

Editorial

Unruly Dog

William Hague, the UK Foreign Secretary, couldn't bring himself to utter Edward Snowden's name, when he made an urgent statement to the House of Commons on 10 June 2013. This was in the wake of Snowden's revelations about 'Prism', the US National Security Agency's covert and extensive surveillance operation, which has been ongoing since 2007. Mr Hague wasn't going to comment on 'leaks', as he repeatedly told the House. This rather put the Foreign Secretary 'behind the curve' in the debate that followed, excerpts from which are reproduced in this number of *The Spokesman*. Some of his comments to the House have been called into question by subsequent developments.

In the days before the debate, the Foreign Secretary, who has political responsibility for Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), the NSA's counterpart in the United Kingdom, had told the BBC:

'if you are a law abiding citizen of this country going about your business and your personal life, you have nothing to fear—nothing to fear about the British state or intelligence agencies listening to the contents of your phone calls or anything like that.'

The Shadow Foreign Secretary, Douglas Alexander, pointed out that:

'This assertion, however, assumes that the state is either incapable of error or incapable of advertent or inadvertent wrongdoing. Surely, on reflection, the Foreign Secretary will accept that law-abiding citizens of this country also want to know and be assured of the fact that the agencies of government are themselves law-abiding ...'

Mr Hague did not answer Mr Alexander's precise point, nor several other questions he posed, nor, indeed, those of many other MPs. He did assert that:

'To intercept the content of any individual's communications in the UK requires a warrant signed personally by me, the Home Secretary, or by another Secretary of State. This is no casual process. Every decision is based on extensive legal and policy advice. Warrants are legally required to be necessary, proportionate and carefully targeted, and we judge them on that basis.'

However, as *The Guardian* newspaper suggested on 21 June, GCHQ was given the go-ahead for a mass trawl of raw communications 'by applying

Statement by Edward Snowden

One week ago I left Hong Kong after it became clear that my freedom and safety were under threat for revealing the truth. My continued liberty has been owed to the efforts of friends new and old, family, and others who I have never met and probably never will. I trusted them with my life and they returned that trust with a faith in me for which I will always be thankful.

On Thursday, President Obama declared before the world that he would not permit any diplomatic 'wheeling and dealing' over my case. Yet now it is being reported that after promising not to do so, the President ordered his Vice President to pressure the leaders of nations from which I have requested protection to deny my asylum petitions.

This kind of deception from a world leader is not justice, and neither is the extralegal penalty of exile. These are the old, bad tools of political aggression. Their purpose is to frighten, not me, but those who would come after me.

For decades the United States of America has been one of the strongest defenders of the human right to seek asylum. Sadly, this right, laid out and voted for by the US in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is now being rejected by the current government of my country. The Obama administration has now adopted the strategy of using citizenship as a weapon. Although I am convicted of nothing, it has unilaterally revoked my passport, leaving me a stateless person. Without any judicial order, the administration now seeks to stop me exercising a basic right. A right that belongs to everybody. The right to seek asylum.

In the end the Obama administration is not afraid of whistleblowers like me, Bradley Manning or Thomas Drake. We are stateless, imprisoned, or powerless. No, the Obama administration is afraid of you. It is afraid of an informed, angry public demanding the constitutional government it was promised — and it should be.

I am unbowed in my convictions and impressed at the efforts taken by so many.

Moscow, 1st July 2013

old law to new technology'. A clause of the 2000 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (Ripa)

'allows the Foreign Secretary to sign a certificate for the interception of broad categories of material, as long as one end of the monitored communication is abroad. But the nature of modern fibre-optic communications means that a proportion of internal UK traffic is relayed abroad and then returns through the cables.'

Mr Snowden, speaking about 'the largest programme of suspicionless surveillance in human history', declared the UK 'has a huge dog in this fight'. He probably had in mind GCHQ's 'Tempora' operation 'to tap into and store huge volumes of data drawn from fibre-optic cables for up to 30 days so that it can be sifted and analysed', as described in *The Guardian* article reprinted below, which we have entitled 'Huge Dog'.

Snowden's revelations are having a wide international impact, particularly in the European Union and South America, following the illegal stop and search of Bolivian President Morales' jet in Vienna, *en route* from Moscow. Not surprisingly, the Germans are outraged at their treatment at the hands of the US and UK, close collaboration between the US and German intelligence services notwithstanding. The Germans are more spied upon by the Americans than most, which is no new development. In 2004, the NSA base at Bad Aibling in Bavaria was finally closed after a European Parliament investigation had, among other findings, revealed significant industrial espionage conducted from the station. Some staff were relocated to Menwith Hill, the huge NSA base in North Yorkshire, it was later reported. Apparently, much such espionage continues.

Meanwhile, the revelations keep coming. *Der Spiegel* reports that the United States spies on the high offices of the European Union, apparently courtesy of the NSA presence at NATO headquarters in Brussels. What kind of 'Alliance' acquiesces as its dominant member spies on the inner workings of the EU in this way?

We publish some of the seminal texts of this developing story. More will surely follow. Edward Snowden told his interviewer in Hong Kong that his greatest fear regarding the outcome for America of his disclosures was that 'nothing will change'. Many Europeans will readily understand and share his concern. How do we see to it that changes which buttress democracy, rather than risk tyranny, are put in train?

Fifty years on

The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation was established in 1963. In this, our fiftieth anniversary year, we take stock a little. What was happening then? What pre-occupied Russell? What was the peace movement doing? This has been something of a journey of discovery. For many years now, the Foundation's extensive archives have been filed away, while we concentrate on the priorities of the day. So the occasion to take a look back, contrary to popular advice, is welcome.

In an extract from his *Autobiography*, Russell describes how the Foundation

‘should be not just for this or that purpose. It should be for any purpose that would forward the struggle against war and the armaments race, and against the unrest and injustices suffered by oppressed individuals and peoples that in very large part caused these. Such an organisation could grow to meet the widely differing demands. It could, also, reorientate itself as circumstances changed ...’

The Russell Tribunal on Palestine, for example, which held its concluding session in Brussels earlier this year (see *Spokesman 120*), would seem to fit the bill as described here.

Russell goes on to discuss the controversy surrounding the murder of President Kennedy, as well as the increasing US bombardment of Vietnam. These themes are echoed in contributions we have chosen for this anniversary number.

Developments in Greece also pre-occupied Russell during 1963, particularly the murder of Grigoris Lambrakis, Member of Parliament of the Left Party and peace activist, in May of that year. We have called upon Peggy Duff, CND's stalwart first general secretary, to help tell that story.

Thumbing through issues of the *London Bulletin*, forerunner of *The Spokesman*, and early volumes of *The Spokesman* itself, one is struck by the number of reports of industrial activism as well as union and community campaigns in Britain, interspersing articles about political developments around the globe. During the 1960s, workers' control again captured people's imagination in Britain and elsewhere in Europe, as well as further afield. In Britain, Ken Coates was at the epicentre of this movement, the roots of which he traces to the syndicalists, so much admired by Russell the industrial democrat. We reprint his insightful essay on this theme.

Tony Simpson