"A letter from Donald Maclean was received by his wife. It was in his handwriting. It was posted on August 5, in Reigate, Surrey—30 miles from the Macleans' home"

—Reuter

THE LAST PHOTO TAKEN IN ENGLAND

Mrs. Maclean is seen at London Airport as she walks toward the plane which is to take her from her adopted land

of money through a foreign bank as a legacy from her late husband."

This paragraph, with others in the original article, did not appear when the article was published in the *Observer* on July 27. It was *NOT* deleted at the request of the Editor of the *Daily Express*.

And the White Paper three years later confirmed the *Daily Express* revelation in specific terms:

"According to information given to the Foreign Office in confidence by Mrs. Dunbar, Maclean's mother-in-law, who was then living with her daughter at Tatsfield, she received on August 3, 1951, two registered letters posted in St. Gallen, Switzerland, on August 1.

"One contained a draft on the Swiss Bank Corporation, London, for the sum of £1,000, payable to Mrs. Dunbar; the other, a draft payable to Mrs. Dunbar for the same sum, drawn by the Union Bank of Switzerland on the Midland Bank, 122, Old Broad Street, London.

"Both drafts were stated to have been remitted by order of a Mr. Robert Becker, whose address was given as the Hotel Central, Zurich. Exhaustive inquiries in collaboration with the Swiss authorities have not led to the identification of Mr. Becker, and it is probable the name given was false."

Lost Trail in Switzerland

Geoffrey Hoare has given more detail:

"Detectives flew to St. Gall* where, with the help of the Federal police, they attempted to trace Mr. Becker. They were unsuccessful.

"There is nothing in the world closer about its affairs and the affairs of its clients than a Swiss bank, and apart from a vague description of the man who had bought two £1,000 cheques and the information that he had indicated that he was staying at the Hotel Central, Zurich, and had given an address in New York there was nothing else to be discovered.

"On August 14, at the suggestion of M.I.5, Mrs. Dunbar wrote to the two banks at St. Gall in the hope—not very rosy—that as the money had been sent to her they might unbend sufficiently to give her a little more information.

"As was to be foreseen, this ruse failed completely and the banks divulged no additional information of any value."

So by August 3, 1951, Mrs. Maclean and her family knew that Maclean was alive, because of the remittance of money to Mrs. Dunbar.

And a few days later—the White Paper reveals—a letter from Donald Maclean was received by his wife. It was in his handwriting. It was posted on August 5, in Reigate, Surrey—30 miles from the Macleans' home.

Says the White Paper: "It was of an affectionate personal nature as from husband to wife. It gave no clue as to Maclean's whereabouts or the reason for his disappear-

*An alternative spelling of St. Gallen.

. . . "Mrs. Maclean deceived everybody except the Soviet agents who organised her journey. . . . The Foreign Office took the view that the wife of a known spy was not a person it was right to watch."

ance but it explained that the bank drafts, which for convenience had been sent to Mrs. Dunbar, were intended for Mrs. Maclean."

It is known that Maclean, in this letter, showed he knew about the new baby, Melinda. He complimented his wife on presenting him with a daughter.

And then—the White Paper goes on to reveal—Lady Maclean received a letter from her son on August 15, 1951:

"There is no doubt that it was in his own handwriting. It had been posted at Herne Hill on August 11."

Two days after this letter was received Lady Maclean saw Mrs. Maclean off on her holiday in the South of France, insisting: "It's purely a holiday."

Came those mysterious journeys . . . and it came to light that certain Intelligence officers had been much opposed to Mrs. Maclean going out of Britain.

Then, on July 15, 1952, it was reported that Mrs. Melinda Maclean was moving from England for the second time—and this time for good.

• • •

CHAPTER IX / The Lady Vanishes

THE HULLABALOO raised by the do-gooders had the effect of relaxing any watch on Mrs. Maclean's movements.

She went from England to live with her sister and brother-in-law, Mr. Jay Scheers, in the Avenue de Segur in Paris. In the autumn of 1952 she moved to Switzerland. On October 22 the *Daily Mail* reported:

"Mrs. Melinda Maclean, wife of the missing diplomat, intends to live with her mother in Geneva. She told authorities she wanted to make Geneva her permanent home if she found she could live there unmolested."

She went to live in a furnished flat in the Rue des Alpes. With her mother. With her three children. No newspaperman or policeman from the West "molested" her.

She gave it out that she would divorce her husband on the grounds of desertion. Her mother said so. Her brother-in-law said so.

She was attractive; she had admirers; and, according to her relatives, she was entering a gayer life than at any time since her Cairo days.

Yet less than a year after declaring Geneva to be her "permanent home" she vanished behind the Iron Curtain with her three children in a Soviet-organised cloak-and-dagger operation.

She thus deceived everybody except the Soviet agents who organised her journey. She was able to practice this deception because the Foreign Office took the view that the wife of a known spy was not a person it was right to watch.

She vanished on September 11, 1953, and on October 26 Sir Anthony Eden—then Mr. Eden, Foreign Secretary—faced the question: "Was Mrs. Maclean subject to any supervision? Did she owe any obligations to report her progress to anyone, or was she an entirely free agent?"

Mr. Eden: I, of course, have no responsibility whatever for keeping Mrs. Maclean under surveillance. She was a free agent, and no form of surveillance would have been either feasible or proper.

Thus the Foreign Office behaved "correctly"—and the chance of unmasking two or three Soviet agents and the chance of following Mrs. Maclean's trail to her husband were lost.

On Thursday, September 10, Mrs. Maclean went to her bank in Geneva, and arranged for the payment of rent due on her five-roomed flat. Tradesmen's bills were paid.

She was telephoned by a friend, and accepted an invitation to attend a cocktail party on the following Tuesday night.

At 9.30 on the morning of September 11 she went again to her bank and drew out 700 Swiss francs (£58 or $162.40).

Thirty minutes later, she called at the Fleury garage, in the Avenue de Fronterex. She instructed the garage hand to fill up her car—a black Chevrolet numbered GE 10514. She paid an outstanding repair bill for £5 ($[illegible]).

At 10.50 she was back at the flat in the Rue des Alpes and handed over £17 ($47.60) to her mother. Then she told the lie that enabled her to make her getaway unobserved.

She said she had met an old friend from the Cairo days, a man named "Robin Muir," in the market place. Robin Muir—Mrs. Dunbar was quite sure she had not mistaken the name—had invited Melinda and the children to spend the week-end at Territet, near Montreux, where he and his wife had a villa.

On September 18, the *Daily Telegraph* reported Mrs. Dunbar as saying:

"The English governess was to have helped look after the children. We put the baby to bed for a rest before the journey, and my daughter went out to buy the baby a woollen coat and some shoes.

"She left for Territet at about 8.30 a.m. She was to meet Mr. Muir in the lounge of an hotel there from where he would take them to the villa.

"She was due back at six o'clock on Sunday. The boys had to be at school at 8.15 on Monday for the opening of the new term."

The police at Territet stated there was no villa owner or tenant in the district named Robin Muir.

Mrs. Maclean sat with her three children, Fergus, 9, Donald, 7, and Melinda, just two—in the roomy front seat of the Chevrolet. The boys were in grey flannel suits and blue sports shirts. Mrs. Maclean drove off with a wave of the hand. It was the last time her mother saw her.

Mrs. Maclean had managed to pack most of her clothes

74

"Since the Foreign Office security department had not kept any check on Mrs. Maclean, the trail was cold for the two British agents sent to Switzerland four days late"

paration for the journey, leaving behind only a mink and an evening dress.

Dunbar realised this later. She left Geneva after her ter's disappearance and returned after more than a ly. It was then she saw that Mrs. Maclean had taken her clothes.

Maclean was said to have been dressed in a white and a black skirt under a three-quarter length light coat. She was hatless. But a man who travelled later ter on a train said she was differently dressed.

within the rigid timetable of her flight, Mrs. Maclean time to change her clothing, it could only have been to o the deception.

left her cheque-book with her mother and carried her rt in her hand bag.

er—too late—a sheet of photographs of the children was in the flat. The photographer's directions were attached. were made out to "Mrs. Smith"—another deception—and ordered enlargements were of the size required for Iron n passport photographs.

Mrs. Maclean Fails to Return

September 18, 1958, the *News Chronicle* reported Mrs. ar as saying:

"From 6 p.m. on Sunday I sat at the window and waited Melinda and the boys.

Since Donald's disappearance, we have all lived in a te of great anxiety and if ever Melinda was going to be than she expected, she would invariably telephone me. fact, we all telephone each other madly whenever apart.

When she neither returned nor telephoned on Sunday ning, I was frantic but thought perhaps there was too ch traffic on the roads and she had decided to postpone return until Monday morning.

On Monday I went to the British Consulate. They told my report of her absence would go through ordinary nnels. But as I knew this was an urgent matter I tele- ned straight to the Foreign Office in London to the chief urity officer—and got immediate action.

Why had I not told the Swiss police up till then? Well, dn't know any of the top men and thought it would be eless to try to explain to a subordinate who might never e heard of the Maclean story."

nce they had been asked to help, the Swiss police moved ly. They sealed every frontier post, alerted all the customs Interpol called for co-operation throughout the West.

r the second time in two and a half years, half of Europe in uproar over the once-honoured name of Maclean.

London, a Foreign Office spokesman announced: "In of the possible bearing of this development on the Bur- Maclean disappearance, two officers who had been con- ed with that case were immediately sent to Geneva."

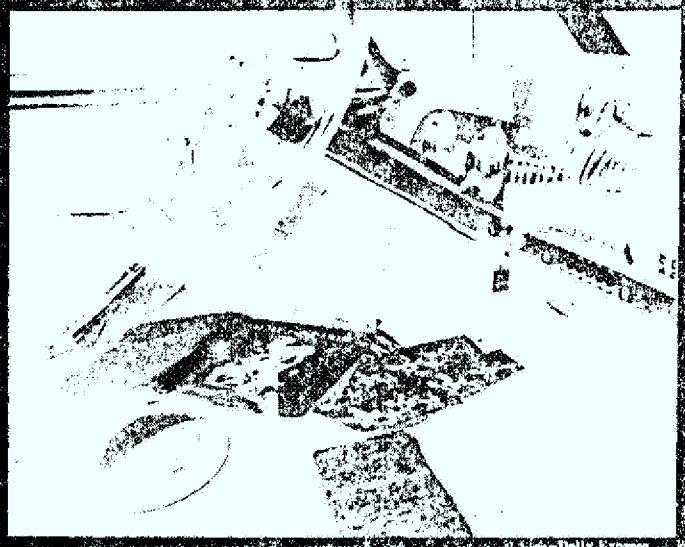
oversea journalist asked: "Did not the Beaverbrook Press a campaign against Mrs. Maclean going abroad? Was it understood she would keep in touch with the British au- ities about her movements?"

Answer: "There was no obligation on her. She was an tirely free agent. She kept us informed when she was there, and she told us a year ago of her intention to go to Switzerland to live there."

Since the Foreign Office security department had not kept any check on Mrs. Maclean, the trail was cold for the two British agents sent to Switzerland four days late.

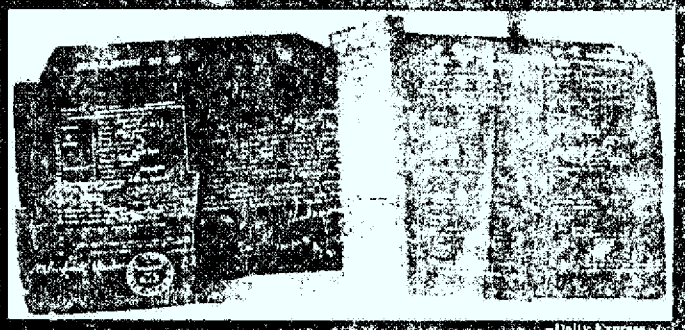
With the help of the Swiss and Austrian police, they were able to reconstruct part of her journey as far as Schwarzach St. Veit in Austria.

Results were not long in coming. First a car was found. And with it proof of more deception by Mrs. Maclean.



THE FRONT SEAT OF MRS. MACLEAN'S CAR

Left behind: a map of the Austro-Swiss frontier. Toy pistol and story book belonged to seven-year-old Donald.



DOCUMENTS TOLD THE TALE

Also in Mrs. Maclean's car, documents detailing her numerous journeys, including those in and out of Switzerland.

The black Chevrolet was found in the Garage de la Gare (the Station garage) at Lausanne. Mrs. Maclean had driven it in at 6.30 p.m. on the Friday of her disappearance.

She was composed as she told the garage hand Manuel Micheli, "I want to leave the car here for a week." Just as coolly, she gave details which had to be taken down in writing to complete the parking form.

She gave her name as Dunbar—her mother's name.

. . . "Mrs. Maclean, in a single year, had made sixteen journeys over the Swiss frontiers, three of them, near the Italian border, in one day . . . It is reasonable to suppose . . . that Mrs. Maclean went on these clandestine journeys to contact an agent or agents sent by her husband or his masters."

In the car she left her triptyque, the customs registration of all journeys in and out of Switzerland.

She left, too, a certificate showing she had paid both tax and insurance; two French maps of the St. Malo area, where her husband had landed in France on the first morning of his flight, and a new map of Switzerland showing in detail the German and Austrian frontiers.

There were, too, a few children's toys. On the front seat there was seven-year-old Donald Maclean's book, "Little Lost Lamb." It was open at a page which read:

> "Oh wind, blow softly over my sheep,
> Away from the lion and over the lamb,
> Blow softly."

But more than sentimental interest was shown by the Swiss Intelligence men in the triptyque. *It showed that Mrs. Maclean, in a single year, had made sixteen journeys over the Swiss frontiers, three of them, near the Italian border, in one day.*

Why should Mrs. Maclean want to cross and recross the frontier three times in one day? What was the significance of all these journeys?

It is reasonable to suppose—since no normal explanation has been given—that Mrs. Maclean went on these clandestine journeys to contact an agent or agents sent by her husband or his masters.

If this was so then here surely is the thumping, conclusive proof that Mrs. Maclean should have been kept under observation.

It does not require a great deal of worldly wisdom to appreciate that much work has to be done outside diplomatic channels by British security and counter-espionage organisations.

You would have thought that Mrs. Maclean was, indeed, a person who invited their constant attention. But, apparently, not so.

And now if these journeys of Mrs. Maclean had a sinister significance—then why was no effort made to hide or destroy the triptyque? Why did she leave it in the car?

It had been suggested—with some force—that the timing and methods of the Soviet agents in these cases have always had purpose.

Soviet Plan—Show Up the British?

Rebecca West has said: "The sole purpose of the Soviet plan (for the diplomats) was to tell the world that the British Foreign Office had two traitors on its staff; and Mrs. Maclean's humbugging flight later can have had no purpose except to nudge the world in the ribs and ask if it had forgotten Burgess and Maclean and the inefficiency of the British."

Now it was just at the time of Mrs. Maclean's flight that Britain and America were discussing the exchange of atomic information.

Was the triptyque left in the car to give solid evidence that British security had been outwitted? And thus to sow mistrust between the Allies . . . ?

After Mrs. Maclean had garaged the car, she called for a porter to gather up the baggage. Then the [illegible] all walked [illegible] the road—it was only a few yards to the station—where she presented tickets for the first-class journey which ended early next day in Austria.

Presented? Not bought? *The Times* of September 1[illegible] reported:

> "The ticket collector was on duty on the train which left Lausanne at 8.58 last Friday evening for Zurich. He recalls a woman showing a full ticket for herself and two halves for two boys. A girl of two, which is the age of Melinda Maclean, would travel free.
>
> "This train departed only eight minutes after Mrs. Maclean had left her car at the garage next to the station at Lausanne, and it is thought that if it was she who was on board the train she did not buy the tickets herself, but that they were bought for her.
>
> "Those on duty at the ticket office in Lausanne do not recall selling a full ticket and two halves to Buchs (a town on the Austro-Swiss frontier) and tickets are not examined before passengers board their trains."

Two passengers on that train confirmed that it was Mrs. Maclean who climbed aboard at Lausanne.

Mrs. Maclean in Lausanne

Professor Andre Guignard, of Lausanne, told the *Daily Express*:

> "I was 13 minutes early for my train at the main Station, and so I walked up and down the platform. I saw in front of a newspaper stand a woman in a light summer grey or beige [illegible] with [illegible] on her head. Huddled close to her were two boys who [illegible] fairer than any you see among the Swiss—almost white.
>
> "As I walked I continued to look in this group and I noticed a porter arrive with two light-coloured suitcases, a bundle of comic books and a toy rifle.
>
> "He put down the whole load in front of her and said: 'I found something to tie the books together.'
>
> "She said: 'I beg your pardon' in French, and then spoke in English. Another porter came up and gave the boys with the rifle and said jokingly: 'Present arms!'
>
> "The train arrived and the woman entered a carriage ahead of me. She stopped and turned around. She looked very frightened. The two boys ran along the coach and entered at the other end.
>
> "She lost sight of them for a moment and it seemed to me she became almost hysterical. But this was the only time she showed any nervousness at all."

Railway porter Louis Papetin [illegible] that I took the luggage out of [illegible] in front of the railway station, waited until the woman had got the car away and then put the luggage in the train."

Mrs. Maclean and her children reached Zurich [illegible] p.m. There is no record of her buying tickets at Zurich. She left Vienna-bound on the overnight express, 2[illegible] minutes late—at 11.34 p.m.

. . . A telegram from Mrs. Maclean? "Clearly an agent was at work. The agent was a woman. The telegram had been handed in at Territet by a 'heavily made up woman' and there was some link between this woman agent and Mrs. Maclean"

It was first assumed that Mrs. Maclean had taken the children direct to Vienna, there to make her way into the Russian Zone. A porter named Emil Vasnicek told the police he had helped the family into a taxi. This was proved untrue. The *Sunday Chronicle* reported:

"Allied security agents in Berlin have found that her trail leads to Neunkirchen, in the Soviet Zone of Austria.

"They believe that in November 1952 and again in June this year two mysterious emissaries from behind the Iron Curtain tried to contact her in Geneva.

"One, reported to have made an attempt to meet Mrs. Maclean in Switzerland nearly a year ago, is known as Duffy. He is described as a Soviet agent also concerned in the Pontecorvo case.

"The other man is said to use the name of Gerard. He is reported to have had a message for Mrs. Maclean to the effect that her husband, who vanished with Guy Burgess, another diplomat, had an entirely new job and had started a new life—and needed her.

"First clues in the mystery were contained in Allied agents' reports smuggled out of Czechoslovakia a year ago. They said there appeared to be a connection between the Maclean affair, and a Czech foreign trading agency at Theresienstadt, near Prague, run by a man named Czepock.

"The agency was merely a cover organisation for a Soviet spy network with links in the U. S. Zone of Germany."

And then—as in the case of the diplomats—there came a telegram. It purported to come from Mrs. Maclean and it was delivered to Mrs. Dunbar at the flat in the Rue des Alpes on September 17.

It had been drafted by a Continental; it had been handed in at Territet, where Mrs. Maclean was supposed to have spent the weekend. It read:

"TERRIBLY SORRY DELAY IN CONTACTING YOU UNFORSEEN CIRCIONSTANCES HAVE ARISEN AM STAYING HERE LONGER PLEASE ADVISE SCHOOLBOYS RETURNING ABOUT A WEEKS TIME ALL EXTREMELY WELL PINK ROSE IN MARVELLOUS FORM LOVE FROM ALL MELINDA."

Once again—as "Teento" was used for Maclean—a pet name known only to the family and close friends was used. "Pink Rose" was baby Melinda.

Evidence That a Telegram Is "Phoney"

But Mrs. Dunbar told reporters: "It's phoney." She was able to declare later: "The original handwriting is not my daughter's."

The Continental crossing of the figure 7—as in that early telegram purporting to come from her husband—and spelling mistakes, such as "circionstances" for "circumstances", were proof enough that Mrs. Maclean had not written the original.

Clearly an agent was at work. The agent was a woman. The telegram had been handed in at Territet by a "heavily made up woman" and there was *some* link between this woman agent and Mrs. Maclean. For, six days before the telegram arrived, Mrs. Maclean had announced her intention of going to Territet.

Since the trail of Mrs. Maclean seemed to have been lost, the *Daily Express*, which had offered £1,000 for evidence establishing the whereabouts of the diplomats, now offered £2,000 [$5,600] for information establishing the whereabouts of Mrs. Maclean.

At this date the *Daily Mail* joined in with an offer of £10,000 [$28,000].

Clues on the "Contact Man"

The first authoritative report came to the *Daily Express* from correspondent Sydney Smith in Salzburg, Austria, on Sept. 22:

"A description of the man who might have been the contact man between Mrs. Melinda Maclean and the organisers of her flight, is being circulated throughout Austria.

"The man picked up Mrs. Maclean and her three children at the wayside station of Schwarzach St. Viet, 10½ miles from Salzburg.

"The slender clues:

"The man: Well-dressed, 35 to 40, with receding medium fair hair. He speaks good English and German with an Austrian accent. He is short—about 5 ft. 6 ins., but tough and broadly built.

"The car: A black or blue-black American Ford or Chevrolet, 1950 or 1951—not, therefore, conspicuous. It is privately owned and has a Salzburg registration plate.

"A porter saw the family at Schwarzach St. Viet. He is Peter Gruber. He said tonight: 'The American lady looked very tired and nervous when she got off the train with her children.

"'I asked her where she was going, and she said in English "Someone is meeting me in a car." After twenty to forty minutes I saw an American car drive up and a man got out. I asked him "Have you come to meet one, one?"

"'He seemed terribly startled and said "Why do you ask that?" I think he was angry.

"'I said there was a lady and children waiting in the car and he said "Yes, that's them."'

"Schwarzach St. Viet is the station Mrs. Maclean would have changed at for Bad Gastein. And her tickets, reports said, *were* for Bad Gastein. But there is no record that she ever made the train connection.

An American officer who travelled on the same train as Mrs. Maclean and her children said that he saw Mrs. Maclean in the courtyard outside Schwarzach St. Viet station.

She walked through it, about 9 a.m. on September 12, with her sleepy-eyed children. They had their comics and their popgun.

None of them were seen again by Western eyes.

The slender evidence gathered by newspapermen—in particular Ernest Ashwick of the *Daily Express* and Hugh McCleave of the *News Chronicle*—suggested she went by car, via Linz, into the Russian Zone of Austria.

The White Paper added later: "It is probable that it (the car) took Mrs. Maclean and the children from Schwarzach St. Viet to neighbouring territory in Russian occupation, whence she proceeded on her journey to join her husband."

A Russian envoy told Frederick Sands of the *Daily Mail* in Geneva this year that it almost became necessary to conceal

"On September 21, 1953 the Foreign Office announced that the five-nation police hunt for Mrs. Maclean had been called off."

Mrs. Maclean's journey out of Austria because of the sudden illness of one of her children.

"Mrs. Maclean became very worried and thought it might be appendicitis. She wanted to go straight to a hospital in Austria."

The chauffeur, however, persuaded her to carry on across the border. "She did not meet her husband for the first three weeks of her stay in Russia," said the envoy.

On September 21, 1953 the Foreign Office announced that the five-nation police hunt for Mrs. Maclean had been called off. The two British security officers returned and reported personally to Lord Salisbury, acting Foreign Secretary.

It was over. The three principals had gone.

British security had been outwitted again—because of official policy.

CHAPTER X / Security in Action Again

THE ISSUE, after all, is this: was Mrs. Maclean as bewildered as she appeared to be when her husband vanished with Burgess—or was she all along keeping back vital information from the British security authorities?

Some light was thrown on this when S. L. Solon, then chief correspondent of the *Daily Express* in Paris, received an English visitor three weeks after the diplomats vanished [on May 25, 1951].

This gentleman in tweeds stroked a small, bristly moustache and said that he would not give his name. But he said he wanted a friendly chat. He said he was a friend of Mrs. Maclean.

He said he had come to Solon on his own initiative; that he had been a friend of Donald Maclean, although they had had differences.

He said: "I'm really interested in seeing that Melinda is treated fairly. This has all been frightfully upsetting."

The visitor then told Solon he was wasting his time looking for Maclean in Paris. He added: "You really should drop all that nonsense. It does no good."

And he said: *"Mrs. Maclean knows her husband is not in Paris because she knows where he is."*

Solon asked: "Why doesn't she tell the police?" The reply: "Would you expect her to? She's his wife."

Solon: "I don't see how keeping it secret helps anybody." The reply: "It might certainly interfere with her plans."

Solon: "Plans? What plans?"

And the reply: "My dear fellow, surely a wife who loves her husband would want to keep in touch with him, wouldn't she?

"Besides, she is being hounded enough as it is. You chaps ought to let her alone."

Mrs. Maclean was always giving this explanation of any mysterious journey: she wanted to get away from all the publicity.

She made mysterious journeys from the Villa Sauvageonne on the Riviera in August, 1951—when she was of interest to newspapermen.

But then she had been "unmolested" in Geneva—and still there were the mysterious journeys recorded on the triptyque. And there was one that is recorded by Geoffrey Hoare:

"In the middle of May, 1953, Mrs. Dunbar arrived in Paris on her way back from New York, and telephoned to Melinda who was overjoyed at her return.

"During their conversation Melinda said she would like to accept an offer some American friends had made to take them all in as paying guests in their house on Majorca for the summer.

"On June 10 the tickets to Majorca were bought, and they were due to leave on July 1, the day after the boys' school term ended.

"Melinda appeared preoccupied and quiet, but she seemed to be looking forward to the change.

"Two nights before Mrs. Maclean was due to travel, Mrs. Dunbar, back in the Geneva flat, heard her walking about in her room. She asked what was the matter, and Melinda said she had changed her mind.

"I feel I need some mountain air and I want to take the children up to Saanenmoser for two weeks before we go to Majorca."

The children were upset but nothing would make her to change her mind. Off she went to Saanenmoser.

That was July 3. Five days later she was back in Geneva and said she now wanted to go to Majorca.

Why did she suddenly want to go to Saanenmoser? It is reasonable to suppose that she went to meet an agent of her husband.

One month before she went to Majorca she collected the Iron Curtain passport photographs—marked "for Mrs. Smith." But, of course, it was nobody's business to know.

Geoffrey Hoare gave details of a clash between Mrs. Maclean and M.I.5 as early as August 1951:

"The official who came down to Tatsfield grilled Melinda on the most intimate details of her life with Donald.

"He suggested that she knew all along that Donald was a Communist, was probably a Communist herself, and was going off to join him."

But the White Paper four years later insisted:

"There was no question of preventing Mrs. Maclean from leaving the United Kingdom to go to live in Switzerland. Although she was under no obligation to report her movements, she had been regularly in touch with the secret authorities, and had informed them that she wished to make her home in Switzerland.

"She gave two good reasons: firstly, that she wished to avoid the personal embarrassment to which she had been subjected by the press in the United Kingdom; and secondly, that she wished to educate her children in the International School in Geneva."

Vladimir Petrov: "I am now convinced that she knew all about her husband's plan to flee. At any rate she began to play a willing and highly astute part in her own successful disappearance."

"It will be remembered that Mrs. Maclean was an American citizen and in view of the publicity caused by her husband's flight it was only natural that she should wish to bring up her children in new surroundings.

"Before she left for Geneva the security authorities made arrangements with her whereby she was to keep in touch with the British authorities in Berne and Geneva in case she should receive any further news from her husband or require advice or assistance.

"Mrs. Maclean was a free agent. The authorities had no legal means of detaining her in the United Kingdom. Any form of surveillance abroad would have been unwarranted."

Unwarranted? Some newspapers agreed. The *News of the World* wrote: "For goodness' sake give us a rest from the case of Mrs. Maclean.

"They seek her here, they seek her there, those Pressmen seek her everywhere . . . and if by some miracle they find her, what then?

"Donald Maclean is either behind the Iron Curtain or he isn't. The same may be said with equal truth of his wife and family. But we can't see what difference it makes either way."

And Mrs. Maclean's champion of champions, the *Observer*:

"Melinda Maclean, whose disappearance has created world news, is said by those who knew her to be the last person to desire notoriety. She is a demure, peace-loving young woman, though she has a lively wit and intelligence.

"She belongs to the Europeanised type of American of the tradition of Henry James—sophisticated, highly cultured, but under normal circumstances with an eager enthusiasm for life. She is a devoted mother and was always a conscientious wife to her erratic husband. She never showed interest in his political ideas.

"It is possible that Donald Maclean left in a hurry and on impulse: but his wife is not an impulsive woman. If she left voluntarily, she would certainly have tried to balance the claims of her husband, particularly in distress, against her other obligations and would have made, whether rightly or wrongly, a considered choice."

On the other hand, John Gordon, Editor-in-Chief of the *Sunday Express*, wrote: "What we might have learned had the Foreign Office kept a watch on Mrs. Maclean. And what we might still learn if we knew who didn't like the idea of her being watched—and why!

"We live in peculiar times. Without a doubt we have a lot of odd creepy-crawlies among us who thrive and do its mischief—the extent of which we may not know—just because they come under the Old Pals' Protection Charter. It's time we suspended that charter."

Mrs. Maclean's "Vanishing Trick"

Consider now what Petrov had said much later. It was at the point of Mrs. Maclean's successful vanishing trick that Kislytsin, the Soviet agent who had helped organise her escape, burst into his chief's office, exultant.

He shouted to Petrov, waving a newspaper: "It's come off at last just as we planned it."

Petrov, telling the story in the *People*, said it was the final coup in the most daring spy operation in history. Dozens of agents had taken part. And Mrs. Maclean, said Petrov, dubbed officially as a reliable witness—"was guilty of a staggering piece of duplicity."

"I am now convinced," said Petrov, "that she knew all about her husband's plan to flee. At any rate she began to play a willing and highly astute part in her own successful disappearance very soon after Donald Maclean passed behind the Iron Curtain."

That holiday in France three months after the diplomats went? Said Petrov: "It now seems certain she made contact with an MVD agent there and finally agreed to take part in the plot.

"Kislytsin sought an opportunity to contact her in Geneva—and now she is living with her husband in Moscow as he secretly continues his work for the Soviet Foreign Ministry."

So see now the record of Britain's security authorities, which was inspired by the Foreign Office:

MRS. MACLEAN was never watched, because this would have been intrusion.

DONALD MACLEAN was never watched outside London because of "the need to ensure that he did not become aware that he was under observation."

GUY BURGESS was never watched *at all* because he was about to be sacked anyway.

The Foreign Office attitude appeared to be supported by the Russians themselves. On October 5, 1953, *The Times* quoted the Soviet magazine *New Times*:

"The disappearance of the British diplomatists Burgess

—Daily Express

LAST HOLIDAY IN THE WEST

This picture of Fergus and Donald Maclean, then nine and seven years old, was taken at Majorca. Their backs are to the camera. A fortnight later they were behind the Iron Curtain. Others in the picture are not identified.

. . . "In October, 1953, the first of a series of notes was sent to their families by the Macleans and Burgess. . . . A month after Mrs. Maclean had written to her mother, Guy Burgess sent the first evidence that he was alive."

and Maclean, and Mrs. Maclean, has not the slightest connection with the Soviet Union."

"A great noise has been stirred by the Press in a 'slander campaign' against Russia. Some British and American papers had inferred that the diplomats escaped for 'political reasons,' carrying secret documents.

"It is an attempt to confuse international political events with the clear aim of arousing empty and even absurd suspicions."

But when, finally, Petrov spoke confirming these empty and even absurd suspicions—the official attitude had to change. Meantime, there came the first hard evidence that Burgess was alive and well.

CHAPTER XI / "Burgess Is Alive"

IN OCTOBER, 1953, the first of a series of notes was sent to their families by the Macleans and Burgess.

The first was from Mrs. Maclean. It was posted in Cairo and her mother, Mrs. Dunbar, received it in Paris on November 6—thirteen days later.

Now the Foreign Office knew about this letter, but the Foreign Office said nothing publicly. And, indeed, the White Paper of September 1955 still made no mention of it.

But news that the letter had been received was given in the *Daily Express* [August, 1954] nine months after it arrived:

"Mrs. Melinda Maclean, 38-year-old wife of the vanished diplomat Donald Maclean, has written to her mother from behind the Iron Curtain.

"The letter—summarized—said simply: DON'T WORRY ABOUT US. THE CHILDREN AND I ARE WELL AND HAPPY.

"Mrs. Dunbar received the letter while she was staying with her other daughter, Mrs. Scheers, in the Avenue de Segur, near the tourist spot Invalides.

"The letter is believed to have been posted by a regular courier from Eastern Europe. It bore no address. Mrs. Dunbar, who has now returned to her home in America, took the letter from Paris to the Foreign Office in London.

"She vouched that it was genuine. The handwriting was compared with other documents at the Foreign Office—and it *was* that of Mrs. Maclean.

"The letter offered no explanation for the disappearance of the Maclean family. There was no mention of Donald Maclean or Guy Burgess."

Only then did the Foreign Office speak of the letter. A spokesman said: "There is every reason to believe that it is in fact in Mrs. Maclean's handwriting."

The *Daily Express* asked the Foreign Office why it had said nothing about the letter.

The reply: "It was a private communication. But now it has come out in the newspapers, and Mrs. Dunbar had no objection."

A private communication? From a traitor's wife who had gone to join her husband after both had hoodwinked the intelligence services of the Western world? Were there *no* public implications?

Meantime—a month after Mrs. Maclean had written to her mother—Guy Burgess sent the first evidence that he was alive.

After his disappearance Jack Hewit, who had [illegible] him for nearly 14 years, had said: "Guy won't be able to keep quiet for long. But I'm afraid if he writes to anyone it won't be me; it will be his mother. He is devoted to her."

And on Christmas Eve, 1953, the *Daily Express* disclosed:

"Guy Burgess IS alive. He sent Christmas greetings to his mother, Mrs. Bassett, at Arlington House, off Piccadilly, W.

"For the Foreign Office confirmed last night that a letter delivered to Mrs. Bassett among her Christmas cards at 6.30 p.m. on Monday WAS written by her son.

"It was in a typewritten envelope. This was postmarked 'London, S.E.1,' with Monday's date. It bore a 2½ stamp.

"The letter was dated November [illegible] with no day following. There was no address given. The exact contents were not divulged last night.

"But Colonel I. R. Bassett, step-father to Guy Burgess, said: 'Rather a nice Christmas present. He says he is in very good health, and he seems very cheerful.'

"There is absolutely no doubt that the letter is from Guy. It is handwritten in ink, and the handwriting is Guy's.

"Mrs. Bassett phoned the Foreign Office, which said last night: 'It gives no indication of Burgess's present whereabouts. It merely expresses his love for his mother. He wishes her a happy Christmas and New Year.'

"Intelligence officers, delving deeper, discovered that the envelope and writing paper were of different makes.

"The writing paper could not be identified at once. But the envelope was made by the Basildon Bond Company. This then was the first line of inquiry.

"Mr. T. W. Shearman, secretary of the Basildon Bond Company, said last night that none of the firm's stationery was exported directly to Iron Curtain countries—but a little possibly got through indirectly.

"On the other hand, the letter written by Burgess could have been sent in an envelope obtained and typed in this country. It was one of 502,000 posted in the S.E.1 postal district on Monday.

"Next, therefore, the postal centre which handled the letter had to be identified.

"This, it turned out, was an office in Borough High Street. The letter was postmarked at this centre by one of four automatic machines."

80

The *Sunday Pictorial*: "The address of Burgess and Maclean is c/o The Kremlin, Red Square, Moscow, U.S.S.R. (Telephone Centre 67571.) They are working for the Soviet Foreign Ministry"

"It was the busiest day of the Christmas rush and as fast letters were brought from post boxes they were fed into the machines.

"Where, then, could the letter have been posted? At Waterloo Station by a courier arriving by plane?

"The last diplomatic courier known to have flown to England from behind the Iron Curtain reached Northolt last Friday at 7 p.m. He had travelled from Warsaw, by way of Paris.

"He left again on Monday, December 21—the day someone posted the letter to Mrs. Bassett.

"This diplomatic courier left Waterloo air terminal at 10.43 a.m. that day and went to Northolt. He could have posted the letter before he left."

The *Sunday Chronicle* asserted that within 24 hours of Burgess's letter being delivered, M.I.5 knew the identity of the courier. He was, said the paper, a "top British Communist travelling behind the Iron Curtain."

Was Burgess Watched?

Gordon, Editor-in-Chief of the *Sunday Express*, commented on the surprise letter from Burgess:

"It must have thrown a few people into a fit of funk. The Foreign Office can't regard it with enjoyment. It wants the whole of the Maclean-Burgess business buried and forgotten.

"Now, I suggest, on the contrary, that in the national interest we ought to go a good deal more deeply into it. Behind Maclean and Burgess there may well be bigger and far more dangerous men.

"Are we pursuing inquiries into that possibility?

"Burgess seems to have been a man with many powerful friends. He was a scruffy and somewhat disreputable character. A Communist of long standing.

"But we have never been given any real indication of what part he played, if any—in a spying organisation such as we know existed—and probably still exists.

"Yet he was an indiscreet man. In drink he talked a lot. Sufficient to warrant a close watch being kept on him.

"That raises three questions.

"Were his indiscretions reported to M.I.5. and to the secret service of the Foreign Office?

"If they were, was a watch put on him?

"If not, who decided it was unnecessary and why?"

The White Paper, 20 months later, was naively to ex-

Early in 1950 the security authorities informed the Foreign Office that in late 1949 while on holiday abroad Burgess had been guilty of indiscreet talk about secret matters of which he had official knowledge. For this he was severely reprimanded.

"Apart from that lapse his service in the Foreign Office up to the time of his appointment to Washington was satisfactory and there seemed good reason to hope that he would make a useful career."

On through 1954 went the rumblings of the Press. And by January 9, 1955, the *Sunday Pictorial* could say with admirable certainty:

"The address of Burgess and Maclean is c/o The Kremlin, Red Square, Moscow, U.S.S.R. (Telephone Centre 67571.) They are working for the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

"Their job is to advise Russian experts on propaganda before it is put out to the West.

"The *Pictorial* understands that at least fourteen M.P.s know how Burgess and Maclean disappeared and what they are doing now.

"Captain Henry Kerby, the Tory member for Arundel and Shoreham, who was once in the Diplomatic Service, told the *Pictorial*:

"The Foreign Office has known for many months all there is to know about Burgess and Maclean.

"THEY KNOW the exact movements of the two diplomats from the moment they left England to the time they reached Moscow via Prague.

"THEY KNOW the identity of all the people who aided the two men when they made their getaway.

"Captain Kerby said: *I strongly deplore the fact that the Foreign Office still refuse to make a clean breast of the affair.*

"In at least 30 questions by M.P.s they have been asked to make a statement about Burgess and Maclean, but they will not do so."

Two days later, there was a new sensation. Burgess had written home again. The news had just leaked, as all news of this case had to leak before the public could know.

"Christmas Greetings" From Burgess

Mrs. Bassett, Guy's mother, revealed she had had a second Christmas greeting letter from her son, delivered on Christmas Day 1954. It was in a typewritten envelope posted in the London, E.14, district which is London Docks, Poplar.

On December 22 there arrived at Surrey Docks the 2,910-ton Russian steamer *Belostrob*. The letter is believed to have come on that ship.

Mrs. Bassett said:

"The letter is in his own handwriting. It is unmistakable. He said he was well. He wrote very affectionately. There was nothing in his letter to say where he is or what he is doing.

"He has obviously seen British newspapers because he knew his letter last year had been received.

"This is the first time I've heard from him since last year. I could not have had a nicer Christmas present.

"I am not going to reveal the contents to anyone—after all, they are private and personal between mother and son. But the letter indicated that Guy is well and happy.

"I expect to hear from him again."

That letter was never handed to Foreign Office experts. Why? Said a Foreign Office spokesman: "We are satisfied that Colonel Bassett has told us what is in it."

Just *how* many letters had Burgess written? His mother said: "In this second letter, Guy says he wrote to me before

"It had not been, in fact, until January 25, 1954, that first official admission was made that the diplomats were behind the Iron Curtain. And then it was a qualified admission."

Christmas 1953. I didn't get those other letters. I don't know how many there were—he didn't say.

"My son didn't know I'd received his 1953 message until it was published in the newspapers."

In February Colonel Lipton observed in the House: "Is it not the case that the Foreign Office have some information which for some dubious reason they will not disclose, or is it that the Foreign Office Intelligence has not been very intelligent?

"Some Conservative backbenchers seem to know more about this disappearance than the Foreign Office."

In April he asked the new Foreign Secretary, Mr. Harold Macmillan: "How much longer is this four-year-old farce of an investigation to be continued and what, if anything, has been the result of investigations to date, or will you abandon what looks like a foolish expenditure of time, money and effort?"

Mr. Macmillan: "I will consider how to resolve that dilemma."

Then on June 5, 1955, this authoritative report came from Rene MacColl. He cabled to the *Daily Express* from Belgrade that Sunday:

"Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess are living [illegible] side Moscow.

"I am able to say this definitely on the strength of a statement from a highly reputable Soviet source [illegible] during the conference between Tito and the Russian delegation which has just ended in Belgrade.

"Until now no Russian has ever admitted that Maclean and Burgess had sought sanctuary behind the Iron Curtain, let alone Moscow.

"When I was in the Soviet Union last year I asked [illegible] of people about the two missing diplomats. Everyone looked blank.

"But now a Russian—and there is no doubt that he has access to official information—confirms that Maclean and Burgess are indeed living near Moscow.

"What are they doing? Said the Russian: 'A special job.'"

But when Colonel Lipton, therefore, asked again: "What about the missing diplomats" and got the usual "Nothing to add" reply, he sighed: "If I put a question down in three years' time could you perhaps give a better answer?"

Better answers were to come—in three months.

CHAPTER XII / The National Uproar

It had not been, in fact, until January 25, 1954, that first official admission was made that the diplomats were behind the Iron Curtain. And then it was a qualified admission.

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, Minister of State, said—almost coyly—to Colonel Lipton: "If you were to presume they are behind the Iron Curtain you would probably be right."

At last. From a Minister. After thirty-two months.

But then neither the information that Petrov had talked, nor the second letter from Burgess, nor the important revelation made by Rene MacColl could induce another helpful word.

With the *Daily Express* story that Petrov had talked, John Gordon returned to the attack in the *Sunday Express*:

"Let us be under no delusions. Those masters of ours in Whitehall are very sensitive about their two miserable renegades.

"They regarded the persistent discussion of the episode in the newspapers and elsewhere as an intolerable intrusion into their private affairs. To all pressure from the community they reply in effect: 'It's no business of yours.'

"BUT IT IS our business. Very much our business.

"We have a right to know, not only how Burgess and Maclean managed to skip out of the country, but who in the Foreign Office disregarded the warnings they had concerning the dangerous character of these two men.

"And why?

"It is time we made these official mistake-makers realise that this isn't an old-school-tie society. That they are the servants of the nation, not its masters. And that when the nation asks the questions it is entitled to ask, it must have adequate and respectful answers."

The next day Mr. Selwyn Lloyd said in the House: "We are in close touch with the Australian Government which has appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the case of Petrov.

"Such information about Burgess and Maclean as has so far been elicited is of a limited and general character. It is not yet certain if it is based on Petrov's personal knowledge or on hearsay."

Mr. Tom Iremonger (Tory, Ilford North) pursued this point:

"Will you assure the House that the results of such an inquiry are made available to the public of Britain?" To which Mr. Lloyd replied: "It is important in these sensitive matters not to let the other side know how much we know."

Mr. S. J. McAdden (Tory, Southend East): "Will you assure us there will be no complacency in this matter and that we shall not adopt the attitude that because Burgess and Maclean have gone we can forget all about it?"

"As the revelations made so far by Soviet diplomats have revealed the existence of spy rings in Canada, the U.S.A. and Australia, it would be surprising if similar revelations were not made about this country."

Mr. Lloyd: "I can assure you most emphatically there is no complacency."

The London *Evening Standard* made answer:

82

"Petrov said, among other things, that Kislytsin, that busy Soviet agent, had told him he had personally handled all the secret documents supplied by Burgess—briefcases full of them"

"This stuff and nonsense from the Foreign Office, with its patent and puerile evasions, is an insult to the public. For it is perfectly plain from the spokesman's own words that Petrov *has* talked on Burgess and Maclean.

"Instead of making an immediate announcement of this dramatic news, the Foreign Office tries to belittle it, and the Press, by asserting that Petrov has no 'detailed' but only hearsay knowledge.

"As to 'hearsay,' if Mr. Malenkov gave the Foreign Office information on Burgess and Maclean, would the Foreign Office take no notice unless Mr. Malenkov could satisfy them that he had personally organised the entire business?

"And does the Foreign Office truly regard it as of little importance that within days of asking for protection, the chief of Soviet secret police in a key nation abroad should be able and willing to give information on these two men?

"The Foreign Office does not truly think it. The Foreign Office is pursuing its established tactic on this subject of lying doggo and pretending that nothing is the matter. But no one is deceived any more."

Petrov's "Sensational" Disclosures

The Petrov disclosures—when they came in *The People* on September 18, 1955—were sensational. Now there was *certainly* no complacency in the Foreign Office.

Petrov said, among other things, that Kislytsin, that busy Soviet agent, had told him he had personally handled all the secret documents supplied by Burgess—briefcases full of them.

The documents were photographed in London—where Kislytsin was a cypher clerk at the Soviet Embassy—and returned. The photographs went to Moscow.

After three years of this—in 1948—Kislytsin returned to Moscow and was put in charge of sifting intelligence documents relating to England.

This section was crammed full of British Foreign Office documents supplied by Burgess and Maclean. Said Petrov in *The People*: "Kislytsin had this work cut out even to sort them." And the documents poured in—until May 1951.

The Foreign Office knew what was going to be revealed for several weeks before Petrov's story appeared, and the matter was on the agenda at four Cabinet meetings.

It was argued by Sir Anthony Eden, Mr. Macmillan and others that to deny Petrov's statement would create an international situation. The Royal Commission on Espionage in Australia was to publish a 100,000-word report based almost entirely on Petrov's statements.

To have suggested that Petrov was a liar would have destroyed his credibility as a witness altogether and made the Australians look extremely foolish. More important still, it would have given the Russians a wonderful propaganda weapon.

They would have made much of the fact that the British Government branded Petrov as a liar, and this would have discredited all his statements made to the Commission.

The alternatives left, therefore, were to say "no comment" or to make some admission.

It was argued that "no comment" could not be sustained in view of the terrific pressure which would be put on the Foreign Office in Parliament. Furthermore, even that attitude would cast some doubt on Petrov's credibility.

A great deal of time was spent in formulating specific answers to the questions the Press were likely to put.

Thus on the day of the Petrov disclosures the Foreign Office had some answers ready; and Derek Marks, Political Correspondent of the *Daily Express*, reported:

"The Foreign Office admitted yesterday that Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess, the missing diplomats, were long-term Soviet agents.

"An official spokesman supplied some of the answers to questions that have been asked ever since the men vanished in May, 1951:

Q. Were Maclean and Burgess long-term Soviet agents?

A. We believe this to be true.

Q. Were they being investigated by the security services when they fled from Britain?

A. It is true that Maclean was under active investigation by the security authorities. Burgess's suitability for continued Foreign Service employment was under examination and he had already been withdrawn from Washington.

There was insufficient evidence to warrant Maclean's arrest, nor were there powers to prevent either man leaving the country.

Q. Is it true that Maclean and Burgess knew they were being investigated and reported this to their Russian contact in London?

A. We believe this to be correct.

Q. Is it true that the flight of Maclean and Burgess was planned by their Russian contact?

A. We believe this to be true.

Q. Vladimir Petrov now claims that Maclean and Burgess were recruited as Communist agents when they were still at Cambridge. Is that true?

A. We see no reason to disbelieve the claim.

Q. Petrov says that Maclean and Burgess are working in Moscow. Is this correct?

A. We have no direct evidence that they are in Moscow.

Q. On April 28, 1954, the *Daily Express* stated that Petrov had disclosed a great deal of information about Maclean and Burgess. The next day the Foreign Office said that anything Petrov knew was only by hearsay and "cannot be regarded as sufficiently conclusive to justify various statements published." Why was that?

A. At that stage we were still checking the story. In the House of Commons on May 3, 1954, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd said about the Petrov claim: "The interrogation is at present in progress, but such information about Messrs. Burgess and Maclean which had so far been elicited is of a limited and general character, and it is not yet certain whether it is based on Petrov's personal knowledge or on hearsay."

The Four Years' Silence had ended.

After Four Years of Denials—

Express Chief Crime Reporter Percy Hoskins commented: "Why does the Foreign Office, after more than four years of denials, now come out with these admissions? Because Vladimir Petrov has forced it.

"The long, long trail of Maclean and Burgess should never have started. For M.I.5 had put out warnings months before that night of May 25, 1951."