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'The painful aftermath': reactions to the publication of *SOE in France*

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ABSTRACT

This article considers the aftermath of the publication of *SOE in France*. A groundbreaking official account of a secret wartime organisation, publication was followed by complaints and legal action. It examines how Whitehall responded to the negative fallout, and the tensions with the author, Professor MRD Foot, as officials refused to accept responsibility for the lack of personal testimony in the work, and prioritised settling legal cases and the avoidance of any further legal action as changes to the text were made for a revised first edition. The article also reflects upon whether the experience had any impact upon subsequent intelligence-related official histories.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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"*SOE in France*" finally reached the bookstalls in May 1966 – seven years after the decision to commission such a work. I shall not enlarge on the painful aftermath...¹

The publication of MRD Foot's official history *SOE in France* in 1966 marked a significant point in the historiography of the British intelligence and security community. It was also controversial: publication was followed by several complaints and legal cases, which cumulatively generated a considerable volume of paperwork, much of which survives in the National Archives. This article uses this material in order to explore how the civil servants who had overseen the project, stung by the critical reaction, dealt with the fallout.² The institutional memory of the process whereby the book had been researched, in particular the bar imposed which prevented Foot from conducting interviews with former members of the organisation, was swiftly recast to suggest that no such restriction had been imposed, thereby allowing officials to wash their hands of criticisms that had resulted from the book's limited use of first-hand testimony.³ As officials from across Whitehall sought to address the most pressing complaints through the publication of a revised impression of the first edition, the fact that the book was a work of history was of little importance. The avoidance of further legal action became the overriding priority, which caused tension in the relationship between the authorities and their historian. Pressure was put upon Foot to make amendments to the text beyond those negotiated to settle legal disputes, which themselves caused a degree of tension, in order to pre-empt any further legal difficulties. A revised first edition was quietly published in the summer of 1968, which put the legal issues to rest, but a more extensively revised second edition, for which Foot undertook further research, was put into indefinite 'cold storage', as Whitehall moved on from its first experience of publishing secret history.

CONTACT Christopher J. Murphy  cj.murphy@salford.ac.uk

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Following some two and a half years of official discussion and revision, *SOE in France*, the first officially sponsored account of a secret British organisation, went on sale on 28 April 1966. The book did well.⁴ The first edition of 10,000 copies sold out within three months, while HMSO estimated that, had an immediate reprint appeared, it would likely have sold a further 5,000 by the end of the year.⁵ Such a reprint was not possible owing to the controversy that soon followed publication.

Legal storm clouds had started gathering prior to publication. The first of these to break came from former French (F) Section agent Odette Hallowes. During the editing process, the Steering Committee had expressed concern over passages that saw Foot question the extent of the torture Hallowes had suffered while imprisoned, and the state of her mental health upon her return to Britain. Through his comments, Foot had also inadvertently questioned the validity of her George Cross.⁶ On 14 April, Edwin 'Eddie' Boxshall, the 'SOE Adviser' at the Foreign Office, reported that Hallowes was known to be 'in great distress'. Having had the passages about her treatment read out over the phone by a reporter who was reviewing the book for the *Daily Mail*, she intended to 'bring a libel action against the author'.⁷ The Deputy Treasury Solicitor, F.W. Charlton, was sent the papers on which Foot had drawn his conclusions about the treatment meted out to Hallowes, and asked to provide a legal opinion. While he expressed some concerns, he considered legal action unlikely.⁸ Nevertheless, with publication of *SOE in France* just days away, Hallowes' threat was unwelcome news. The seriousness with which it was received was reflected in the decision to inform both the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, and the Foreign Secretary, Michael Stewart, of the development, although neither politician proved particularly concerned.⁹

On 3 May, Hallowes' solicitor, Lord Goodman, wrote to the Paymaster General, the 'lover of secrets and self-styled security expert' George Wigg MP.¹⁰ Goodman felt that Hallowes had been 'gravely defamed', drawing attention to the implication that she was 'unworthy' of the George Cross, and entitled to damages. However, he explained that Hallowes had no interest in pursuing protracted litigation.¹¹ Rather, her 'solitary desire' was 'to bring it to an end in a fashion honourable to herself', which could be achieved through a public apology. The authorities considered this an agreeable course of action, and suggested that Foot 'might write to Mrs Hallowes expressing the view that the words he had used were less than felicitous and arranging for a revised form of words to be used when the book went for its next impression'.¹² Alongside Foot's letter, which it was suggested could be published in the *Times*, an answer to an 'inspired' Parliamentary Question would acknowledge that the passage concerning her George Cross had been 'infelicitously' worded.¹³ Tasked with approaching Foot 'to see whether he would agree' to write such a letter,¹⁴ Charlton explained the Committee's view that it was 'in everyone's interest – including the Governments's [sic] – to settle the matter out of Court'.¹⁵ While he maintained his opinion that the offending passage was 'not defamatory', Charlton explained that there was more to consider than solely the legal merits of Hallowes' case. He felt that 'it was quite possible that in view of the status of a war-time heroine she had acquired in the opinion of the public a jury might award her heavy damages for defamation'.¹⁶ After 'some discussion', Foot agreed to draft a letter for publication in the *Times*, along with a 'toned down' redraft of the passage concerning Hallowes' George Cross.¹⁷ This marked the beginning of a more protracted process of amendments and counter-amendments.¹⁸ The final version of the letter was eventually published in the *Times* on Monday 11 July, and the Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Mrs Eirene White, answered the 'inspired' parliamentary question later that day, while Hallowes, sat with Violette Szabo's daughter, looked on from the Speaker's Gallery.¹⁹

Instead of drawing a line under the matter, White's answer drove a wedge between Foot and the authorities with its reference to the restrictions that had been placed on his ability to interview former members of SOE during the research process. White stated:

It is the case that he [Foot] was asked to look at the papers first before consulting individuals, but after that he was able to consult whom he pleased.²⁰

The claim was, at best, misleading. Upon being offered the job of researching and writing *SOE in France*, Foot had been immediately informed that the history was to be based upon surviving archival material. Given the path-breaking nature of the project, and with a decision on publication to be made only on review of the completed manuscript, it was felt prudent to keep the number of people who knew of its existence – and who could thereby lobby for its publication – to a minimum. Yet such a cautious approach was adopted at the expense of history; the surviving SOE archive was far from complete, and any such archival-based account could only benefit from interviews with former members of the organisation.²¹

White's statement angered Foot, who wrote immediately to Cabinet Secretary Sir Burke Trend demanding its withdrawal, arguing that it 'is simply not true . . . it casts an odious slur on my integrity as an historian'.²² Foot wanted the matter dealt with quickly ('I am anxious to wipe off the mud before it has time to stick'), and threatened to write a further letter to the *Times* the following day 'unless I get in tomorrow's post a letter from her, or one of her seniors, that I can communicate to the press'.²³

An unedifying example of bureaucratic sleight of hand followed. Inspired by Trend's thinking on the matter, a reply to Foot was drafted, which carefully selected from earlier correspondence and papers to support White's position.²⁴ This emphasised the point that Foot had 'submitted a minimum list of three names' in May 1962, but made no mention of the fact that some months earlier, in September 1961, he had asked for permission to talk to former members of SOE, drawing up a list of 31 names. The request had been turned down, officials having concluded that it would be 'best to tell Foot that he would have to restrict himself to the documentary evidence'.²⁵ The draft reply also clearly outlined what the official line would be should news of the dispute reach the press, which was reiterated by Trend when he met with Foot on 13 July; in such an event, the authorities would have to 'put the matter in what the Government believed to be the right perspective', which was 'that it was the author's responsibility to see those whom on professional grounds he judged necessary to see and that at no stage had the Government prevented Foot from doing this'. Trend hoped that Foot 'would agree that it would be better to try and settle the matter amicably in discussion', to which end a private letter of apology from White to Foot was proposed.²⁶ White wrote to Foot on 21 July, noting that she was 'very sorry to hear that you felt unhappy about the words I used in the House of Commons'. She conceded that 'on reflection, perhaps I could have put the matter as briefly, but rather more exactly, if I had said "whom he judged necessary" instead of "whom he pleased"'. This was, however, as far as White was prepared to go, adding 'I am sure that there is no disagreement between us on the main point of principle, namely that you were never debarred from seeing any individuals whom, on professional grounds and for the sake of historical accuracy, you judged it necessary to see'.²⁷ Foot's reaction to White's letter is unknown, but it is difficult to imagine that he would have agreed with her 'main point of principle'.

II

As the wording for the apology to Odette Hallows was being agreed, news was received that Peter Churchill, her former husband and fellow F Section agent, was considering legal action. Foot believed that he had an opportunity to nip this in the bud, and, with official blessing, wrote to Churchill, but received no response.²⁸ On 10 June, Foot telephoned Boxshall, having been warned that Churchill 'had written to Colonel Buckmaster announcing his intention of bringing a libel action'.²⁹ On 24 June, Churchill's solicitors, Oswald Hickson, Collier & Co., wrote to Foot and HMSO, claiming that *SOE in France* contained 'as cruel and callous an attack upon brave men and women as has ever appeared in what purports to be an official publication'. Describing several references to Churchill as 'patently defamatory', the solicitors had been instructed 'to commence proceedings forthwith claiming substantial damages for libel'. The solicitors offered an opportunity to avoid this 'by publishing as soon as possible a full and unqualified withdrawal and apology to our client', along

with undertakings to withdraw the book from sale, recall of copies from libraries and to sell no further copies 'until the untrue defamatory references to our client have been deleted'.³⁰

Officials agreed that the demand that the book be withdrawn was 'unacceptable', and Charlton drafted a 'robust' response to Churchill's lawyers, a firm that was considered 'probably one of the best in matters concerning libel action'.³¹ He reminded them that Foot had already 'offered to consider making changes in certain passages in the text', but that no reply had been forthcoming.³² Continuing to refuse to engage in any discussion of specific passages, Churchill's lawyers now launched legal action.³³ On 11 August, a Writ and Statement of Claim was received, claiming damages for libel against Foot and HMSO,³⁴ which drew attention to three offending passages.³⁵ On 20 September, Churchill's solicitors wrote to inform Charlton that they would shortly meet with Churchill, to take 'his definitive instructions on the alterations which would render the book acceptable to him', and would seek a meeting to discuss these in due course'.³⁶

The Treasury Solicitors sought the Opinion of Counsel on the Writ. Two of the three passages flagged up were considered 'undoubtedly defamatory' to Churchill, and it was considered 'obviously desirable that the action should be settled if it can be settled on reasonable terms', proposing a figure of 'up to £1,000'.³⁷ Churchill's amendments were finally received towards the end of November, and Charlton immediately forwarded a copy to Foot,³⁸ who considered them 'acceptable in content, but not in form', sending his own counter-amendments in return.³⁹ With amendments acceptable to both Foot and Charlton agreed,⁴⁰ a meeting with Churchill's solicitors to discuss them 13 January 1967 brought some hopes of a conclusion to the case may be on the horizon, if agreement from both Churchill and Foot on some further amendments could be reached: 'therefore a good deal turns on our meeting next week with Foot', noted Wolfe, who 'hoped Foot would be reasonable'.⁴¹ The meeting produced further agreement on amendments put to Churchill's solicitors, who were 'prepared to agree the amendments we discussed at our meeting on the 19th of January, with one exception'.⁴² In the end, it took over a year for agreement on the amendments to be finalised, while the question of damages wore on for several more months. This was finally settled following a 'last ditch attempt' by Charlton and Wolfe in early January 1969.⁴³ Later in the month, Wolfe wrote to the Cabinet Office, noting that 'You will be pleased to hear that we have at last succeeded in settling this action'.⁴⁴ A statement made in open court on Monday 27 January, which referred to 'a very substantial sum of damages', was reported widely in the press.⁴⁵ The settlement saw £5000 paid in damages, along with £4900 costs.⁴⁶

In July 1966, with the *Odette* issue settled, Foot received another letter of complaint, from the writer R.J. Minney, author of *Carve Her Name With Pride*, an account of Violette Szabo's time with SOE in France. Foot's treatment of Minney's work in SOE in France had been terse, and once again at the heart of the issue was the question of torture; this time, that suffered by Szabo at the hand of the Germans following her capture in France. Minney had claimed that Szabo had been ill-treated, a conclusion reached on the basis of the citation for her George Cross, supported by personal testimony drawn from an interview Minney had conducted with Harry Peulevé, another F Section agent who recalled being transported to Germany with Szabo.⁴⁷ Before discussing Szabo, Foot made the pointed remark that 'stories of torture come from the prurient imaginations of authors anxious to make their books sell'. In the next paragraph, he noted that 'One tale of torture deserves particular notice, for it is only a tale':

The ghastly story of Violette Szabo's sufferings, published in her mother's and her daughter's lifetime, is so far as I can ascertain completely fictitious: no other evidence I have seen suggests that she was ever subjected to personal violence at all.⁴⁸

Minney felt that Foot's 'attack on me, made with such offensive emphasis . . . is most damaging to my reputation and my integrity as a writer'. Citing Foot's comments, Minney asked him: 'Can you produce any evidence at all to support your statement that Violette Szabo was not tortured? Why then should you regard your deduction as being more reliable than mine?' In

conclusion, Minney felt 'the least that decency demands is that you make a public apology to me by name in the public press. If you feel unable to do that I may find it necessary to seek legal advice'.⁴⁹ In contrast to his willingness to pre-empt legal action by making amendments to placate Churchill, Foot was altogether more unrepentant in his attitude towards Minney. He forwarded Minney's letter to Charlton on 18 July, along with a draft rebuttal of Minney's points.⁵⁰ Rather than offering the desired apology, Foot stood his ground, and asked Minney whether he would be prepared to allow him to see the original copy of the statement made by Peulevé.⁵¹

The case escalated in early August, at which point Foot received a letter from Minney's solicitors, Rubenstein, Nash and Co., who had advised Minney 'that he is entitled to a public apology and that, to this end, he is entitled to issue a Writ so that your apology, made in Open Court, may receive the widest publicity'.⁵² In reply, Charlton repeated Foot's request to see Minney's correspondence with Peulevé, adding that 'The question of an apology could perhaps await the results of our discussions and consideration of the evidence referred to above'.⁵³ With Charlton likely relieved that Minney 'does not seem to be claiming damages but only a public apology',⁵⁴ hopes that a swift settlement may follow were further raised when Minney's solicitors noted that their client 'would very much like to dispose of the matter amicably before he goes away on holiday at the end of the month'.⁵⁵ However, a further letter suggesting that an apology would be a 'necessary preliminary' to any discussion of Minney's material, with which Charlton disagreed,⁵⁶ followed by the news that Minney did not have access to the notes of his meeting with Peulevé, complicated matters.⁵⁷ With Minney unable to evidence what Peulevé had told him, Foot continued to stand his ground.

Szabo's citation for the George Cross was at the heart of the disagreement between Foot and Minney, on account of the fact that it made explicit reference to torture. While Minney accepted the statement that Szabo had been 'continuously and atrociously tortured' at face value, Foot was 'been unable from the records placed at his disposal to unearth any evidence acceptable to an impartial historian which supports these words in the citation'.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the statement had been made. As both Minney and Foot felt justified in maintaining their positions, Charlton concluded that 'It does not look as if we are going to settle this matter in an amicable way'.⁵⁹ A further exchange of letters between Charlton and Minney's solicitors followed, with Charlton asking for details of amendments that would satisfy Minney, until December, at which point proceedings for libel were launched.⁶⁰ On 6 January 1967, Charlton and Wolfe met with Minney's solicitors. After asking for details of the amendments that would satisfy Minney for several months, these were finally received two days before the meeting, at which the draft of a proposed public apology and the prospects for a settlement were also discussed, with Minney having 'his sights firmly fixed on a figure of £5000'.⁶¹ His attitude had 'considerably hardened' owing to the fact that his novel, *I wish her no harm*, had been published three days before *SOE in France*. Minney's lawyer now argued 'that due to the libellous passage about Minney. . .Minney's novel obtained no review publicity in the National Press as a result of which the publishers William KIMBER had reported that the sales were most disappointing'.⁶²

Having once again asked Counsel for advice, Charlton noted that 'The prospects of successfully defending these proceedings before a jury are not considered very bright'. Charlton requested permission to go up to £2500 to settle the case, along with agreed amendments to the text of a revised edition of the book.⁶³ By the time authorisation for the sum was granted,⁶⁴ Minney was not prepared to accept it, having been advised that a jury was likely to award a higher sum of 'at least £5000'.⁶⁵ An amended Statement of Claim was subsequently issued, which it was felt gave Minney a 'stronger case'. Charlton advised Jackson of the latest advice from Counsel: 'if we can settle this case for £5,000, we should do so'.⁶⁶ The possibility of settling for that sum was duly put to the Treasury. In the meantime, Charlton incorporated Minney's 'suggested revisions' into the manuscript being prepared for the second impression of the book, and asked Foot to consider them.⁶⁷

Foot did not hide his frustration at the need to amend his work in order to pacify Minney in his correspondence with Charlton:

As for the changes proposed by Minney's solicitors ... I am anxious to resist them: there are plenty of other authors who can be convicted of the divergencies from historical truth that these pages record, and I really don't see why – to suit one aggrieved writer, whom HMG appear anxious to compensate, if necessary at their own author's expense – any alteration is called for.⁶⁸

Charlton was anxious not to re-open discussion of amendments that had already been agreed ('I understood from your letter of "Twelfth night" 1967 that you did not object to Minney's solicitors' proposals. Need we therefore go back again on something which I understood was already agreed and possibly jeopardise the chances of a settlement?⁶⁹), but Foot continued to stand his ground. Writing again on 2 April, he told Charlton that he found one of the proposed changes 'sticking in my throat', adding 'What I find it hard to stomach is the thought that Minney is going to be able to say that I have admitted to the malicious conduct he alleges'.⁷⁰ Complicating matters further, Foot's letter was followed by news that Minney's solicitors 'wished further amendments to be incorporated in the text to take account of the matters raised by their amended statement of claim'.⁷¹

With Minney's solicitors now asking for damages of £7,500, Charlton was concerned that if this was offered, 'Minney's solicitors might then hold out for a still higher sum'. Fighting the case, however, meant 'that the terms of the citation for Mrs. Szabo's GC and the justification for the citation might be discussed in open court'.⁷² The prospect 'that the inaccuracies in the citation for Mrs. Szabo's George Cross might receive greater publicity' was not considered a cause for alarm ('If it became necessary, the inaccuracies could probably be defended on the grounds that they were made in good faith and related to confused war-time circumstances, etc.').⁷³ and Charlton felt 'the time had come to dig our toes in', and offer £5000.⁷⁴ With officials in agreement, and Ministerial and Treasury authority granted, Charlton met with Minney's solicitors, with 'every hope' of reaching a settlement.⁷⁵ Instead, he emerged with further suggested amendments, which were collated into a full list which now ran to 13 separate points and sent on to Foot.⁷⁶ Replying the next day, an aggrieved Foot noted: 'I cannot possibly agree to a number of Minney's proposals, which grossly exaggerate the historical value of his work'.⁷⁷ Notified of Foot's response, an exasperated Trend minuted: 'Did I not tell Foot that he really must accept Charlton's advice? Does Charlton want me to say it again?'⁷⁸ A meeting to discuss the proposed changes, attended by Foot, Charlton and Boxshall, was held on 22 May.⁷⁹ On some points a compromise was reached, but on others Foot held firm. The results of the meeting were immediately communicated to Minney's solicitors, with Charlton explaining tactfully that Foot was 'anxious not to alter the text of the book more than is necessary ... On the other hand, he is very willing to meet your client's objections to the text as far as possible'.⁸⁰ The reply from Minney's solicitors saw the list of substantive points now reduced to two, which were considered again by Foot and Charlton replied on 10 July with further proposed amendments, along with amendments to the draft statement to be read in open court. Minney's solicitors responded with a request for one final change on 19 July, which Foot agreed to the following day.⁸¹ Final agreement, on both the amendments and the statement, was eventually reached on 21 July 1967.⁸²

III

The length of the legal wranglings concerning both Minney and Churchill put paid to any prospect of the early appearance of a revised impression of the first edition. While a desire to meet all legally required changes at once was understandable, as time went on Charlton became increasingly concerned that the delay could hamper the agreement made with Hallows, and repeatedly urged publication as soon as possible. Officials were also concerned that others may decide to jump on the 'pecuniary bandwagon' – particularly when the amount awarded in damages in the Churchill and Minney cases became public knowledge, as was considered inevitable.⁸³ The merest hint of legal action was now sufficient for Foot to be encouraged to make further amendments to the manuscript beyond those passages where changes were required as part of legal settlements. Steps were now taken to both placate those who had previously expressed unhappiness with the work but

had yet to take legal action, and to immediately consider any newly raised concerns as they appeared, in order to ensure, as far as it was possible, that the revised impression would be legally fireproof.⁸⁴ The approach was not entirely compatible with the publication of a work of history, and a number of flashpoints with Foot soon followed.

That the official priority was the avoidance of any further legal action, even at the expense of the historical record, was made clear at a meeting held in Trend's room on 18 November 1966. During a discussion of the ongoing legal actions, it was noted that while Foot had agreed certain changes with Mr. Charlton, there were others, one or two to which he could not agree, since he believed the amendments proposed by complainants to be untrue. At this point, Trend 'advised Mr. Foot to depend on Mr. Charlton for legal advice in order to avoid further risks of litigation'.⁸⁵ Trend's point was reiterated by Jackson, who wrote to Charlton emphasising the need for him to consider 'the legal implications of the amendments' made to the text, and the need for him to 'consider whether the limited nature of his [Foot's] proposed changes, or his failure to suggest any changes at all in some cases, in response to approaches to him or us by various people after publication of the first edition, raises any risk of further legal actions once the book is reprinted'.⁸⁶ Jackson's letter reflected official concerns about the 'pecuniary bandwagon', as he asked Charlton:

is there...any danger that some of these people if they are not satisfied by Foot's changes, may be encouraged by the Odette, Churchill and Minney actions (the results of which will presumably become public) to take action on the basis of the reprint? ... We should also be grateful to know whether you think there is any danger of legal actions by people who read the book for the first time when it is reprinted or who have already read it though not hitherto surfaced about any passages they did not like, but who might be encouraged to do so by the Minney and Churchill cases.⁸⁷

Acknowledging the amount of work involved, Jackson explained that

the Treasury and our Ministers will need to be convinced before the reprint finally goes to the press that everything possible has been done to avoid any further legal actions which might lead to more payments being made from the Foreign Office Vote.⁸⁸

By 22 August, the amendments to the text were thought to be "'virtually" complete', and Charlton was again asked his view of the legal status of the amended manuscript in order to support a submission to Ministers to proceed with publication.⁸⁹ In terms of the complaints that had been received but had not yet led to legal action, Charlton believed that these had been 'on the whole fair', and that Foot 'by his amendments has met these objections in a reasonable manner, without admitting that the original comments were defamatory'. Charlton felt that 'we have done our best to obviate the risks of such proceedings, and to meet the reasonable objections that have been made'.⁹⁰

Charlton also recommended showing the revised text to Maurice Buckmaster, former Head of F Section, and Lawrence Grand, who had headed Section D, one of the forerunners of SOE, before proceeding with the reprint, both men being known to have been unhappy with the first edition. In the aftermath of publication, their views were afforded far greater consideration than had previously been the case.⁹¹

Having reviewed the changes, Buckmaster responded that he was pleased that certain passages had been amended, and considered these to 'constitute an improvement'. However, he also expressed disappointment 'that it has been decided to produce a second impression without rather more radical improvements, about which I have been in conversation and correspondence with Professor Foot for some months'. The revelation that Buckmaster and Foot had been in contact resulted in a tense stand-off between Foot and the authorities, with Foot's desire to delay making major changes to the work until its second edition at odds with the official desire to make as many amendments as possible for the revised impression, in the hope of preventing further legal surprises. Foot wrote to Charlton on 7 September, in response to a request to see his correspondence with Buckmaster, noting that 'As the letter deals with points for the second edition, rather than the reprint, I would

be glad if we could let it stand over until the copy for the second edition reaches you'.⁹² Undeterred, Charlton continued to press his request to see Foot's correspondence with Buckmaster:

... the Foreign Office have received a letter from Colonel Buckmaster in which he refers to his letter to you of 15th August last which he says set out a number of factual inaccuracies. It is for this reason that I wanted to see a copy of this letter, since if there are any inaccuracies that ought to be corrected, we ought to do so, and furthermore, these inaccuracies might lead to consequential amendments. I should be grateful therefore if you could let me have a copy of Colonel Buckmaster's letter.⁹³

Relations continued to deteriorate further. In response to another letter from Foot which was considered a 'disappointment', R.G. Watts of the Foreign Office wrote:

... as regards Buckmaster, you do not comment on his detailed criticism. . . It is accepted by all concerned that (as we told Buckmaster when ourselves inviting his comments) a major re-casting of your book would not be practicable at this stage. Nevertheless, it is surely incumbent on us. . . to see whether any of Buckmaster's criticisms are sufficiently convincing an important to call for immediate corrections in the reprint of your book. A second edition is not likely to appear for some time. . . and in the meantime the text of the reprint will stand.⁹⁴

Watts continued to state that 'Some of Buckmaster's points. . . make a direct appeal to our sense of fairness' – a comment that illustrates the extent of the change in official attitude towards the former Head of F Section, whose complaints about the manuscript prior to publication had been felt worthy of 'the scantiest consideration'.⁹⁵

Lawrence Grand's views were also now given greater consideration than had previously been the case.⁹⁶ While never directly employed by SOE, Grand had headed one of its predecessor organisations, Section D, part of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). The prevailing attitude towards Grand changed significantly following publication, after which Grand's unhappiness remained. On 3 June, Boxshall reported that Grand had been 'highly critical' of *SOE in France* at a dinner party, noting that 'he intended lodging a formal protest with the authorities'.⁹⁷ In light of this news, the omission of all mention of Grand in the revised edition was proposed, a course of action supported by Charlton.⁹⁸

Officials met to discuss both Grand and Buckmaster on 10 October. In addition to agreeing to remove references to Grand, it was agreed that all the points put forward by Buckmaster should be amended, in order 'to be fair' to him.⁹⁹ In order to achieve this, it was also agreed to take a firm line with Foot: 'If we are to bring Professor Foot to accept and authorize quickly the necessary amendments, we shall probably have to summon him to a meeting of all concerned'.

In adopting a new attitude of insisting upon amendments, the authorities pushed too far, and Foot drew a line in the sand. Writing to Charlton on 13 November, he noted that 'While willing to amend passages referring to Grand. . . I am not able to bring myself to suppress Grand's name'. Should the Committee continue to press for this, Foot continued, 'I'm afraid you must do it through an administrator not an historian. No historian worth his salt is going to touch such a smothering-up of the officially published truth'.¹⁰⁰ The letter led the authorities to reconsider. Charlton, who was 'most anxious' to proceed with the revised impression,¹⁰¹ now backed away from the disagreement, offering support for Foot's position. In relation to Grand, he felt that 'this is really no longer a matter for me as a lawyer, since your new amendments which touch on Grand seem to me to take the sting out of a lot of what was previously said. It is really a matter for the Foreign Office "policy-wise" to decide whether or not the name should appear. I personally do not think Grand will bring any defamation proceedings based on the revised text to appear in the reprint'.¹⁰² Charlton also conveyed his views to Dame Barbara Salt, noting that 'Grand's name having appeared in the first edition of the book, I should have thought that not very much further harm would be caused by it appearing in the reprint of the first edition'.¹⁰³ In relation to Buckmaster, Charlton also offered support for Foot, suggesting that 'it was not feasible to try and meet' all of Buckmaster's comments at this stage, and proposing that the majority 'could be better covered. . . in the proposed second edition'.¹⁰⁴

The clash with Foot marked the culmination of official efforts to further fireproof the text against legal action. The proofs for the revised impression were circulated in January, with Foot returning his annotated copy just over a week later.¹⁰⁵ When the remaining amendments required by Churchill agreed by early April, the 'last impediment to the publication of the Second impression' was removed.¹⁰⁶

IV

Publication of the revised first impression had been considerably delayed by the protracted nature of the legal cases that followed, and the wrangling over the revisions necessary to satisfy those concerned. The hold up to the appearance of the revised edition was such that Charlton wrote to Hallowes' solicitors, on 14 December 1966, apologising for the delay.¹⁰⁷ Some 16 months later, agreement from Churchill in early April 1968 on an outstanding piece of wording finally removed the last legal hurdle facing the revised impression, which arrived on the shelves in August 1968. Publication was accompanied by little by way of fanfare. The guidance prepared for Foreign Office News Departments noted:

In spite of H.M.S.O.'s natural interest in selling as many copies as possible to the public, it has been agreed between all departments concerned that we should not go unduly out of our way to stimulate press and public interest in it.¹⁰⁸

It was agreed that Foot would be shown the guidance, while the Foreign Office 'would do anything possible to ensure that he would be discreet with the press'.¹⁰⁹

By the time the revised impression appeared, Foot was formally engaged in further research for a more extensively revised second edition of the book, completing the revised manuscript by November 1969. However, the authorities ultimately decided against publication, a decision influenced by Dame Barbara Salt's determination that it 'should never see the light of day', a consequence of 'the libel actions caused chiefly by Foot's acid comments on certain individuals'.¹¹⁰ Salt wrote to Trend on 19 November, by which time the revised text had been 'carefully examined' by both Boxshall and herself, neither of whom were overly impressed:

... we cannot find anything in the alterations made to the text which would justify the time and expense entailed in preparing it for circulation. Most of the changes are trivial and narrative in character and alters [sic] the whole tenor of the book so little that we do not think the whole warrants classification as a 'Second Edition' at all ... The historical value of the work is in no way enhanced and some of the additions would have to be rejected out of hand.¹¹¹

As such, Salt put forward the 'very firm recommendation' that 'we should at this stage simply put the text as it is into indefinite cold storage in our archives to be brought up annually for reconsideration'. After some closer examination of Salt's views, Trend was advised that he would 'be justified in acquiescing in her proposal not to publish', but on the condition that Salt 'will ensure that HMSO do not let the present edition go out of print'.¹¹² Salt confirmed that HMSO would 'let us know well in advance should they look like having to re-run the reprint', and informed Foot of the decision.¹¹³ An unhappy Foot wrote to Trend, noting that 'I know you will understand that I shall do anything that I fairly can to reverse the decision'.¹¹⁴ Trend alerted Dame Barbara, informing her that he had received 'the sort of vigorous protest which you can imagine'.¹¹⁵

Foot proceeded to ask for his revised work to be reviewed by a professional historian, a request Salt considered 'a nuisance but fair: an Englishman has after all a right to be judged by his peers'.¹¹⁶ She arranged for the manuscript to be read by Bill Deakin, who felt that it 'adds so little of worth to the old one that HMG would have to have some very potent special reason for publication to make it worth while going ahead with the project'.¹¹⁷ On 5 November, Salt notified Foot of the anonymous historian's view.¹¹⁸ Here matters stood for some time, as official attention turned to the development of the wider official history of intelligence during the Second World War.¹¹⁹ In September 1974, HMSO raised the question of either a further reprint or a new edition. With some 435 copies left in

stock, HMSO estimated that it had enough 'to last for about 2 ½ years at the present rate of issue'.¹²⁰ In line with previous discussions, Child now raised the question of whether pursuing a reprint, rather than a new edition, was still considered the best way forward.¹²¹ Officials agreed that it was.¹²²

A third impression of the first edition was duly published in paperback in late 1976. On 5 January 1977 a surprised, and annoyed, Foot wrote directly to the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Crossland, to complain that he had not been informed of the decision to publish a further impression ('I discovered this by chance ... the usual courtesies of some notice, or even a copy, to the author having been omitted'), without consideration of the revised second edition ('It's hard to see what useful purpose is served by reprinting the book in this obsolete version. Can anything now be done to get the second edition out?').¹²³ While apologising for failing to inform Foot about the reprint, Crossland's reply scotched any hopes of the appearance of a new edition ('I do not think in the circumstances that we would at present be justified in producing a second edition').¹²⁴ The lack of interest in pursuing a new edition suggests that the failure to inform Foot of the reprint was not entirely an oversight, as the Cabinet Office claimed.¹²⁵ An official admitted that the failure to contact Foot 'was probably deliberate insofar as it would be less difficult to proceed as we and the FCO wished ... by reprinting from the second impression and presenting Professor Foot with a fait accompli; rather than attempt to persuade him that we should not take this opportunity to publish his second edition'.¹²⁶ In response to Crossland's apology, Foot warned that 'If ever the proposal to reprint the current printed text yet again should come up, and be accepted, I would be compelled to protest – this time in public – that the reprint was made without my authority or agreement'.¹²⁷ The warning appears to have been received lightly; officials noted that 'Should the question of a further reprint come up we shall need ... to look hard at its merits before choosing again to ignore the second edition'.¹²⁸

V

By the time the legal cases were settled and the revised first impression published, officials felt that enough time had been spent on *SOE in France*, and were keen to lay this particular experience of official history to rest. What impact did the 'painful aftermath' that followed publication have on official histories of intelligence and security affairs? In some respects, surprisingly little: Trend confided in Boxshall that 'in spite of the libel actions he did not regret the decision to publish "SOE in France",¹²⁹ and discussions over which area of SOE operations should be focused on next continued. Yet while this area of official history had a future, there would be changes to the way it would be approached, which is where the impact of the experience of *SOE in France* can be seen.

In July 1969, the Foreign Office completed a study which considered the prospect of future histories of SOE.¹³⁰ The report contained a short section dedicated to the 'lessons to be learned' from *SOE in France*, which focused on the:

... fact that it went beyond what some critics regard as the proper role of a historian in giving the true names of individuals without their consent and often passing personal judgements on them, to say nothing of the asperity of tone in which these were sometimes couched. Many people ... think it wrong to disclose true names at all without the expressed consent of every named person; and if they have died they should never be named at all except under a pseudonym.¹³¹

In focussing its criticism on the 'proper role' of the historian, the report failed to acknowledge the fact that the decision to name SOE officers and agents had been taken by the committee of officials who prepared Foot's manuscript for publication (nor did it mention the dismissive attitude displayed towards these individuals during the discussions, where they were referred to collectively as 'the "small fry"'¹³²), but the point was made; any further studies of SOE would do well to avoid too great a focus upon the details of operations and the specific personnel involved. The report suggested that there should be 'one, or if essential two, further volumes covering the whole scope of SOE activity in a broad survey'.¹³³ Such an approach 'clearly could not enter into anything like the operational detail

given in Professor Foot's book', which 'should simplify problems both of security and of individual susceptibilities', and perhaps most significantly 'would go some way towards lessening the real problem concerning the disclosure of names of agents ... and also the danger of libel actions'.¹³⁴ While in the event future official histories did not appear until the 1980s, the next two volumes, on the Far East and Scandinavia, adhered to the broader approach that had been recommended. In the meantime, it can also be suggested that the multi-volume *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, by Sir Harry Hinsley and others, which occupied a considerable degree of official attention during the 1970s, also heeded the warnings provided by the experience of *SOE in France* by largely steering clear of naming individuals, a review by former Chief of SIS Sir Maurice Oldfield describing it as 'a book written by a committee, about committees, for committees', suggesting that perhaps the pendulum had swung too far in the opposite direction.¹³⁵ While *SOE in France* can be considered the first in a long line of official secret history prepared for publication, in its approach to its subject it remains unique.

Notes

1. Eddie Boxshall, 'Notes on the decision to authorise an official history on SOE', March 14, 1969, CAB 163/134, TNA.
2. In order to present a coherent account of the aftermath of publication, some of the issues that followed, such as the aborted plan to publish a French language edition of the book, along with relatively minor complaints that did not escalate, such as those concerning Dame Irene Ward and Jean Overton-Fuller, are not covered here.
3. For an account of the process whereby *SOE in France* was vetted prior to publication, see Murphy, 'Whitehall, Intelligence and Official History: Editing *SOE in France*'.
4. Thompson to McIndoe, June 10, 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA. For the first weeks after publication, there was 'very heavy pressure of demand', with sales running at up to 400 copies a day.
5. Jackson to Reid, October 19, 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
6. The passage read: 'The other stories of torture come from the prurient imaginations of authors anxious to make their books sell; apparently with one exception, the story that Mrs. Sansom had all her toenails pulled out at the Avenue Foch. She did return from Germany with some of her toenails missing; unfortunately her experiences in Ravensbruck had induced in her a state of nervous tension so severe that she had considerable trouble for many months in distinguishing fantasy and reality, and it is likely enough that she got the two confused in trying to give an honest account of what she had been through. In her formal interrogation on her return, she made no reference to this incident at all. The story has now become a well-established part of the folklore of the war ... and it is neither charitable nor magnanimous to complain as some brave men and some vindictive gossips do that her GC should never have been given her'. Foot, *SOE in France*, 431.
7. Boxshall to Jackson, April 14, 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA.
8. Charlton to Boxshall, 18 April 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA. Charlton noted that the copies of Hallows' two interrogations, held on SOE's files, were incomplete. He considered this to be 'of some importance because Foot says in his book that in her formal interrogation on her return she made no reference to this incident at all. I do not see how he can say this if he has not seen the whole of the interrogation'. Charlton also noted that a further document, 'quoted as the authority for saying that Odette Sansom for many months had difficulty in distinguishing fantasy and reality, unfortunately does not contain words to this effect' (Charlton to Boxshall, 18 April 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA). At a meeting with Charlton on 21 April, Foot 'confirmed that Odette's interrogation report on her file was incomplete' when he saw it. The offending passage was then discussed 'at some length'. Foot maintained that it constituted 'fair comment and a fair inference from the contents of the report itself' ('Notes on some points discussed by Mr. Charlton with Mr. Foot on 21 April 1966', CAB 103/575, TNA).
9. McIndoe informed Trend that Stewart 'took the news calmly' when told of the possible libel action, while Trend noted that Wilson's reaction 'was much the same' as the Foreign Secretary's. (McIndoe to Trend, 25 April 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA; Trend's reply is scribbled along the bottom of the minute.).
10. Aldrich and Cormac, *The Black Door*, 260.
11. Goodman to Wigg, May 3, 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA.
12. 'Note of a Meeting held in Sir Burke Trend's Room on Wednesday, 4th May, 1966, at 5.45pm', CAB 103/575, TNA.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. 'DRAFT: Notes on the meeting of 7th May 1966 in Mr. CHARLTON's Office', CAB 103/575, TNA.
16. Ibid.
17. Foot to Charlton, 7 May 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA.

18. Charlton to Foot, 10 May 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA; Charlton to McIndoe, May 11, 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA; Charlton to Jackson, May 13, 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA; Charlton to Foot, 13 May 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA.
19. White to Goodman, 24 June 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA; Extract Taken From *The Times* Dated 11 July 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA; Extract Taken From Hansard dated Monday, 11 July, 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
20. Extract Taken From Hansard Dated Monday, 11 July, 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
21. For more on the SOE archive, see Stuart, 'Of Historical Interest Only'.
22. Foot to Trend, 12 July 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
23. Ibid.
24. 'Draft letter to Mr Foot' (undated), CAB 103/576, TNA.
25. Trend to Wilkinson, 17 October 1961, CAB 103/571, TNA.
26. McIndoe to Jackson, 14 July 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
27. White to Foot, 21 July 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA. Elsewhere in the Foreign Office, Foot's position was viewed more sympathetically. Discussing the book in October 1966, J.E. Jackson wrote 'it has been pointed out that the book's success has been qualified by serious criticism because Foot did not consult more people and/or French sources; but here ... Foot was not entirely a free agent'. (Jackson to Reid, 19 October 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.).
28. Foot to Charlton, 15 May 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA; Humphreys to Foot, 16 May 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA.
29. Boxshall to Jackson, PUSD, 10 June 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA.
30. Hickson, Collier & Co to The Comptroller, HMSO, 24 June 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA.
31. 'Record of the Meeting held at the Foreign Office on 27 June 1966 3 to 5.45 p.m.', CAB 103/575, TNA; Reid to Trend and McIndoe, 30 June 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA.
32. Jackson to Hickson, Collier & Co, 30 June 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA.
33. Hickson, Collier and Co to Charlton, 19 July 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
34. Writ & Statement of Claim, 11 August 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
35. As discussed at a meeting with Charlton that examined Churchill's Statement of Claim, the first was an observation by Foot that 'Neither patience nor diplomacy was Plaintiff's long suit', a comment which was felt to be 'neither defamatory nor written with malice'. The second centred around a passage that observed that 'Luxury, in the end, was as much a cause of SPINDLE's undoing as were the stresses in CARTE etc', while the third focused on a passage which noted that 'Churchill had a habit of keeping old W/T/messages etc'. ('Record of Meeting in Mr Charlton's Office on 24 August, 1966', CAB 103/576, TNA.).
36. Hickson, Collier & Co to Charlton, 20 September 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
37. 'Opinion', Peter Bristow & Nigel Bridge, 10 October 1966, CAB103/576, TNA.
38. Charlton to Foot, 25 November 1966, CAB103/577, TNA.
39. Foot to Charlton, 27 November 1966, CAB103/577, TNA.
40. Charlton to Foot, 6 December 1966, CAB103/577, TNA; Foot to Charlton, 7 December 1966, CAB103/577, TNA.
41. Wolfe to Jackson, 13 January 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA; EGB, 'Note for the Record', 10 January 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
42. Charlton to Foot, 13 February 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA. Charlton did 'not feel it is worth while arguing further about this amendment' (a technical point concerning a copy of a message), and hoped that Foot would 'agree this minor amendment and I can then, I hope, proceed to settle the action'.
43. Wilson, 'Note', 13 January 1969, CAB 103/579, TNA.
44. Wolfe to Wilson, 23 January 1969, CAB 103/579, TNA.
45. See for example T.H. Johnston, 'Secret agent gets libel settlement', *Evening News*, 27 January 1969; 'Wartime agent gets libel damages', *The Times*, 28 January 1969.
46. Wilson to Nunn, 24 January 1969, CAB 103/579, TNA.
47. See Violette Szabo's Personnel File (HS9/1435, TNA). The citation for Szabo's George Cross noted that, following her arrest, she 'had to endure solitary confinement and the torture of the cold douche, and others', going on to note: 'Although SZABO was continuously and atrociously tortured she never by word or deed gave away any of her acquaintances or told the enemy anything of any value'. (Minney to Foot, 15 July 1966, CAB103/576, TNA.).
48. Foot, *SOE in France*, 431.
49. Minney to Foot, 15.07.1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
50. Foot to Charlton, 18 07.1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
51. Foot to Minney (undated draft), CAB 103/576, TNA.
52. Rubinstein, Nash & Co. to Foot, 5 August 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
53. Charlton to Rubinstein, Nash & Co., 11 August 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
54. Charlton to Foot, 11 August 1966, CAB 103/577, TNA.
55. Rubinstein, Nash & Co. to Charlton, 11 August 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
56. Rubinstein, Nash & Co. to Charlton, 12 August 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA; Charlton to Rubinstein, Nash & Co., 15 August 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
57. Rubinstein, Nash & Co. to Charlton, 18 August 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA. The letter quoted correspondence with Minney, in which the author noted: 'The original note was written by me at the end of our talk when, after some reflection, Peuleve dictated what I should quote him as saying. So I cannot see what purpose my search for the

original note would be now. These precise words were sent to Peuleve in typescript for checking and appeared exactly in that form in my book, which it must be remembered was published in Peuleve's lifetime'. The solicitors concluded: 'If Mr. Peuleve had had any reason to dissent from Mr. Minney's statement in the book he had amply opportunity of doing so during his lifetime, the fact that he did not must, please, be accepted as incontrovertible evidence that he could not'.

58. Charlton to Rubinstein, Nash & Co (undated draft), CAB 103/576, TNA.
59. Charlton to Reid, 26 October 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA.
60. Charlton to Rubinstein, Nash & Co., 7 November 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA; Rubinstein & Co. to Charlton, 10 November, 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA; Charlton to Rubinstein, 18 November 1966, CAB 103/576, TNA; Rubinstein, Nash & Co to Charlton, 21 November 1966, CAB 103/576.
61. Wolfe to Jackson, 13 January 1967, CAB 103/577.
62. Boxshall, 'Note for the record Re: Minney's Libel Suit', 10 January 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
63. Charlton to Hancock, 13 February 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
64. Whitbread to Charlton, 20 February 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
65. Wolfe to Hancock, 23 February 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
66. Charlton to Jackson, 23 March 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
67. Charlton to Foot, 6 March 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA. He wrote to Foot again, with some further amendments related to Minney, on 23 March. (Charlton to Foot, 23 March 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.).
68. Foot to Charlton, 27 March 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
69. Charlton to Foot, 29 March 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
70. Foot to Charlton, 2 April 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
71. Charlton to Jackson, 11 April 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
72. Reid, 'Confidential Note for Record: SOE in France', 12 April 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
73. Jackson, 12 April 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
74. Ibid.
75. Hancock to Jackson, 9 May 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA; Charlton to Foot, 16 May 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
76. Charlton to Foot, 16 May 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
77. Foot to Charlton, 17 May 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
78. Compliments slip covering Charlton to Foot, 16 May 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA. Charlton did not feel it necessary for Trend to intervene (Reid, 19 May 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA), but later noted 'I am bearing in mind Burke Trend's views if Foot turns out to be completely unreasonable'. (Charlton to Jackson, 31 May 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.).
79. 'Notes on Meeting in Mr. Charlton's office from 11.30 to 12.30 on 22 May 1967', CAB 103/579, TNA.
80. Charlton to Rubinstein, 22 May 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
81. Rubinstein to Charlton, 19 July 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA; Wolfe to Rubinstein, 20 July 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
82. Wolfe to Foot, 24 July 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
83. Salt to Trend, 24 February 1969, CAB 103/569, TNA. Such concern was not without foundation, as was demonstrated by the threat of legal action from Nicholas Bodington, one-time deputy head of F Section. The Foreign Office was fully aware that 'When last heard of officially, Mr. Bodington was reported to be in a bad way financially, so I am afraid this looks rather like an attempt to climb on the pecuniary band wagon'.
84. 'Note of a Meeting held in Sir Burke Trend's Room on Wednesday, 4th MAY, 1966, at 5.45 p.m.', CAB 103/575, TNA.
85. 'Note of a Meeting held in Sir Burke Trend's Room, Cabinet Office, Whitehall, S.W.1., on FRIDAY, 18th NOVEMBER, 1966, at 4.00 p.m.', CAB 103/576, TNA.
86. Jackson to Charlton, 6 February 1967, CAB 103/577, TNA.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Watts to Thompson, 22 August 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA; Watts to Charlton, 22 August 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid. The official attitude towards Buckmaster had initially been dismissive; having read Foot's completed manuscript, Wilkinson observed that Buckmaster 'does not come out of the story at all well; but this is only fair ... In view of his past behaviour, particularly since the end of the war when he has done nothing but blow his own trumpet, Colonel Buckmaster deserves the scantiest consideration'. (Wilkinson to Trend, 12 December 1963, CAB 103/571, TNA.).
When he had learned of plans to publish *SOE in France*, Grand had been alarmed at the prospect of his name being associated with the origins of the organisation, which he believed would damage his current business interests in the Middle East, and threatened to take legal action. Grand had expressed his concerns in a letter to Sir Paul Gore-Booth. In reply, Sir Paul pointed out that the references to Grand were 'not more numerous' than those that had appeared in the unofficial memoir *Baker Street Irregular*, published the previous year and 'which dealt in some detail with the activities of D Section'. (Gore-Booth to Grand, 26 April 1966, PREM 13/949, TNA.) Unsatisfied with Gore-Booth's reply, Grand had appealed directly to the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. His letter was greeted with neither sympathy nor any great sense of concern. (See correspondence in PREM 13/949, TNA.)
92. Foot to Charlton, 7 September 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.

93. Charlton to Foot, 2 October 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
94. Watts to Foot, 4 October 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
95. Wilkinson to Trend, 12 December 1963, CAB 103/571, TNA.
96. Grand to Gore-Booth, 19 April 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA; Grand to McIndoe, 21 April 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA; Boxshall, 'Note', 21 April 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA; Boxshall to Jackson, 22 April 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA.
97. Boxshall, 'Note', 3 June 1966, CAB 103/575, TNA.
98. Watts to Charlton, 26 September 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA; Watts to Jackson, 11 October 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
99. Watts to Jackson, 11 October 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
100. Ibid.
101. Charlton to Watts, 20 October 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
102. Charlton to Foot, 16 November 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
103. Charlton to Salt, 15 November 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA. Grand's annoyance was defused by Dame Barbara Salt, who met with him and discussed the revised versions of the passages that had caused concern. She reported that he was 'very pleased...I think we are probably over that hurdle...and need now fear no further trouble in the shape of legal action from the General'. (Salt to Charlton, 1 December 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.).
104. Charlton to Salt, November 15, 1967, CAB 103/579, TNA.
105. Anon to Salt, January 15, 1968, CAB 103/579, TNA; Foot to Salt, 23 Jan 1968, CAB 103/579, TNA.
106. Wolfe to Salt, April 8, 1968, CAB 103/579, TNA.
107. Charlton to Goodman, Derrick & Co., December 14, 1966, CAB 103/577, TNA.
108. 'Guidance to Foreign Office News Department: Second Impression of "S.O.E. in France" with Amendments', CAB 103/579, TNA.
109. 'Minutes of Meeting held at the Foreign Office on April 24th 1968 at 11–00 a.m. to discuss publicity for the "Second Impression with amendments of S.O.E. in France"', CAB 103/579, TNA.
110. Boxshall, 'Notes on the decision to authorise an official history on SOE', March 14, 1969, CAB 163/134, TNA.
111. Salt to Trend, November 19, 1969, CAB 103/581, TNA.
112. Child to Trend, 16 January 1970, CAB 103/581, TNA; Trend to Salt, January 22, 1970, CAB 103/581, TNA.
113. Salt to Trend, January 27, 1970, CAB 103/581, TNA.
114. Foot to Trend, January 29, 1970, CAB 103/581, TNA.
115. Trend to Salt, March 13, 1970, CAB 103/581, TNA.
116. Salt, 'Record of Conversation: "S.O.E. in France" draft for 2nd Edition', March 16, 1970, CAB 103/581, TNA.
117. Salt to Trend, July 24, 1970, CAB 103/581, TNA.
118. Salt to Foot, November 5, 1970, CAB 103/581, TNA.
119. See Moran, *Classified*, Chapter 8.
120. Woolway to Child, 6 September 1974, CAB 103/581, TNA.
121. Child to Everett, 11 September 1974, CAB 103/581, TNA.
122. Everett to Child, 24 September 1974, CAB 103/581, TNA; Child to Woolsey, 30 September 1974, CAB 103/581, TNA.
123. Foot to Crossland, 5 January 1977, CAB 103/582, TNA.
124. Draft: Crossland to Foot, 21 January 1977, CAB 103/582, TNA.
125. Hervey, 14 January 1977, CAB 103/582, TNA.
126. Theobald to McIndoe, 28 January 1977, CAB 103/582, TNA.
127. Foot to Crossland, 25 January 1977, CAB 103/582, TNA.
128. Thorpe to Theobald, 1 February 1977, CAB 103/582, TNA.
129. Boxshall, 'Notes on the decision to authorise an official history on SOE', 14 March 1969, CAB 163/134, TNA.
130. 'Study of the pros & cons of publication of further histories of SOE in the light of experience gained since the decision to publish "SOE in France"', July 1969, CAB 103/570, TNA.
131. Ibid.
132. The phrase appears to be used for the first time in Boxshall to Figg, 13 July 1964, CAB 103/572, TNA.
133. 'Study of the pros & cons of publication of further histories of SOE in the light of experience gained since the decision to publish "SOE in France"', July 1969, CAB 103/570, TNA.
134. Ibid.
135. Cited in Moran, *Classified*, 324.

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Notes on contributor

Christopher J. Murphy is Senior Lecturer in Intelligence Studies at the University of Salford. His latest book, *Intelligence and Espionage: Secrets and Spies* (with Daniel W.B. Lomas) is published by Routledge (2019).

ORCID

Christopher J. Murphy  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5056-7879>

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