

# A NARCHIST REVIEW

NUMBER 6



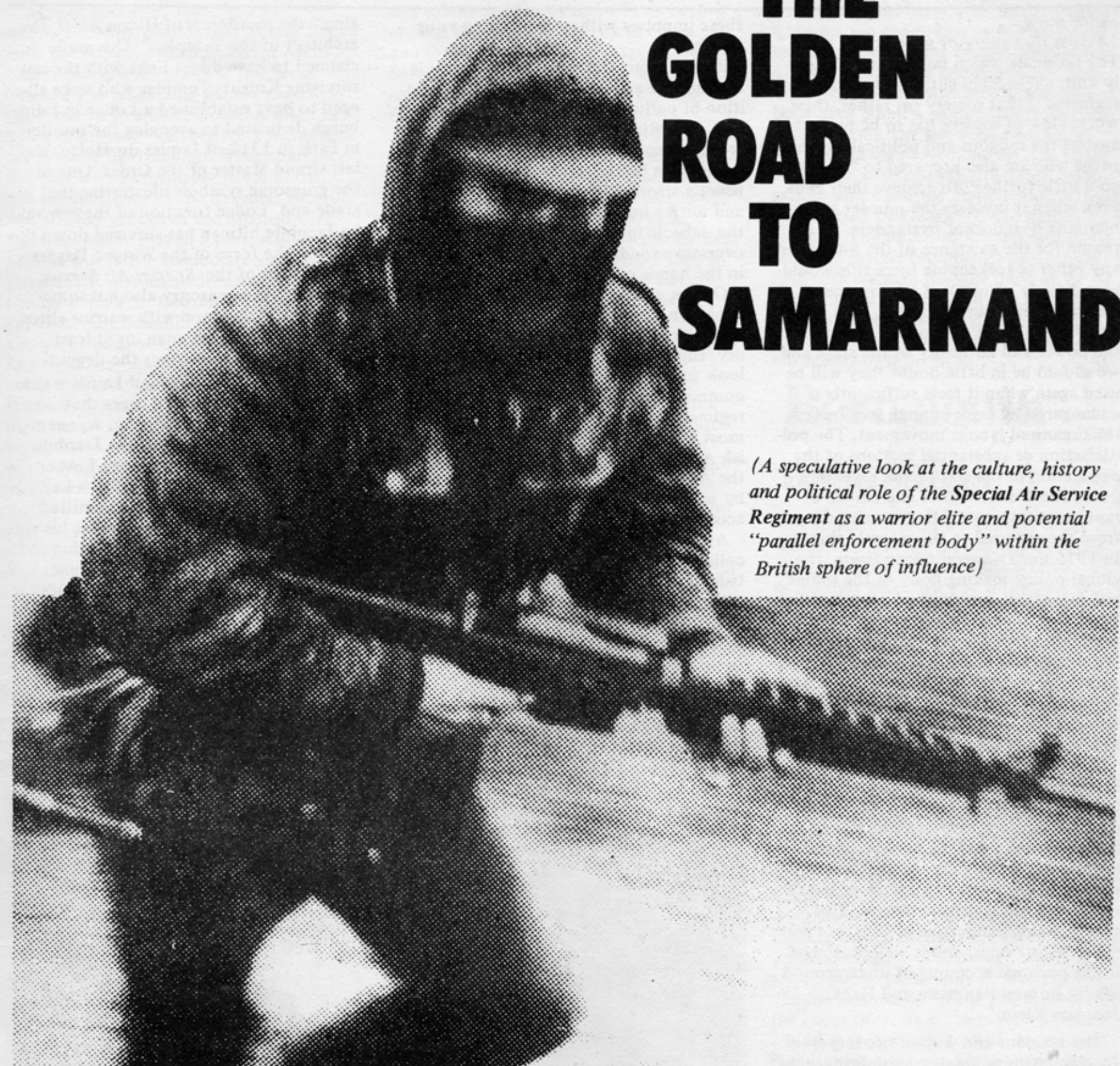
THE GOLDEN ROAD TO SAMARKAND-

A speculative look at the SAS as contemporary Knights Kadosh - the State's 30<sup>0</sup> hit-men

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# THE GOLDEN ROAD TO SAMARKAND

*(A speculative look at the culture, history and political role of the Special Air Service Regiment as a warrior elite and potential "parallel enforcement body" within the British sphere of influence)*



Not many people will argue with the premise that the fragmented and polarised nature of western capitalist society makes it necessary to countenance the existence of highly trained, disciplined and dedicated groups of people who are prepared to risk their lives and save and defend endangered sections of the community. The Fire Brigade and Lifeboat Service are two cases in point, particularly in view of the recent Penlee Lifeboat disaster in Cornwall. The police, security and armed services also have, arguably, socially useful functions. However, as part of the coercive apparatus of the state I would argue that these functions serve as a mask for the true role of the forces of law and order — to defend and uphold the power, privilege and interests of the ruling class.

Among the agencies of state whose ostensible role is to defend this country of ours, two groups spring to mind as renowned for their swashbucklingly dangerous and heroic exploits - and their total lack of accountability: the Security/Intelligence Services and the Special Air Service Regiment. A lot of attention has been focused on the various branches of

the former group over recent years with the result we now have a slightly better idea as to how HMG's Secret Service operates than before, but so far few - other than a handful of left-wing investigative journalists - have managed to penetrate very deeply through the veil of secrecy surrounding the SAS and its

sinister "parallel" and unofficial commercial regiments which are co-ordinated through the SAS Regimental Association. Does the autonomous structure and security blanket which cloaks this legendary regiment provide a breeding ground for extreme right wing adventurers? To what extent does its rise to prominence reflect the relatively new development in British military history of political involvement by its officer class? Lastly, is the increasing politicisation of the officer class likely to have any constitutional effect on the government of Britain?

On the monument to the SAS dead at their Bradbury Lines barracks near Hereford is inscribed this poem which reflects the ethos of these 20th Century samurai: "We are the pilgrims, Master, we shall go Always a little further. It may be Beyond that last blue mountain buried

with snow,

*Across that angry or glimmering sea...."*

The rationale which motivates this tightly knit, exclusively elitist and secretive regiment is that society or, rather, their world view of society has to be protected against the religious and political psychopaths who are also prepared to "always go a little further" to achieve their ends, even when it involves the murder and maiming of innocent bystanders. As a reason for the existence of the SAS or an any other peacekeeping force this would sound fairly plausible if the argument stopped there, but it doesn't. Elite troops have always been used to maintain the power and authority of the state and we should be in little doubt they will be used again when it feels sufficiently endangered by large enough sections of the organised labour movement. The politicisation of substantial sections of the population in the sixties and seventies jolted the Western elites and forced a rapid reassessment of the security danger from the external to the internal threat. In 1975 the *Trilateral Commission*, the global policy making body of the industrial democracies, published a work called *The Crisis of Democracy* which interpreted the growing popular demand for greater participation in the decision-making process as a threat to democracy, and one that had to be contained if their concept of "democracy" was to survive in a workable fashion.<sup>1</sup>

No matter how well-trained or idealistic the members of a secret society may be, there inevitably comes a time when conflict develops between obligations to one's comrades and the society of the outside world. Equally inevitable is the abandonment or suspension of ordinary moral and social considerations. This applies to *all* clandestine groups, not just the sub-state ones, and is well illustrated in the personal accounts of underground life by Bommi Baumann and Hans Joachim Klein.<sup>2</sup>

The tensions and way of life imposed by clandestinity created an unbridgeable gap between their world view of reality and that of people outside their immediate circle and ideology. I cite the *June 2nd Group* simply as an example of what was originally a *highly idealistic* group as opposed to the arbitrary, random and deliberate brutality of neo-nazi and statist terrorism.

Count Windischgratz, a reactionary but astute observer of human nature, noted in 1788 that the directors of secret societies could never be certain the men they recruited would always have sufficient strength of character not to abuse the techniques of control made available to them. He went on to warn the aspiring arbiters of the public good: "A man who sets himself up to govern the minds of others is hardly ever one whose ideas are sensible and almost always one whose mind is mediocre.... Start by recognising that you have no right to act in this way; you are not the emissaries of the Almighty; you cannot ever give way to

these impulses without forgetting your duties."<sup>3</sup>

By and large, the warrior elite ethos is foreign to England which has a long tradition of parliamentary government. It is also a maritime nation which up until recently was given to fighting most of its decisive battles at sea. Militarism was never a strong force in English politics and until a hundred years ago following the debacle in the Crimea the raising of overseas expeditionary forces was mainly in the hands of the aristocracy.

On the other hand, the Scottish Highland clan system which existed more or less intact until the mid-eighteenth century, supported a fiercely militarist outlook with a cohesiveness and loyalty to commanders that made the Highland regiments admired the world over as the most effective fighting units in the British Army. In return for military service the Army became the traditional means by which the Highland laird class gained access to polite English "society".

After the defeat of 1745 and the final collapse of the feudal power of the Scottish clan chieftans, many of these Jacobite landowners turned to Freemasonry as a sort of political lifebelt in order to maintain their privileges and act as an outlet their flights of fancy regarding the restoration of the Stuarts to the British throne. Among the many new degrees of Freemasonry which flourished in Jacobite Scotland at this time was that of Knight Kadosh (30th Degree) which commemorated Solomons' "chosen masters" charged with bringing back "dead or

alive" the murderers of Hiram Abiff, the architect of the Temple.<sup>4</sup> This grade claimed to have direct links with the last surviving Knights Templar who were alleged to have established a Lodge in Edinburgh dedicated to avenging the murder in Paris in 1312 of Jaques du Molay, the last Grand Master of the Order. One of the gruesome symbols illustrating the grade and Lodge function of these would be Jacobite hitmen has survived down the years in the form of the Winged Dagger - the emblem of the *Special Air Service Regiment*. Freemasonry also has something else in common with warrior elites - it is usually anti-woman, or at least excludes women. Perhaps the devout Catholicism of the Highland Lairds was a sublimation of the sexual urges that usually accompany mysogyny. As exemplified by the behaviour of the Jacobite Simon Fraser, the twelfth Lord Lovat (1667-1747) - a family who play a key role in the SAS story - who committed such unheard of barbarities against his second wife, Primrose Campbell, that she was granted the unusual (for the time) legal privilege of a second maintenance from him.<sup>5</sup> Be that as it may, in the 17th and 18th Centuries Roman Catholic, Jacobite Freemasonry was such a powerful and cohesive political force opposing integration with the Protestant dominated Union and committed to forwarding the interests of the Roman Catholic landowning class and aristocracy, that it led to the foundation of the Protestant Grand Lodge in 1717.



Wartime Commando leader, Lord Lovat, in 1942.

Almost 200 years later, in 1940, another Highland laird, also closely linked with the Frasers of Lovat, David Archibald Stirling, a subaltern in the Scots Guards, was recovering from a parachuting accident in a Cairo hospital when he had a brainwave - an idea for a revolutionary type of fighting unit. What sparked the idea we will probably never know, but the influence of the irregular guerrilla and affinity groups of the Spanish Civil war might have played a part. Also, Stirling was in the immediate vicinity of Wingate's Palestinian adventures and not too far from T.E. Lawrence's famous exploits with Bedouin irregulars (now known to be almost entirely mythical). Lawrence was also a notorious elitist in every aspect of his life, a militarist, semi-fascist and woman hater, and his ghost must have haunted the Middle East at the time. One wonders too whether the ghost of the Mamelukes did not do likewise. They were a Turkish warrior caste who were so "exclusive" - ie. anti-woman - that they depended for the replacement of their numbers on the kidnapping of boy children. They were originally a kind of palace guard but became the more or less autonomous rulers of Egypt, while paying a formal homage to the Sultan. What better place or time to dream of a warrior elite? The post World War I period saw a growing interest in all aspects of unconventional approaches to warfare and the advent of the parachute seems to have helped focus David Stirling's mind on the extreme effectiveness of a small, highly trained groups of assassins

and saboteurs. It was against this background that Stirling's idea was conceived and slowly took form - the Special Air Service Regiment, one of the most selective, tightly knit and effective fighting fraternities in history.

The early history of the SAS Regiment could be described perhaps as heroically incompetent. The Regiment's official birthday is given as 16 November, 1941, when sixty men were dropped behind enemy lines in North Africa with the mission of locating and destroying a Libyan airfield. Of these sixty just over twenty made it back to base - without having found their target, let alone destroying it. The first real action was even more disastrous. Then, in February 1941, thirty-six men of the 11th SAS were dropped in Northern Italy and within a short time all of them had been captured or had surrendered - some to unarmed peasants. David Stirling was himself captured in 1943 by a German dentist and spent the rest of the war in a POW camp. The SAS Regiment did, however, fight bravely behind enemy lines working with the various Resistance networks and Special Operations Executive in Occupied Europe knowing full well Hitler had personally ordered that no SAS soldier was to be taken alive. However, the last campaign in Greece - 1944/45 - was one of the most tragic and ignoble actions by any British field regiment in World War II - and a hint of things to come.

Once the German army had been defeated in Greece, not only did the SAS not disarm the fascist security they re-

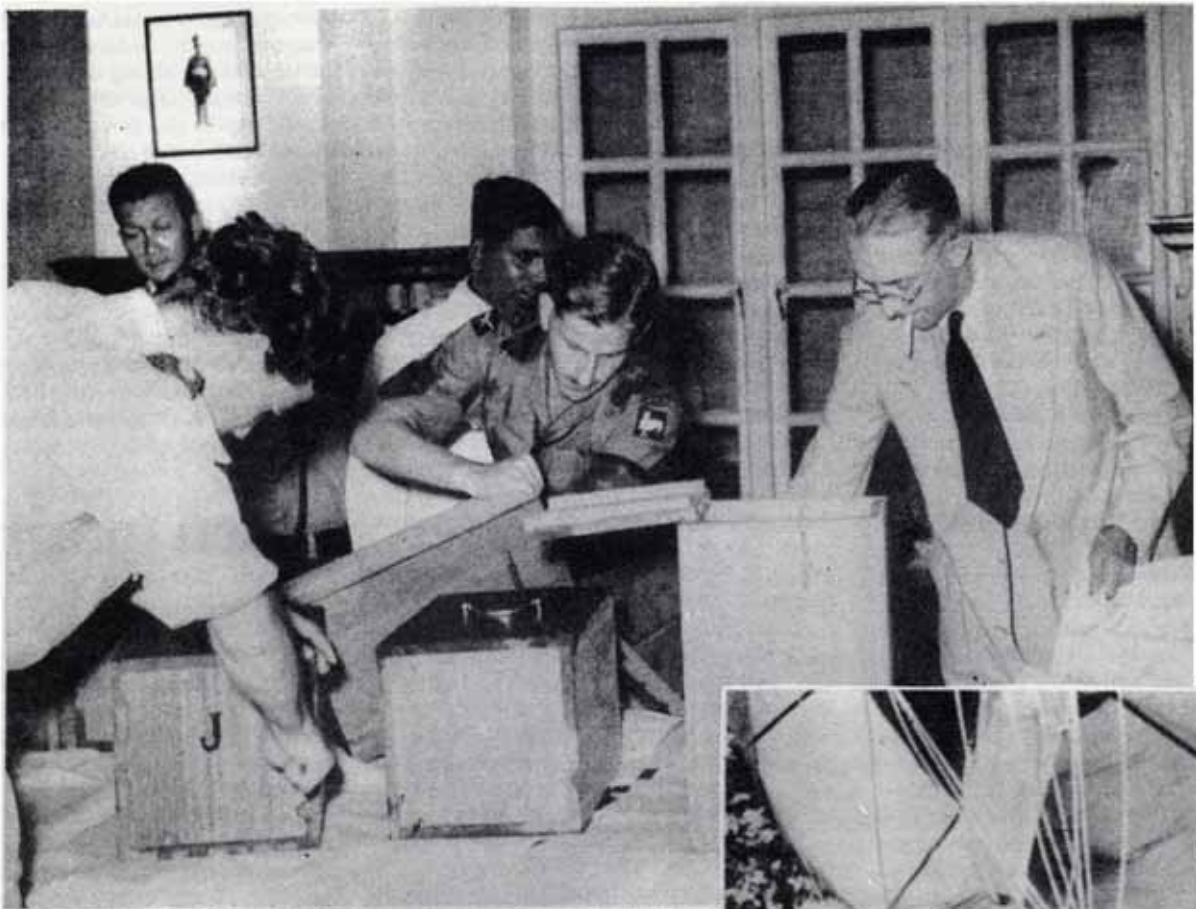
train and equip them with modern allied weapons: on the orders of British Intelligence officers acting on the instructions of Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt, they were party to the massacre in Athens on December 3 and 4 of their previous comrades in arms, the left wing Greek anti-Nazi resistance movement, ELAS. These massacres, ambushes of liberation celebrations and a protest demonstration, were perpetrated by George Grivas' fascist terrorist 'Organisation X', and orchestrated by British Intelligence and senior SAS officers with the sole purpose of breaking the backbone of the left wing dominated resistance and ensuring the establishment of Greece within the western sphere of influence.

## Born again assassins

The Regiment as we know it today was resurrected by the Labour Government of Clement Atlee in late 1950 as the only effective way of containing the threat from the national liberation and anti-colonialist movements which marked the end of World War II. The Special Air Service Regiment had proved its worth behind enemy lines in the Second World War and its structure was ideally suited for the type of warfare which was to be the hallmark of all liberation struggles. It was a go-anywhere unit which specialised in counter-insurgency campaigns and was specially trained in psychological warfare to secure the popularity of the colonialist powers. The "born again" SAS emerged in Malaya under the command of an extreme right-wing staff officer, J.M. "Mad Mike" Calvert<sup>6</sup> as an Intelligence gathering, political-military enforcement agency with a public philosophy of winning the "hearts and minds" of the population to the cause of western "democracy" and a hidden face which dealt in deception, murder and mayhem. Since then it has been the Regiment the British Government and the city of London has ultimately turned to in its desperate attempts to safeguard its economic sphere of influence from the radical nationalist and revolutionary movements of the post war era. After its nine year bleeding in Malaya, the Regiment moved on to Oman, Borneo, Aden, Vietnam, Northern Ireland, and now, as the system starts to fail at home, the streets of London, Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester. In fact, so highly thought of is this warrior elite today, and so specialised their skills, that their services are contracted out by Her Majesty's Government to any friendly government who can convince the Foreign Office that those services are necessary to quell internal opposition irrespective of the brutality and savagery of those regimes. Thus is maintained the delicate network and balance of HMGs' diplomatic alliances.



\*Colonel David Stirling, DSO, OBE.

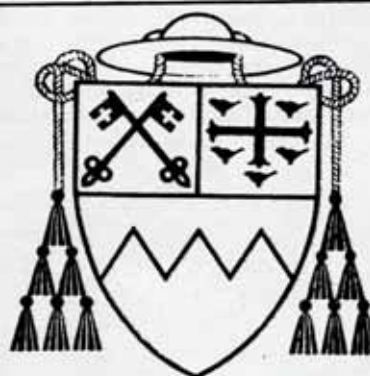


The SAS (Malayan Scouts) was re-formed in 1950 by 'Mad' Mike Calvert (above left) to combat the anti-colonialist guerrilla war which erupted in Malaya in 1948. Recruits came from the ex-wartime SAS, SOE, Force 136 ('Dare' Newell), Ferret Force, and 21 SAS (reservists and Territorials who had served under Stirling). By 1952 the SAS had four squadrons in Malaya - A, B, C, and D,\* plus a headquarters staff, and in February 1952 were dropped deep in the jungle in an operation designed to cut off supplies to the Min Yuen. In June 1952, General Templer, the Malayan High Commissioner, was asked whether he had sufficient troops. He replied: 'The answer lies not in pouring more soldiers into the jungle, but rests in the hearts and minds of the Malayan people'. This was to be the essence of SAS philosophy and strategy and marked the beginning of the SAS as a clandestine intelligence gathering and perception shaping military task force. During the period of the Malayan emergency there was unofficial competition among British troops for the highest Regimental 'body count'. The biggest score was that of the 1/10th Gurkhas with 300. The 'official' score for the SAS during their nine-year tour of duty was 108 kills. The photograph (top of the page) shows General Sir Gerald Templer, architect of the 'hearts and minds' strategy, emptying lockers containing completed intelligence questionnaires distributed and collected by the SAS from Malayan villages in an attempt to break the organisational infrastructure of the Min Yuen. The parachutist (above right) is Sergeant Hanna.

\*According to an editorial in the SAS Regimental magazine (*Mars and Minerva*, November '78), these squadrons were described thus: 'A' was the 'SOP' outfit, straight laced, formal, ultimately professional and probably the proud producer of more senior ranks in 22 SAS than any other - P de B, PFW, Lawrence, Tanky and Frank all spring readily to mind. 'B' were the tearaways, the humourists, the 'livers of life' to the full, the unorthodox - even to the point of being disbanded. . . 'D' was the old man's squadron, nasty, evil, tribalistic - even the Troops did not talk with each other, a mixture of 'A's professionalism coupled with 'B's humour, but with an evil touch. . .

Although the SAS has an important role in conventional defence planning with established precedence in the Order of Battle, the secrecy and detachment it encourages from the rest of society, even within the British Army itself, its specialist role in counter-revolutionary warfare raises many questions – to me anyway! – as to its deployment. The laird and gentry outlook of the SAS officer class, coupled with the self-destructive elitism of the soldiers themselves make the Regiment an unlikely breeding ground for liberal-minded freethinkers. After all, what the laird sees as subversion and terrorism may be something quite different to an unemployed shipyard worker or a half-starving worker on a tea-plantation.

Like most ruling class children the world over, the sons of the gentry are educated away from home and in an atmosphere of greater sexual confinement and restriction than the children of those whom they are destined to rule over. So far as the SAS officer class is concerned a substantial number of them appear to have been educated at Ampleforth College, which is attached to the Benedictine Abbey of St. Laurence<sup>7</sup>, in North Yorkshire. It is in such places that the 'old boy' network is cemented – not least by widespread and often sadistic sodomy – and where a difference of sexual mores from those of the lower orders is inculcated that will at least inhibit intermarriage and the collapse of



## AMPLEFORTH COLLEGE

*Under the Patronage of Saint Laurence and Saint Edward the Confessor*

*Westminster Abbey*

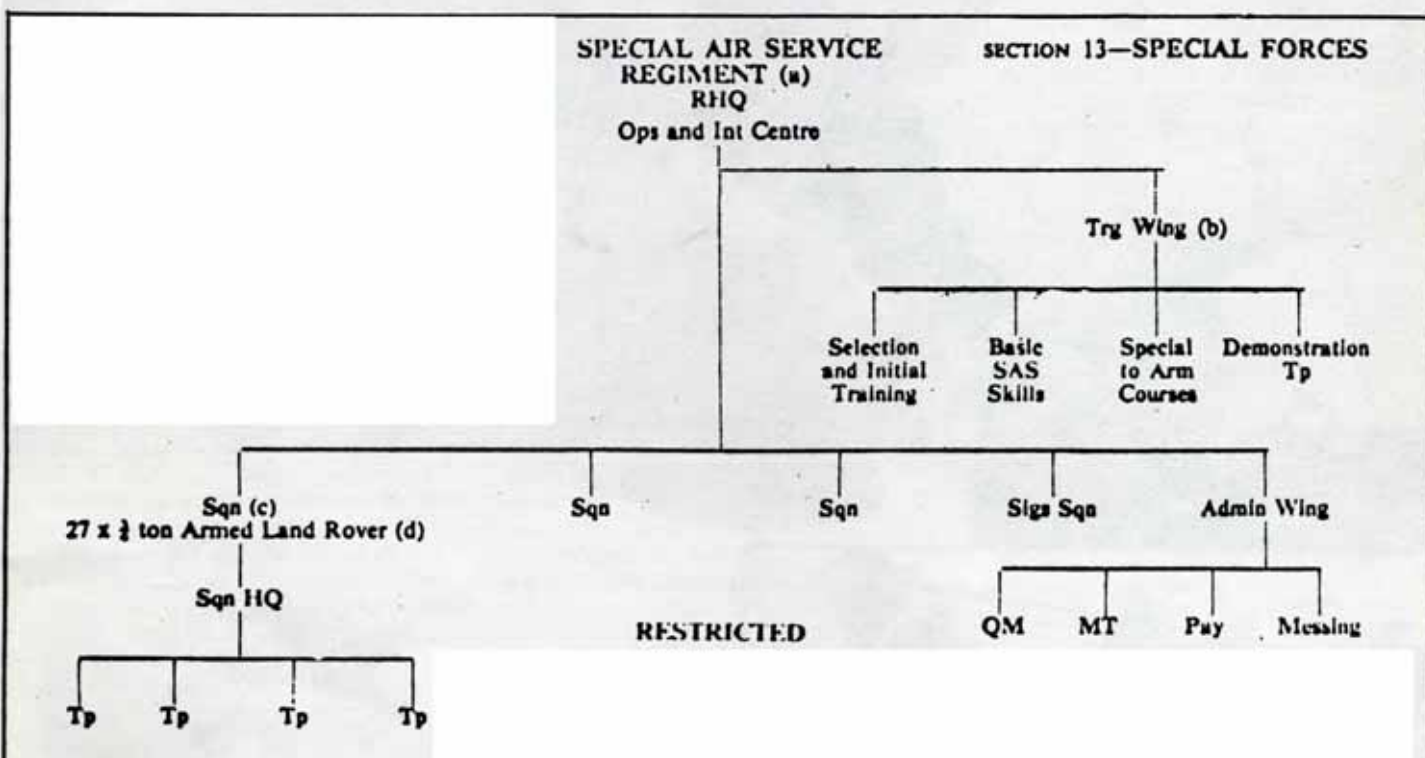
*Dieulouard, 1608*

*Ampleforth, 1802*

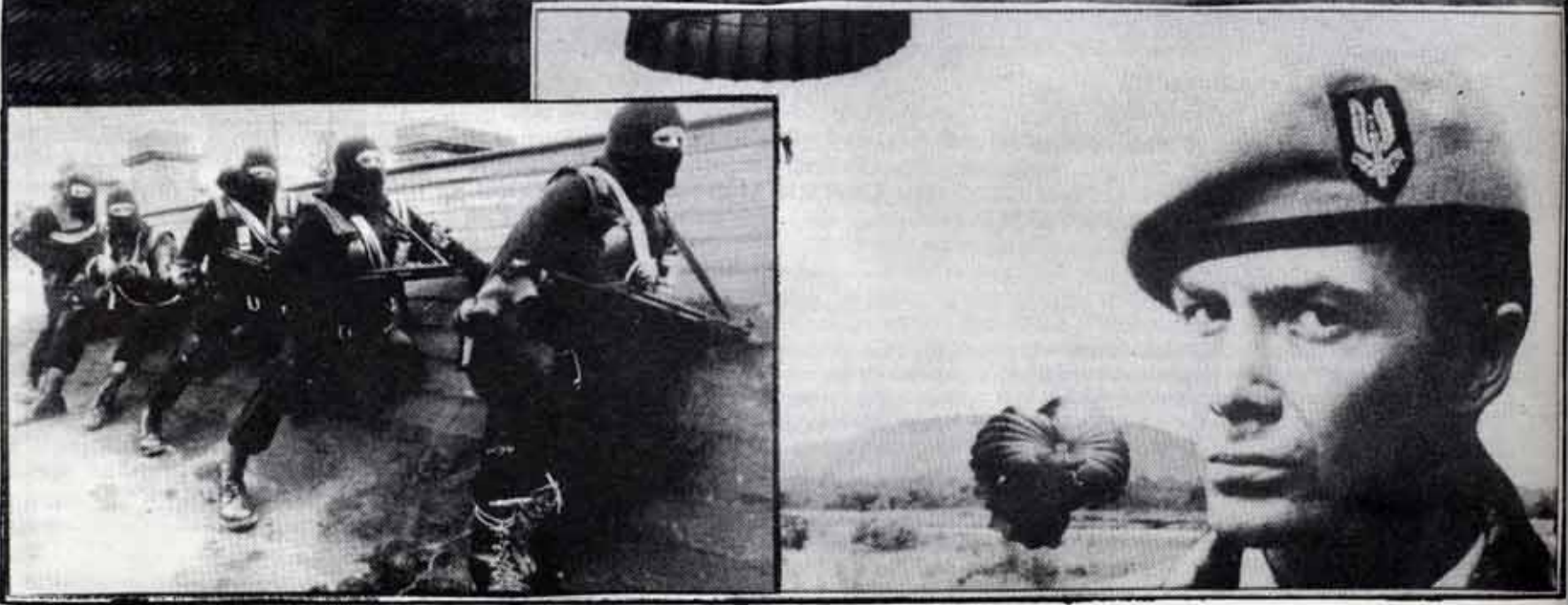
the class system it would bring about. Childhood friendships and adolescent heterosexual dalliances that would have a similar effect are also discouraged by the same means. Sending the young men away into the army encourages them to seek brides from another, acceptably remote social grouping.

The 1969 edition of the British Army handbook, *Land Operations Manual*, defines the role of the SAS thus: "SAS

squadrons are particularly suited, trained and equipped for counter-revolutionary operations. . . Small parties may be infiltrated or dropped by parachute. . . in order to carry out any of the following tasks. . . infiltration of sabotage, assassination and demolition teams into insurgent held areas." A more up-to-date view of the SAS role was seen on the nation's television screens one evening in May, 1980, when 20 men of Pagoda



**SAS FACT AND FICTION:** Two members of the SAS Pagoda team about to enter the Iranian Embassy. Inset: Scenes from the forthcoming SAS film hagiography *Who Dares Wins* made by producer Euan Lloyd, who also made the pro-mercenary film *Wild Geese*. Right, Lewis Collins of *The Professionals*, in the starring role of Captain Peter Skellern of the SAS, who claims that 'The SAS are my heroes and I want to do justice to them'. *Who Dares Wins* is being billed as 'the first picture about the world's most secretive soldiers which will reveal the role they never talk about - their undercover work against terrorism'. The story is based on George Markstein's book *The Tiptoe Boys* and most of the minor actors and participants (including Major Alistair Morrison, who led the GSG-9 attack on the Lufthansa airliner at Mogadishu, which led to the murders of Andreas Baader and his comrades) are members of the SAS Regimental Association.





Basic four-man SAS patrol – leader, scout, medic, and signaller. The weapons are non-standard Armalite rifles and a pump-action shotgun.

One unit<sup>8</sup> of the SAS Special Operations Group under (surprise, surprise!) another member of the Lovat family, Major Jeremy Phipps, the stepson of Sir Fitzroy Maclean and one of the original founders of the wartime SAS<sup>9</sup>, stormed the Iranian Embassy in London and brought the armed occupation of it by Arab separatists to a spectacular close. So spectacular, in fact, that any casual viewer could well be forgiven for thinking they had tuned in to a commercial for Cadbury's *Milk Tray*. Within minutes of the hooded men going into action five of the occupying gunmen were dead, the hostages freed, and the Regiment, apparently without a single casualty, was the toast of the media and all right thinking people the world over.

However, a few disquieting features of the ending of the siege came to light when the facts slowly emerged from hostage statements during the inquest on the five dead terrorists. There were two conflicting versions as to how the five men had died in the Embassy. A number of the hostages claimed that at least two of the terrorists threw away their weapons, surrendered and were then shot dead in cold blood. The coroner, Dr. Paul Knapman, instructed the jury that "not too much must be made of the actual minute details such as whether or not the victims had been shot at point blank range".<sup>10</sup> Nor was there any mention of the incident in the Embassy garden when a scuffle developed between the SAS Pagoda unit and a police dog handler who had arrested the only surviving terrorist, Fowzi Nejad, who had, in

the confusion, managed to get out of the building by passing himself off as a hostage. Having arrested his man, the bobby refused to release the prisoner from police custody or let him be taken back inside the Embassy as requested by the SAS – for what purposes we can only guess.

The SAS men are not "cowboys" like their more brutish counterparts in the Parachute Regiment. They are well trained, intelligent, and highly disciplined men who, in this particular incident, were briefed direct from the Cabinet before going into action, which indicates that official government policy was to be one of "no prisoners". This would have the effect of killing two (five!) birds with one stone. On the one hand it would provide the Thatcher Government with a magnificent propaganda coup, and on the other it would avoid a politically embarrassing and diplomatically sensitive trial as well as discouraging any further round of terrorism and hostage taking on British soil.

This somewhat new British response to crime and terrorism appears to have been agreed Western policy since 1977 when three members of the Red Army Faction were alleged to have committed suicide in Stammheim Prison the same day as the successful attack by a combined force of SAS and German GSC-9 assault guards on the guerrilla held Lufthansa airliner at Mogadischu. The inquest on the dead German prisoners raised a few questions that were left unanswered, for example the never explained forensic

evidence that at least one of the "suicides", Andreas Baader, had been taken from his German prison cell to Mogadischu to trick the hijackers<sup>11</sup>. It is possible that once the airliner had been taken successfully the prisoners were then killed in order to rid the New Model Germany once and for all of their eternally turbulent priests?

Although unsatisfying and ineffective, the inquest on the men who died in the Iranian Embassy siege did at least help to expose the role of the modern day SAS, but when we move into the altogether more shadowy and sinister world of the "parallel" regiments of "ex", "Reserve" and "TAVR SAS", public scrutiny and accountability vanish altogether.

Again, it was the ubiquitous and enterprising Scots laird and entrepreneurial businessman, David Archibald Stirling, who first saw the commercial and political prospects in this unique fighting unit and the rapidly changing political climate which often forced the British government to maintain two distinct and, often, opposite policies – one official, the other "unofficial". As with American foreign policy, as interpreted by the CIA and other foreign intelligence agencies, particularly in Latin America, the dirtiest operations required by "unofficial" policy are most effective and less embarrassing if carried out by "former" agents or trusted soldiers of elite units in the employ of apparently commercial security consultancy firms.

The overthrow of the corrupt pro-British ruler of Yemen in 1962 provided



Lt. Col. Ian Lapraik with men of the early 21st SAS Regt. (Artists) (v)

22nd SAS HQ is located at Bradbury Lines Barracks, Hereford, where 'R' Squadron (TAVR) also have their base. SAS communications are provided by 322 Royal Signal Squadron and 264 (v) Signal Squadron. 'G' Squadron personnel, recruited from the now disbanded 'Guards Independent Parachute Company' are distinguished from other SAS personnel by having their wings on a dark red background, and by having the unique rank of lance-sergeants. 'R' Squadron, the immediate operational TAVR reserve of 22 SAS serve operationally for short periods within 22 SAS as opposed to the yearly training camps of most other TAVR units. The unique role of the SAS was formally recognised in 1966 in a rather surprising citation to the then Major de la Cour de la Billiere, published in *The London Gazette*: "A Squadron Commander of the SAS, unlike in other armies, has to deal with a wide spectrum of affairs, both matters political and military and to negotiate with senior officers far superior to him". Two SAS anti-terrorist 'Pagoda Units' of 12 men with Range Rovers, based at Hereford and London, with access to RAF Special Forces planes, are on a 24 hour a day, three minute alert.

There are two SAS TAVR Regiments, the 21st SAS (Artists V) and the 23rd SAS (v). The 21st, apart from being the senior regiment of the Group, are regarded as the elite within the SAS—although the Guards 'G' Squadron would probably dispute that statement. 'The Artists Rifles', originally known as the 38th Middlesex (artist) Rifle Volunteers, were typical of that middle class Victorian and Highland tribal phenomena—the privately raised 'gentleman's volunteer army! In the case of the '38th' primarily from those connected with the Arts. On its formation in 1947, 21 SAS incorporated the 'Artists Rifles' into their regimental title. Thus they provided the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition Guard of Honour—the RA was originally the Artists HQ—and a guard for the Lord Mayor of London's Manor House Banquet. The 21st SAS (Artists V) have close connections with the City of London, particularly through the 'Glovers Company' where their interests are watched over by ex-SAS Colonel Lapraik. The 21st SAS express their difference from the rest of the SAS by wearing their rank badges on a black background instead of silver or white, and by their pompadour blue uniform trimmings. As well as their uniform differences the regimental toast of the 21st SAS (Artists V)—"Gentlemen of the Artists and men of the other Corps"—illustrates their elitist attitudes. 21st SAS (Artists V) has its HQ 'A' and 'B' Squadrons at the Duke of York's HQ in London. 'C' Squadron is located at Bedford Rd., Hitchin, 'D' Squadron at Tudor Crescent, Cosham, Portsmouth.

The more proletarian 23rd SAS (V) covers the territory north of the Midlands with squadrons located in all the more important industrial centres and provide an important monitoring facility for social unrest. The HQ and 'A' Squadron are based at Kingstanding Rd., Birmingham, 'B' Squadron at Old Carlton Barracks, Leeds, and 'C' Squadron has its HQ at Sanford Rd Barracks, Doncaster. 'D' Squadron covers the industrial belt of Scotland. Officers of 23 SAS (V) have a club called the '923' club which indicates the regiment's lineage. 23 SAS (V) was formed in London in 1959, but then transferred to Birmingham. It was formed from an existing unit "The Joint Reserve Reconnaissance Unit (TA)" which, in turn, had originally been known as "The Joint Reserve Prisoner of War Intelligence Organisation (TA)", and before that as "Intelligence School 9 (TA)" which was the post war continuation of IS9 (d), the WWII operational section of MI9, the British escape network commanded by Airey Neave and Lt. Colonel James Langley.

the opportunity for the father of the SAS, David Stirling to "come in from the cold" from his Secret Intelligence Service work in Africa. Since "retiring" from the Army, Stirling had been working for the SIS (MI6) in Africa under the cover of the *Capricorn Africa Society* of which he was President from 1947 to 1959. Operating out of Salisbury and Nairobi his mission in *Capricorn* was to build up multi-racial political parties of white settlers and the "right kind" of blacks who could be trusted and moulded into a pro-British middle class. Given his assignment to restore and secure the status-quo in Oman, Stirling recruited his modern day "magnificent seven" from the ranks of his old "Regimental Association" and with the unofficial blessing of the British Government off they went to restore order within the British sphere of influence. The rapid growth and proliferation of national liberation movements, coupled with the unwillingness of the British Government to commit troops too widely with the tide of history turned against it, provided an excellent and lucrative business opportunity for David Stirling and his colleagues.

In 1967 Stirling set up his Guernsey-based "Watchguard" organisation to provide bodyguards, security training, and other "specialist" services such as planning the invasion of Libya in 1970 to oust the unsympathetic Colonel Ghaddafi, who had staged his revolutionary coup against the pro-British regime the year before. Since then the number of commercial paramilitary "security" consultancies has increased considerably and it is now reckoned the security industry employs between 200,000 and a quarter of a million people offering services from supermarket security to "silent killing", "advanced sabotage", "advanced lock neutralisation", "in depth instruction in the use and manufacture of home-made explosives", "modern interrogation methods", etc. Incidentally, "Watchguard" is no more and David Stirling has now publicly distanced himself from the private army scandals which threatened to polarise British society in the early seventies, but his mantle has been taken up with gusto by brother SAS officers who welcomed the opportunity to continue to earn a living from terror and mayhem under the euphemistic cover of "security consultants". If the British government itself turns to the SAS Regiment to defend its sphere of influence in times of crises, the City of London turns to the SAS Regimental Association and the commercial security consultancies which come under its aegis.

The most important of these security consultancies today is *Saladin Security Ltd* based at 141 Sloan Street, London SW1, next door to the Regimental HQ of "22 SAS". All the directors of *Saladin* – the name again recalls the Crusades – were senior officers in the Regiment and two of them are former Commanding



The post-war SAS were amongst the earliest experimenters in the military application of free-fall parachuting. Above, Major Mark Milburn (reserve SAS), who took part in the first Army free-fall course in England in 1960, seen here in 1961. A noted Francophile, Milburn is wearing a French Captain's insignia on the left lapel of his Denison smock. Below, a present-day SAS free-fall trooper wearing High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) parachuting kit.






Selection for the SAS TAVR regiments is almost as strict as for the 22 SAS. Virtually the only difference between the Regular and the TAVR selection procedures is that the latter is spread over a longer period. After being thoroughly vetted by SAS Group Intelligence, a four month selection period commences. The photographs show some of last summer's 273 would be SAS recruits lining up for the regiment's summer selection course at Sennybridge in the Welsh Brecon mountains. Devised by SAS instructor Paddy Nugent, the course consists of six weekends marching in the mountains, a week to learn map-reading and basic weapon handling with an additional day to judge parachuting aptitude. The parachuting course is completed three months later during a two week camp which starts with three testing marches on consecutive days followed by ten days of individual training and testing. Of the original 273 men on this course only 11 passed the parachuting course. Apart from Brecon, the SAS also uses MoD property and the estates of sympathetic Highland Lairds and English landed gentry at Torridon, Kirkmichael, Blair Atholl, Cape Wrath, Mallaig, etc., for training purposes. The third phase is a course in combat survival where the men are tested psychologically as well as physically. This instructional phase also involves undergoing sensory deprivation and psychological torture techniques. Usually less than one fifth of the men who make it this far are able to compete this phase. The next stage of training is known as special intensive instruction where the candidate selects one of four active service squadrons, each with their own specialities: high altitude free fall parachuting (HALO); amphibious operations; mountain/artic warfare; long range overland missions. In addition to the skills required within each squadron, each soldier is required to specialise in one of the other squadron's skills or specialise in communications. Phase five involves developing language skills, close quarter battle training, assassination, explosives, and other terrorist 'skills'. However, in spite of the media and SAS PR emphasis on the superman/macho aspect of the SAS myth which emphasises the physical qualities required to pass the SAS selection board, the SAS does not only recruit from units which require a high standard of physical fitness. The Intelligence gathering and assessment function of the Group calls for brains as well as stamina. An analysis of 119 awards/decorations to post 1950 SAS personnel shows that 78 had been recruited from the infantry, the remainder from specialised Corps—signals, artillery, engineers, etc. A 1973 survey of an SAS patrol showed its parent membership was composed of five engineers, four infantry, three Royal Signals and two Armoured Corps—the majority from units which require a reasonably high degree of intelligence. SAS awareness of the fact that many potential SAS recruits never joined the army led them to attempt to recruit directly from civilian life, but this plan was vetoed by the MoD. However, with the re-organisation of the Territorial Army in 1967 they were able to do this and, with the formation of 'R' Squadron (TAVR), they had an immediate operational reserve on attachment.


Officers. Saladin Ltd is known as "24 SAS" as it recruits exclusively from the Regiment and it is the epicentre of a national and international network of "security" organisation each with their own specialities and bond of affinity cemented by the Regimental Association.

This Jekyll-and-Hyde relationship between the "cream" of HM Forces and private enterprise has a number of disquieting features. For example, in 1967, an SAS officer, Major Pirie, claimed in an interview with a Sunday newspaper that the Adjutant's office at the Duke of York's HQ, a large military staff establishment in London SW1, was being used as a clearing ground for the recruitment of mercenaries. When this scandal broke, Pirie was ordered to write a report for his commanding officer, which he did, but no more was heard of the affair. Major Pirie was killed during an SAS "escape and evasion" exercise in France in 1972 so the matter could not be followed up. A few years later, a rather less "professional" mercenary freebooter, John Banks, gave a sworn statement to a London solicitor (investigating an IRA arms procurement case in which Banks had been working as an *agent provocateur* for the British Security Services) outlining his relationship with MI5 and the security services. Banks claimed he worked in "close harmony" with Major Andrew Nightingale of SAS Group Intelligence<sup>12</sup> and Detective Inspector Ray Tucker, an Arab affairs specialist of Scotland Yard Special Branch. It was DI Tucker, apparently who made all the arrangements for the hapless mercenaries, many of them recruited from the paramilitary organisations of the British neo-Nazi movements to clear immigration without passports on their way to the ill-fated Angolan fiasco. Some of these individuals were on police stop and arrest lists while others had no identification documents.

Another interesting point made by Banks was a reference to an SAS Intelligence Unit known as "The Kremlin". The SAS Intelligence Unit is totally independent of the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) and the Security Service (MI5). The Director of the SAS, Brigadier Peter Edgar de la Billier<sup>13</sup> has direct access to the Prime Minister and, because of the growing importance of the SAS in anti-terrorist activities and policy making, a seat alongside other Intelligence and Security Service Directors on the Joint Intelligence Committee<sup>14</sup>. "The Kremlin" itself is run under the cover of the "old boy" network of the SAS Regimental Association from the



# THE SPECIAL AIR SERVICE REGIMENT



## MARS & MINERVA

INCORPORATING THE JOURNALS OF

- THE SPECIAL AIR SERVICE REGIMENT
- THE ARTISTS RIFLES ASSOCIATION
- THE SPECIAL AIR SERVICE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

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Centre Block at the Duke of York's HQ by "retired" Major Clarence "Dare" Newell, the editor of *Mars and Minerva*, the Regimental Association's magazine. According to Banks, this organisation "employs, controls and runs intelligence gathering in alien paramilitary organisations in the UK. It runs assassinations teams, snatch teams and infiltration teams." As the only paramilitary organisations that can possibly be referred to here are the neo-Nazi ones such as "Column 88", "Edelweiss", "SS Wotan 18" and a couple of other clandestine paramilitary and intelligence networks of the neo-hitlerite movement in this

country presumably these are the organisations Banks claimed were being infiltrated by "The Kremlin". Certainly, according to the research done by Searchlight magazine, the aforementioned organisations are known to have close links with the intelligence and "parallel" police organisations of Italy, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Spain etc and have at least one ex-British Special Branch and one senior ex-MI6 officer in their ranks, not counting their sympathisers. One of the principal organisers and co-ordinators of "Edelweiss", one of the international SS-style networks, is Major Ian Souter Clarence, who



## SPECIAL AIR SERVICE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

CENTRE BLOCK, DUKE OF YORK'S HEADQUARTERS, CHELSEA, LONDON, S.W.3 Tel: 01-930 4466 Extension 317

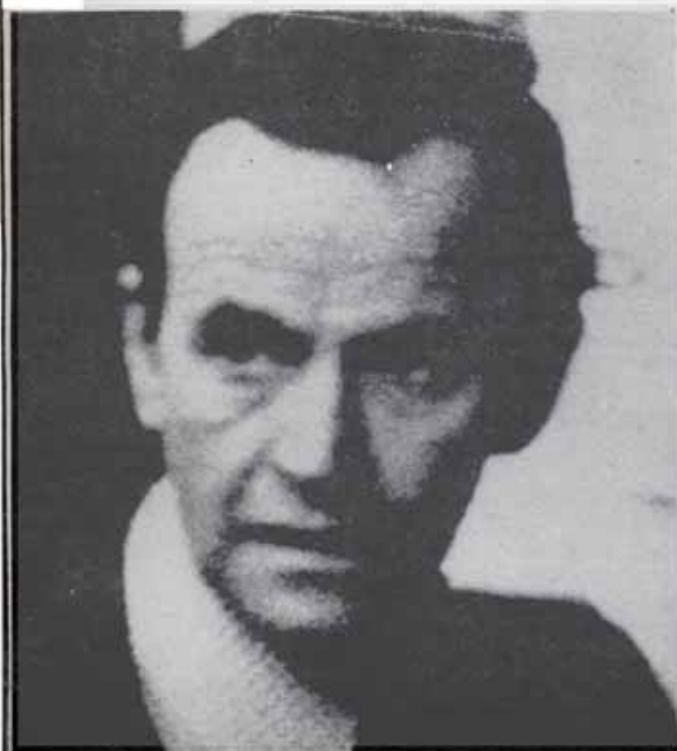
President: COLONEL DAVID STIRLING, DSO, OBE

Chairman: LIEUTENANT COLONEL J. M. WOODHOUSE, MBE, MC

Secretary: MAJOR DARE NEWELL, OBE



Wryly known as '24 SAS' within the SAS Regiment was KMS Ltd, now operating as Saladin Security Ltd. The initials KMS stand for 'Keeni-Meeni Services', Keeni-Meeni being South Arabian slang for 'under-the-counter'. The phrase has also been used as a codeword for SAS operations in South Arabia. KMS shut up shop hurriedly in July 1978 after *Time Out* exposed their Kensington-based mercenary recruiting activities. KMS was closely connected with the 'Special Forces' ex-SAS mercenaries who greatly assisted Sultan Qaboos of Oman in repressing the Marxist liberation movement in Oman's northern province of Dhofar. KMS also handled recruitment for much other work in Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and South American states such as Argentina. Key figures within KMS were Brigadier Mike Wingate Gray, Colonel Jim Johnson, Major David J Walker, and Major Andrew M Nightingale - all former SAS officers. In Yemen, the mercenaries employed by KMS's Jim Johnson coined the apt replacement for the SAS motto 'Who Dares Wins': 'Who Pays Wins'. The photos show (top left) Colonel Henry James Johnson, OBE, TD - insurance broker turned private army organiser and ex-CO of 21 SAS (1960-62); (top right) the Hon Fiona Fraser, daughter of the 17th Baron Lovat, and Johnson's principal assistant for 20 years; and (below left) Major Russell West, ex-SAS Squadron commander, one-time managing director of Thor Security Systems Ltd, and mercenary recruiter for KMS Ltd.



in Hereford goes on;

*"... White on a throne or guarded in  
a cave  
There lives a prophet who can  
understand  
Why men were born: but surely we  
are brave  
Who take the golden Road to  
Samarkand..."*<sup>18</sup>

The recent revelations that criminals such as Kenneth Littlejohn were employed by MI6 officers to discredit the IRA and briefed to assassinate leading members of the Provisionals can only add fuel to our suspicions regarding the new trend in "unofficial" government policy towards those it regards as enemies. More worrying still is the fact that MI6 provided Littlejohn with a "safe house" belonging to a member of a neo-Nazi paramilitary organisation in Birmingham following his engineered escape from Mountjoy jail in Dublin. Perhaps the most sinister development of all is the fact that senior SAS officers are now being recruited by MI5 and MI6, signifying a distinct change in government policy from the defensive to the offensive.

It is very difficult for outsiders to disentangle fact from fiction when dealing with secretive and tightly knit cabals. In the case of the various secret state organisations we have the Official Secrets Act and the class nature of its structure obscuring and obstructing all independent attempts to get at the facts. We can only judge on the actions, the information made available to us by selected hagiographers, that uncovered by investigative journalists, and our own interpretation of the social and political

nature of the organisation in question.

The history of our civilisation has shown that any state which builds up a secretive elite group of law enforcers, apparently above the law and answerable to no-one but their own kind, with a highly dramatised and coloured world view of history and politics, has little chance of maintaining intact its status as a "democracy". The irrational is a powerful element in history and if those who wield political, economic and military power believe the fundamental institutions of their society - wealth, property, privilege, religion, etc - are threatened then they are likely to look upon that threat as the start of a desperate struggle for survival and try to keep open that "golden road to Samarkand" with all the resources and myths they have at their disposal.<sup>19</sup>

Although the SAS would be ineffective militarily against any generalised insurrection accompanied by widespread industrial action: however their skills and history are such that it would probably be used in a period of serious industrial and social unrest in counter-revolutionary sabotage, terrorism and assassination. Meanwhile, so long as the British Government feels threatened by armed confrontation and an increasingly alienated working class the SAS and related organisation will have a justifiable role and continue to flourish

as the "guardians of democracy" However, the sinister record of alliances forged by the officer class of these organisations with anti-democratic elements in industry, banking and political life, make it a potentially dangerous time bomb ticking away in the heart of any democratic society. As US historian, Carl Oglesby said of the CIA: "How can a naive, trusting, democratic republic give its secrets to crime and its innermost ear to the spirit of European fascism and expect not to see its Constitution polluted, its traditions abused, and its consciousness of the surrounding world manipulated ultimately out of all realistic shape".<sup>20</sup>

Even granting the popular argument that these are brave men with lofty motives who are prepared to risk their lives to protect our freedom - as opposed to power and privilege - the type of clandestine existence they lead and the terrorism they practise must put all but the more obsessive among them under terrible stress. Their closed society and self-appointed elitism inevitably creates a distorted outlook which in turn distances and alienates them from their former idealistic motives. All power corrupts and distorts - the secrecy, elitism and violence are its most important ingredients.

*Stuart Christie*

Remembrance Day parade at Bradbury Lines, with wreaths laid on the monument to the SAS dead.



## THE GOLDEN ROAD TO SAMARKAND

### FOOTNOTES

1. This mandarin interpretation of the 'threat' to democracy has since percolated down to middle-management level of our society. In a fascinating article in the January/March 1982 issue of the *Police Journal*, I.A. Watt, Dean of Academic Studies at the Police Staff College, Bramshill, the training college for all senior and intermediate police officers in the U.K. writes: "Another feature of society likely to continue is the persistent scepticism towards authority, and mounting demands for "accountability" and "open government". Yet at the same time most people have as their chief goal the pursuit of their private lives and material well being...this proliferation of pressure groups, which has been very much a feature of recent years in this country, seems likely to continue to the point of endangering the basic unity of the country.

2. *How it All Began. The Personal Account of a West German Urban Guerilla*, Bommie Baumann, Pulp Press, 1977 (Vancouver); *The West German Guerrilla: Terror, Reaction and Resistance. Interviews with Hans Joachim Klein and other members of the June 2nd Group*, J.M. Bouguereau and anon, Cienfuegos Press, 1982 (Orkney).

3. *Objections aux sociétés secrètes*, Windischgratz, 1788 (London). Quoted in J.M. Roberts *The Mythology of Secret Societies*, Granada, 1974 (London).

4. *Macons ecossais au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, C.H. Chevalier, AHRF, 1969 (quoted in Roberts). The "30th Degree", that of 'Chevalier Kadosch', made its appearance in the 1750's" (in the aftermath of the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion).

5. " (Simon Fraser)...A person too remarkable in history to be overlooked, though his want of public or private virtue might otherwise have dictated his exclusion". Fraser obtained a commission in 1694 in the Regiment of Lord Murray through the services of his kinsman, Hugh Lord Lovat, who wanted to bring him forward "most advantageously in the world". Although the regiment was in the pay and service of King William it was in fact intended for King James, and with this assurance Simon Fraser led into the regiment a complete company of his clansmen. The remainder of Simon Fraser's treacherous life until his execution by beheading for high treason in 1747 followed much the same course. The Frasers of Lovat were by no means unique among the Highland lairds and Clan Chieftains in their self seeking treachery as Scottish history shows, and the obituary of Simon Lord Lovat applies to most of his class - then and now: "He was totally destitute of what alone constitutes true dignity and character - moral worth. His private character ... was vicious, his appetite coarse, and his pleasures low and unscrupulous ... A protracted course of wickedness seems at last to have impaired his natural shrewdness". *Lives of Eminent Scotsmen* Vol. III, ed. Robert Chalmers, Blackie & Son, 1872 (Glasgow).

6. Brigadier J.M. Calvert, now retired and living in Haywards Heath, is now closely associated with the extreme right wing Focus Policy Group run by the revisionist historian (nazi apologist) David Irving. He is one of the contributors to a new Tory Action pamphlet entitled *Neither Up Nor Down* along with Sam Swerling (Chairman of the Monday Club) and with George Kennedy

## UDA man gaoled for killing politician claims SAS gave him weapons

One of three UDA men who were gaoled for life yesterday for murdering an Ulster politician claimed after his conviction that he had been working for the SAS.

In a statement made from the dock at Belfast Crown Court Robert McConnell, aged 27, said that he agreed to work for the Army's secret undercover men two months before he killed Mr John Turnly, a leading member of the Republican Irish Independence Party.

McConnell said the SAS men had given him weapons and intelligence-gathering equipment, including a listening device which he once used to eavesdrop on the vice-president of Provisional Sinn Fein, Gerry Adams.

Mr Turnly, a former SDLP member was shot nine times in front of his Japanese wife, Myoko, and their two children, as he arrived to address a meeting in the village of Carnlough in County Antrim in June 1980.

In his statement from the dock at the end of the five-week trial after being convicted of the two murders, McConnell, a fish salesman, named the two alleged SAS

soldiers he teamed up with a Sergeant Tom Aiken, a Scot and a Corporal McGow.

He said that they discussed Republican leaders, including Mr Turnly, Mrs Miriam Daly and Mrs Bernadette McAliskey. Mrs Daly was later shot dead at her Belfast home. Mrs McAliskey was critically wounded by Loyalist gunmen at her home in County Tyrone.

McConnell said in court: "They said they had information that over a two-year period the Republicans had a plan to escalate tension in the province by civil disorder, large-scale importation of arms and explosives, and by certain actions which would arouse the sympathy of Republican people with the ultimate object of starting a civil war. We realise now that this involved the hunger strikes."

McConnell, who said he refused to accept money, alleged he was provided with weapons, uniforms and information on how to obtain intelligence-gathering equipment.

An Army spokesman said last night: "Initial investigations into McConnell's statement from the dock have revealed nothing to support his allegations."

Guardian 11/3/1982

Young (ex Deputy Chief of M16) which is being distributed by *Focalpoint*, the journal of the FPG.

7. Ampleforth College, an independent Roman Catholic boys school run by Benedictine monks and lay masters, comprises a Preparatory school at Gilling Castle and the Upper School, the college itself in North Yorkshire. The purpose of the school is "to educate Catholics in their faith and in all branches of learning so that they may be prepared to take as full a part as their ability may justify in the life of the country". The school traces its roots back to the Benedictine foundation of St. Edward the Confessor at Westminster which escaped from England during the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1534-39). These English Benedictines eventually settled in Dieulouard, Lorraine, in 1608 where they remained until Revolutionary France expelled them towards the end of the 18th century. The Benedictines returned again to England and eventually settled in Ampleforth in 1802. The school has a strong military tradition and has a Territorial Army Cadet Force with a staff of five officers. SAS officers educated there include David Stirling, the present Lord Lovat (all the male members of the Lovat family in fact) and the Rt. Hon. Sir Hugh Fraser. A list of Ampleforth "old boys" would make interesting reading.

8. *Pagoda Units* of the SAS deal specifically with anti-terrorist operations. Other units deal with Long Range Land Operations in enemy held territory.

9. SAS officers and men are listed under their regiments and corps (with the exception of the Commanding Officer and Quarter Masters). Major Jeremy J. Phipps, *Queens Own Hussars* (commissioned 31/12/74). Son of Mrs Alan Phipps, daughter of the 16th Baron Lovat, and stepson of Sir Fitzroy Hew Maclean of Dunconnel of Strachur House, Argyll.

10. *State Research Bulletin*, Vol. 4 No. 22 - February/March 1981, pp 73/74.

11. *The Stammheim Deaths*, Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review, Vol. 1 No. 4, 1978. pp 118/125.

12. Major T.A. Nightingale, the Royal Anglian Regiment (commissioned 14/10/71), worked for Lawn West, a 'risk management' consultancy firm under the Saladin umbrella. He later died in a car crash in Oman on contract to Sultan Quaboos.

13. Brigadier Peter Edgar de la Billiere, DSO, MC, *The Light Infantry* (promoted to Brigadier 31/12/79).

14. Joint Intelligence Committee - a sub committee of the Defence Intelligence Staff which

collates reports from the DIS, M15 and M16. The Chairman of the JIC is always a senior Foreign Office Official civil servant of Deputy Under Secretary rank who is responsible for intelligence and strategic affairs. The JIC is now known as the Defence Intelligence Committee and its function today is to supply responsible Ministers and officials with intelligence on critical matters, assessments of possible troublesome developments of significance, and long term forecasts on the effects of political, military and economic policy.

15. *News of the World*, 13/9/81 - 131 Independent Commando Unit, Stanmore, Middlesex.

16. In an interesting report to President Reagan on intelligence matters the extreme right wing think tank, The Heritage Foundation, made the following recommendations which may well have been taken up by the Thatcher administration: "For administrative and constitutional reasons, the U.S. government is ill-prepared to deal with this threat (terrorism/subversion). Our over-riding need is for accurate information available immediately. When a terrorist group strikes, The Departments of State, Defense, Justice, etc., need to know the profile and modus operandi of the group at once in order to respond appropriately. Our present capacity is very limited and should be augmented. One solution would be to contract with one or several of the many private corporations that have specialised in providing such information, that can collect and disseminate relevant information without legal complications, and that can respond to a crisis without transgression of administrative jurisdictions".

17. *Service d'Action Civique* (SAC), Parallel police created by De Gaulle's RPF (also known

as *Barbouzes*) during the Algerian War to eliminate members of the right wing *Organisation de l'Armée Secret* (OAS) then, after May 1968 against the left wing opponents of Gaullism. In 1973 Georges Pompidou purged SAC of over 7000 of its most overtly undesirable elements, many of whom fled to Spain to work with SS Colonel Otto Skorzeny's *Paladin Group* as had many of their former enemies, the OAS, in the early sixties. In Spain the *Paladin Group* operates under the name 'Spanish Basque Battalions' which, since 1974, has made over 500 attacks in Spain, wounding 128 people and killing 30. SAC has since been re-organised as a paramilitary death squad in France and is thought to be responsible for the murder of a number of known left wingers (including Henri Curiel) and the bombing of left wing bookshops and presses. Finance for the group is reported to come from a West German employers organisation close to the Bavarian Christian Party and links have been traced to the ultra right wing Roman Catholic organisation *Cite Catholique* which, in 1958, had over 200 cells within the army in Algeria and from whose ranks many of the OAS activists were drawn. Retired Rear Admiral Antoine Sanguinetti believes that the SAC is currently working with the remnants of the OAS within the *Paladin Group* to stage a coup against Francois Mitterand within the next 18 months to two years. (General Gardy is a counter insurgency consultant to the Argentinian Government and the notorious Colonel Trinquier lectures at military academies in the Argentine as well). Apparently the Gaullist RPF held an assembly a few months ago where discussions took place on the "replacement" of the Mitterand Government and dwelt on the fact that all the generals in office were appointed

by and loyal to D'Estaing. (When Giscard D'Estaing came to power in 1974 he completely reshaped the army, staffing it with staunch gaullists and anti-socialist loyalists. The reserve army, with 14 Divisions, selected by computer by family background and political loyalties, was boosted and the regular army re-organised so that the maximum number could be deployed inside France. It is an army attuned to the internal rather than the external threat. The more traditionally republican minded air force has had its flying hours severely restricted.)

18. *Hassan*, James Elroy Flecker, 1884-1915. Rather ironically, it comes from Act V, in which Hassan and Ishak leave the horrific cruelties of the Caliph's regime behind them to seek a more meaningful existence, becoming pilgrims in search of the ideal city of Samarkand.

19. In his prefatory endorsement of General Frank Kitson's *Low Intensity Operations* Field Marshal Lord Carver wrote: "If a genuine grievance arose, such as might result from a significant drop in the standard of living, all those who dissipate their protest over a wide variety of causes might concentrate their efforts and produce a situation which was beyond the powers of the police to handle. Should this happen the army would be required to restore the position rapidly. Fumbling at this juncture might have grave consequences, even to the extent of undermining confidence in the whole system of government".

20. *The Yankee War and the Cowboy*, Carl Oglesby, Andrews and McMeel 1976.

