

British and Allied
Intelligence Complex

Owing to Cow-gill's liking for a family atmosphere, an almost excessive cosiness marked the life and work of Section V. Officers and secretaries were put on Christian-name terms as soon as they arrived. It felt as if the office might at any moment burst into wholesome round games. While this was embarrassing at times, it had its professional uses. It was never difficult to find out what colleagues were doing; what was known to one could be known to all. It also gave me wide freedom of movement. Cowgill did not mind when or how the work was done, provided it was done—itself no mean requirement considering the volume of paper with which we were flooded. This meant that I could go up to London virtually at will. This was valuable for developing contacts with other SIS sections in Broadway Buildings, with MI5, and with other government departments interested in our work. I made a practice of going once a week, in-

variably with a bulging briefcase and a long visiting list. I also volunteered for night duty in Broadway, which came round once or twice a month. It was an instructive occupation because, in the course of a single night, telegrams would come in from all parts of the world, throwing new light on the operations of the service.¹

Broadway was a dingy building, a warren of wooden partitions and frosted glass windows. It had eight floors served by an ancient lift. On one of my early visits, I got into the lift with a colleague whom the liftman treated with obtrusive deference. The stranger gave me a swift glance and looked away. He was well-built and well-dressed, but what struck me most was his pallor: pale face, pale eyes, silvery blond hair thinning on top—the whole an impression of pepper-and-salt. When he got out at the fourth floor, I asked the liftman who he was. "Why, sir, that's the Chief," he answered in some surprise.

At that stage, I knew precious little of the Chief. His name was Stewart Mcnzies, his rank Colonel. His office was on the fourth floor. His stationery was a vivid blue, his ink green. He wrote an execrable hand. Before becoming Chief, he had been head of Section IV, which dealt with Army intelligence. His official symbol was CSS, but in correspondence between Broadway and overseas stations he could be designated by any three successive letters of the

¹ One file available to night-duty officers in Broadway was especially valuable to me. It contained telegrams from the War Office to the British Military Mission in Moscow, sent over SIS channels.

alphabet, ABC XYZ, etc. In government circles outside SIS, he was always known as "C." The initial was a hangover from the days of Captain Mansfield dimming, R.N., the first head of the secret service in its modern form. That was the sum total of my knowledge of the Chief at the time of our first encounter in the lift. As will be seen, I came to know him much better, and I hasten to say that I look back on him with both affection and respect, though not necessarily with respect for those qualities on which he would have prided himself.

Apart from Fenwick, the agreeable but ineffective oil-man who vaguely administered the stations in Madrid, Lisbon, Tangier, and Gibraltar, my earliest contact in Broadway was with one of the Chief's closest cronies, David Boyle. He was in charge of the distribution of information obtained by rifling diplomatic bags, and of arrangements for its secure treatment by recipients. But he was also credited with being very close to the Chief, and thus having influence on policy. I was prepared to dislike him thoroughly, as I had heard appalling reports of him; his nickname was Creeping Jesus. My first impressions tended to confirm the awful reports I had been given. He had most of the qualities I dislike most; it would be no injustice to describe him as a selfish and conceited snob. Yet he had a capacity to ingratiate himself with senior members of the Foreign Office which, much to my surprise, I came to admire. Furthermore, I was increasingly drawn to him for his inability to assess the intelligence that passed through his hands. Although he was more than twice my age, he came to

rely on my judgement. In my turn, I paid him all the outward signs of respect. Our personal association, despite its inherent absurdity, became quite a happy one. It was also of great value to me because, among the waffle and gossip that fills most diplomatic bags, there is sometimes a pearl of price. Boyle, of course, would never have claimed the prerogative of using green ink; he used purple instead.

Through Boyle, I met the famous Colonel Claude Dansey. Before the war, he had busied himself with building up the so-called "Z" organisation, designed to penetrate Germany from bases in Switzerland. The most interesting thing about the "Z" system was that its communications were disastrously affected by the collapse of France. In Switzerland, Dansey had left behind to carry on the work a smooth operator named Van Der Heuvel (pronounced Hoyffl) who was alleged to be a Count of the Holy Roman Empire. He will forgive me if I have mis-spelt his name, either literally or phonetically, but I can claim to be in good company. When I went one day to dine with him at the Garrick, the porter had difficulty in understanding whom I wanted to see. "Oooh," he said at last, "you mean Mr. Vannoovl," and gave me the appropriate direction.

I have already explained that Dansey had the lowest opinion of the value of counter-espionage, as well as a reputation for unnecessary combativeness. I was therefore surprised by the courtesy he showed me. It proved always to be so. Dansey was a man who preferred to scatter his venom at long range, by telephone or on paper. The only way to deal with him

was to beard him in his office; a personal confrontation lowered the temperature, and made it possible to talk common sense. As soon as I grasped this, I had little difficulty with him, except to keep a straight face when he started to make cracks about Vivian, my boss's boss. Happily, our paths did not cross often, as he was good enough to strike me off his list of pet bugbears.

I made a point of seeing Vivian as often as possible. He was quite useless for immediate practical purposes, being mortally afraid of Dansey and even of his own subordinate, Cowgill. But he probably had a better mind than either, and was of a reflective temperament which led him to discourse long and widely on SIS history, politics, and personalities, and on relations between SIS and MI5. He was a stickler for correct procedure, and his sermons on the subject told me more about the intricacies of government machinery than I could have learnt from the more slap-dash "result-getters," such as Dansey or Cowgill. I had little idea in the early months of my cultivation of Vivian how much it would assist me in attaining the one position in SIS which I wanted above anything the service could offer. Cowgill was to regret bitterly his premature dismissal of Vivian as a nonentity.

It was a short walk from Broadway Buildings across St. James's Park to the wartime headquarters of MI5 in St. James's Street. But the difference in style was considerable. Even the entrance compared favourably with the dingy hall at Broadway, and the first good impression was confirmed upstairs. The offices looked

like offices; so far as I know, there were none of the makeshift rabbit hutches that disfigured so much of Broadway. The officers sat at desks uncluttered by dog-eared paper. At most, half-a-dozen neat files, each nicely indexed and cross-indexed, would be awaiting treatment. This had its drawbacks. At Section V, we used to complain of the inordinate detail which MI5 officers found time to pack into their long letters. Some of it, at least, was unwarranted by the significance of its subject-matter. Nevertheless, MI5 wore an air of professional competence which Broadway never matched. It may have been over-staffed, as Cowgill frequently complained. But the results of such over-staffing was that most of the officers knew what they had to do, and how to do it. The same could not be said of all too many in Broadway.

It had not always been so. After the fall of France, MI5 faced a situation for which it was quite unprepared. The British people fell victim to its own propaganda, particularly in regard to the German Fifth Column. For months after Dunkirk, the police and MI5 were swamped with reports of flashing lights, mysterious strangers, outlandish accents overheard in the pub, and so on. The organisation almost broke down. I first visited MI5 with Commander Peters in the autumn of 1940, when it was in its temporary quarters at Wormwood Scrubs. It was good to think that MI5 was housed in a prison, but the place was in a horrible mess. Stacks of unread correspondence littered the floors, and officers conceded that not more than a tenth would ever be read, let alone answered.

Fortunately, it was all waste paper anyway. The German Fifth Column in Britain never existed.

The task of producing order from chaos was entrusted to a certain Horrocks who was imported (from the City, I believe) especially for that purpose. Inside a year, he could claim to have succeeded. I do not understand that he had authority over the administration in general, but my particular interest was in the archives. There he did a beautiful job. In a new home in part of Blenheim Palace, MI5 Registry was a place of delight after Woodfield's untidy labyrinth at St. Albans. Information was easily accessible in well-kept files and card-indices, and there were enough filing clerks to ensure that the work was done methodically and at a reasonable pace. I was surprised and envious to find that most of the girls knew the contents of the files for which they were responsible as thoroughly as the officers handling cases in St. James's Street. When I delicately raised the question with Woodfield, he replied that he was disgracefully understaffed and that such attention to detail was unnecessary anyway.

Most of my work with MIS concerned the so-called B Division of that organisation. This was the place where intelligence was received and assessed, and where subsequent action was usually determined. By "action" in this context, I mean action to develop and exploit information received only, not such action as arrest. For, like SIS, MI5 had no executive power. I could not arrest suspects, but only recommend their arrest to the usual authorities. Although this made

little difference in practice, since MI5's recommendations were almost invariably accepted, the formal distinction was firmly maintained in theory.

Here, I think, lies one of the most important reasons for the greater professionalism of MI5 compared with SIS. MI5 operates on British territory, and is therefore sensitive to the law of the land. It can, and often does, press for specific breaches of the law, but each one requires the explicit sanction of the government, usually in the form of a Home Office Warrant. Armed with such warrants, MI5 can arrange, for instance, to tap the telephones of private citizens or of institutions such as foreign embassies and the headquarters of the Communist Party. But it must watch its step. If MI5 makes a mistake, questions are asked in Parliament, the press launches campaigns, and all manner of public consequences ensue, of a kind distasteful to a shy and furtive organisation. No such inhibitions hamper the operations of SIS in breach of the laws of foreign countries. The only sufferer is the Foreign Service which has to explain away mistakes to foreign governments, usually by simple denials.

The quality of MI5 in wartime owed much to its temporary recruits. There was a particularly good haul from the universities, Hart, Blunt, Rothschild, Masterman, and others, and the law also made a substantial contribution. Most of these fine brains returned to their normal occupations after the war; as this book is not a history, there is no need to enlarge on their excellences. But at the top of B Division, there were two professional intelligence officers who

contrived throughout the war to retain the respect of their brilliant subordinates. As both have some part to play in my story, they call for a respectful mention.

The head of B Division was Guy Liddell. "I was born in an Irish fog," he once told me, "and sometimes I think I have never emerged from it." No self-depreciation could have been more ludicrous. It is true that he did have a deceptively ruminative manner. He would murmur his thoughts aloud, as if groping his way towards the facts of a case, his face creased in a comfortable, innocent smile. But behind the façade of laziness, his subtle and reflective mind played over a storehouse of photographic memories. He was an ideal senior officer for a young man to learn from, always ready to put aside his work to listen and 'worn' at a new problem.

Yet Liddell's career ended in disappointment. The head of MI5 during the war was Sir Charles Petrie, an Indian policeman of great authority and charm. When he retired, B Division would have voted to a man for Liddell to succeed him—and he had many supporters elsewhere. Instead, the government appointed Sir Percy Sillitoe, another policeman, British this time, with less authority and less charm than Petrie. Liddell's personal disappointment was obvious, yet it was more than personal. He, like most of the MI5 professionals, maintained that MI5 was an intelligence organisation, not a police outfit. The techniques for combating espionage were different from those adapted to crime. Since spies are backed by the great technical resources of governments, while criminals are not, there is clearly much to be said for that view

The government, however, took the view that the appointment of a senior policeman, trained to Whitehall procedures, would be safer. Liddell was awarded the doubtful dignity of Deputy Director, and he would have been inhuman if he had felt no resentment. I am sure that spies, had they but known it, would have rejoiced at Liddell's discomfiture. One did.

Liddell's chief assistant in B Division was Dick White. Originally a schoolmaster, he had joined MI5 between the wars. He was a nice and modest character, who would have been the first to admit that he lacked outstanding qualities. His most obvious fault was a tendency to agree with the last person he spoke to. With his usual good sense, he was content to delegate a lot of work to his subordinates, and to exercise his gifts for chairmanship with a view to keeping harmony in the division. He was one of the few officers in MI5 who, until the bitter end, maintained a reasonable personal relationship with Cowgill. His capacity for avoiding departmental fights paid off in the outcome. When Liddell became Deputy Director, White was promoted to the top of B Division. But there was more to come. In due course, White was wafted across the park to become Chief of SIS. Luckily, Dansey died before seeing a counter-espionage expert lording it, however courteously, over Broadway. If he hadn't, it would have killed him anyway.

I cultivated MI5 assiduously, and before the end of the war, I could claim many personal friends in St. James's Street. It was in every way necessary for

someone to soften the collision between Cowgill and our opposite numbers; and as few others were willing to take the lead, I took it upon myself. Quite apart from immediate considerations, various long-term prospects were forming in my mind, for the materialisation of which MI5 support would be helpful. I formed the habit of slipping my friends information off the record—that is to say, without Cowgill's knowledge. The rewards of such unorthodoxy were often generous.

A major battle developed in 1943, in which I found myself ranged discreetly on the side of MI5 against Cowgill. The issue was the location of Section V. We had been housed in St. Albans partly because of overcrowding in Broadway, partly because of the desirability of keeping the archives out of range of German bombers. When Woodfield moved his records to St. Albans, Cowgill moved too. His overt reason for doing so was that "a counter-espionage organisation must be near its records." His real reason was that it enabled him to build up his little empire with a minimum of disturbance, free from the taint of 'politics.' The long lull in the bombing, however, had robbed these arguments of their cogency. There was plenty of office space available in London, and no obvious reason for not using it.

MI5 meanwhile had maintained their pressure for closer cooperation with ourselves. They laboured the virtues of "propinquity," a word that began to appear frequently in Petrie's correspondence on the subject with Menzies. It was indeed quite clear that, despite the telephone, cooperation would be more effective if

the distance between us was less. This was precisely what Cowgill did not want, and for the same reasons that MI5 wanted it. He foresaw himself and his staff, back in London, dissipating their effort in "politics," at the mercy of the manoeuvres of Liddell and Co. Above all, he saw control slipping from his fingers. For my part, I was wholly in favour of the return to London. Closer contact with MI5, Broadway, and other government departments, in my view, could only assist in promoting an overall grasp of intelligence work. That, as far as I was concerned, was all that mattered.

Characteristically, Cowgill over-estimated his hold on the situation. He announced in St. Albans that he would take a free vote on the subject, giving all his staff a chance of pronouncing for or against London. He was even unwise enough to let outsiders know what he had done, so that the result of the vote could not have been suppressed. I assumed that a free vote entitled me to a little lobbying, and I got busy accordingly, not neglecting the secretarial staff, many of whom had begun to tire of the cloistered life in billets. The result of the vote dumbfounded Cowgill. More than two-thirds of our staff chose London—the vote, in itself, had no validity, but it did much to weaken Cowgill's determination. Within a few weeks, we were installed in offices on Ryder Street. We were two minutes from MI5 and fifteen from Broadway. If we came to work early, we could look down from our windows and see Quaglino's offloading its horrible garbage from the night before. We were just in time for the "little Blitz."

I must now go back a few months and write of an event that was to have a profound effect on all subsequent development of British intelligence work. I refer to the arrival of the Americans. Before the war the United States lacked a regular foreign intelligence service. The Federal Bureau of Investigation was responsible for internal security only. Secret information from other countries was obtained to a limited extent from extra-curricular activity of service attaches and diplomats attached to United States embassies, who were less inhibited than the representatives of countries which had regular secret services to do the dirty work. It is now well-known from published material how, in 1940, British Security Coordination, under William Stephenson, was set up in New York. Its main ostensible function was to assist in protecting the security of American supplies destined for Britain. It was supposed that the large element of German origin in the United States would indulge in widespread sabotage. This supposition was not borne out. But Stephenson, who was a friend of Churchill's and wielded more real political power than any other British intelligence officer, soon found other outlets for his ample energies. One was interference with supplies destined for the Axis and with neutral shipping in which they were carried. It is probable that BSC committed more acts of sabotage than the whole of the German-born colony in the United States. But another outlet for Stephenson was the one toward which he devoted his best efforts: persuading the Americans that it was high time that they created an intelligence service of their own.

Stephenson, like many others, saw that the creation of such a service was, in the long run, inevitable. Short-term considerations suggested that it would be better for the British to get in on the ground floor and, by offering all possible help in the early stages, to earn the right to receive in return the intelligence that might be expected to flow from deployment of the greater resources of the United States. There was also the immediate chance of getting information through United States embassies in countries where Britain was no longer represented, such as Vichy France, the Balkans and even Germany. A true top-level operator, Stephenson was not used to footling around at the lower levels. His achievement was to stimulate the interest of Roosevelt himself, and to make quite sure that the President knew that Stephenson and his backers, among whom were SOE and MI5 as well as SIS, had a lot to offer. Thus, when the Office of Strategic Services was born with General Donovan at its head, the closest cooperation with the British was already assumed at the highest level. Whether the wartime exchange of British experience for American resources really paid off is a matter open to argument. What is beyond doubt is that the decision in favour of cooperation doomed the British services, in the long run, to junior status. That junior status has been sobering fact for many years. All SIS could do was sit back helplessly when CIA committed the United States Administration to folly with Ngo Dinh Diem or to ridicule in the Bay of Pigs.

Stephenson's activity in the United States was regarded sourly enough by J. Edgar Hoover. The impli-

cation that the FBI was not capable of dealing with sabotage on American soil was wounding to a man of his raging vanity. He was incensed when Stephenson's strong boys beat up or intoxicated the crews of ships loading Axis supplies. But the real reason for his suspicious resentment, which he never lost, was that Stephenson was playing politics in his own yard, and playing them pretty well. He foresaw that the creation of OSS would involve him in endless jurisdictional disputes. The new office would compete with the FBI for Federal funds. It would destroy his monopoly of the investigative field. The creation and survival of the new organisation was the only serious defeat suffered by Hoover in his political career—and his career has been all politics. He never forgave Stephenson for the part he played as mid-wife and nurse to OSS.

These high decisions gradually seeped downwards and reached St. Albans. Our first visitor from the United States was a certain Kimball, of the FBI, who arrived shortly after Pearl Harbor. He talked with machine-gun speed, accusing the Navy, the Army, the State Department and the White House of having ignored FBI warnings of imminent Japanese attack. The real purpose of his visit, apart from the sales-cackle, was to announce that Hoover had decided to appoint a liaison officer in London, in the shape of a Legal Attache of the United States Embassy, to cooperate with MI5 and SIS. After Kimball's departure, Cowgill spoke of him in derogatory terms, saying that "Hoover evidently intended to by-pass Stephenson." With more reason than usual, Cowgill

regarded Hoover as another of the evil men who used intelligence as a step-ladder for political advancement, whose overtures should be treated with suspicion if not resisted outright. My loyalty to Cowgill was strained when the first Legal Attache made his appearance. He was Arthur Thurston, a thoroughly competent operator with whom it was a pleasure to work. I had every reason to cultivate him, and he happily reciprocated the bootlegged intelligence I passed him. He was too perceptive to stay long with Hoover, preferring the political jungle of Indiana.

OSS were not far behind. After preliminary high-level talks with Donovan, Bruce, and others, we had assigned to as a small liaison part). Its head was Normal [Holmes] Pearson, a poet of Yale. He was hail-fellow-well-met, and have you heard the latest one about the girl in the train? He was terribly funny about his organisation. Oh So Sexy. It was a notably bewildered group, and they lost no opportunity of telling us that they had come to school. I must have been slow to grasp the facts of inter-departmental life, as I was innocently surprised by the confidence bestowed on them by Cowgill. He gave them the freedom of our files, including the intercepted wireless traffic—which was still being doled out grudgingly to the FBI in heavily disguised form. It was difficult to see why a professional organisation like the FBI should be denied intelligence which was given in profusion to a service once described by Pearson himself as "a bunch of amateur bums."

In due course, the answer became clear enough. It was quite true that Hoover had wanted "to by-pass

Stephenson." He did not like BSC and wanted to clip its wings. One way of achieving that end was to shift the weight of the liaison to London. In addition, he naturally wished to get close to MI5. Like the FBI's security division, MI5 was purely a counter-espionage organisation. It had its worries about SIS, just as Hoover had his worries about OSS. Above all, in Hoover's eyes, its writ ran only in British territory and its interests therefore could not clash with those of the FBI, whose jurisdiction was confined to the Western hemisphere. In short, Hoover's aim was twofold: to move the centre of cooperation away from the United States to Britain, and to get as close as possible to MI5.

All this was highly distasteful to Cowgill. He would have liked to gather all exchange of counter-espionage information with the Americans into his own hands. Having failed in this, he wanted to restrict exchange between the FBI and MI5 to a minimum. The ostensible reason for his attitude was fear that MI5 might pass to the FBI information derived from SIS without due regard for the security of SIS sources. I have never heard any evidence that such transactions occurred. But the line of argument had a certain plausibility, and in the stress of war a plausible argument is often good enough. Plausible or not, the argument was quite hollow, as Cowgill's liberality towards OSS showed clearly enough. Information too delicate for MI5 and the FBI should certainly have been withheld from Pearson's "bunch of bums." Yet it was not. The truth was that Cowgill saw in OSS a potentially pliable instrument which might be used to bolster his

position against both MI5 and the FBI. His strength was that, however much Hoover might rave, no one in Britain could challenge his links with OSS on realistic grounds. Such a challenge would have meant MI5, for example, associating itself with Pearson's dictum on OSS. Inter-departmental good manners barred such crudities.

With respect to my own work in the Iberian Peninsula, the arrival of OSS was a pain in the neck. Apart from the time wasted in putting our information at the disposal of the newcomers, a host of problems arose from the appointment of their men in Lisbon. The first was a certain Ray Olivera, who soon made his dreadful mark. His opening move was to call on our own man, without warning, and ask for cooperation. Our man naturally asked for his credentials, in reply to which Olivera opened his bag to display its contents: God knows how many wads of dollar bills. Apart from this show of brashness, Olivera's arrival caused great confusion in the United States Embassy. Immediately after America's entry into the war, the Military Attache in Lisbon, Colonel Solborg, had started sending agents through Spain into Occupied Europe. The Naval Attache had naturally concentrated on shipping, and someone else started in on economic intelligence. By the time Olivera arrived, all these fields had been pre-empted, and no one was willing to withdraw in his favour. Prolonged muddle was eventually sorted out by George Kennan, then Counsellor of the United States Embassy in Lisbon. He decided that the best course was to keep the intelligence flowing, not to worry about jurisdic-

tional disputes in Washington. Thus Solborg and the rest were confirmed in their undiplomatic activity, while counter-espionage, which no one had yet thought of, was thrown as a sop to Olivera.

The unfortunate Olivera, however, was given little time to settle down to his restricted field. He succeeded without delay in making himself so generally unpopular in Lisbon that he had to be replaced. The new man was a certain Di Lucia, who was soon giving us an immense amount of trouble. Within a very short time, he was claiming to have amassed a card-index of so many thousand suspects, a feat which never seemed to yield any positive benefit. More to the point was the discovery that one of his principal sources was an obscure and noxious person who went, in Portugal, under the name of Alexander. We knew, from the wireless traffic, that Alexander was passing information to the Abwehr. We had also learnt, by opening the Czech diplomatic bag, that he was working for Colonel Pan, then Czech intelligence representative in Lisbon. We had spent many months devising means of warning Pan, without disclosing to him the guilty source of our knowledge. He resisted our sincere endeavours with remarkable density; "ivory from the neck up," as Dick White tersely remarked after an unsuccessful meeting. It was a little too much when Di Lucia also put Alexander on his payroll. When, after endless prodding from us, OSS decided that Di Lucia must go the way of Olivera, they asked us to write to our man in Lisbon for a statement of the qualities desirable in an OSS representative in that hot spot. He cabled back at once:

"For God's sake tell them to send a man called Smith." Against Cowgill's wishes, I showed the message to Pearson. He pretended amusement.

In the second half of 1942, news reached us that the invasion of North Africa had been decided in principle. The duty imposed on us in St. Albans was the timely provision of intelligence to the staffs of the invading armies. The intelligence particularly concerning us related, of course, to the activity of the Abwehr and the Italian military-intelligence service in North Africa, and that of their sympathisers among the special services of the Vichy regime. Cowgill saw in the development both a problem and an opportunity. The problem was to ensure that SIS intelligence was transmitted to army staffs in such a way as to safeguard the security of our sources, including wireless intercepts. Cowgill successfully argued the view that this could only be done by the attachment to the staffs of special units composed of Section V officers, or officers trained in Section V. Having won this point, he was well-placed to show that his existing resources were inadequate, and that he could fulfil his new duties only if he received substantially increased appropriations. From this battle, too, he emerged victorious, with the result that he was able to recruit additional staff as well as giving most of us, if not all, a welcome rise in pay.

In passing, I should mention that this increase in staff led to two wholly delightful associations. Graham Greene was brought back to reinforce Section V from Freetown, where he had been supposedly watching the intrigues of the Vichy French. He will forgive me

for confessing that I cannot recall any startling achievements of his in West Africa; perhaps the French were not intriguing? I do remember, however, a meeting held to discuss a proposal of his to use a roving brothel to frustrate the French and two lonely Germans suspected of spying on British shipping in Portuguese Guinea. The proposal was discussed quite seriously, and was turned down only because it seemed unlikely to be productive of hard intelligence. Happily, Greene was posted to my section, where I put him in charge of Portugal. He had a good time sniping at OSS, and his tart comments on incoming correspondence were a daily refreshment. At about the same time, Malcolm Muggeridge swam into our ken, wearing his usual air of indignant bewilderment. He was despatched to Lourenco Marques, too far away for my liking, where his principal adversary was the Italian Consul, Campini, an assiduous reporter of British shipping movements. I was glad when our interest in Campini died, and Muggeridge was brought back to deal with various aspects of French affairs. His stubborn opposition to the policy of the day (whatever it was) lent humanity to our lives.

Some weeks before the North African invasion Cowgill asked me whether I would take over responsibility for the area. It had previously been included in the French section, but for reasons not very clear to me it had been decided that the transfer would be beneficial. I had no hesitation in accepting. We had achieved a fair stranglehold on the Abwehr in Spain and Portugal, and were regularly

picking up its agents. There was no reason why I should not shoulder additional responsibilities. It was also satisfactory to me personally to get nearer to the active conduct of the war, and the enlargement of my field at that crucial stage suggested the hope of further extensions as the Allied armies progressed. That hope was fulfilled in due course.

My new duties involved politics rather than intelligence work. The special units mentioned above were duly formed and attached to the army staffs under the title of Special Counter-intelligence Units (or SCI units). The term, of course, was an Americanism—a concession to the fact of an American being in supreme command. We were also issued with new stamps marked Top Secret instead of Most Secret. It was a foretaste of things to come, but we were innocent enough then to feel enthusiastic about our precious Eisenhower. But the bulk of what I call, for want of a better term, our work, concerned relations with the French. For some time, there had been attached to Section V a Gaullist counter-espionage officer with ill-defined functions. Apart from giving him our most attractive secretary, on the grounds that she spoke French, we had kept him at arm's length. I do not know what obscure reasons promoted Cowgill's reserve towards Passy's Bureau Central de Renseignements et d'Action, the Gaullist intelligence organisation. But when the political situation burst in our faces, when Darlan and Giraud became friends, not enemies, Cowgill passionately embraced a certain Commandant Paillole, a Vichy counter-espionage officer. In fact, Paillole proved to be a most attractive

character, and his anti-Axis feeling was beyond reproach. Yet I could never understand what good intelligence purpose was served by the mountain of work involved in Cowgill's self-imposed commitment to defend Paillole against all comers. It was probably just that he could not adopt any attitude falling short of total involvement. What came of it all in the end, I do not know. Before the issue was resolved, if it ever was, I was immersed in the problems of the Italian campaign, and the Paillole Affair reduced itself to its proper parochial level.

The fact that in the year 1942-43 Cowgill had enlarged my field of responsibility to include first North Africa, and then Italy, suggested to me that I was beginning to make a career in the secret service. This was confirmed shortly after our move to London. Until then, Cowgill had delegated his work, during his rare absences on leave or duty, to his deputy, Ferguson. Ferguson had also come to us from the Indian police, though at one or two removes, and had impressed chiefly by his terror of taking decisions. It was time for Cowgill to pay an official visit to the United States, where he proposed to spend two or three weeks. On the eve of his departure, he circulated a minute to all officers in Section V. It informed them that during his absence, Ferguson would act as deputy in administrative matters, myself in the same capacity in all intelligence matters. This was my first formal intimation that I was on the ladder for promotion. Poor Cowgill!