writers and changed the relationship between fact and fiction'. Various literary sorts became involved in the war effort, contributing to propaganda and intelligence work, and 'Once the war was over, they could draw on personal experience in the writing of spy fiction'.[12] It actually took a decade before any real impact was made with the new realist-style spy story. It came with Somerset Maugham's *Ashenden* tales (1928), based on wartime intelligence service in Switzerland, and with Compton Mackenzie's novels *Extremes Meet* (1928) and *The Three Couriers* (1930), similarly derived from espionage experience in the eastern Mediterranean.[13]

The first literary genre to foreground recent wartime espionage was the spy memoir, which witnessed a remarkable flowering from around the end of the war onwards.[14] Intelligence officers of several combatant nations published their experiences, and alongside the main British titles many foreign memoirs appeared in English translation. Principal home accounts included Nicholas Everitt's *British Secret Service During the Great War* (1920), Capt. Ferdinand Tuohy's *The Secret Corps* (1920), Hector Bywater and H.C. Ferraby's *Strange Intelligence. Memoirs of Naval Secret Service* (1931), and Edwin T. Woodhall's *Spies of the Great War: Revelations of the Secret Service* (1932); for the Germans there were Capt. Goltz's *My Adventures as a German Secret Agent* (1917) and Col. Nicolai's *The German Secret Service* (1924); the French memoirs included Charles Lucieto's *On Special Missions* (1927) and Joseph Crozier's *In the Enemy's Country* (1931); the Italians were represented by Lieut. Camillo de Carlo's *The Flying Spy* (1919) and the Russian's by Col. Kaledin's *K.14—O.M.66*. The larger series of wartime spy memoirs offered the interested reader unprecedented detail regarding recent espionage. Curtis Carroll Davis has argued that it was from the spy memoir, unchallenged by other authorities, that 'the man in the street derives his understanding of espionage'. According to Davis, 'In presenting their memoirs to the public all the ex-spies, we must assume, took it for granted that

their work would be accepted at face value by readers'.[15] As a general assumption this largely holds true, but, as will be revealed, there are important exceptions. The material in the witness accounts was also the principal source for a spate of studies of espionage which began to appear after the war and which fed burgeoning interest in the subject. These were often written by journalists and expanded on the plentiful material that was appearing in newspapers. Titles included Sidney T. Felstead's *German Spies at Bay* (1920), Richard Rowan's *Spy and Counter-Spy* (1928), Winfried Lüdecke's *Behind the Scenes of Espionage* (translated from the German, 1929), and 'Vigilant''s *Secrets of Modern Spying* (1930).

The unprecedented outpouring of insights into recent espionage clearly had an impact on the writing of spy fiction, which now could openly draw on sources offering greater authenticity. The contribution of Compton Mackenzie was important in respect of the converging of fact and make-believe in spy writing. As we have seen, he offered up his experiences initially in fiction, later confirming that the scope of his intelligence work in 1916 and 1917 'provided the material' for the novels (although personally disappointed that the connection was lost on most reviewers).[16] He interspersed these with a series of war memoirs, *Gallipoli Memories* (1929), *First Athenian Memories* (1931), *Greek Memories* (1932) and *Aegean Memories* (1940) dealing with his war service and intelligence work. For some time, Mackenzie had been unsure how to present his tale, in the event serving it up as both fact and fiction. As he stated in his first memoir, he had long been contemplating a war novel incorporating his adventures and finally coming to the seemingly wrong-headed decision that 'my experiences in Athens and the Cyclades [would] make a better novel if related as fact'.[17] The successful prosecution of Mackenzie under the Official Secrets Act for revelations in *Greek Memories* was no doubt a feature of the author's experience which impressed itself on other spy writers who understandably did not wish to face official sanction.[18]

While Mackenzie shifted from fiction to fact in drawing on his wartime intelligence experiences, other writers moved in the opposite direction. This was the case with Marthe McKenna whose *I was a Spy!*, published in 1932, was probably the best-known of the spy memoirs, being released as a major British motion picture in 1933. She followed this with a further memoir, *Spies I Knew*, in 1933. Running out of reminiscences, in *A Spy Was Born* (1935) McKenna next turned to what was generously described on the dust jacket as a 'fictionalization of her experiences as a Belgian spy during the War'.[19] In fact the approach was obviously romantic fiction and served as a bridge for McKenna who continued in this lucrative vein with a series of popular spy thrillers which commenced with *My Master Spy* in 1936.[20]

The varied literary approaches to spying could be quite perplexing, and readers were no doubt further confused by a spate of fake memoirs of wartime secret agentry. The style of casting a narrative of espionage as the authentic record of actual service reported to an author was a device previously utilised by William le Queux, a writer who favoured an appeal to the real in his fictions. As early as 1911, le Queux adopted this conceit in *Revelations of the Secret Service*, which was subtitled, 'Being the Autobiography of Hugh Morrice, Chief Travelling Agent of the Confidential Department of His Britannic Majesty's Government'. The approach was resurrected for *Sant of the Secret Service: Some Revelations of Spies and Spying* (1918), in which le Queux maintained in some introductory remarks that the modest Gerry Sant 'permitted me to write down these intensely absorbing memoirs of exciting and unrecorded adventures in defeating the Hun'.[21] The method of drawing on seemingly authentic material or documents was developed by le Queux in his *Bolo, The Super-Spy* (1918), in which he served as 'Editor' for an account furnished by an Armand Mèjan, a supposed Ex-Inspector of the Paris Sûreté Gènèrale. Bolo, of course, was a genuine wartime spy and the work flew closer to history than its predecessors. Its supposed authority was claimed in the subtitle to the book: 'An Amazing Exposure of the Traitor's Secret Adventures as a Spy in Britain and France disclosed from Official Documents'. The ruse was also used by the prolific Edgar Wallace for a series of short stories which appeared in 1918 under the title of *My Adventures as a German Spy in Britain*. These were attributed to 'Hermann Gallwitz, Agent of Karl von Rintelen the famous Banker-Spy' whose private diary was purportedly edited by Edgar Wallace.[22]

Other writers also found such a method suitable for casting exciting narratives of espionage, and one which conveniently endowed the stories with a patina of authenticity. Journalist and writer Henry de Halsalle, like le Queux, had contributed to the widespread anti-German hysteria during the war with his *Degenerate Germany* (1916), which, as the advertising copy feverishly claimed, 'revealed for the first time . . . the hideous and wholesale vice, crime, and the general immorality of the German people'.[23] The opportunistic Halsalle followed this with two volumes of supposed wartime memoirs recording the exploits of 'Germany's Greatest Woman Spy', 'Told by Herself and Chronicled by Henry de Halsalle'. *A Secret Service Woman: Being the Confessions, Experiences and Opinions of Olga von Kopf, the Famous International Spy* appeared in 1917 and was serialised in *Thomson's Weekly News*,[24] and *A Woman Spy: Being Further Confessions and Experiences of Germany's Principal Secret Service Woman Olga von Kopf* followed in 1918.[25] A decade later, Halsalle returned to the spy memoir with *Who Goes There?: Being an Account of the Secret Service Adventures of 'Ex-Intelligence' During the Great War of 1914–1918* (1927). The author's attribution was simply recorded as 'Put down here by Henry de Halsalle'. While patently bogus to the modern reader, evidence from contemporary reviews suggests that these memoirs were largely accepted as a truthful and accurate rendition of secret service in the war (*Dundee Courier and Advertiser*, 13 June 1927; *Daily Mail*, 3 June 1927; *Catholic News*, 3 September 1927).

A fake spy memoir which actually drew some criticism was Baroness Carla Jenssen's *I Spy! Sensational Disclosures of a British Secret Service Agent* (1930). Jenssen attracted much publicity from her revelations and was soon in the United States where she did some lecturing and inveigled for work in Hollywood (*Belfast News-Letter*, 11 March 1932; *News Chronicle*, 13 April 1934).[26] The patriotic magazine *John Bull* took objection to the preposterous claims in the book, its researches proving that she was a 'bogus' baroness, that the Danish legation was contemplating taking proceedings if she persisted in using itself as a personal reference and that she had left a trail of dud cheques all over London (15 November 1930: 13). As with de Halsalle, though, there were varied responses to *I Spy!*. The reviewer at *The Nottingham Journal* was oblivious to all improbabilities, recommending 'A thriller with the merit of its contents being true', and declaring the book 'an education by virtue of its authentic peep behind the scenes' (3 October 1930). In contrast, Richard King, reviewing in *The Tatler*, felt the fanciful story made 'even a Lyceum melodrama look tame' (22 October 1930: 156).

The anonymous memoir, in which the author's name was conveniently hidden behind a code designation, was a variation worked by some publishers who spotted a commercial opportunity. In 1931, '1196' provided some 'secret service disclosures' in a series published in the *Evening Despatch*.[27] Later in the decade, 'E.7' caught attention when he broadcast some of his adventures on the BBC's National Service in October 1937. The story was immediately picked up and serialised in the *Sunday Pictorial* and later published as *I Am a Spy* in 1938.[28] 'E.7' was kept busy with such titles as *Danger Zone* (1938) and *Women Spies I have Known* (1939) and eventually slipped into straight spy fiction with *Romance of a Spy* (1947). Such predictable treatments of espionage fed popular curiosity at a time when readers were largely kept in the dark about official clandestine activity. Other, more artful and complex works, however, were capable of sowing confusion.

The early Spy novels of Bernard Newman

> 'It is just fiction – but it might have happened', Bernard Newman quoted in 'Leicestershire Author's "Spy" Spoof'. *Leicester Mercury*, 18 February, 1935.

Critics and the reading public could be forgiven if they found it difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between fact, fake and fiction in their literary engagement with the secret world. The availability of plentiful accounts of spying was after all a modern phenomenon, and a good indication of the extent and popularity of spy memoirs and factual accounts of espionage was the appearance of anthologies gathering together recent writing. Richard Rowan's *Modern Spies*

tell Their Stories (1934) collected examples from the personal narratives of Charles Luceito, Richard Boleslavski and Helen Woodward (*Way of the Lancer*, 1932), Nicholas Snowden (*Memoirs of a Spy*, 1932), Joseph Crozier, Lieut. A. Bauermeister (*Spies Break Through*, 1934), Marthe McKenna, Col. Max Wild (*Secret Service on the Russian Front*, 1932), Sir Paul Dukes, Dr A.K. Graves (*The Secrets of the German War Office*, 1914), Captain Horst von der Goltz and I.T.T. Lincoln (*Revelations of an International Spy*, 1916). With his anthology, Rowan included reminiscences only from operatives who had genuinely engaged in secret service. Other anthologies were less consistent, freely mixing genuine and bogus memoirs alongside fictional stories, and undoubtedly confusing readers. This was the case with Dennis Wheatley's *A Century of Spy Stories* (1938), Faber and Faber's *My Best Spy Story* (1938), and Odham's Press's *Fifty Amazing Secret Service Dramas* (1939). Each of these included material by Bernard Newman, extracted from his fictional stories. However, the distinction was not clear. Here was an author of spy fiction who genuinely confounded his readers regarding the verisimilitude of his tales. Was this memoir or make-believe?

Newman's controversial entry into spy fiction came with *Spy* published in 1935. 'Annoyed' by their many crudities, Newman set out to 'write a parody of these pseudo-spy memoirs', constructing in the first person, providing accurate historical background, using some real personalities, and ensuring that 'realism should be the dominant feature'.[29] A columnist at the *Liverpool Daily Echo*, referring to the brouhaha which surrounded its publication, declared *Spy* a 'literary sensation' ('"Spy" book of thrills'. 18 February 1935). *Spy* purported to be the author's memoirs detailing his intelligence service in the Great War. The work was an artful deception, taking in many reviewers and, no doubt, a fair few readers. In the account, Newman impersonates a German cousin who has been incarcerated in a prisoner of war camp in Leicestershire. In this guise, Newman stages an 'escape' back to Germany where he is celebrated and recruited into German Intelligence, serving at General Headquarters. There, he uses his position to undermine enemy strategy and to spirit invaluable intelligence back to Britain.[30] Gollancz, the publishers, sensing an unusual opportunity, immediately set about promoting uncertainty.[31] Emblazoned on the front of the dust jacket was an unattributed comment from a review, declaring *Spy* 'the most extraordinary book I have ever read'. 'The question', the reviewer intriguingly pondered, 'is simply whether to believe him or not'.[32] Gollancz then further stimulated the sense of ambiguity by adding:

> For ourselves as the publishers of the book, we wish to make it clear that we are not in the position to guarantee the truth of Mr Newman's astounding narrative, nor can we take any responsibility in the matter whatsoever. We can only suggest that each reader should examine the internal evidence and so form his own judgement.

Reviewers responded differently to the invitation. J. Emrys-Jones, writing in the *Sunday Dispatch*, was annoyed by Gollancz's policy. 'In my view', he asserted,

> the question of whether a thing is true or not true in the case of a book of this sort is the publisher's job. Otherwise the book-reading public will be so engaged in ferreting out information that they will have no time to read other books. That is bad for the trade, tiresome for the public, and wearying to critics. (17 February, 1935)

The critic at *The Times*, pinpointing uncertainty with the heading 'Fact – and Fiction?', took on the challenge of reviewing *Spy* alongside Marthe McKenna's 'fictionalised' *A Spy Was Born*. Disposed to be kindly to McKenna's honesty, the review judged her book to be 'fictitious but typical'. Clearly intrigued by the 'unguaranteed' Newman, the reviewer was equally disposed to be generous to *Spy*, believing the sketches of historical characters in the story to be drawn 'much in accordance with current opinion'; the whole constituting 'a synopsis of the War that is none the less constructive'. Prepared to accept the artful joke, the critic was happy to 'laugh at a war book and with the writer' (15 March 1935).

Elsewhere, some confusion reigned. A.J. Cummings reviewing in the *News Chronicle* doubted 'if a more realistic war-spy story has ever been written'. 'When I began it', he continued,

> I was diddled into the belief that here was an authentic record of the actual experience of a member of the British Intelligence service. When I laid it down . . . I was convinced that Mr Newman, or whatever his real name may be, had contrived a daring spoof, so daring in its execution as to be almost fool-proof.

Still, 'If I were asked to prove my conviction that the story is an ingenious fabrication', he went on, 'I could not do so'. Praising the 'fascination, aplomb and sustained actuality of Mr Newman's adorable narrative', Cummings implored his public to read the book. Reassuring it that, 'though you may be on tip-toe with curiosity you will not in the end care a row of dud grenades whether you have gulped down an historical cocktail or taken on the chin a gorgeous hoax' (18 February 1935).[33]

The *News Chronicle* decided to get to the truth and an 'enthusiastic search' for the perpetrator began, the unassuming Newman being tracked down at the Ministry of Works. The author was unmasked over lunch in a Soho restaurant, where he disarmingly confessed that, 'I am not a spy. I have never been a spy, and I don't suppose that I shall ever become one' ('"Master Spy" Found by Telephone'. 18 February 1935). *The Daily Telegraph* also secured an interview, and Newman cheerfully divulged that, 'Of course it is not true', 'not a word of it is true . . . I was never a spy in Germany'. 'It was not meant to deceive readers' he pleaded, explaining the approach as an 'experiment in ultra-realistic fiction' ('"Spy" Author's Confession'. 18 February 1935). Newman also disclosed how he came to the idea of *Spy*:

> When walking in the Carpathians two years ago I remembered the story of a brilliant English major who actually succeeded in joining the staff of Crown Prince Rupprecht and remained there working for the English intelligence service for a long time. His perfect German enabled him to be accepted with complete confidence. ('"Master Spy" Found by Telephone'. *News Chronicle*, 18 February, 1935)

He also referred to the enduring rumour that a British officer rode into Belgium on 5 August 1914, at the head of a Uhlan squadron ('"Spy" Author's Confession'. *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 February 1935).[34] Anticipating doubters, in an introduction to *Spy*, Newman referred his readers to the documented cases of Jules Silber, the German spy at the British censor's office throughout the war, the German spy who served as interpreter to the French courts martial for trying spies, Captain Preusser who penetrated British GHQ at Cairo, and Major Franks who, dressed as a British officer, wandered about behind British lines in Palestine.[35]

Born of yeoman farming stock in the East Midlands, local newspapers immediately set about unearthing what they could about Bernard Newman, whose book *Spy*, it was noted, had 'set reviewers feverishly checking its authenticity'. It was all 'Just his imagination' disarmingly reported his 75-year-old mother with 'quiet amusement' ('Leicestershire Author's "Spy" Spoof'. *Leicester Mercury*, 18 February 1935). Newman informed the rival *Leicester Evening Mail* that, 'I have tried to invent a different kind of thriller, where realism is one of the important things'. 'The background of the story is accurate' he went on, and '*Spy* is a different kind of thriller . . . depending upon its realism' ('Leicestershire Man's Spy Thriller'. 18 February 1935).

Newman's first espionage novel *Spy* certainly caused a stir and cast some attention on to its author, as well as to the complex question of authenticity in spy writing. The admiring reviewer at the *Liverpool Daily Post*, somewhat typical of critical reactions to the novel, confessed that 'one disbelieves reluctantly' in engaging with the story, it being 'told with a magnificent air of confidence' (18 February 1935). Both 'applauded and abused by the critics', Newman's *Spy* was serialised in the popular *Weekly Illustrated*, 'so that the public shall have the opportunity of deciding for themselves' (*Daily Herald*, 28 February 1935). One positive effect of the book, mused a critic, could be its 'casting serious doubts on quite a large number of war-time biographies' (*Yorkshire Post*, 18 February 1935).

Newman and his publisher knew they were clearly onto a good thing, and it was no surprise that the spy memoir as a convenient disguise for fiction was adopted for a further couple of realistic spy thrillers. *Secret Servant* (1935) recounted the postwar adventures of Bernard Newman, this time acting to counter a German conspiracy to undermine the Peace Treaty.[36] Once again, the former wartime intelligence officer uses imposture to get among the plotters and undermine their plans.

There was an interesting distinction between the approach to promote the book in the United States and that in the United Kingdom. The dust jacket for the American edition brazenly informed readers,

> This is a further series of exciting experiences in the life of Bernard Newman, ace English secret service agent, and carries his story forward from where he left it with the conclusion of his first book, SPY … As fascinating as any thrillers of our time, the accuracy and veracity of Mr Newman's story is beyond dispute. (Hillman-Curl, New York, 1935)

In Britain, given the recent reception of *Spy*, Gollancz had to be more circumspect. Hence, the following appeared on the dust jacket:

> In view of the controversy, interviews, denials, counter-denials, and suggestions of double-double bluff which the latter occasioned, we wish to make it clear beyond any possibility of doubt that there is not a word of truth in *Secret Servant* and that it is fiction from the first page to the last.

Of course, this was effective marketing copy, serving to intrigue readers and, perhaps, hinting at a possible 'triple-bluff' for those disposed towards the dark machinations of the secret world. The latter impression was reinforced through the rider (larger font and in bold) that, 'Were this not so its publication would be impossible in view of the OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT'.

German Spy (1936) worked as an inversion of the earlier *Spy*, this time purporting to be the memoirs of Ludwig Grein, a German officer who spied while serving as driver to a British Intelligence Officer on the Western Front. As explained in an introduction to the book, Grein had contacted the author of *Spy* as he had a similar tale to tell, and eventually the manuscript was acquired and edited by Newman for publication. With *German Spy*, Newman took the opportunity, as he did in introductions to both *Spy* and *Secret Servant*, to befuddle the reader as to the truthfulness of the story. So, names have been changed where the material presented might lead to charges of libel; readers were invited to check up such facts as they could and the publishers were instructed to produce the work as a novel. 'If a book published as fact turns out to be fiction, then readers have a legitimate complaint' Newman asserted. However, 'if a book published as fiction is actually fact, then no one can grumble', he dissembled.

By this stage in the game reviewers were becoming used to Newman's 'playfulness': enjoying it, even, as the author's approach was so ingenious and accomplished. Thus, "'German Spy' is taken out of the thriller class', and in accordance with Newman's 'playful habit', 'Fact is mixed up with fiction in a clever way' (*The Daily Telegraph*, 1 May 1936). 'Mr Bernard Newman pulls a pretty leg' was the verdict of the *Observer* (29 March 1936). While *The Listener* reported *German Spy* to be 'wonderfully fitted together, and, from a rational point of view, most convincing'. In the spirit of the 'game', the reviewer concluded: 'Nevertheless, we continue to harbour our irrational suspicions' (15 July 1936: 137).

Authenticity, authority and literary construction

> 'Bernard Newman "Knows his Onions"'. Review of *Maginot Line Murder*. *Observer*, 22 January 1939.

Bernard Newman's spy fiction promoted a strong impression of credibility and realism. A sense of authority and authenticity was constructed through writerly means and approaches more common to historical scholarship, and the method was duly noted by critics. A.J. Cummings observed that Newman 'makes use with uncanny skill of established facts and weaves them naturally into his own narrative' (*News Chronicle*, 18 February 1935). Similarly, the review of *Spy* in the *Liverpool Daily Post* noted that the novel exhibited 'Shrewd touches of apparent authentication' (18 February 1935). *The Daily Telegraph* acknowledged that *Spy* was 'tricked out with the circumstantial details, introduction, footnotes and cross-references proper to an historical narrative … and is peppered with allusions to well-known people' ('"Spy" Author's Confession'. *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 February 1935). *The Listener*, on treating G*erman Spy*, reported that, 'Mr Newman, in his role of editor, plies us with footnotes', thus

'proving, by cross-reference and comparison, that what Grein says *might*, in this or that particular, very well be true' (15 July 1936: 137). Newman's subterfuge was such that the reviewer at the *Observer*, as he was reading *Spy*, and despite the many references and confirmatory sources in the book, found a question arising 'with increasing insistence': 'Is this amazing truth or beautiful and brazen fiction?'. Taking up the challenge laid down by the publisher, and in a case of 'detecting the detective', he decided to interrogate the book. The sources and references embedded in the narrative, although impressive and genuine, were too general he felt, revealing nothing more than that the author has read them, therefore proving nothing, and merely generating doubt. The critic's mistrust was also encouraged by a strong sense of 'omission', the lack of a certain 'vividness' in the protagonist's dealings with real historical characters. And does not 'the examination of the internal evidence', he concluded, 'and especially this lack of circumstantial evidence', merely 'leave a strong suspicion that Mr Newman has once more written a first-class war novel?' (17 February 1935). The professed need for careful investigation in this case confirms the artfulness of the novelist and the doubt he was able to sow.

As already argued, British spy fiction in some influential hands sought to be realistic and even authentic in the tradition of the memoir. Most of the means to secure such an impression used by Newman had been employed before, but never as extensively, thoroughly and adroitly.[37] A principal method to secure the desired effect, referred to in the reviews quoted above, was the copious use of footnotes, deployed in the scholarly manner of the historian and offering genuine historical detail. The practice promoted historical legitimacy, through, for example, reference to authoritative writers on espionage and memoirists. In *Spy*, Newman made mention of J.C Silber (*The Invisible Weapons*, 1932), Richard W. Rowan (*Spy and Counter-Spy*), Joseph Gollomb (*Spie*s, 1928), Colonel Kaledin (*K14–0.M.66*) and Sir George Aston (*Secret Service*, 1930).[38] Newman buttressed this appeal to espionage fact by referencing other authoritative historical writing and contemporary sources, situating his narrative in similarly attested terrain.[39] A favourite was his friend Basil Liddell Hart's *History of the World War* (1930). One effective 'trick' he essayed in *Spy* was to underpin certain bits of narrative detail through reference to other authorities. So, when early in the story Newman is recruited into the Corps of Royal Engineers as a despatch-rider, he refrains from providing details and refers the reader to W.H.L. Watson's *The Adventures of a Despatch-Rider* (1915).[40] Similarly, Newman's 'escape' from Donington Hall prisoner of war camp is accompanied by reference to the classic *Escapers All* (1932), and in particular, the escape attempt by Captain Hermann Tholens from Dyffrnaled Camp which is taken as the model for the breakout in the story.[41] In *German Spy*, Newman became self-referential, drawing authentic material for a long exciting passage of an agent crossing enemy lines using old mine shafts from his own history of the tunnelling companies of the Royal Engineers, *Tunnellers* (written with Capt. W.G. Grieve, 1936).[42]

The grounding of the espionage narrative in historical referents was taken to its most extreme form with *Secret Servant*, where the author appended a bibliography of authoritative works and contemporary newspapers relating to the historical setting of the Peace Conference. While Newman dissimulates in a preface to the bibliography that he 'would prefer this book to be read as a story', he realises that there will be some who 'demand to know whether my story is fiction or fact'. Such readers are referred to 'the following books' in which 'they will find chapters or paragraphs which have a very direct bearing on my story'.[43] Another device used by Newman that helped ground his stories in real history was to weave aspects of his narrative into known events. So, in *Secret Servant*, the German conspiracy to undermine the peace treaty incororates the actual assassination attempt on the life of Prime Minister Clemenceau by the anarchist Émile Cottin in 1919,[44] as well as the successful assassination of the controversial Bavarian politician Kurt Eisner.[45]

Newman's 'memoirs' also carried long expositions on such spy craft as codes and ciphers, and disguises – all accompanied by detailed diagrams and historical examples – more so than strictly required by the adventure narrative.[46] Some reviewers were admiring of these additions which were thought to be informative and most welcome.[47] In a comparable vein, much spy lore, familiar to readers of memoirs and factual accounts of espionage, re-appears

in the stories, once more inserting them into a demonstrable past. In the 'memoirs' trilogy, Newman included references to the legendary spy the Lady Doctor, the wartime German spies Lody, Küpferle, Janssen, Roos, Breechow and Wertheim, the notorious 'Black Book' which supposedly contained 47,000 names of tainted British subjects who would be susceptible to German influence, the equally notorious pre-war spy Col. Redl, the spy hysteria in Britain during the early months of the war, the myth that Russian troops had passed through Britain in the early weeks of the conflict destined for the Western Front, and the case of the German agent who carried a code in the embroidery of her knickers, given away because the elaborate stitching on cheap underwear aroused suspicion. In *German Spy*, Newman inserts Grein in the actual case of the female spy who carried her message in invisible ink on her back.[48]

The appearance of historical personages in the stories functioned in a similar manner. *Spy* boasted the participation of Prime Minister Lloyd George, Sir Douglas Haig, Lord Kitchener, Kaiser Willhelm II, and Generals von Falkenhayn, Hindenburg and Ludendorff. Meanwhile, *Secret Servant* utilised Marshall Foch, Ludendorff, the high-ranking French civil servant Jean Chiappe, the politician Kurt Eisner, and even a young Adolf Hitler. To further bolster the sense of the real, Newman incorporated authentic spies and agents into his narratives. *Spy* enjoyed the brief participation of Colonel Nicolai and Sir Basil Thomson,[49] while *German Spy* boasted the wartime German spy masters Colonel Nicolai and Gustav Steinhauer, and the German agent active in London Karl Gustav Ernst.[50]

Newman's recourse to the apparatus of historical writing and the incorporation of documented material, as we have seen, led to questioning of the status of the stories. The author both anticipated and fuelled this inquest in an introduction to each of the 'memoirs'. In *Spy*, he reported that 'Several hundred books on secret service have appeared since the war'. 'Of these', he continued, 'about one per cent have been strictly accurate, a larger proportion founded on fact, but the greater part have been the sheerest of fiction – while pretending to be true!'.[51] Eschewing 'sensation' and suggesting he was of the 'one per cent', Newman with his book set out 'to show, so far as is practicable, the *details* of my work as a spy – a history not only of *what* I did, but of *how* I did it'. He could, therefore, unblushingly assert that the following pages 'represent the high lights of my secret service career'.[52]

For his second memoir *Secret Servant*, published after *Spy* had been outed as an ingenious hoax, the author had to be more sly in the way he prepared his audience for the tale. From the outset, he informed his readers that, 'There is more truth published under the guise of fiction than we know'. Suitably unbalanced with regard to how they should proceed, readers were then bathed in a masterful smokescreen of equivocation. 'Six months ago', he reported, 'I published my first book of memoirs (or confessions!), called *Spy*'. 'Unexpected circumstances', details of which the author selfishly kept to himself, led him then 'to announce the book as fiction'. Further obstacles presented themselves in the form of those 'strange oddments of laws governing the revelations of one who has once been a spy' (readers are subtly reminded of Compton Mackenzie's fate). 'Not everyone believed my announcement' Newman confessed. However, it was 'interesting to note that, weeks after I had announced that *Spy* was only a story, *The Times Literary Supplement* . . . reviewed it under the heading of 'Military' and not of 'Fiction'. The groundwork thus insecurely laid, the author set out the approach for his new memoir:

> A combination of similar circumstances has led me, this time, to ask the publisher to produce the book purely and simply as 'fiction', labelling it boldly as such. If, after that, people choose to read it as fact, that is their responsibility, not mine . . . Some people will read it as a story; others will be intrigued as to its veracity.[53]

Deviously, Newman decided to flatter those who pursued authenticity, labelling them 'a very intelligent class of reader' and rewarding them in going 'as far as I can in the documentation of my story'.[54] The implication of a limit to what the spy-author can reveal comes in a veiled reference to official secrecy. Newman took pains to remind readers that 'the Official Secrets Act has no jurisdiction over fiction', and thus furthers the impression that it is secret fact rather than fiction that is being divulged here.[55]

For *German Spy*, the supposed memoir of enemy agent Ludwig Grein, Newman had to come at the problem from the opposite direction. Grein, he tells us, had accepted *Spy* as truthful and the inspiration for writing up his own adventures. Only now, in his series of 'Introductions' does Newman come clean in print that, albeit unknown to Grein, his '*Spy* was fiction'. It follows that, 'The most obvious query of every reader' of Grein's memoir, will be: "Is this story true?'. As the actual author of the story, Newman was on safe ground when he averred that, 'Many of the incidents are capable of confirmation'. Shifting ground, he came to the conclusion, however, that due to the simple pleasures it afforded, 'it didn't matter a damn if it were fiction or fact, or a mixture of both'. In case it was needed, a word of warning was issued to those who would dismiss the story as 'fantastic'. Is it possible, he posited, that the ineffective bunch of 30 agents caught in the war was the best that Germany could field? For Newman, Grein's story revealed 'the way a clever spy would set to work', perhaps revealing of hidden German successes. And if it is not true, 'then it ought to be true'.[56]

Despite all this equivocation, the material was backed up by a firm sense of authority. Even those critics who dished out a 'thorough hiding' after being taken in by *Spy*, Newman professed, 'would admit that I do know a little about the Secret Service'.[57] In his own estimation, his reading covered 'most of the spy literature'[58]; a fact attested to by the convincing historical detail and documentation featured in the trilogy of 'memoirs'. The sense of expertise was reinforced with Newman's next spy 'novel', *Lady Doctor-Woman Spy* of 1937, which provided the author with a different sort of problem for the writing of historical espionage. Here, the memoir style is adapted into biography, the subject being the legendary yet illusive figure of the 'Fräulein Doktor'. In *German Spy*, Grein (endorsed by Newman in a footnote) disputes her very existence, 'debunking' her as a mere legend and declaring that 'there has been more utter rubbish written about this Lady Doctor than about any other woman spy, even including Mata Hari'.[59] However, in an introduction to *Lady Doctor-Woman Spy*, Newman reveals that further diligent researches, which included consultations with such authorities as Col. Kaledin, Brigadier-General Sir James Edmonds (an official historian of the war), librarians at the Imperial War Museum, and a chance encounter with a former German wartime intelligence officer while travelling in the Balkans, led him to revise his opinion and attempt a more authoritative story of the mythical female spy. Consequently, the author-historian informs us, he followed up leads and sources in Britain, Germany, France, Belgium, Russia and Poland, and what he discovered convinced him that here was 'the outstanding woman spy in history'. Although now assured of the main incidents in the story, yet given that strict accuracy was impossible, Newman decide to proceed 'in the fashion and format of fiction'. That said, he was quick to point out that he hadn't produced a conventional story featuring 'a beautiful female spy of the popular pattern'; but trusting that his 'more objective method' would not have less appeal.[60] The brief review in the *Daily Telegraph* was convinced that the approach aptly served the material, making 'many undiluted works of fiction appear small beer in comparison' (12 October 1937).[61]

A handful of writers had already commenced to pen espionage biography in fictional terms and may have influenced Newman. As we have seen, wartime agent Marthe McKenna had chosen to represent her experiences in fictional terms with *A Spy Was Born* in 1935. That year also saw the publication of Major Thomas Coulson's *Queen of Spies*, a fictionally treated biography of Louise de Bettignies.[62] Perhaps of greater influence was Major Georges Ladoux's *The Kaiser's Blonde Spy* (1934); the blond spy in question being none other than the Lady Doctor.[63] The book's subtitle, 'An Historical Romance of the Secret War', betrays the approach to the telling of the tale, and one which hardly stands up to the reassurances in Warrington Dawson's introduction, which would have it that Ladoux serves as a 'strict historian', offering up an 'authentic' account, and only leaving out those details 'which could not properly be revealed even at this late date'.[64] Once again, reviewers disagreed whether the offering was truth or fabrication. The *Western Morning News and Daily Gazette* reported that, 'The story has all the thrill of a modern novel, enhanced by its groundwork of fact' (7 May 1934); while the *Liverpool Post and Mercury* confessed to being confused whether the book was fact or fiction, albeit ultimately satisfied that it provided a 'dramatic and thrilling story of plot and counter-plot' (6 February 1934).

Bernard Newman firmly established his reputation as an authority on spying in the early years of World War Two when he commenced to publish, lecture and broadcast on factual espionage. Early 1940 saw the appearance of his timely *Secrets of German Espionage*, the first of a number of books dealing with the history of spies. Subsequent titles included *The Red Spider Web. The Story of Russian Spying in Canada* (1947), the more general *Epics of Espionage* (1950), *They Saved London* (1952), about the efforts to learn about and counter the V-weapons,[65] *Soviet Atomic Spies* (1952), *The Sosnowski Affair. Inquest on a Spy* (1954), about the famous Polish spy of the inter-war years, *Inquest on Mata Hari* (1956) and *The World of Espionage* (1962). Already established as a popular travel lecturer in the 1930s, Newman added espionage to his repertoire in the war years when he toured for the Ministry of Information. During this period, his lecture topics included the 'The Fifth Column and Espionage' (1940), 'Spies in Fact and Fiction' (1942), and 'Spies and How They Work' (1943) (*Portadown Times*, 4 October 1940; *Bedfordshire Times and Standard*, 20 March 1942; *Belfast Telegraph*, 10 April. 1943). For the first of these lectures, Newman was billed as an 'Espionage Authority'.[66] Some of these lectures along with original short stories were broadcast. For example, 'Spies in Fact and Fiction' appeared on the Overseas Service on 27 February 1940; 'German Spies' featured on the Home Service on 1 July 1940 and the radio play *The Great Spy Round-Up* was broadcast on the Forces Programme on 23 July 1943 (*The Listener*, 28 March 1940, 619, and 27 June 1940, 1214; *The Times*, 23 July 1943).[67]

Newman shared much material across his spy novels and his historical studies, lectures and broadcasts, diminishing the distinction between fact and fiction in his writing. This made the task of the reader of his spy fiction, in trying to discern what was authentic and what was imaginary and problematic. The calculatedly baffling approach was maintained by the author as the novels took on a contemporary setting, pitting secret agent Bernard Newman, working alongside counter-espionage specialist Papa Pontivy, against Nazis, Soviets and other conspirators. The stories maintained an immaculate authenticity of scene, convincing local colour, and incorporated all the 'tricks' of footnotes, real personages, and espionage lore which had characterised the 'memoirs'. As such, they served up a strong and convincing impression of on-going secret service for intrepid agent Bernard Newman. The ruse clearly worked in some instances, for as late as 26 October 1950, the press could still refer to Newman as 'a former Secret Service Agent'.[68] Most markedly, Newman's obituary in *The New York Times* baldly declared him a 'British spy during World War One' (20 February 1968).

Conclusion

> 'It seems to me that history ought to be accurate above all things: there have been published far too many serious "memoirs" of spies which are largely or even wholly fiction'. (Bernard Newman, 'Introduction', *Lady Doctor-Woman Spy*, 1937)

In 1935, the following brief item appeared in the *Nottingham Evening Post*, a corrective to an easy acceptance of the truthfulness of a typical spy memoir. 'Discussing a book noticed in the Press yesterday', it commenced, 'a friend who holds an important post in our Intelligence Service told a "Morning Post" gossip that there need never be any doubt as to whether wartime "spy" memoirs are works of fiction or of fact'. 'The Official Secrets Act', it maintained, 'still applies to all who served this country during the war or since, and this prohibits them under severe penalties from publishing the story of their experiences' (19 February). The book in question, of course, was *Spy* by Bernard Newman, which had appeared the day before and already begun, as we have seen, to create some excitement in the press. Informed readers would be reminded of the successful prosecution of Compton Mackenzie over revelations in his intelligence memoir *Greek Memories* a few years earlier. However, despite the assertion in the newspaper, many other personal accounts of secret service had appeared. Could all these

be suspect? Bernard Newman's were so very convincing, after all. Perhaps it was easiest, in the fashion of the reviewer at the *Liverpool Daily Post* previously reported, if 'one disbelieves reluctantly', and simply falls in with a story 'told with a magnificent air of confidence' (18 February 1935).

Bernard Newman, among other things, was a popular writer of spy novels. In 1956, the readers of the *Daily Mail* were invited to vote for their favourite crime author and Bernard Newman came out an impressive fourth, behind leading thriller writers Agatha Christie, Dennis Wheatley and Patricia Wentworth (*Daily Mail*, 17 October and 6 December). Newman is now unjustly forgotten, when in fact he clearly counts as something of a stylist in the formula market of the popular spy thriller. As revealed here, an important strand of spy fiction tended towards authenticity following the First World War, and Newman favoured this approach, describing his own first novel as an experiment in 'ultra-realistic fiction'. Believing that the thriller 'had over-reached itself – it had become too incredible', Newman 'decided to write an adventure story which might have happened, with as much authentic detail as I could work in'. 'Although none of the episodes in the book is fact', he asserted, 'they are not inconceivable' ('"Spy" Author's Confession'. *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 February 1935). Aware that some of the spy memoirs which had appeared since the war were fanciful, he offered up pastiches of the style, recreating the pattern so convincingly that he took in some reviewers and presumably a good part of his reading public.[69]

Literary scholars have been largely unappreciative of the influence on spy fiction of the spy memoirs emerging from the First World War. As a perceptive reviewer of *The Secret Corps* alluded in 1920, 'Captain Tuohy's 'tale of "intelligence" on all fronts' may be described as the complete manual for the writer of spy stories' (*The Spectator*, 26 June 1920: 24).[70] Other memoirs and espionage publications could serve as similar guides, and the influence on Newman of the new writing on espionage in the 1920s and early 1930s was clearly significant.

While the spy memoir was but a sub-genre of the much broader 'Great War Memoir', due to continuing requirements of official secrecy, it was inherently more problematic in terms of its ability to report the 'truth'. Paul Fussell, a celebrated war memoirist, has argued that the war memoir generally couldn't escape what he calls 'the necessity of fiction'.[71] This was perhaps doubly so for the spy memoir, which had an exciting narrative to deliver, but one potentially kept in check by requirements of secrecy. Mark Kaufman has put down thoughts along these lines, seeing the problem of authenticity and the spy memoir as residing in legal restrictions. In this regard, he refers to 'a censorship dialectic in which the injunction to protect official secrets and avoid prosecution results in a hybrid mode of writing wherein truth and fabrication – intelligence and invention – remain in precarious suspension'.[72]

Considering the broader Great War memoir, Ian Isherwood has argued that literature constituted one of the most powerful components of the culture of memory that emerged from the First World War, enabling servicemen and women to communicate the meaning of their experience and suffering.[73] The 'revelation' of the spy memoir, though, was of a different order, it rather being concerned with illuminating a previously secret world, one characterised by a veiled duty and honour on one side, and unwanted treachery and disgrace on the other. Certainly, the shrouded nature of espionage ensured that the spy memoir sailed close to spy fiction, the literary form familiar to readers, and perhaps an inescapable outcome given the conditions. The reading public, however, was presented with a problem: what was memoir, and what make-believe? Disentangling this conundrum was no easy matter, especially when the author, like a spy, reverted to imposture and disguised fiction as memoir. In the process, he befuddled the reader with a wilderness of mirrors.

Notes

1. Details of the luncheon taken from *Daily Mail*, February 29, 1940; *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury*, February 29, 1940; *Birmingham Post*, February 29, 1940. In his autobiography, Newman recalls the presence of some acclaimed spy fiction authors, Dennis Wheatley, Eric Ambler, Gilbert Frankau, but these are not mentioned in the brief press reports, Newman, *Speaking From Memory*, 197.
2. Sir Paul Dukes, *Red Dusk and the Morrow* (1922) and *The Story of 'ST 25': Adventure and Romance in the Secret Intelligence Service in Red Russia* (1938); Capt. Franz von Rintelen, *The Dark Invader: Wartime Reminiscences of a German Naval Intelligence Officer* (1933) and *Return of the Dark Invader* (1935); and Col. Victor K. Kaledin, *K.14-O. M.66: Adventures of a Double Spy* (1934) and *High Treason: Four Major Cases of the St. Petersburg Personal Court Branch* (1936).
3. In his autobiography, Newman claims that during the war he was periodically seconded to a French counter-espionage officer for purposes of intelligence, and that he set up a series of listening posts in brothels used by the troops to keep tabs on loose tongues. 'Quite a number of the incidents [the French officer] organized', Newman reported, 'were later included in my spy stories', *Speaking From Memory*, 29–30. In both his spy fiction and his factual books about espionage, Newman gave regular hints that he remained connected to secret service in various ways. Newman knew Dukes as a colleague in the official lecture service to the British Expeditionary Force in France and later with the Ministry of Information, and counted Kaledin as a friend, even making the former Russian spy a character who helps break a code in the novel *Maginot Line Murder* (1939).
4. For a detailed overview of Newman's travel writing see, Jamieson "The Cycle Writings of Bernard Newman".
5. For radio, see the listings for the Regional Programme, July 16, 1937 and July 7, 1939; for television, see 'Televised'. *Gloucestershire Echo*, February 3, 1938. More generally, see, Newman, *Speaking From Memory*, 125.
6. Newman's writing method was to speak into a dictaphone and *Spy* was recorded in 24 2-hour sessions, *Speaking From Memory*, 79. Newman's thrillers were issued in the celebrated yellow jackets of Gollancz, and the 25 books he published there between 1935 and 1955 were more than any other author at the stable.
7. Newman also published some detective and spy fiction under the name of Don Betteridge.
8. Woods, *Neutral Ground*, 2.
9. The term is used by Stafford in *The Silent Game*, 4.
10. See Burton, *Literary Agents*.
11. Atkins, *The British Spy Nove*l, 16–17.
12. Stafford, *The Silent Game*, 72–3.
13. There were some early experiments in realistic spy fiction immediately following the conflict. In 1921, *On Hazardous Service*, offered, according to the *Daily New*s, 'an excellent idea of the secret operations of the Allied agents behind the German lines', and seemed to represent 'something authentic' (2 December, 1921). This was written by Mervyn Lamb, the pseudonym of Walter Kirke, a senior officer for British military intelligence on the Western Front. (The Private Papers of General Sir Walter Kirke GCB CMG DSO can be found in the Imperial War Museum). Unaccountably, such pioneering efforts have been missed in the literary accounts of spy fiction.
14. Spy memoirs were but part of a much broader trend of Great War memoirs, Jerry Palmer arguing that, 'The centrality of eye-witness became a commonplace in both war writing and evaluations of it' ('Authenticity and Gender', 1).
15. Davis, "Companions of Crisis," 385, 387. He was writing about the period of the American Civil War.
16. Mackenzie, *My Life and Times*, 129.
17. Mackenzie, *Gallipoli Memories*, preface, n.p.
18. Hugh Cleland Hoy's *40 O.B., or How The War Was Won* (1932), about codebreaking at the Admiralty, was briefly held up and some material excised before publication; while Henry Landau's *All's Fair: The Story of the British Secret Service Behind German Lines* (1934) and *Secrets of the White Lady* (1935) were tactfully published in the United States to avoid interference. For a discussion of Mackenzie, his prosecution and the spy memoir see, Kaufman, 'Spyography'.
19. The comments have been taken from the dust jacket of the American edition of the book published by Robert M. McBride & Co., New York.
20. In all likelihood, the books were written by her husband John McKenna, who had served on the Western Front. See, Deborah E. Van Seters, 'McKenna [née Cnockaert], Marthe', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004.
21. Le Queux, *Sant of the Secret Service*, 3.
22. The stories first appeared in *Thomson's Weekly News* (January 19-May 18, 1918), and later in book form as T*he Adventures of Heine* in 1919. An interesting American example of this approach, combining authority with fiction, was *The Eagle's Eye* (1919), subtitled, 'A True Story of the Imperial German Government's Spies and Intrigues in America', 'from facts furnished by William J. Flynn, recently retired Chief of the U.S. Secret Service' and 'novelised' by Courtney Ryley Cooper.
23. See advertisement in *The Times Literary Supplement*, March 23, 1916, 139.

24. The stories were often placed on a news page in the paper, thus sitting alongside genuine wartime news items. The effect was to enhance the authenticity of the tales. Although, somewhat undermining credibility of the whole project, the female spy was named Olga von Marx in the serialisation.
25. In a rare piece of reader response to spy fiction in this early period, the eminent clergyman H.H. Henson recorded in his diary (November 24, 1917): 'On my return I read a preposterous book "A Secret Service Woman" by Henri (sic) de Halsalle, one of the numerous writers who are "exploiting" the present rage with Germans in the interest of their own pockets'. The entry can be found at https://henson.durham.ac.uk/journals/17-11-24.
26. Most comment centred on the notorious 'Poison Kisses' episode in the book. In this, secret agent Jenssen brought low enemy agents through the passionate application of drugged lipstick in prolonged bouts of 'french-kissing'.
27. See the announcement for the series, *Evening Despatch*, September 21, 1931.
28. For the initial radio broadcast see, *Daily Express*, October 5, 1937. For the announcement of the newspaper series see, *Daily Mirror*, October 9, 1937.
29. Newman, *Speaking From Memory*, 73–74.
30. A British agent serving in First World War, Germany, was used by a number of writers. Valentine Williams set the mould with his hugely successful *The Man With the Clubfoot* published early in 1918. Graham Seton revived it with *The W Plan* in 1929. A similar story published after Newman's breakthrough in the mid-1930s was *Drink to Yesterday* by Manning Coles, which appeared in the spring of 1940. Unlike Newman, none of these writers wrote in the first person, or constructed the sort of elaborate apparatuses associated with historical scholarship.
31. As Newman would later state: 'No publisher in the world could exploit such a situation as well as Gollancz', *Speaking From Memory*, 74.
32. On publication in the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, the review was signed by H.W. Metcalfe and appeared as 'Spying or Spoofing? Remarkable War Adventures that Tax the Imagination', February 18, 1935.
33. For a negative impression of *Spy*, for which reviewer 'Newman rarely becomes plausible', see *Yorkshire Post*, February 18, 1935.
34. The story of a British officer serving with Crown Prince Rupprecht's staff seemingly first appeared in Ferdinand Tuohy's *The Secret Corps*, where it was reported that the agent 'was to all outward appearance German' and gained admittance to the German Intelligence staff 'so that he saw every secret German document – most of which were systematically forwarded to British HQ' (110–11). For his own stories, Newman even elevated himself to the same rank of the agent, that of Captain, when in fact he had been demobilised as a staff sergeant. A picture of Newman in his sergeant's uniform appears in 'Leicestershire Author's "Spy" Spoof', *Leicester Mercury*, February 18, 1935. Newman repeats the story in his second novel *Secret Servant*, 13–14, and there gives his source as Richard Rowan's *Spy and Counter-Spy*.
35. Newman, *Spy*, 7. For the last three anecdotes, the author cites Richard Rowan's *Spy and Counter-Spy* as his source.
36. The book was also serialised in *Weekly Illustrated*.
37. Most of the following techniques had been essayed by Newman in his historical-seeming novel *The Cavalry Went Through*, which also saw the author experiment with first person narration, something that would later become a feature of the spy novels.
38. Clearly pleased with his method, Newman's use of footnotes increased with his second 'memoir': *Spy* carried 32 and *Secret Servant* 52. While *German Spy* still carried an impressive 40, overall they tended to be more discursive and carry a greater amount of material. Newman later recorded that *German Spy* 'contained a higher percentage of fact than the previous books', *Speaking From Memory*, 80.
39. One method was to secure his narrative and the events he described in the published memoirs of participants. In *Spy*, these include Ludendorff, Lloyd George and Hindenburg.
40. Newman, *Spy*, 28.
41. Ibid., 121. Another possible source would have been Kapitan-Leutnant Gunther Pluschow's *My Escape from Donington Hall* (1922).
42. Newman, *German Spy*, 64–79. The section is illustrated with a full-page map, and the author effectively signals to the reader of the story his credentials as a historian.
43. Newman, *Secret Servant*, 285. 28 books are listed, including Vernon Bartlett's *Behind the Scenes at the Peace Conference* (1919), Robert Lansing's *The Peace Negotiations* (1921) and Winston Churchill's *The World Crisis: The Aftermath* (1929), as well as 6 German and 4 French contemporary newspapers, and the obligatory *The Times*. The works of history and memoirs referenced in the earlier *The Cavalry Went Through* are bogus, derive from Newman's imagination, and illustrate the author's early interest in creating an 'historical' effect.
44. Newman, *Secret Servant*, 97–102, 107–110, 119.
45. Ibid., 72–77, 96–97, 120–121.
46. In *German Spy*, for example, Newman digresses to offer a 'brief exposition of the elementary principles of codes', 41–44; and details Grein's use of musical codes, 48–49 and 82–85 (complete with staves!), and coded material embedded in embroidery, 109–112 (complete with illustration).
47. See, for example, the reviews of *German Spy* in the *Observer*, March 29, 1936 ('the cipher work is very ingenious'), and *The Listener*, July 15, 1936 ('Grein is exceedingly interesting on the subject of codes').

48. Newman, *German Spy*, 124–125. Newman later included a photograph of the young lady wearing her message in his *Secrets of German Espionage*, 84.
49. Nicolai (*The German Secret Service*) and Thomson (*Queer People*, 1922) were both wartime spy chiefs and prominent memoirists.
50. Steinhauer's story had been told in *Steinhauer: The Kaiser's Master Spy*, edited by S.T. Felstead (1930).
51. Heinz Ecke in his preface to the English language edition of *Spying Still Goes On. Four Spies Speak* (London: John Hamilton, 1933, first published in Germany in 1930) cites a similar observation from a Colonel Seeliger, an Austrian 'expert' on Intelligence, who more generously maintains that, 'Quite ninety per cent of all spy stories belong to the realm of fiction and fantasy. On the other hand the remaining ten per cent deal with incidents which have won or lost wars', vii. In *German Spy*, Newman brought himself into alignment with Seeliger, now avowing that, 'I have no hesitation in saying that ninety per cent of the books on espionage which are published as fact are actually fiction', 7. Some years later, Newman cited Gustav Steinhauer as an example of a spy memoirist who falsely built up a reputation through publishing. See, Newman, *Secrets of German Espionage*, 33–34.
52. Newman, *Spy*, 1, 3–4, 7.
53. Newman, *Secret Servant*, 6.
54. Ibid., 6–7.
55. Ibid., 6.
56. Newman, *German Spy*, 7.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 6.
59. Ibid., 94–96. Newman cites Col. Nicolai's *Secret Powers. German Military Intelligence in the First World War* (n.d., probably 1923) as a reputable source; however, the former spy chief only briefly refers to a leading female spy working for the Central Powers. The Lady Doctor appears in various guises in the following contemporary accounts of espionage, 'Vigilant''s, *The Secrets of Modern Spying*, Richard Rowan's *Spy and Counter-Spy* and *The Story of Secret Service* (1937), Winfried Lüdecke's *Behind the Scenes of Espionage*, *K-7. Spies at War, as told to Burke Boyce by George F. Zimmer* (1935), H.R. Berndorff's *Espionage!* (1930), and even merits a discussion in Dr Magnus Hirschfeld's *The Sexual History of the World War* (1941). Sir George Aston reported that 'there are references [to the Lady Doctor], more or less (chiefly less) accurate, in nearly all books on secret service in the Great War' (*Secret Service*, 155). The Lady Doctor was the subject of the undistinguished Hollywood film *Stamboul Quest* (1934) and the more accomplished French film *Mademoiselle Docteur* (1937).
60. All material taken from the electronic edition of *Lady Doctor-Woman Spy* (Peach Publishing, Bromley, 2017), which is unpaginated. A favourite device of Newman was to make continual disparaging references to 'sensational' spy fiction, thereby infering that his own stories were more authentic. See, for example, *Spy*, 46, 93, 100–101, 129, and *Secret Servant*, 23, 49, 101, 240.
61. Years later, in his autobiography, Newman dismissed the novel as a 'pot-boiler' but intriguingly suggested that it had been 'used for instructional purposes in schools of counter-espionage', *Speaking From Memory*, 89.
62. The Lady Doctor featured in the story, see chapter 5. Coulson, who was billed to have experience of secret service, had previously published the more conventional biography *Mata Hari: Courtesan and Spy* (1930).
63. The controversial Ladoux had been head of French counter-espionage during the war and had since published widely in France on espionage. The original *L'espionne de l'empereur* had appeared in 1933 as the fourth installment of the series 'Memoires de Guerre Secrète'.
64. Ladoux, *The Kaiser's Blonde Spy*, 7, 10.
65. This was the only Newman book to be filmed, as *Battle for the V-1* (1958). Newman later provided an original script for the television crime drama *Element of Doubt* (1961).
66. Newman gives an account of his lecturing throughout 1940 in *One Man's Year* (1941).
67. The text of the broadcast for 'German Spies' was reproduced in *The Listener*, July 4, 1940, 20. The radio plays *The Great Spy Round-Up* and *Havanas From Rotterdam*, both derived from well-known incidents of the First World War, were also issued on gramophone records and shipped to the troops, and later appeared in Newman's collection of short stories *Spy Catchers* (1945).
68. The paper in question was the *Luton News* on the occasion of Newman being the guest of honour at the Speech Day for the girls at the Luton County Secondary School.
69. Newman has even claimed that *Spy* was used as a textbook in the Soviet School of Military Intelligence, *Speaking From Memory*, 75.
70. It is instructive that Ferdinand Tuohy, in his role as a journalist at the Peace Conference, plays a part in Newman's *Secret Servant*, 197.
71. Quoted in Dwyer, "Preface," vii.
72. Kaufman, "Spyography."
73. Isherwood, "British Memoirs and Memories," 95.

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