

Ref. A083/2273

MR BUTLER

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I last reported to you on 20 June (A083/1755) about the book which Mr. Rupert Allason (alias Nigel West) is writing on the history of the Secret Intelligence Service from 1909 to 1945.

2. Since then the Secretary of the D Notice Committee has given the publishers of the book (Weidenfeld and Nicolson) a list of the deletions which should be made to the book in order to comply with D Notice No 6. The deletions are extensive, involving not only names but in some cases whole pages. It was recognised that it would be very difficult for the publishers to accept deletions on that scale, but it was thought advantageous, in dealing with this book that relates to matters now at least 40 years old, to indicate clearly the sort of material which was unacceptable, in the hope that some notice would be taken when Mr Allason approaches the writing of the second volume dealing with more recent history.

3. The publishers' representatives expressed their reluctance to publish material which would genuinely be harmful to the national interest, but were reluctant to accept that that argument applied to much of the content of the book, both because the period it covered was remote, and because they believed that much of the information and many of the names to the publication of which we were objecting had already been widely reported elsewhere. They did not offer a final view, but they were clearly opposed to the idea of preparing an alternative version of the book taking account of the objections to it, because of the extent to which the book would be emasculated and because they were already committed to it in its present form.

4. Mr Allason himself has been in the United States, no doubt with a copy of the manuscript for his publisher there. It has therefore not been possible for Mr Parkinson to see him, but Mr Parkinson is hoping to arrange to see him on his return. What he has to say may well give Mr Allason pause to think about his next volume, but I fear that it is unlikely that it will deflect him in relation to the present volume.

5. The book has now been advertised in The Bookseller: I attach a copy of the advertisement, which proclaims the book as describing the structure, personnel and operations of the British Secret Service "in breathtaking detail".

6. We shall be reporting in due course the results of the study of United States legislation which makes it an offence to name individuals as being concerned with intelligence organisations, with a view to making recommendations on the possibility of introducing similar legislation in this country.

7.

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Re
Approved by
ROBERT ARMSTRONG
and signed in his absence

28 July 1983

TOP SECRET

By the author of the
controversial
**A MATTER OF
TRUST: MI5
1945-72**

MI6
NIGEL WEST

British Secret Intelligence Service Operations 1909-45

In breathtaking detail, this dramatic book describes for the first time the structure, personnel and operations of the British Secret Service, 1909-45. With the use of original SIS documents, Nigel West traces MI6's extraordinary record during the Great War, the collapse of European spy rings in 1938 and gives the stranger-than-fiction account of the secret contacts between MI6 and their Abwehr opponents. A well-researched and highly readable book, it provides a comprehensive and controversial view of how MI6 narrowly turned espionage defeat into victory.

- TO BE SERIALISED IN MAIL ON SUNDAY
- MAJOR MEDIA TOUR

October 27 £8.95 (C) 234 x 156mm 232pp 8pp b/w illus
297 78290 8

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Thank you for your minute of 28 July (A083/2291)
about Mr. Rupert Allason, Alias Nigel West. The
Prime Minister has seen and noted this,

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RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (A)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

1 August 1983

SECRET

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