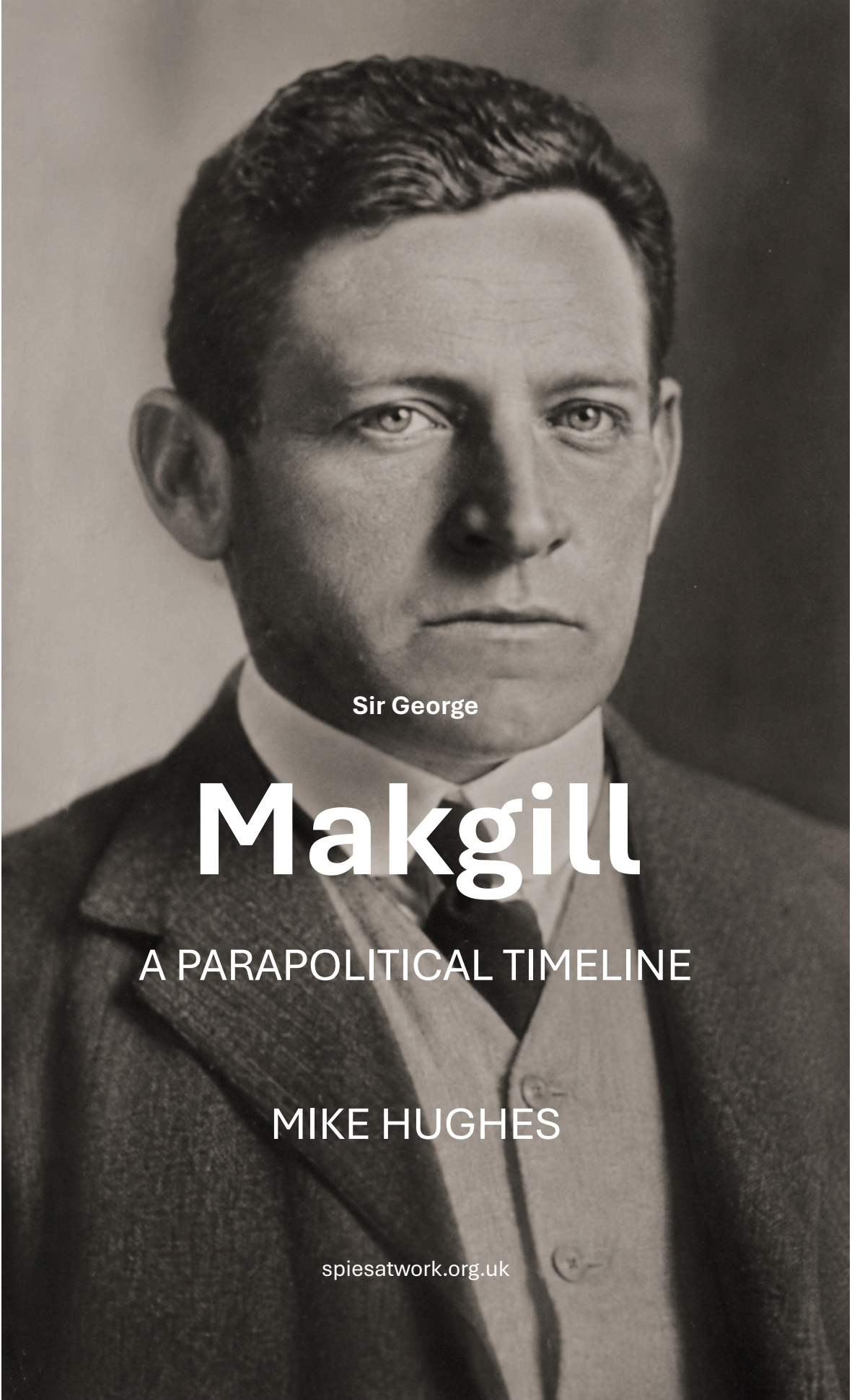


A black and white portrait of a man, Sir George Makgill, with short, dark, wavy hair. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt and a dark tie. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

Sir George

Makgill

A PARAPOLITICAL TIMELINE

MIKE HUGHES

spiesatwork.org.uk

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MAKGILL

The Untold Story of the World's First Para-politician

On this day, October 17, one hundred years ago, the world's first para-politician died.

Like para-politicians ever since, George Makgill had been spectacularly on the wrong side of history. By the time Mussolini and the Fascisti, and Hitler and the Nazis, were dead and defeated, it seems no-one who had been associated with him – by birth or political activism – wanted to see his memory preserved or his political meddling recalled.

In this centenary blog, investigative historian, Mike Hughes, who has spent decades researching Makgill and the organisations he was associated with, tries to make sense of the false assumptions that litter the telling of his story.

(Illustration; AI rendering by Mike Hughes from a rare, poor mechanically reproduced newspaper illustration)

Before the MPs elected in the 1918 General Election in the UK had taken their seats in 1919 there was either no para-politics, or all politics was para-political. Like everything “para”, para-politics are *like - but not*, in this case *like - but not* politics. The *Representation of the People Act 1918* made the difference; it had introduced into the UK something approaching a universal franchise. This left room for some elected politicians, civil servants and people of influence to carry out para-political activity that was not in the interests, or the eyeline of the majority of the new electorate. By contrast the government that had taken Britain and its empire into the First World War was elected by 5 million predominantly comfortably off British men.

The practice of para-politics requires the joint enterprise of these three sorts of people. But the real para-politicians would be the people of influence pursuing their political objectives, without the inconvenience of getting elected, or being managed by people who had got themselves elected. It is a profoundly conspiratorial and subversive approach, which may explain why most para-politicians, from Sir George Makgill onwards, have loudly proclaimed the conspiracies and subversions of their political targets and enemies.

Makgill was born into the landed gentry in Scotland in 1868. He shared the sense of entitlement, and all the casual racist and conservative prejudices of his class and was not exceptional in that. Although a landowner, he was not exceptionally wealthy or influential. He was politically a non-entity for the first forty-seven years of his life. Despite this, he of course did his bit for the Conservative Party in Suffolk, where he lived as an absentee Scottish landlord in a rented country house. He even had some mud and stones thrown at his car by a labourer when campaigning with the Conservative candidate during the first 1910 general election.

He suddenly burst on to the visible political scene in Britain the early months of WWI, when he answered the call of the *Morning Post* for someone to run the **Anti-German Union (AGU)**, which its literary editor, Edward B Osborne, was setting up. The *Morning Post* was the most right-wing of all the Conservative national newspapers. It advocated “diehard” conservative and radical right-wing causes and would go on

to support the British Fascists in the mid-1920s. Working inside the AGU, based in the *Post's* office in the Strand, brought Makgill into contact with all the leading far right politicians and propagandists. It was an almost instant radicalisation, witnessed very publicly. He continued to campaign for these radical right wing causes after the war. He supported Lord Rothermere's Anti Waste campaign against public spending and then became Vice-Chair of the People's League set up by the populist independent politician, Horatio Bottomley, who also published the jingoistic journal, *John Bull*.

Makgill's opposition to the Conservative-Liberal coalition of Lloyd George and Bonar Law, and his enthusiastic support for Bottomley were to be the cause of his disappearance from public view after 1921 which was as sudden as his appearance in the political arena had been. On May 29, 1922, Bottomley was sentenced to seven years penal servitude for fraud, in connection with a Victory Bond scheme run through *John Bull*. On the August 1 Bottomley was formally expelled from the House of Commons.

One of Makgill's last appearances representing the Peoples League was an open-air meeting in Fulham in October 1921, which ended in disorder and arrests. For the next five years of his life, he would become a para-politician, helped by the diehard politicians, key industrialists and some of the most important figures in Britain's intelligence community. His two principal vehicles for this para-political activity would be his own private intelligence service and the British Fascisti. The Fascisti were a paramilitary political movement within the Conservative Party, inspired by Mussolini's *Partito Nazionale Fascista*. Following the General Strike, during the last months of Makgill's life, he was involved in trying transform the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies into permanent private strike breaking force modelled on Mussolini's operations in Italy.

The first relatively recent direct reference to Makgill's secretive life was in Anthony Masters' 1984 biography of the broadcast naturalist, *Maxwell Knight: "The man who was M"*. Masters revealed that Knight may have worked undercover in Makgill's private intelligence service before going on to join MI5. However, the person who had written most about Makgill's organisation and its agents and targets was John Baker White, who worked for Makgill in the 1920s and later went on to be Director of the Economic League. He had written several autobiographical works which touched on his experiences in "Section D" of Makgill's organisation. The problem with Baker White's accounts is that everyone apart from him is partly disguised. He calls Makgill "McGill", misnames or disguises the agents, and introduces various red herrings into his accounts. The useful thing for researchers is he never strays too far from the truth. For example, he mentions Max, a naturalist who died young, a clear reference to Maxwell Knight.

Masters provided a key to unlocking some of the story about the Makgill's intelligence operation. It was further unlocked when his earlier involvement with British Empire Union was examined, because it employed an undercover operative in Liverpool called James McGuirk Hughes. Evidence of this was explored in the para-political journal *Lobster*, and in other writing by John Hope and Mike Hughes in the early 1990s.

The overview of the story told was given some official confirmation, seventeen years later, when Christopher Andrew published his authorised history of MI5, *Defence of the Realm*, in 2009. He even gave the intelligence service a name: the Industrial Intelligence Bureau (I.I.B.) and suggested it was funded by specific trade associations and industrialists. Unfortunately, MI5 had released not even half the story. Makgill's interests were far wider than Industrial Intelligence. Their account was based on a memo or memos written by Vernon Kell, head of MI5, and Maxwell Knight at least a decade after the events described.

Kell stated that he had assisted Makgill to set up the I.I.B. and that it would undertake undercover assignments for MI5 which no longer had agents who could do that sort of activity. Makgill had suggested to Kell that Knight should be infiltrated into the British Fascisti (BF) to provide Vernon Kell with information about the newly established organisation, inspired by Mussolini's insurrectionary group.

The British Fascisti had been set up on May 6, 1923, by a 28-year-old woman called Rotha Lintorn-Orman, with fund of £50,000 from her mother. Along with his mother, Katherine Atkinson, 21-year-old John Baker White, who was already part of Makgill's intelligence service, sat on the BF's Grand Council. He would soon be its Director of Departments, presumably a sort of chief of staff. Lintorn Orman placed six weekly

advertises for membership in a journal called **The Patriot**. The response must have been overwhelming because they stopped the adverts and twelve months later claimed 100,000 members.

The story told by Kell and Knight does not make sense in terms of what is known about the early days of the BF. From the start, nothing had happened in the BF without Makgill knowing about it. But according to Andrew, that might not have been Kell's fault, he could have been being taken for a ride by Makgill and Knight. What happened next goes some way to undermining that simplistic interpretation.

Knight goes along to the BF HQ and starts working there. By 1924 he becomes assistant Chief of Staff and Director of Intelligence. At some stage in "the mid-20s" he instructs six fascists to infiltrate the CPGB, which they do successfully. Knight starts feeding their intelligence into Kell at MI5. In 1920 Kell had introduced Makgill to Desmond Morton of MI6, initiating a prolonged and continuous correspondence until Makgill's death in 1926. Morton hears about Knight's anti-communist infiltration using the BF and starts receiving intelligence. This flow of intelligence continues after Makgill's death and Morton gives Knight and his infiltrators their first paid job in intelligence in 1929. But by summer 1930 Special Branch and MI5 become aware of the MI6 intrusion into domestic intelligence gathering. To resolve this turf-war, Knight is transferred permanently to MI5.

Defence of the Realm also makes no reference to an earlier book by Gill Bennett, a biography of Desmond Morton: *Churchill's Man of Mystery*. had dealt with Makgill's working relationship with Desmond Morton at MI6. Bennett had previously been official historian at the Foreign Office, where she conducted an historical investigation into the Zinoviev Letter and become aware of Makgill's intelligence connections.

In 2017, another book was published about Maxwell Knight, Henry Hemming's *M: Maxwell Knight, MI5's Greatest Spymaster*. Naturally these books focus on the six years Makgill was a radical activist in the public eye and following the five years of parapolitical activity. What is surprising is that there is no understanding of his early life and background. They present a picture of Makgill as a young lone adventurer going into colonies to search his fortune before returning to take up his inheritance on the death of his father. Nothing could be further from the truth. He is credited with creating the Anti German Union /British Empire Union according to his own political agenda. There is no attempt to understand or explain how an unexceptional backwoods, shire tory, comes to be a radical right-wing activist mixing in the highest level of British intelligence and politics.

The attached timeline below accurately reflects his origins and the phases of his life from birth to death which bears little resemblance to the published and hallucinated versions. A fuller, referenced version, is being prepared. Ironically however while the timeline exposes the abruptness of Sir George Makgill's radicalisation, it does not explain how it happened. For that we would have needed sources that could cast light on the methods of those responsible.

Does this historical inaccuracy hide a conspiratorial big lie? The answer is surely "no" but only up to a point. We have been able to fill in the gaps in Makgill's timeline because searchable newspaper databases, online sources and genealogical records are better now than they were in previous decades. And, for all their faults, AI searches tend to eradicate the pay-per-click hallucinations of ad-funded search engines.

But a hundred years after the events described, state agencies are still censoring and restricting the historical record and that is nothing if not a conspiracy perpetuated.

Is there a big lie in this story? If there it is in plain sight. British Intelligence contributed to the introduction and growth of Italian-style fascism in Britain in the 1920s. Although that movement was not ultimately successful, just six adverts in *The Patriot* in the summer of 1923 is all it took to create a 100,000 strong organisation by August 1924, and many times that by the end of the decade.

The British Fascisti changed their name to British Fascists in 1924 by which time they were the second largest fascist organisation in the world. Because of the British Fascists uniquely British approach to establishing fascism by tapping into the anti socialist and anti semitic prejudice in the Conservative, they did not merely till the soil and plant the seed of fascism, As the BF increasingly ceased operations over

1931 and 1932 the German-inspired fascism of Mosley and the British Union of Fascists were able to draw on a ready-made and ideologically prepared membership to build their movement.

There is little to be gained from speculation about how close we came to disaster in the late 1930's. But what is not a matter of speculation is the intelligence services' grooming of 1920's British fascism. This was unquestionably politically motivated and unquestionably subversive. It was done solely with the aim of enabling under-resourced intelligence services to frustrate the legitimate political aspirations of the Labour Party, trade unions and other radical left groups like the CPGB.

Acknowledgement

When I started seriously looking around some 30 years after I had first written about George Makgill I was hoping to find far more secondary material about his life than I found.

I had already seen a doctoral thesis completed in 2010 by Ian Thomas at University of Wolverhampton. Its title was "Confronting the Challenge of Socialism: The British Empire Union and the National Citizens' Union, 1917-1927". We had exchanged some thoughts about Makgill and his significance. I therefore decided to try and get back in touch. Initially he said he had continued looking for information but did not think he got very far. I later got a message saying that he had got a bit further than he thought. By this stage the one hundredth anniversary was weeks away and I was keen to publish something for it, if it might be found. A fully collaborative piece of writing was not possible but there were suggestions in Ian's material and some of mine that with a bit more ferreting about it might be possible to present a fuller picture of George Makgill. I could therefore not have done this without Ian Thomas's help and encouragement.

MH October 17, 2026

SIR GEORGE MAKGILL Bt.

1868-1926

A corrected timeline

- 1836 His father John is born. Commissioned into the East India Company as a military engineer in 1855 John is stationed in India.
- 1864 George's elder half-sister Joanna Maud is born, illegitimately, to a high caste Indian woman who dies in, or shortly after, childbirth.
- 1865 John marries his first cousin Margaret Isabella Haldane. They formally adopt Joanna and return to India.
- 1867 George's elder sister Agnes is born. John resigns his commission and the family return to Edinburgh.
- 1868 Birth of George Makgill, the son and heir of Captain John Makgill (Royal Engineers).
- 1870 Birth of brother Robert Haldane Makgill, who become a prominent doctor credited with the creation of the New Zealand public health service.
- 1872 Birth of sister Katherine who dies in infancy.
- 1874 Birth of brother John Edward.
- 1876 Birth of sister Margaret "Daisy".
- 1879 Capt. John sells two of the three estates he has inherited from his father in preparation for emigration to New Zealand.
- 1881 The Makgill family arrive in New Zealand. Makgill (aged 12) spends the rest of his childhood in Waiuku, (close to Auckland). The new family home is a large "station" (farm) named "Brackmont" after one of the estates sold to fund their emigration.
- 1882 Birth of brother Arthur. George, David and Robert enrolled at school attached to Auckland University College.
- 1886 Older boys go to Auckland Grammar School to enable them to Matriculate.
- 1887 George enrolls as undergraduate at Auckland University College.
- 1888 Birth of sister, Grace Gladys.
- 1890 Prolonged trip to Argentina spending time with gauchos.
- 1891 George marries Frances Elizabeth Grant, in Wellington.

- 1893 Birth of daughter, Harriet Frances Janet
- 1895 Birth of daughter, Marie Elspeth Agnes. Files claim for Gold mine in Remeura.
- 1896 George and family return permanently to Scotland.
 Novel **Cross Trails**, published as Victor Waite.
- 1899 Birth of son, John Donald Alexander Arthur Makgill.
- 1903 **Outside and Overseas** published as Mungo Ballas.
Head of the Firm short story published in his own name in *The Strand* November edition.
The Moor End Mystery published as Victor Waite again, serialised internationally.
- 1904 Living in Newlyn, Cornwall writing and painting.
- 1906 Capt. John dies in Waiuku. George only inherits the estate in Scotland. "Brackmont" is a company owned by his brothers and brother-in-law who farm it.
- 1907 Last of George and Frances' children, Richard James Robert; is born at Parkstone in Dorset.
 Captain John had submitted a claim to revive a dormant family viscountcy and baronetcy. The House of Lords revives the Baronetcy but not the Viscountcy of Oxfuird.
 Sir George and Lady Makgill, however, began living the "society" life of the landed gentry. They take a long lease on a country house called Yaxley House, in Eye, near Diss in Suffolk and a shorter lease on a town house in London.
- 1907-14 Between the beginning of 1907 and end 1914 there are 217 references to the Makgill family in the British Newspaper Archives. 24 are references to the marriage of his daughter; 36 reference his book *Blacklaw*. Most are published in East Anglia and a few less in Scotland.
- 1914 Another novel **Blacklaw** is published, again by Methuen, but this time under his own name. It is a family saga set in New Zealand.
- 1915 **Felons**, a transportation story, is published by Hodder and Stoughton as George Makgill.
 On March 19, the literary editor of the *Morning Post*, Edward Bolland Osborn, writes an article floating the idea of a war time campaign against German or German-speaking emigres in the Britain. He asked if someone would come forward to organise an Anti German League. Sir George Makgill answers the call, and becomes secretary of the **Anti German Union**, based in the *Morning Post's* offices in the Strand.
 May 7 The trans-Atlantic liner "Lusitania" is sunk by a German U boat, leading to an explosion in British Anti German sentiment.
 Jun 23 Makgill challenges in court the right of two naturalised German-born Jewish men, Sir Ernest Cassel and Sir Edgar Speyer, to be privy councillors.
 Dec 17 Makgill's case against privy councillors is rejected by the court.
- 1916 Makgill announces the change of the name of the Anti-German Union to **British Empire Union**, explaining:

“The task of the Union is not merely to uproot all German influence in the Empire but to found a national policy for the Empire which shall be an effective against the assaults of the German foe.”

May 6 A BEU organised mass parade to mark the first anniversary of the sinking of the Lusitania. It is filmed for newsreels (available on the BFI and IWM web pages).

https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-lusitania-day-1916-online?utm_source=chatgpt.com

The BEU's branch network is fairly self-managed. Its Business Secretary Reginald Wilson, recruited from the Anti Socialist Union, starts taking over more responsibility from Makgill as he invests more time in **British Empire Producers Organisation (BEPO)** lobbying for the “national policy for Empire” he talked about in 1916.

1918 On Nov 11 WWI ends, and Lloyd George calls General Election for the end of the year.

1919 The Wartime Coalition is returned without Labour's participation. It is a Conservative majority, led by Bonar Law, with a Liberal Prime minister, Lloyd George. The new intake of MPs includes the still serving Director of Naval Intelligence, by some way the most important and politically influential intelligence chief during the war, Vice Admiral William Reginald Hall, who is elected for West Derby, in Liverpool. Before taking up his seat, he prepares a memo that successfully advises the government to unite all of British Intelligence Services under a single Director of Intelligence. His closest collaborator in the Intelligence community is appointed to the role – Basil Thomson, Assistant Commissioner (Crime) at Scotland Yard.

In May another recently elected independent MP, Horatio Bottomley, a former Liberal who, since 1906, had been publishing a jingoistic journal called *John Bull*, announces the formation of a new party called **The People's League**. Bottomley had been a BEU member and supporter, and from November, Makgill is travelling around the UK speaking at People's League meetings and by Feb 8, 1920, is described as Vice Chair of the party.

A major industry lobby called the **British Commonwealth Union (BCU)** has secretly sponsored a number of the new MPs to form the core of an anti-socialist pro-industry caucus. Law and Lloyd George are keen for the Cabinet Office's Supply and Transport Committee (STC) to take responsibility for a “national propaganda” campaign discouraging trade union militancy and promoting increased production.

The BCU strongly supported the idea of a national propaganda campaign but opposed the idea of it being in any way accountable to Parliament. They offer to fund it themselves to the tune of a quarter of a million pounds and Lloyd George is delighted by the development. In the early autumn it is arranged for Admiral Hall, widely admired for his influence on wartime propaganda, to convene a meeting in Dean's Yard, Westminster, which creates a new organisation, or sometimes “movement”. It is imaginatively called “**National Propaganda**”, and its main role is to distribute the new funds and steer the propaganda. In October Hall and Richard C. Kelly, the administrator of National Propaganda, report progress to an October meeting of the Cabinet's STC.

1920 Throughout 1920 Makgill continues travelling around the country as principal speaker at People's League meetings. His new novel ***The Red To-Morrow*** is an explicitly anti-revolutionary future-war novel, is published under another pen name, Emerson C. Hambrook.

Over the course of his activism on the far right during the previous five years, and especially during his time running the BEU, Makgill has built up an impressive network of informants about the activities of the radical left. Many of these (like Reginald Wilson, Nesta Webster and her research assistant, Katherine Atkinson) were collecting and combing over “open source” materials. The evangelical nature of the radical left meant there was no shortage of information to be gained from their publications and meetings.

But some (like James McGuirk Hughes in Liverpool) were more proactive and covert in how they gathered the information. This sort of covert human intelligence would not have uncovered much in the way of conspiracies. But it would provide information to enable radical activities to be disrupted and to identify the rank file members of groups although there was, as yet, no organised blacklisting.

Makgill's high public profile and in-depth knowledge of radical movements would have made him a familiar figure to those involved in intelligence during the war. The only one we can say with certainty knew him well and regarded him as a friend is Vernon Kell, the head of MI5. We know that because he left a memo in MI5 explaining that he had Makgill create the Industrial Intelligence Bureau. But there is another source that supports this because in 1920 Kell introduced Makgill to Desmond Morton. Although he was senior officer in MI6, during the war he had been General Haig's staff officer and was transferred to MI6 afterwards. Over the next six years Morton and Makgill became friends and collaborators and regular correspondents and some of that correspondence is included in Gill Bennet's *Churchill's Man of Mystery*, first published in 2007.

1921 Until the autumn there was no change to the People's League routine for Sir George Makgill.

But for many years a Birmingham businessman and pamphleteer called Reuben Bigland had been engaged in a feud with Bottomley, particularly concerning the fraudulent nature of his management of the Victory Bonds. The feud stepped up a gear in September 1921, and Bottomley sued Bigland for criminal libel. At the initial hearing in October, revelations emerged about Bottomley's management of the Bonds which were very damaging. Although Bigland was committed for trial in January 1922, to prevent further revelations Bottomley offered no evidence.

There was another development that month which may have had a significant impact on Makgill's future political career. There is, however, no question about the development itself, which is that Basil Thomson resigned as DoI. Nor is there a question that the resignation was prompted by the antagonism of a new Metropolitan Police Commissioner and an unsympathetic review of the directorate by the Cabinet's Secret Service Committee.

With no replacement appointed, and no doubt some solid inside information, Admiral Hall forced an adjournment debate in the Commons on November 3 about the future of the Directorate, in which he was frank about his own role in promoting its creation. But by Dec 1, its abolition was confirmed.

Following the end of the war and the establishment of the Directorate, MI5 and MI6 had been reduced to a skeleton staff. MI5 was reduced from a total staff of 850 to 35, of whom only 16 were officers. MI6 also had 16 officers, but 50 support staff and an overseas network entangled with the diplomatic core. Although the Directorate had a small central staffing of six, Thomson could draw on 135 Officers and an unknown number of admin staff. Thomson had his own network of contacts in industry with information flowing in both directions. There is no doubt from the Commons debate that Hall viewed this abandonment of his plan for post war intelligence as disastrous for the country and particularly industry:

This vacancy has been created, as many of us know, because there were two forces opposed to the officer holding the position. There were the open enemies, the Bolsheviks, the Russians, the extremists in this country. They were open in their enmity, and I respect them for it. They never ceased demanding that Sir Basil Thomson should be removed. They were quite open and frank about it, and they deserve respect; but there were secret enemies.

Bennett and Andrew confirm the industrial source of the funding for Makgill's I.I.B. Although no date is given for its establishment, they give the impression that it is something that happened at the end of the War or immediately after it.

This however makes little sense. The names given as examples of the funders include key players in the BCU, which by the end of 1919 is the established route for funding through National Propaganda. The funding is in the hands of their Secretary General of the B.C.U., Patrick J. Hannon and Admiral Hall at National Propaganda.

Since Hall designed the structure of postwar intelligence, approved of the appointment of Thomson as director, and after his resignation thought he had been doing a good job, he would not before then have supported wasting the BCU's money on Kell.

This would be precisely the time and situation when Hall's views on industrial intelligence would change dramatically and urgently in the direction of B.C.U. funding. But the point of funding national propaganda through the B.C.U was to avoid scrutiny and interference by a Parliament with so many Labour MPs

This is a deduction, not speculation and it is supported by the fact that there is no evidence of I.I.B. activity prior to 1922. It ought to be testable if there is a historical record of it. If there is no historical record, then a strong counter argument that would need to be produced that would explain why Hall agreed a course of action that would undermine his own plan for post war intelligence.

- 1922 Following the Bottomley debacle Makgill had no option but reconcile himself to some time out of the public eye and to use that time to turn his large, but loose and often self-tasked network into an Industrial Intelligence Bureau.

It is a very specific brief, and this would have posed challenges for Makgill, We know from Baker White's autobiographical writing and the correspondence between Makgill and Morton, revealed by Bennett, that he was hoovering up from his network information about all sorts of fringe groups and secret societies and international criminal conspiracies like the trafficking of women and children and Aleister Crowley's occultism which would not have particularly interested industrialists. In this he had a lot in common with Nesta Webster, who in 1924 published **Secret Societies and Subversive Movements**. There is no evidence yet of any direct connection between the Webster and Makgill, but there was powerful shared interest, and one degree of separation through Baker White and his mother.

The cell of his organisation to which Makgill recruits John Baker White, referred to as "Section D", seems to be at the heart of I.I.B. business but not exclusively and there are interests in other areas of activity. This leads open the possibility or perhaps likelihood that there is no fixed place of business or roll call of operatives, just Makgill selecting items of industrial interest to pass on to the B.C.U in the name of the I.I.B. By 1924 and 1925 National Propaganda, now under the leadership of former minister and US ambassador, Auckland Geddes, is turning itself into the Economic League, and a real and tangible Industrial Intelligence organisation.

The new direction into which he is taking "section D" of his intelligence service with I.I.B. funding is covert human intelligence gathering in deep cover, similar that undertaken previously by Hughes in Liverpool. It is a younger, more adrenalin-filled activity and environment, and between the end of the 1921 and 1923 he recruited at least three young men in their early and mid-twenties to do the work.

The main evidence for this is the evasive, game-playing Baker White. He tells us that he himself was recruited by an agent identified as "H", who was a Cambridge undergraduate. He suggests that he himself then recruited a naturalist and sports teacher called "Max". He pseudo-names a number of other agents who were freelancing for Makgill when he joined the IIB without identifying them.

In Italy Mussolini had been developing his robust virulently anti-socialist paramilitary conservatism since Italy's entry into the War on the side of the Allies in 1915. In 1919 and 1920 a major outbreak of trade union militancy dubbed the "Biennio Rosso" (Two Red Years) to which the

Fascists responded aggressively and violently. In November 1921 the movement was set up as the Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF), a political party with a paramilitary presence on the streets, terrorising the trades unions and the social democratic government.

The PNF and Mussolini's ideas were starting to attract the attention of the radical Conservative right, and especially the young, like H, Baker White, and Max, who felt they had missed out on the War (though Max saw a limited amount of service on an armed trawler in 1918). When, in October 1922 Mussolini called on members of the PNF to march on Rome, huge numbers responded and the city was surrounded. The alarmed King responded by demanding the prime minister's resignation and giving the job to Mussolini.

- 1923 Within six months of the conservative revolution that was The March on Rome, on May 6 the decision had been taken to form the **British Fascisti**. It was formed by a small self-appointed group of not particularly well-known individuals who, with a few exceptions, mostly stayed out of the public eye.

The decision of an anonymous bunch of conservative activists to create British Fascism led to a tremendously effective launch of a political movement. After the May 6 meeting Rotha Lintorn-Orman, whose original ideas the group had endorsed, placed the first of six weekly adverts in *The Patriot*. She did need not place any more. The new members began forming branches in a highly militarised form which would soon see men's and women's branches, under the command of county commanders, the divided into areas, districts, divisions and troops.

The British Fascisti would operate within the confines of the Conservative Party, but they seem not to have asked permission or been granted it. However, unlike the CPGB in the Labour Party, membership if the paramilitary fascist organisation was not proscribed by the Conservative Party.

- 1924 In 1924, when a potential new branch of the BF in a Portsmouth suburb requested to be told who was on the Grand Council, the list was published in a local newspaper:

"Capt. Wright. Chairing the meeting, said that objection had been made because the names of the Executive Council of the movement had not been disclosed. He read a letter from the Organising Secretary at the London headquarters, which gave the following names and information for publicity:

*Rear-Admiral Armstrong (Chairman),
Brig.-General Blakeney (Director of Units),
Mr. Kerby Hewlett (Assistant Director),
Col. [F. W.] Moffitt,
Sir Charles Burn.
Mr. Theophilus Sandeman (Treasurer),
Mr. Baker White (Director of Departments),
Mrs. Lintorn-Arman(sic) and Miss Lintorn-Arman(sic) (Founders and Hon. Secretaries),
Mrs. Wroughton (Director of Women's Units), and
Mrs. Atkinson (Director of Social Propaganda).*

The director of propaganda was a well-known journalist in Fleet Street, but his name was not broadcasted, as used his influence as a sympathiser, not as official."

Porstmouth Evening News July 8, 1924.

The names of Admiral Armstrong and General Blakeney would be used in the public domain, as was that of the de facto leader of the Fascisti, 28-year-old Miss Rotha Lintorn-Orman. However, it was her mother, fellow Honorary Secretary, Blanche, who was very wealthy in her own right, who funded the enterprise. Mr Baker White is 25-year-old John. His father was a Kent farmer and big game hunter who had abandoned John and his mother when he was about two. Following a

scandalous divorce, Katherine Baker White had remarried Gerald Hartley Atkinson, a gentleman living on his own means who had worked pro bono as the administrative assistant to the Met Commissioner and would return to volunteer at a senior level in Special Branch during WWI and the Irish War of Independence. Katherine Atkinson joined her son John on the Grand Council as Director of Social Propaganda.

The two most influential characters not on the council were Makgill, understandably still toxic after the debacle with Bottomley, and anti-semitic conspiracy theorist, Nesta Webster. Webster did join two months after Makgill's death. When the list was produced, John Baker White would have been a member of Section D since 1922 and a founding member of the Fascisti.

In May 1924 the BF became a limited company. Baker White would have been on those original records. It is not known when, or if, he left the company before it was dissolved. But it was not dissolved in 1933, according to the National Archives, but in 1948.

1925/6 The identity of "H" has been a matter of interest for those who know the story told by Baker White, because he gives us a little biographical information that makes it possible to identify him. He was, we are told, the younger son of a peer and an accomplished motorcyclist who, after having dinner with White at the Trocadero in London was killed in a mysterious accident on the way back to Cambridge that night. There was an inquest at which a verdict of accidental death was returned. He tells us "H" was involved in the CPGB in Cambridge, which is how he met Baker White, who was pretending to be a student interested in communism. H rumbled him as an infiltrator, possibly also working for Makgill. H challenged him privately after a meeting and when he owned up to it, said he was acting on his own initiative. He was advised to expect a mysterious invitation to tea at the Caledonian Club, where he subsequently met Makgill.

To date, only one serious candidate has emerged for "H", but all the details given by Baker White are slightly awry. Henry Arthur Mina Hardinge was born in 1905 and was the oldest son of Sir Arthur Hardinge, a former senior diplomat living just outside of East Grinstead, near Tunbridge Wells, and the brother of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst. Henry Hardinge was a student at Kings College Cambridge. On June 29, he left Kings College heading towards London at 9.30pm. Just outside Welwyn an RAF man from Hendon saw him fall off his motorbike for no apparent reason. The RAF man took him to Welwyn hospital where he died of head injuries later that night. An inquest was undertaken, and a verdict of accidental death was returned.

Henry's father was an early member of the British Fascisti and became their treasurer on the eve of the General Strike in May 1926. His first cousin was a former Viceroy of India and the Chair of O.M.S.

By 1925 Baker White was working for the public relations/propaganda department of the **Mining Association of Great Britain** run by Phillip Gee, who was a member of the Economic League's Central Council.

The final politically significant period for Makgill came with the General Strike. It was common ground between revolutionary left and far right that any revolution would begin with a general strike. The government had a real fear of one in 1919, which led it to establish the Cabinet's Supply and Transport Committee's Propaganda Sub-committee that had played an influential role in the creation of National Propaganda. At the same time, they had laid down plans to create a Supply and Transport Organisation (S.T.O.) to keep supplies and services operating during a general strike.

Those fears returned when, following Churchill's return to the gold standard which raised the price of British coal sold overseas, mine owners pressed for longer hours and lower wages. The government bought time with a subsidy to the owners, but it was due to expire in May 1926.

Plans for the S.T.O. were revived but they could not be implemented, and strike breakers recruited, until a state of emergency has been declared. Many in industry argued that that would be too late to maintain services and supplies.

In autumn 1925 Employers began conversations with William Joynson-Hicks, the Home Secretary, about a privately funded Organisation for Maintenance of Supplies (O.M.S.). This was agreed with Joynson-Hicks with the proviso that the S.T.O would be in charge. It was announced by the Home Secretary in September and started recruiting straight away. The BF immediately volunteered to join the O.M.S., but when the Government insisted that the BF could not keep their identity in O.M.S. they refused. This split the BF. Most agreed with Linton-Orman that this was not acceptable and organised separately during the dispute or became special constables. Blakeney led the rebels, who followed the government instructions.

O.M.S is a frustratingly under-researched organisation, perhaps because it didn't have a future. In 1926, just before the General Strike, John Baker White joined the Economic League permanently as Assistant Director, while also representing them as the British Chapter of the **International Entente Against the Third International**. This was a transnational right-wing platform for fledgling fascist and White Russian interests.

His role as Makgill's link into the British Fascists' day-to-day management had been successfully taken over by Maxwell Knight, who had quickly become Director of Intelligence and was running the **K society**, a particularly aggressive section of their stewarding teams. He recruited six fascists to infiltrate the CPGB, which they did successfully until the 1930s, with Knight reporting their findings to Vernon Kell in MI5 and Desmond Morton in MI6.

There is no controversy about this account, and it has been confirmed by officially sanctioned sources based on closed files. But there are many gaps in the story and many mis-directions and mysteries. Knight and Kell created some of this by writing self-serving memos in the run-in to World War II, possibly to counter allegations that on their watch MI5 had been soft on fascism.

Kell says that Makgill had suggested the idea that he should infiltrate Knight into the BF. This is a nonsense. From the beginning there was nothing happening in the BFs that Makgill did not know about and could not influence. The knowing use of freelance Fascist undercover agents by MI5 and MI6 to spy on the CPGB in the second half of the 1920s and early 1930s raise serious questions about complicity and deliberation by the Intelligence services introducing fascism into Britain and developing it and protecting it.

Baker White suggests that Makgill was made general manager of O.M.S. during the strike in a role similar to that played by Admiral Hall at the *British Gazette*. Sadly, there are few available records to support this or tell us what was done. Baker White also suggests that the decision was taken to keep O.M.S. as a standing strike breaking force and this is what as general manager Makgill was working on. The following correspondence between Makgill and Joynson Hicks show negotiations were not going well:

On June 18, Sir G. Makgill of the OMS suggested to the Home Office that perhaps Chambers of Commerce might keep the lists. Whoever maintained them, they would require the names of all those who had registered with the Government's volunteer service committees. The Government were adamant. Its attitude is succinctly set out in a memorandum of unknown origin but initialled by Sir John Anderson and dated May 17, 1926. After setting down what the OMS proposed to do, for which they would require funds which they would aim to get from a public appeal, the memorandum made some telling points. It was "undesirable" that a public appeal for funds should be made, since, as the Home Secretary approved an earlier appeal it would be taken for granted that he approved this one and that would be difficult to reconcile with the Prime Minister's appeal for unity and tolerance. *"Large sections of the community regard O.M.S. as a strike breaking organisation financed by employers' associations."*

A. Mason, "The Government and the General Strike, 1926," *International Review of Social History*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1969), pp. 1–21, at p. 20.

On October 16 Makgill died, three days after a duodenal ulcer had perforated causing acute peritonitis.

The Will

1926 His was, in effect, a sudden death. His main will was, and remains, sealed. Although its total value was published at £6,600, the terms and properties included are sealed. It was however written in 1910 before any of his covert work was undertaken. Newspaper reports also mention a more recent document, so was apparently sufficient settled time during his rapidly advancing fateless to dictate terms of a codicil which will have dealt with disposing of and securing his personal papers.

Section D/IIB

This would not of including business continuity for any of his undercover operations. Donald, George's heir, had resigned his commission in the Coldstream Guards around 18 months before his father's death, and secured what sounds like an investment job in the city. Contrary to Hemming's suggestion it is unlikely that he is "**Don**" a sort of deputy to his father. Any previous experience in intelligence he mentioned during his time a senior officer in the SOE during WWII would have been gained in the looser network that predated Kell's and Morton's with his funded intelligence services.

Because of the large cell like structure of the network no one person knows its full full extent or battle. John Baker White and Maxwell decided to continue their "Section D" with Baker White in the driving seat.

1927 On 5th July Sir Donald Makgill married Miss Esther Lillian Bromley at St Margarets Church in Westminster.

O.M.S. and the Fascists

After the General Strike, and with Makgill dying before completing his plans, or getting any agreement of terms for the O.M.S. the proposal was shelved permanently. Had O.M.S. become a standing anti socialist militia the Britain would have taken a clear step in the direction of totalitarianism. With the cancellation of the the momentum behind the British Fascists had started to wain.

1928 George's daughter Marie Elspeth Agnes Winch, two years after her fathers death and aged 32, starts writing novels. Over the next decade Agnes would start writing novels as **Evelyn M Winch**. In the next 12 years she finishes 8 novels all of which published making her more prolific and popular than her father, although though like him pretty much unknown as an author today.

1930 Sir George's widow the Dowager Lady Frances Makgill files for bankruptcy. Failing for £2,477 with assets of £5.

Knight says that by 1930 the BFs had become ineffective and he had left, using an apparently cock-and-bull exit story of going to work in intelligence. However, he maintained his contact with the CPGB infiltrators whom MI6 were by then paying.

Rotha Linton-Orman, who during WWI was invalided out of the ambulance service with Malaria, was by the early thirties drug and alcohol dependent. In 1933 her mother stopped funding her lifestyle. By this stage, what was left of most of the BF membership, which they claimed since

1924 had risen closer to 1million, had already switched allegiance to Mosley's British Union of Fascists. This included Nesta Webster

1933 By 1933 The BF were no longer active. the BUF's latest recruits would include Sir George Makgill's heir, Sir Donald Makgill, who was involved in Mosley's Tory discussion group the January Club while Lady Esther Makgill, his wife, was running Mosley's women's sections.

1935 These Makgill connections to the BUF ended two years later when Lady Ester was removed from her post for financial irregularities, and Sir Donald was suspended.

In unrelated allegations Lady Esther Makgill appears at the old Bailey charged with obtaining goods or services by fraud by bouncing cheques. She is found not guilty

Rotha Linton-Orman died in 1935 from alcohol related causes.

1937 Lady Esther Makgill faces eight new charges of obtaining goods or services by fraud by bouncing cheques. She is sentenced to six months in prison

1939 Early in the year Sir Donald's older sister, novelist **Evelyn M Winch** commits suicide with a handgun. The inquest determines it was an act undertaken when the balance of her mind was disturbed by over work and concerns about the forthcoming war.

1941 Sir George's widow the Dowager Lady Frances Makgill again files for Bankruptcy failing for £422 with no free assets.

1942 Lady Esther Makgill divorces Sir Donald Makgill

1977 The House of Lords Privileges Committee votes for the extraordinary revival of the Viscountcy Oxfuird, dormant for 250 years and denied to Sir George in 1906. It was only the second pre-Act of Union Scottish Peerage to be revived in the 20th century. The 77-year-old baronet has no surviving male children so it will pass out of his own bloodline. However, all his dead male ancestors from whom he descends become Viscounts de jure. Sir George would have been entitled to the title of 11th Viscount Oxfuird and an uncontested seat in the House of Lords.

1986 Sir Donald dies. The viscountcy and baronetcy pass into his long dead younger brother's bloodline. George Hubbard Makgill sits first as a hereditary, liberal peer, then an elected hereditary cross bench peer, and finally as elected tory hereditary peer, and becomes deputy speaker.

Chronological Notes and Sources

1625 JUL 19 James Makgill is made Baronet (hereditary knight) of Makgill by Chales I.
Source: family's Wikipedia site

1651 APRIL 19 Sir James Makgill is made Viscount of Oxfuird (pronounced "Oxfurd"; the place is called Oxenfoord today) by Charles II.
Source: National Records of Scotland

1701 Robert Makgill, the second Viscount dies without a surviving male heir. The viscountcy and baronetcy is assumed (wrongly as it turns out) by the son of Robert's daughter.
Source: family-run Wikipedia site for him.

1821 DEC 23 Old George Makgill, George's grandfather is born. There is little contemporary evidence that he or his son John used the hereditary knighthood by records written 1977 do apply the award of it de jure which is confusing. In 1847 elected to Royal Society of Edinburgh but resigned in 1857.
Source: family-run Wikipedia site for him.

1836 FEB 6 George's heir John is born. Educated at Cheltenham College and then the East India Company's military college, at Addiscombe. Commissioned into the East India Company as a military engineer in 1855 stationed in India.

1858 In 1858, following the Indian Mutiny, the company's military forces in India were absorbed by the army. Captain John Makgill was transferred to the Royal Engineers.

1864 APR 14 George's elder half-sister Joanna Maud is born, illegitimately, to a high caste Indian woman who dies in, or shortly after, childbirth.
Source: Ancestry

1865 APRIL 18 John marries his first cousin Margaret Isabella Haldane in Edinburgh. They formally adopt Joanna and return to India where has a daughter who dies perinatally.
Source: Ancestry

1867 NOV 15 George's elder sister is born in Andhra Pradesh. Soon after John resigns his commission and the family return to Edinburgh and Fifeshire.
Source: Ancestry

2 Colonial Youth

1868 DEC 24 Birth of George Makgill, the son heir of Captain John Makgill (Royal Engineers) and Margaret Isabella Haldane, the half-sister of Richard Haldane, was born in Stirling.

1869 Birth of brother David.
Source: Ancestry

1870 MAY 24 Birth of brother Robert Haldane who become a prominent doctor credited with the creation of the New Zealand public health service.
Source: numerous well documented

1872 JAN 29 Birth of sister Katherine who dies in infancy.
Source: Ancestry

1874 Birth of brother John Edward
Source: Ancestry

1876 Birth of sister Margaret "Daisy"
Source: Ancestry

1878 SEP 21 Old Sir George Makgill dies in Worcestershire where he has lived for a long time.
Source: Ancestry

1879/80 Capt John sells two of the three estates he has inherited in preparation for emigrating to New Zealand. He retains the estate in Kemback outside

St Andrew's the large country house and family seat, Kemback House, is rented out.

1881 Makgill family move to New Zealand. Makgill (aged 13) spent most the rest of his childhood in Waiuku, (close to Auckland). where his father was based. The new family home was a large "station" (farm) named "Brackmont" after one of the Fifeshire estates sold to fund the move.
Source: Ancestry

The Makills had left London on October 12 1881 on the Orient Line steamer Cotopaxi sailing to Melbourne where they changed to the Arawara arriving in Auckland on 12 December.
Source: Ancestry, travel records

1882 Birth of brother Arthur at Brackmont
Source: Ancestry

George, David and Robert enrolled at school? attached to Auckland University College.
Source: 2020 Auckland Grammar School Magazine, profile of Robert Haldane.

1886 Studied at Auckland Grammar School. This was to enable them to Matriculate.
Source: New Zealand Herald, 21 October 1926, p. 12. 2020 Auckland Grammar School Magazine, profile of Robert Haldane Makgill

1887 George enrolls as an undergraduate at Auckland University College. Prominent in rugby, walking and athletics generally.
Source: New Zealand Herald, 21 October 1926, p. 12. 2020 Auckland Grammar School Magazine

1888 MAY 3 Birth of sister Grace Gladys.
Source: Ancestry

Robert Haldane enrolls as an undergraduate medical student at Edinburgh University
Source: 2020 Auckland Grammar School Magazine and other sources see Wikipedia and Who's Who in New Zealand

1890 It is unclear what George studied or if he graduated. Because his first novel featured in some known detail of the lives of Argentinian gouchos, at least one New Zealand review suggested that the author had first-hand knowledge.
Source: New Zealand Illustrated Dec 1.

This Argentinian adventure can be pinned down to 1890, presumably immediately after leaving university. Makgill left New Zealand on the SS Ruapehu in August that year, It was a mail packet heading for Britain with one stop-over in Rio de Janeiro. New Zealanders would leave the ship here to take a coastal steamer to Argentina.
Source: Ancestry travel records, Wikipedia.

1890 NOV 7 Death in Tewkesbury of George's paternal grandmother Harriett Stretel. She left a personal estate of over £15,000 total.

1891 Makgill intended to join legal profession and worked as a legal clerk for time with the firm of Messrs. Buddle Richmond and Buddle.
Source: New Zealand Herald, 21 October 1926, p. 12.

Over following years evidence in reports shareholdings in speculative gold mining ventures that he was working for a law firm, and one describes him as a solicitor.
Sources New Zealand Gazette

1891 DEC 1 1 December 1891 George married Frances Elizabeth Grant, in Wellington. She is

eldest daughter of Mr Alexander Innes Grant, of Murchison, Otago.

Source: New Zealand Herald, 21 October 1926, p. 12.

1893 AUG 29 Birth of daughter Harriet Frances Janet.
Source: Ancestry

1895 JUL 17 Birth of daughter Marie Elspeth Agnes.
Source: Ancestry

1895 JUN 24– OCT 10 24 June -10 October 1895
Makgill files claim for Remuera Special Claim 100 acres capital investment £5000.

Source: Thames Advertiser, 16 October 1895, p. 1.

1895 NOV 7 Hearing into Remeura claim at Thames Warden's Court, 10.30am.

Source: Thames Advertiser, 16 October 1895, p. 1.

1896 Makgill returned to Scotland. Resided at the family seat Kemback, Fifeshire.

Source: New Zealand Herald, 21 October 1926, p. 12.
[Though he owned it there is no evidence that they ever lived at Kemback House]

1896 JUL "Mr and Mrs Makgill and family, of Epsom, left Auckland last week for England, where they will take up their residence, as Mr Makgill has property there, and money left him by a relation." Presumably his Grandmother.

Source: New Zealand Graphic , Vol. XVII, Issue VII, 15 August 1896, p. 210.

NB The graphic is out on their dates. The family sailed Southampton from New York on the SS Paris arriving in July.

Source: Ancestry travel records

1896 Novel "Cross Trails" is published by Methuen under the pseudonym Victor Waite. It receives some good reviews. It is set in New Zealand and among the Gouchos Argentina and features a British settler whose life is ruined by an indigenous woman,

1899 Birth of John Donald Alexander Arthur Makgill in Edinburgh.

Sources: Evening Post (New Zealand), 30 November 1926, p. 9.

1901 George and his family seem not to be in view at the time of the UK 1901 census which suggests that they were not yet settled permanently in Scotland or London or East Anglia. As George set out to establish himself as a published author from 1900 to 1903 he seems to have been working concertedly at this.

1903 "Outside and Overseas: being the history of Captain Mungo Ballas, styled of Ballasburn, in the shire of Fife; with some account of his voyages, adventures, and attempts to found a kingdom in the South Seas" again published by Methuen this time under the pseudonym Mungo Ballas

1903 "Head of the Firm" short story published in his own name in The Strand November edition

1903 "The Moor End Mystery" published as Victor Waite again but written to be serialised between winter 1903 and spring 1904, and internationally syndicated.

1904 FEB 4 The Cornishman reports "There has recently come into our midst another author in the person of Mr. George Makgill, who having resided in a villa at the southern end of Newlyn has become so enamoured of the district that his stay will probably be reckoned by years rather than months, as was his first intention".

1906 NOV 14 His father died in Waiuku. Makgill recorded his pedigree at the Lyon Court, Edinburgh and at Herald's College, London with the hope of bringing back the viscountcy of

Oxfuird into his line and with it the baronetcy of Makgill.

Source: Evening Post (New Zealand), 30 November 1926, p. 9.

George Makgill was the heir to John, there was but there was no baronetcy or viscountcy to inherit. He inherits his father's remaining property in Fife. But, since neither he nor the older of his brothers had any interest in farming, Brackmont was put in the hands of his younger sons and Thomas Middleton, the husband of his adopted illegitimate daughter Joanna.

Source: Compiled from newspaper biographies and obituaries of the sons who farmed Brackmont

1907 MAY 3 Birth of the last of George's children a son Richard James Robert at Parkstone in Dorset.

1907 MAY The house of Lords committee which deals with these claims settled the claim that his father had begun agreed the baronetcy in their favour but not the Lordship and Viscountcy. George became "Sir George", the 11th Baronet Makgill, and it was awarded de jure and post mortem to his 9 predecessors who had never used the title or any privileges associated with it if there were any. But the peerage remained dormant.

Source: Family run site on Wikipedia

Sir George and Lady Makgill however began living the "society" life of the landed gentry. As a result there are numerous records of events attended by them in local newspapers held in the British Newspaper Archive. And though they never lived in Kemback in Fife their "generosity" to their tenant farmers started being reported in the local press there for that charitable and community works there.

About the time they acquired their new titles they took a long lease on a country house called Yaxley House, in Eye, near Diss in Suffolk. They also seem to have rented a series of town houses in Kensington and Chelsea, before settling on 25 Tedworth Square in Chelsea.

1907 Between the beginning of 1907 and end 1914 there are 217 references to the Makgill's in the British Newspaper Archives. 24 are references to the marriage of his daughter; 36 reference his book Blacklaw. Most are published in East Anglia and few less in Scotland. 15 were about a court case in which a labourer was prosecuted for throwing mud and stones at Sir George's Car during the 2010's first election. [Source: Suffolk Chronicle Friday, 25 February 1910].

And with two election in 1910 there opportunities to see him supporting Conservative causes, but there were other stories that would be representative of people of their class with a similar sense of their own importance.

1907 Giving Prizes to local territorials

Source: Evening Star Wednesday, 20 April 1910

Giving an address on Old Age Pensions

East Anglian Daily Times Saturday, 15 January 1910

Assisting them at the first polling of the year

Downham Market Gazette Saturday, 29 January 1910

At the Proclamation of George V

Evening Star Wednesday, 11 May 1910

Recorded as President of the Eye Branch of the Victoria League

Source: Suffolk Chronicle Friday, 28 May 1909

Adoption of Conservative candidate for the second election

Source: Stowmarket Weekly Post Thursday, 11 August 1910

- 1910 JUL 30 Makgill and Lady Makgill were "At Honor" to the Scoutmasters and Scouts affiliated to the Eye and District Scout Association. Source: East Anglian Daily Times, Thursday 4th August 1910.
- 1911 Joins Ipswich Fine Arts Club until 1915 and exhibits several paintings with nautical themes;
- 1914 Another novel, "Blacklaw" is published, again by Methuen, but this time under his own name. It is family saga set in New Zealand
- 1914 SEP 3 The marriage of their daughter, Marie Elspeth Agnes to Aubrey Brooke-Winch, is treated in the press like a society event.
5 War on the Home Front
- 1915 JAN 12 Makgill foreman of jury at the inquest into the death of Thomas Bird, aged 76, held at The Stag public house, East Burnham, Buckinghamshire.
- Source: Slough, Eton and Windsor Observer, 16 January 1915, p. 3.
- 1915 "Felons" Transportation story, published by Hodder and Stoughton as George Makgill
- 1915 MAR 19 Journalist Edward Bolland Osborn, by title literary editor of the diehard newspaper the Morning Post, but from the outbreak of the war its most fervent critic of all things German. On March 19 he writes an article floated the idea an article the paper on of war time campaign against German or German speaking emigres in the UK. He asked if someone would come forward to organise an Anti German League.
- 1915 George Makgill answers Osborn's call and the form what is called the Anti German Union (AGU) Makgill is its secretary and and Osborn as its chair from offices in the Morning Post 's building on the Strand where it meets fleet Street'
- Source
<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.com/image-viewer?issue=BL%2F0000174%2F19150319&page=5&article=087&stringtohighlight=e+b+osborn>
- 1915 MAY 7 The trans-Atlantic liner "Lusitania" is sunk by a German U boat leading to an explosion in British Anti German sentiment.
- 1915 JUN 15 The case was against Sir Ernest Cassel and Sir Edgar Speyer, challenging their right as foreign-born naturalised British subjects to sit on the Privy Council.
- Source: Times
- 1915 JUN 23 23 June 1915 — Makgill obtained the crucial preliminary orders from the King's Bench. The court granted rules requiring Cassel and Speyer to show by what authority they were Privy Councillors—the quo warranto proceedings.
- Source: Times
- 1915 JUL 31 Makgill letter to Manchester Evening News re: Professor Schuster.
- 1915 OCT 14 Makgill a speaker at a meeting organised by the Globe newspaper at the Cannon Street Hotel, London, to 'urge upon the Government a declared policy of air reprisals for Zeppelin raids...'
- Source: Flight, No 356 (No 43, Vol VII), 22 October 1915, pp. 797-8, 802.
- 1915 NOV 18 The substantive hearing of the arguments concerning his action against Cassel and Speyer concluded before Kings Bench
- Source: Times
- 1915 DEC 14 Makgill a speaker at meeting on 'The War and After' organised by the League of the Kingdom at the Church of St. Ethelburga the Virgin, Bishopsgate, London. A resolution confirmed the League's approval of the objects of the AGU.
- Source: Letter in the Saturday Review, 18 December 1915, p. 587.
- 1915 DEC 17 Lord Reading CJ, Avory J and Lush J delivered their reserved judgment on Makgill's action against Cassel and Speyer. His case is lost and judges discharge the temporary rules he had obtained on 23 June.
- Source: Times and other Nationals
- 1915 Numerous reports of BEU branches being formed these often contain details of local lrsdrtts. Morning Post appeals for money from Summer 2015 to Spring
- 1916 FEB 16 1916 Editorial in Manchester Guardian (p. 4) critical of mob rule of AGU and Makgill.
- 1916 MAR 2 Makgill letter in Manchester Guardian (p. 10) replying to accusation of mob rule.
- 1916 MAR ? Makgill presides over a meeting organised by the Czech National Alliance in London. The main speaker was William Joynson-Hicks MP.
- Source: Francis P. Marchant, "Bohemia: her Story and Her Claims", Asiatic Review, August, 1916, pp. 161-2
- 1916 MAR 23 The Morning Post: publishes a letter from Makgill announcing the change of the name of the Anti German Union to British Empire Union, explaining:
"The task of the Union is not merely to uproot all German influence in the Empire but to found a national policy for the Empire which shall be an effective against the assaults of the German foe."
- 1916 MAR 30 Morning Post launches a national appeal to create a £50,000 "Fighting Fund " for the new organisation.
- 1916 APR 4 Makgill letter in Yorkshire Telegraph and Star (p. 4) appealing for supporters to join BEU.
- 1916 APR 5 Speaker, along with Lord Templetown, at BEU meeting at Sun Hall, Liverpool. The Chairman, Mr. J. Kebty-Fletcher, 'presided over a rather meagre attendance'.
- Source: Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, 6 April 1916, p. 7.
- 1916 APR 6 Main speaker at BEU meeting at Houldsworth Hall, Manchester (An Address on the Aims and Objects of the BEU).
- Source: Manchester Evening News, 6 April 1916, p. 1.
- 1916 APR 20 1916 two letters in The New Age (p. 598) critical of Makgill.
- 1916 MAY 4 Makgill letter to The New Age (p. 22) responding to his critics.
- 1916 MAY 6 A BEU organised mass parade to mark the first anniversary of the sinking of the Lusitania. It is filmed for newsreels and that is available on the BFI and IWM web pages.
- https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-lusitania-day-1916-online?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- Source: BFI
- 1916 By 1916 The BEU's extensive local network of branches headed by local dignitaries was pretty much running itself. Some traffic analysis would give a flavour. Sir George, thoroughly radicalised by Morning Post and its network of diehard Tories was looking for new channels for his political energies which he found in the British Empire Producers Organisation (BEPO) in which he had a serious family interest.
6 Moving On - British Empire Producers Organisation
- 1916 MARCH No Newspaper reference to BEPO prior to March 1916 apart from chemical news. Given the explanation of the AGU name change it is

tempting to entertain the idea that BEPO was Makgill moving on to beef up the constructive side leaving Wilson to front the BEU.

1916 JUN 9 Morning Post reports 9 June 1916: the executives of BEU and BEPO jointly entertain the Canadian Trade Commission, at an event explicitly about attacking German trade and creating a “self-contained Empire.” Malcolmson, described by Leo Amery as BEPO co founder , Makgill, Parker and AGU founder Osborn are together.

1916 JUN 29 Statement by Mr C. Sandbach Parker, Chairman of BEPO, in Manchester Guardian (p. 5), describing organisation and expressing confidence in the efficient and energetic Secretary, Makgill.

1916 AUG 22 Makgill in Manchester in capacity as Secretary of BEPO in connection with arrangements for visit of Canadian Trade Commissioners. Interviewed by correspondent of Manchester Guardian.

1916 AUG 23 Interview with Makgill published in Manchester Guardian (p. 10). Explains work of BEPO and reason for its formation.

1916 DEC 8 Makgill attendee (as representative of BEPO) at a private meeting convened at Holborn Restaurant by the British Association of Trade and Technical Journals. Source: Chemical News, 2 February 1916. [This s looks like the earliest reference to BEPO is the date right?]

1916 DEC 12 Makgill speaker at luncheon at Waldorf Hotel, London, organised by BEPO.

Source: Auckland Star, 15 December 1916, p. 6.

1916 DEC 18 Meeting of the Council of the British Association of Trade and Technical Journals decided to invite Makgill and five other “gentlemen representing associations of manufacturers... to meet a sub-committee to consider what practical steps can be taken for the more effectively organised co-ordination of British production and publicity.”

Source: Chemical News, 2 February 1916.

1917 OCT 20 The Croydon Times reports a meeting of the local BEU Branch at which the right-wing Seaman’s Union Leader and Business Secretary Reginald Wilson are speaking suggesting the Makgill has clearly moved on.

1917 NOV ? Makgill was present at BEPO luncheon at Waldorf Hotel.

Source: Dominion (NZ), 13 November 1917, p. 5.

1918 MAY 28 Makgill speaker on behalf of BEPO at meeting under auspices of Derby Chamber of Trade at the Temperance Hall, Derby.

Source: Derby Daily Telegraph Wednesday 29 May 1918, p. 2.

1919 JUNE 3 Makgill in Manchester representing BEPO at a conference of employers’ associations and trade union representatives at the Milton Hall to set up a Manchester district committee to combat ‘the propaganda of those extremists who advocate violent or illegal methods of reform’. One of Makgill’s contributions reflected the growing discussion on the far right for government sponsored patriotic “national propaganda”.

Source: Factory Times Friday 6 June 1919, p. 1.

2.1 Conservative Subversion

1919 DEC 14 Following the end of the War on November 11th Lloyd George almost immediately calls a General Election to be held over the Christmas period. In 1910 less than 5m people voted for the government which would declare war on Germany. Following the Representation of

the People Act 1918 more than 20m were registered to vote, many of the still in France waiting to be demobbed. Lloyd George’s Conservative dominated coalition was returned to power to negotiate the peace.

Source: Wikipedia UK Elections

1919 JAN The new parliament includes Admiral William Reginald Hall, still serving as the head of Naval Intelligence, as Conservative MP for West Derby in Liverpool. Also there is the former Liberal M P, Horatio Bottomley the publisher of the patriotic journal John Bull; standing as an Independent who took South Hackney Seat from the coalition candidate.

1919 JAN MI5 had massively expanded its human covert intelligence capacity during the War as had MI6. But the most significant figures in British intelligence were Basil Thomson at the Metropolitan Police and Admr. Reginald “Blinker” Hall. Hall’s significance across the whole spectrum of wartime intelligence and propaganda derived from his spectacular success in creating a new intelligence genre that would later be called “signals Intelligence” which involved intercepting and decoding wireless communications of all kinds and using range and direction finding to undertake traffic analysis. All the post war cabinet would not only know him, but be in awe of him and his achievements.

1919 APR 4 Lloyd George makes Basil Thomson Director of Intelligence at the Home Office. He is already Assistant Commissioner (Crime) the Metropolitan Police and therefore Special Head of Special Branch and he retains these roles while assuming responsibility for all Intelligence services, “At Home and Abroad”

Source TNA, HO 144/1590/380368, Mohamed Hanif Majothi

1919 MAY Bottomley who had been a supporter of the BEU announces the formation of a new political party, the Peoples League, pledging to fight waste (public spending) in government.

1919 BEFORE HALL REPORTS TO CAB 27/84 As the new parliament took its seats in the new year of 2019 there were growing calls for “national propaganda” to replace the wartime spirit and its drive for improved production rates. As early as February 20 the Pall Mall Gazette reports Bonar Law, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, saying to the members the government was considering it.

Later in the year the task of organising national propaganda was given to the Cabinet Office’s Supply and Transport Committee which established a Propaganda Sub-Committee. [papers CAB 27/84]

Keith Middlemass Politics in an Industrial Society:

“Guest, the Liberal Chiet Whip, described the process rather disingenuously: there are grave objections to the employment of taxpayers’ money for this purpose, as many members of the Labour Party could justly claim that their own money was being used to overcome their political creeds.’ Hence he and Talbot turned to those to whom a peaceful settlement of industry is a vital consideration’ (LG F21/4/10).Caillard actually objected to the presence of the Chief Whips, fearing to give Walton’s organisation “political colour”, and threatened that ‘he and his friends embracing the very largest interests in the country, would not act upon the committee (BL 98/1/8).

The employers later went on to form their own body, called “National Propaganda”, in January 1920, under the chairmanship of Lord Inchcape (shipbuilding) with

- Sir Allan Smith (engineering), Lord Gainford (coalmining), Sir Hugh Ball (iron and steel), Lord Desborough (landowners), and Caillard and Admiral Reginald Hall ex-head of Naval Intelligence) on its Central Council (EEF P/13/4): its aims were almost identical, being to counter nationalisation, revolutionary and extremist activities,
- safeguard private enterprise and promote increased production; and its budget as £250,000 - roughly the same as the costs for the Conservative Party of the whole 1923 election. It should be added that Admiral Hall managed to make an agreement with the Inland Revenue in July 1920 whereby all such subscriptions were to be viewed 'as a trade expense' in computing firms' liability for tax!"
- CAB 27/84 CAB 27/84/1-24,
CAB 27/84 is richer than just that meeting. It contains the later Propaganda Sub-Committee report and separate appendices on National Propaganda (Appendix A, p.7) and Sidney Walton's Industrial Information (Appendix B, p.9).
- The organisation National Propaganda was established at a meeting at 4 Dean's Yard, with £250,000 of BCU industrialists money.
- Sources "Fifty Fighting Years", Economic League, 1969, "Politics in Industrial Society", Keith Middlemas
- That meeting have been before October 1919. Walton is not named as being present and may not have been part of it, His funding comes from the government fund held by "the whips". Until 1886 the secret service finding was held by the Chief Whip. This seems to have a revival of the sort of arrangement.
- Source: Middlemas
- Although the funding for Makgill's undercover service funding would come out of the £250,000 allocated by the BCU there is no indication that it was allocated in 1919.
- National Propaganda describes itself as a "movement" and may act as a distribution hub for the BCU fighting fund. This backroom role for National Propaganda means it has left little evidence in the archives of the newspapers where the ideological conflict was being waged. But it left some
- 2.2 A Final Fling in the Limelight
- 1919 NOV 17 Makgill presided over meeting of the Reading Branch of the People's League at the Large Town Hall, Reading, to explain its aims and objects.
- Source: Reading Observer Saturday 22 November 1919, p. 7.
- 1919 DEC 18 Makgill a speaker at inaugural meeting of Derby Branch of the People's League. Also on platform were four Russian trade unionists who spoke against the Bolsheviks.
- Source: Derby Daily Telegraph, 19 December 1919, p. 5.
- 1920 The Red To-Morrow: an explicitly anti-revolutionary future-war novel. George Makgill, published under his pseudonym Emerson C. Hambrook in 1920. The Proletarian Press.
- 1920 JAN 5 Makgill chaired meeting in connection with the People's League at Paddington Town Hall. He was assisted by Jacques Abady. (Contains information on Makgill's views on trade unions).
- Source: Marylebone Mercury Saturday 10 January 1920, p. 6.
- 1920 JAN 9 Makgill chaired meeting of the People's League on "Bolshevism and the Nationalisation of Industries' at Argyle Hall, Seven Sisters Road.
- Source: Daily Herald Thursday 8 January 1920, p. 2.
- 1920 JAN 16 Makgill speaker at People's League meeting on "Bolshevism and the Nationalisation of Industries' at Hammersmith Constitutional
- Hall. Two Russian trade unionists available to answer questions.
- Source: Daily Herald Friday 16 January 1920, p. 2.
- 1920 JAN 19 Makgill speaker at People's League meeting on "Bolshevism and the Nationalisation of Industries' at Fulham Town Hall. Two Russian trade unionists available to answer questions.
- Source: Daily Herald Saturday 17 January 1920, p. 7.
- 1920 JAN 29 Makgill speaker at People's League meeting on "What is Behind the Demand for Nationalization?" at the Guildhall, Bath.
- Source: Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette Saturday 31 January 1920, p. 15.
- 1920 FEB 8 Advert inserted by Peoples' League describing Makgill as Vice-Chairman and also stating that the PL incorporated the British Constitution Association, the National Security Union and the National Unity Movement.
- Source: Sunday Post (Glasgow), p.4.
- 1920 FEB 14 Makgill speaker at People's League meeting on "Bolshevism in England" at the Montpellier Rotunda, Cheltenham [good example of Makgill's conspiratorial mindset].
- Source: Gloucestershire Echo Monday 16 February 1920, p. 3.
- 1920 FEB 27 Makgill addressed a meeting of the People's League at Market Harborough Assembly Rooms.
- Source: Leicester Daily Post Monday 1 March 1920, p. 6.
- 1920 MAR 12 Makgill writes letter to press calling on people to share book on The Nationalisation Peril with Labour and trade union members.
- Source: Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer 17 March 1920, p. 4.
- 1920 MAR 18 Death of Makgill's mother in New Zealand.
- Source: Dundee Courier 25 March 1920, p. 8.
- 1920 MAR 19 Makgill advertised as Peoples' League speaker at meeting of Housewives' Union at Dover Town Hall.
- Source: Dover Express, p.4.
- 1920 MAR 22 Makgill unable to attend Dover meeting due to death of mother. His replacement was Capt. Erskine Tulloch, [who went on to found the Imperial Fascist League in 1928].
- Source: Dover Express 26 March 1920, p.7.
- 1920 APR 19 Advert for Peoples' League open air meeting in Albert Square (Dundee?).
- Source: Evening Telegraph (Dundee), p. 2.
- 1920 DEC ? Makgill accepts invitation from East Leyton branch of the People's League to stand as prospective parliamentary candidate for the constituency.
- Source: Essex Newsman Sunday 18 December 1920, p. 5.
- 1920 NOV 10 Despite its largely backroom role National Propaganda had not escaped the attention of the left. In 1920 the Independent Labour Party Information Department published "The Little Brothers of Big Business" which exposed the leading anti-socialist campaigning organisations funded and run by business interests.
- Source: Daily Herald 10 November 1920 ,
- 1920 DEC 4 The relative dearth of newspaper reports about that National Propaganda suggests it was almost exclusively engaged in a small scale educational ventures through the Economic Study Clubs or backroom funding and co-ordination operation is upturned when Sylvia Pankhurst's Workers Dreadnought a comparative article about it. The article is by P. F. Meachem and is a

	response to a factory gate campaign by National Propaganda to encourage workers to maximise production. It is not so much an expose as a forensic dismantling of the arguments being put forward by their speakers that improved productivity will improve their conditions and job security. The author is almost certainly Percy Meachem, previously associated as a printer with the anarchist paper Freedom.	MP and later a member of Attlee's blacklisting government.
	This approach of what might be today described as assertive outreach, backed up by pamphlets was in 1920 was the only alternative mass media to newspapers and public meetings. With local and national newspapers predominantly in Conservative hands it was therefore widely used by the radical left throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Meachem's article is one of the first examples of evidence of it being adopted by the pro-capitalist lobby.	Source: The Daily News (London) 5 December 1921
	Four years later when National Propaganda becomes the Economic League it becomes a characteristic and routine tactic used by the League's "Flying Squads".	1922 MAY 29 Having been prosecuted over, and found guilty of his misuse of investors' money in the Victory Bond scheme Bottomley is sentenced to seven years penal servitude.
1920	DEC 18 Two weeks after it published Meachem's article about National Propaganda the Workers Dreadnought publish a second long article by him dismantling the BEUs arguments about alien involvement in "White Slavery" and the threat posed to British workers by alien workers. I have been unable to trace any further examples of Meachem's work after this; but have included these two articles as appendices.	1922 AUG 1 Bottomley is formally expelled from the House of Commons. 3.3 - Into the Shadows
1921	JAN 8 Makgill is unable to attend coming of age dinner for his son Donald at Royal Hotel, Cupar. He was due to chair the dinner, but absence was "unavoidable".	1922 Having so openly backed the maverick crook Makgill's public and more conventional political ambitions were in ruins. Having stood against mainstream Conservative candidates and campaigned alongside Bottomley there would be no easy way back into the Party. His mere presence would discredit any political cause he became publicly associated with. At this point he had little immediate choice but to pursue his political objectives and ambitions from the parapolitical shadows, and out of sight of the electorate.
	Source: Dundee Courier Monday 10 January 1921, p. 3.	1922 OCT 22 The 1918 election had been won by the Liberal and Conservative Government led by the Liberal Lloyd George but with a Conservative majority in the House of Commons. It was an arrangement that did not please the Die Hards but there was little they could do about it until October 1922 when a majority of Conservative back benchers and a few ministers forced the reluctant Party leaders led by Bonar Law to pull out of the coalition forcing a general election. Law immediately became prime minister on October 23.
1921	MAY 18 Bottomley owned his own hyper-patriotic newspaper John Bull, In 1917 it launched a Victory Bond scheme which sold half a million pounds worth of bonds to mostly small investors. In the spring of 1921 a businessman called, Reuben Bigland published a pamphlet accusing of fraud, Bottomley tried to sue him for criminal libel and failed.	1922 OCT 29 From the 27 October members of Mussolini's Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF) had been marching towards Rome from across Italy demanding the resignation of the social democrat government. By the 28th the city was surrounded the next day the King insisted that the prime minister stood down and he asked Mussolini to form a government.
1921	SEP 21 Makgill drowned out by protesters at People's League meeting at Fulham Town Hall.	1922 NOV 15 In the general election, three weeks later the Conservatives came out the largest party, with 344 seats. Labour were second largest party with 142 seats, Asquith's Liberals were third with 62 seats Lloyd George's National Liberals had 53 seats there were 14 others. On paper the Conservatives had a comfortable working majority, but ideologically they were split over the issue of tariff reform and Empire protectionism, militantly promoted by the Die Hards.
	Source: Dover Express Friday 30 September 1921, p. 9; Daily Herald Thursday 29 September 1921, p. 5,	1922 DEC 14 However, with a change of government and three years after its creation there is a rare first-person account of National Propaganda's doings in the form of a newspaper report of a general meeting at the Caxton Hall on 14 December 1922. This was the first sign of its transformation from being a facilitative and coordinating body into being into one hoping to shape government policy.
1921	OCT 11 Makgill speaks at People's League open-air meeting at Fulham as prospective Anti-Waste candidate. Disorder and arrests.	Source: Western Mail 15 December 1922
	Source: Portsmouth Evening News Wednesday 12 October 1921, p. 3.	1922 Sometime in 1922 Though Makgill had become politically toxic well before the election he still had friends, and perhaps admirers, among the diehard right-wing in the Party, and especially in the network of anti-socialists groups funded by the industrial parliamentary lobbyists of the BCU whose General Secretary was Patrick J Hannon. Their funding was still being channelled through
1921	OCT 30 Following several difficulties with the metropolitan Police Commissioner General Sir William Horwood and the Secret Service Committee, and without the continuing support of Lloyd George, Basil Thompson resigns as Director of Intelligence and Assistant Commissioner, and the directorate is closed down.	
	Source: Mohamed Hanif Majothi	
1921	NOV 3 Furious about what he sees as Thomson's dismissal as head of intelligence Admiral Hall forces and adjournment debate in the House of commons.	
1921	DEC 5 The Daily News in 1921 Includes a tightly argued and precient expose of the National Propaganda by Arthur Greenwood a Leeds Labour activism Arthur Greenwood, soon to be a Labour	

the platform of the National Propaganda Movement run by Admiral Reginald Hall and administrator Richard C. Kelly.

From early in 1922 Makgill himself would have been considering how to readjust to the new realities of his political life. In fact we now know the answer he would find; he would recast and reshape the informal intelligence network that he had used to inform his public political activities for the previous six years into his own secret service. It would be dedicated to supporting the anti-socialist, pro-capitalist objectives of the radical right.

But it was his disappearance overnight into the shadows that was the radical change in his political direction. A straw poll of newspaper references on the British Newspaper Archives falls from 710 and 454 in 1915 and 1916; to 19 in 1919; then rises to 51 in 1920, 41 in 1921, 20 in 1922, just 1 in 1923, 3 in 1924 and 1 before his death in 1926. There is however a flurry of 47 mentions in 1925 where he is named as the husband of his wife who is being sued for defamation by a tenant's butler.

At National Propaganda, Admiral Hall was seriously concerned about the collapse of Intelligence surveillance of communists, socialist and industrial militants signalled by Basil Thomsons resignation/constructive dismissal in October 1921. It is inconceivable that Hall was not fully kept up to date with the detail of what was happening to his old friend Basil Thompson in the Home Office and Metropolitan police and the attention close The Directorate of Intelligence (DoI), was closed on December 1. Although Hall was no fan of Vernon Kell at MI5 it is equally inconceivable he did not know that Kell's service was so depleted it could no longer run agents.

Source: Andrew

The transformation of Makgill's secret network into a secret service which started to happen in 1922 was not initially a radical change in direction. It would be Mussolini's paramilitary revolution in Italy, during the 1922 election campaign in Britain, that radicalised it and turned it into a conservative subversive force.

A Note on Sources

The main primary source on Makgill's un-named secret service is John Baker White who writes about his experiences in it in some of his autobiographical writing. He gives he makes a hit miss attempt to disguise his fellow agents and misnames Makgill as "McGill". And calls his part if the organisation as "Section D" and explains he goes on to run it until the outbreak of World war II even after becoming the director of the Economic League.

In 1991 and 1992 two researchers, John Hope and Mike Hughes, more or less independently conclude that George McGill is Sir George Makgill, secretary and chief organiser of the BEU. Hope identifies a Makgill agent active in Liverpool Hughes compiles a list of agents that Baker White has described and suppositively given misleading names. One is the broadcaster and naturalist and MI5 agent runner Maxwell Knight. Hope and Hughes both suggest links with the British Fascisti created in 1923. See Appendix for an update list of agents descriptions and candidates.

There is no official confirmation by MI5 of the identifications made or the links with the British Fascisti until the publication of "Defence of the Realm" the

"authorised" history of MI5 by Christopher Andrew, published 18 years later. in 2009.

Andrew is shown a memo or memos written by Vernon Kell and Maxwell Knight that confirm that Makgill had run a private secret service and that Knight and a couple of other future MI5 officers had worked for it. Kell explains that he had helped Makgill set it up and that it was called the Industrial Intelligence Board (IIB). Kell explains it had been funded by a group of industrialists. Kell explains that MI5 had been so depleted that he had no permanent agents so that he subcontracted tasks to the IIB.

In 1924 Makgill suggested that Knight could be infiltrated into the newly established British Fascisti. agrees and is quickly promoted to be head Intelligence. In this role he gets seven Fascists to infiltrate to the CPGB. He stays in this role until.

The story that Andrew was allowed publish is not the whole truth and the lack of dates and credited or described documents contribute to the ambiguity.

The way the story is told, presumably by Kell, is that Makgill set up his intelligence service "at the end of the War". This is surely wrong. During the debate in Parliament Hall tells the commons that he was to a large degree responsible for establishing the "Directorate of Special Intelligence". He opens the adjournment debate with the observation:

"It was borne in on me more and more towards the end of the War that it was essential for the public economy and the public interest that, at the termination of the War, intelligence of that nature should be centralised in some central, responsible body, and I venture to say, with all deference, that it was in consequence of a Minute of mine that the original Cabinet Committee was set up, from which emanated the appointment of Director of Special Intelligence. It was not because there had been any failure of cordial co-operation between myself and the officer responsible in the Home Department for the collation of intelligence, but because I saw an overlapping, and saw danger ahead which, unless at once perceived and stopped, would reduce the efficiency of the service."

He then reflects:

"It is fair to say that had I been, after my experience of the War, asked who should have been selected for this onerous and responsible appointment, I should have named Sir Basil Thomson."

This is not just important because of his role in establishing the Directorate but because he does not say "Vernon Kell", for whom he had little regard, But even more importantly Hall was still responsible for distributing the BCU funding which was used to fund IIB. Since everything was going exactly as he wanted in respect of counter subversion he would not have entertained the thought of funding competition for the DoI.

The notion that Makgill himself needed in infiltrator in the Fascisti makes no sense whatsoever. Because Baker White and his mother were on the Grand Council of the BFs even before Knight, recruited by Baker White infiltrated them.

At least two biographers of Makgill agents - Hemming of Maxwell Knight, and Hutton of Eric Roberts - accept the infiltration myth but then struggle understand why Makgill should want to infiltrate an organisation with which he had so many views in common. The truth is that it is a nonsense.

The question is whether this irreconcilable contradiction was the result of a conspiracy by Makgill and Baker

	White and Knight to blindside Kell and MI5 about the actual subversive objectives of the Fascisti. Or on the other hand whether it was a conspiracy by Kell, Baker White and Makgill to use the Fascisti to furnish a pool of trusted ultra conservative loyalists to spy on and disrupt the CPGB and the international Jewish conspiracy.	"assistant chief of staff" and soon also becomes "director of intelligence". The BFs do not seem to have had a role of chief of staff, although its sounds suspiciously like Baker White's job title "Director of departments". If that is the case the so called infiltration is no tougher than being recruited by his friend and fellow Makgill agent
1923	MAY 6 Within 4 months of Mussolini's accession to power in Italy a decision was taken by a small self-appointed group of radical right-wing Conservatives to create a British organisation that mirrors Mussolini's PNF right down to its name "The British Fascisti".	As Director of Intelligences Knight gets six BFs to infiltrate the CPGB and feeds their intelligence back to MI5 and later also to MI6 via Desmond Morton. Knight confirms he remained in the BFs until the very early 1930
	The two people responsible for organising the foundation of the BFs were a remarkable young woman called Rotha Lintorn-Orman and her mother Blanche Lintorn-Orman (nee Simons and Major Charles Orman. Her mother had inherited a substantial fortune and agreed to fund her daughter to form the BFs.	Source: Andrew. Defence of the Realm. Knight stays in his role as Director of Intelligence until 1930 when according to his memo in MI5 the BFs were becoming ineffective. Knight is recruited to initially to MI6 in December 1929, He continues to run the BF infiltrators in the CPGB, while under taking a tour Britain to report CPGB links with Comintern. He first task in 1931 he is transferred to MI5. The BFs were dissolved in 1933, the year Hitler came to power in Germany.
	From the middle the end of May six weekly recruiting adverts were published in The Patriot. Since 1921 the Duke of Northumberland, a diehard Tory Peer, had been funding the Boswell Press and publishing a weekly political paper called The Patriot. It provided a platform anti socialist antisemitic views and was sympathetic to Italian fascism. By 1922 it was regularly publishing articles by Nesta Webster.	Sources newspapers, Dorrell, JBW, Masters, Hope, Hughes, Andrew
	It had a small Grand Council but part from its founder, Rotha Lintorn Orman, chair Rear-Admiral John Armstrong and its director of units Brig.-General Robert Blakeney. Rotha was still only 28 but when she was sixteen she was one of a small number of girls who turned up to a scout assembly at Crystal Palace join the scouts leading to the formation of the Guides. When War broke out she joined the Women's Volunteer Reserve and in 1916 she posted as an ambulance driver to the Serbian front where she was twice decorated for gallantry. In 1918 she joined the Red Cross becoming their chief driving instructor. Amongst the members of Makgill's IIB/Section D John Baker White names "Rose" who is an impressive and courageous young woman who is very likely to be Lintorn Orman. That likelihood is underlined because Baker White, and his mother are also members of the Grand Council. His mother, Katherine Atkinson, is head of "social propaganda". According to Baker White Although still only 20 years old when the BFs are created Baker White is made its Director of Departments.	1925 1925 MAR 31 The butler of a tenant in a house in Eton Place owned by the Makgills successfully sues Lady Makgill for telling an estate agent that he is a liar. He is awarded £50 Source: Suffolk Chronicle 3 April 1925
	The three most influential figures in early British Fascism were Makgill, Webster and Northumberland. There is no evidence that Makgill and Northumberland joined the BFs and Webster only joined in 1926. The BFs Pamphlet 17 The Need for Fascism in Britain, was a speech she gave at Kensington Town Hall in December of that year announcing her decision to join.	1925 APR 28 Chancellor Winston Churchill returns the pound to the gold standard. This substantially overvalued sterling, producing a higher exchange rate against the major currencies and making British goods more expensive throughout world markets 1925 JUN 30 Mine owners (who had been pressing unions for lower wages and longer hours to compensate for the damage to their business caused by Churchill) give notice of termination of the national wage agreement.
	This must have been a deliberate decision to avoid personality politics at this stage of the development of fascism in Britain. British Fascist membership was not proscribed by the Conservative party and membership of the Conservative Party was encouraged by the Fascist leadership. The BFs uniformed section was even used to steward Conservative meetings.	1925 JUL 31 "Red Friday" with owners threatening a lockout of any miners to accepting their new terms. The government intervenes to buy time with a nine-month subsidy to the owners. 1925 AUG August 1925 Makgill selling off outlying farms on his Kemback estate. Source: Dundee Courier Wednesday 26 August 1925, p. 2.
1924	In their memos in the MI5 archive, Vernon Kell and Maxwell Knight describe how on Makgill's suggestion Knight "infiltrates" the BFs as	1925 SEP 25 Although the Cabinet Office's Supply and Transport Committee had had since 1919 had plans for a Supply and Transport Organisation to maintain supplies during a general or essential workers' strike. This would rely on volunteers, but they were not being recruited in advance of a State of Emergency being declared. Industrialists and the pro-capitalist radical right lacking confidence in Baldwin's preparedness and resolve to challenge a general strike launch their own Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies (O.M.S.). It is launched with an impressive governing council under the presidency of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst. When it is launched on September 25 it already has a network of area organisers often former military officers. It immediately starts recruiting volunteers with an advertising campaign in all the many conservative local newspapers. According to JBW at some stage before the general strike, possibly very early, George Makgill becomes a sort of general manager for the O.M.S.

1925 OCT 1 William Joynson-Hicks makes clear that the Government will be in charge during any emergence but would welcome O.M.S. assistance with recruiting volunteers. The BF members flock to O.M.S. and to join up as special constables. But there are a number of tensions over the responsibilities of S.T.O and O.M.S. and the issues about the issues about the BF retaining their identity within O.M.S. and therefore the government operations.

Source: Times

1926 APR 26 With a week to go to the strike the BF Grand council are split and several leaders leave to avoid a clash with the government. In the end the O.M.S. provides a hundred thousand volunteers though 86% are in the south.

Source: Times, Mason

1926 MAY 3 Strike begins.

1926 MAY 11 The O.M.S. and S.T.O. are two of the least researched and understood organisations. Some accounts suggest that OMS was absorbed by the the S.T.O., But on the eve of the strike's end the O.M.S. was already preparing for the future.

Source: Mason

1926 MAY 12 The General Strike ends as the Government Prepares to prosecute Unions and Union leaders. The miners strike continues for months without secondary action

1926 OCT 16 George Makgill dies suddenly in his London home aged 57. The cause of his death was acute peritonitis caused by a perforated duodenal ulcer. He is ill for three days and has time to dictate a codicil about his papers and other matters to his 1910 will. The will is "sealed" – that is not published. However the estate is valued at £6,600. This around half a million pounds today in purchasing power, although this could be an underestimate because of the inflation in land values, and today in Kemback cottages can cost that muc. But it did not make him or his heir seriously wealthy men by the standards of the day and landowning classes.

Sir Donald Makgill becomes the new baronet. Although Hemming names him as "Don" the spymaster of Sir George Makgill's intelligence network this seems speculative at best. He seems not to have been left not have left any key to the cells in his father's networks and Baker White takes over the organisation of what was the I.I.B. which he now calls "Section D". Later Section D includes agents in France and Germany. Although he is Assistant Director of the Economic League and the British Representative of the International Entente against the Third International at the time of Sir George's death, and becomes Director in 1932, Section D is not incorporated into the League. His network of international contacts in the transnational right influenced hia own and Section D's European interests.

2.4 The Afterlife of Sir George Makgill

Two years after her father's death his daughter Marie Elspeth Agnes would start writing novels as Evelyn M Winch. In the next 12 years she had 8 novels published making her more prolific and popular than her father, though like him pretty much unknown as an author today.

1930 Sir George's widow the Dowager Lady Frances Makgill files for bankruptcy. Failing for £2,477 with assets of £5.

Source: Surrey Advertiser Saturday 19 April 1941

1931 JUL Sir Donald Makgill narrowly escapes death when his motor yacht, Jackana, explodes at Newhaven.

Source: Dundee Courier Tuesday 14 July 1931, p. 12.

1933 MAR Lady Esther Makgill launches the B.U.F.'s women's section and becomes its first otganiser.

Source: Mitchell

1934 JAN Sir Donald Makgill joins Oswald Mosley's discussion group The January

Source Dorril

MAY Lady Esther Makgill severs connection with BUF following allegations of financial irregularities in her section.

Source Mitchell

1935 SEP 25 Lady Esther Makgill is found not guilty at the Old Bailey of several charges of obtaining goods or services by fraud by bouncing cheques;

Source: Portsmouth Evening News Wednesday 25 September

1937 JUL 7 Lady Esther Makgill is found guilty at the Old Bailey of eight charges of obtaining goods or services by fraud by bouncing cheques. Inspector Griffey told the court that since 1924 she had been suspected of obtaining money by fraud, She is sentenced to six months in prison.

Source: Daily Mirror Thursday 8 July 1937

1939 MAY 23 Marie Elspeth Agnes kills herself with a hand gun. She is found yo have had mental health issues which were exacerbated by overwork and concern at the approaching war led her to

Source: "Good Reads" web site Ancestry

1941 APR 15 Sir George's widow the Dowager Lady Frances Makgill again files for Bankruptcy failing for £422 with no free assets.

Source: Surrey Advertiser Saturday 19 April

1943 NOV 20 Lady Esther Makgill divorces Sir Donald Makgill

Source: People Sunday 21 November 1943

1947 FEB 19 Former Lady Esther Makgill now remarried and using the first name Anne is taken from prison where she is serving a sentence for selling furniture from a rented flat to the bankruptcy court,

Source: Daily Mirror Wednesday 19 February 1947

1948 AUG 9 Sir Donald's younger brother and heir is killed in freight aircraft crash in New Zealand

Source: Fife News Saturday 14 August

1955 SEP 16 Sir Donald remarries to Maureen Gillington

Source: Evening News (London) Friday, 16 September 1955

1958 OCT Andrew's official history of MI5 records that Sir George Makgill was a Freemason, and quotes Vernon Kell as saying that he had assisted Makgill in establishing an organisation of a secret nature "somewhat on Masonic lines." Though unable Sir George's lodge or establish the extent of his involvement in Freemasonry, his son, Sir Donald Makgill, however, was unquestionably a prominent Freemason. He attained the 33° of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and rose to the senior office of Grand Secretary General of the Supreme Council 33° for England and Wales, in which capacity undertook tours of overseas chapters. The 33° is the highest numbered degree within the Scottish Rite, although it should not be understood as a rank above all other forms of Freemasonry; Donald's significance lay particularly in his senior governing office within the Rite.

- Source: News Zealand Evening Post 2 October 1958, Christchurch The Press
- 1977 The House of Lords Privileges Committee votes for the extraordinary revival of the Viscountcy of Oxfuird, dormant for 250 years. It was only the second pre-Act of Union Scottish Peerage to be revived in the 20th century. The 77-year-old baronet has no surviving male children so it will pass out of his own bloodline. However, all his dead male ancestors from whom he descends become Viscounts de jure.
- 1986 JAN 24 Sir Donald's death. The heir of the Viscountcy and Baronetcy is George Hubbard Makgill son of Donald's younger brother Richard and his wife Elizabeth Hubbard. As the 13th Viscount he takes a seat in the house of Lords as first as Liberal, then crossbench and finally Conservative peer. At first he was a hereditary peer, then and elected hereditary peer. On his death in 2003 the Viscount of Ullswater was elected in his place.
- Ian Alexander Arthur Makgill, 14th Viscount of Oxfuird was born in 1969. He is an expert government spending, open data and public procurement. Ironically for the great grandson of someone who in his time was a well-known "Don't Spend!" politician he runs the Spend Network.

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