



Spooks and Scientologists:

Secrecy, Surveillance and
Subversion in Cold War
Australia 1954-1983

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At a glance: Hubbard Association of Scientologists aka Church of the New Faith aka Church of Scientology (ASIO File No. 3/2/834)

National Archives of Australia Series Number and Control Symbol:	Content range (dates):	Partially exempted Folios:	Wholly exempted folios:	Total number of folios:
A6122, 2608	1956-1966	103	4	274
A6122, 2609	1966-1969	59	13	268
A6122, 2610	1970-1976	50	24	196
A6122, 2611	1976-1978	13	0	58
A6122, 2612	1978-1979	65	3	201
A6122, 2613	1980-1981	35	9	128
A6122, 2614	1981-1983	26	12	200
A6122, 2615	1982-1983	1	0	46

The *Archives Act* 1983 allows for all government files to be released after a thirty year moratorium. Section 37 of the act permits that certain folios (i.e. pages), mainly intelligence received from foreign sources, are **wholly exempted**, whilst others are **partially exempted** to block out the names of informers and ASIO operatives.

Aims

1. ASIO and the Australian Cold War
2. First Contact: Scientology and ASIO in the 1950s
3. ASIO and the Apostate: Phillip Bennett Wearne
4. ASIO and Accountability: Scientology and ASIO in the 1970s

A Cold War Problem:

The “Nest of Traitors” in the Department of External Affairs

Below: Ian Milner and Jim Hill –
Alleged Russian Spies.



**Report to President Truman,
January 27, 1948.**

“Indications have appeared that there is a leak in high government circles in Australia, to Russia. This may, in magnitude, approach that of the Canadian spy expose of last year insofar as high Australia government officials are involved.”

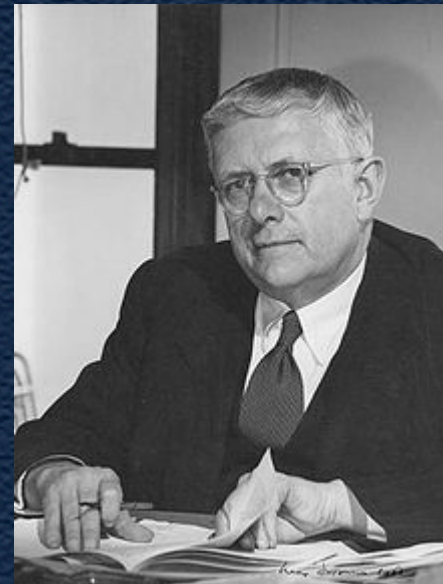
CONFIDENTIAL

U.S. Ambassador on Attorney General H.V. Evatt

Below: Myron M. Cowen – U.S. Ambassador to Australia 1948-1949



Below: H.V. ('Doc') Evatt – Australian Attorney General and Minister of External Affairs 1941-1949



“[Evatt is] not a communist but being a complete political opportunist he hews to Communist Party line whenever it suits his political interests.”

Origins of ASIO

Below: Ben Chifley – Labor Prime Minister of Australia 1945-1949



Background to 1948 Intelligence Embargo.

1. Soviet 'spy-ring' in Department of External Affairs.
2. U.S. diplomatic and intelligence paranoia (especially Naval Intelligence) about Communist influence in Australian Labor Party.
3. Inter service rivalry within the U.S. defence forces.
4. Intense U.S. dislike of H.V. Evatt (Attorney-General).
5. U.S. concerns about U.K.-Australia Joint Project to develop guided missile capabilities.

Directive for the Establishment and Maintenance of a Security Service (1949)

“...Its task is the defence of the Commonwealth from external and internal dangers arising from attempts at espionage and sabotage, or from actions of persons and organizations, whether directed from within or without the country, which may be judged to be subversive of the security of the Commonwealth.”

Note: This was slightly modified in July 1950 by Prime Minister Menzies.

Origins of ASIO

Below: Sir Charles Spry – Second Director-General of ASIO 1950-1970



Establishment of ASIO and Early Operations.

1. Established by Chifley under direction of Justice Geoffrey Reed of South Australian Supreme Court on March 16, 1949.
2. Election in 1949 brings Menzies government to power.
3. U.S. relaxes the intelligence embargo.
4. ASIO work on 'The Case'

The Petrov Defection and its Aftermath.

Below: Evdokia Petrov escorted by armed Soviet agents at Sydney Airport.



Key Events

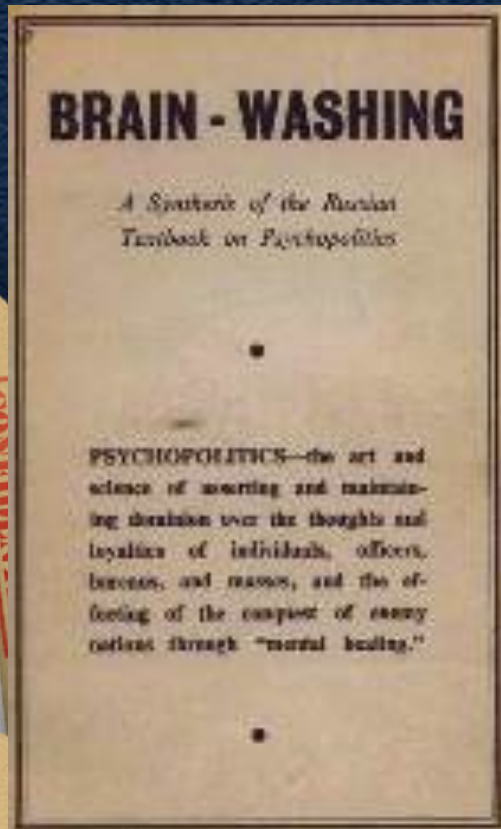
1. April 3, 1954 – Vladimir and Evdokia Petrov defect.

2. April 13, 1954 – Menzies announces the *Royal Commission into Espionage*.

3. Souring of Relationship between ALP and ASIO (H.V. Evatt partially blamed ASIO for his May 1954 election loss)

Fellow Anti-Communists: Initial Contact between ASIO and Scientology (1956)

Below: Cover of *Brain-Washing: A Synthesis of the Russian Textbook of Psychopolitics*.



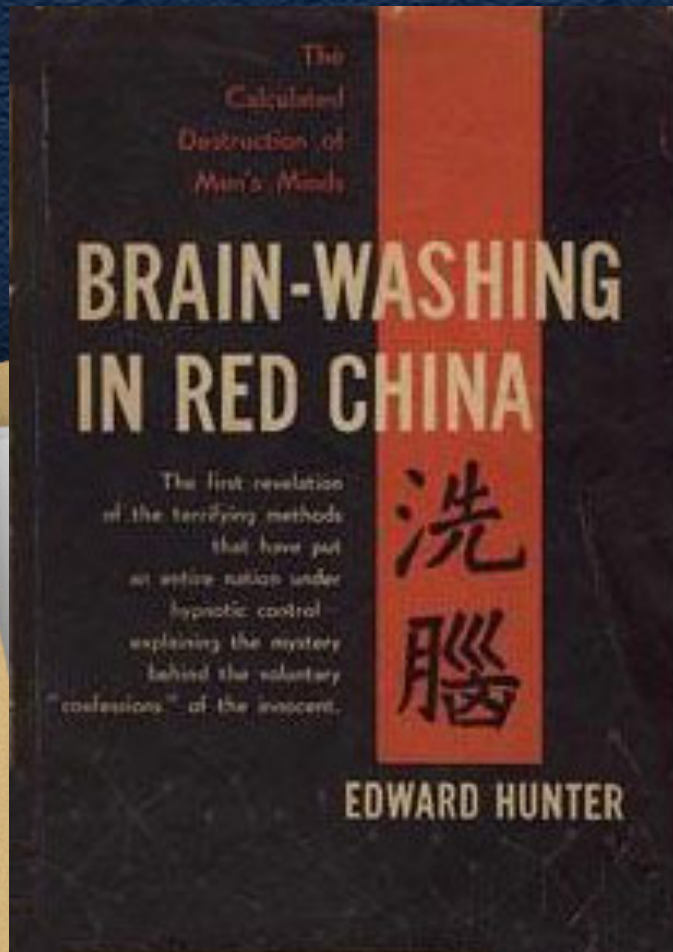
First Contact

April 16, 1956 Ronald Lindsay Chittock approaches Regional Security Officer A.E. Ellis at Department of Supply about printing and distributing manual.

Preliminary investigation in Melbourne found HASI "would not appear to be of any security interest."

Colonel Spry on further contact:
"...this organisation has no desire to discuss the booklet with Mr. Chittock."

The Rise of Brain-washing Theory



Brain-washing in Red China (first published 1951).

Korean War
(1950-1953)

Anti-Communist Fellow Travellers: Eric D. Butler

Below: Eric D. Butler – Founder of the Australian League of Rights



Butler began distributing *Brain-washing* through the *New Times* press from 1956.

Butler told ASIO in 1970:

“I met Hubbard in Rhodesia in 1966, just prior to him being removed from that country, and did not form a very high opinion of him. His movement may be, as some opponents charge, a money-making racket for Hubbard.”

Late 1950s and early 1960s

1. Scientology and communists (including Ken Dyer – See Chris Hartney this afternoon)
2. Security Vetting for Scientologists employed at Weapons Research Establishment (WRE) in Salisbury and Long Range Weapons Establishment (LWRE) in Woomera, South Australia (Owen McKenna, “Bunkumology” *Truth*, December 2, 1961).
3. HASI media claims to be associated with ASIO in exposing communists.
4. Phillip Bennett Wearne and the ALP.

ASIO Scientology Policy, June 22, 1962

Memo 7813 Hubbard Association of Scientologists

“The Association is not considered to be subversive, but is of security interest and could have harmful effects on the public mind. It is probably the Association would exploit any contact with A.S.I.O. to their own advantage which might in turn reflect discredit on this organisation.”

“No contact with the Association is to be established and if a member of the Association telephones for an appointment, he is to be requested to forward his information in writing.”

Below: Phillip Bennett Wearne RAAF Enlistment Photo 1944



ASIO and the Apostate: Phillip Bennett Wearne

Below: *The Legion of Space* comic-book.



Background

1. WWII Service (RAAF) (“careless,” “full of his own self-importance.”)
2. Comic strip illustrator: *Legions of Space*.
3. Investment Scams.
4. ALP Publicity Officer.

Phillip Bennett Wearne

Below: *The Legion of Space* comic-book.



ALP Affiliation

1. Wearne's company, Australian Trade Union Press Pty. Ltd., published 51 Trade Union and ALP journals across Australia.
2. 1958 – Wearne joins HASI.
3. 1961 – Wearne begins publishing *Probe*, distributes to all Federal parliamentarians and public service departments.

Probe Magazine

Below: Article from *Probe* (1961).

SECURITY CHECKING

A GOVERNMENT exists at least in part to protect its people from aggressors.

No government can claim complete sovereignty unless it can maintain weapons which repel any attempt at outside control.

The history of war is the history of CONTROL. The end goal of war is to throw a population out of the control of its government. The government is then supplanted and the population put back in control again.

Modern warfare, up to the time of the atomic bomb, was levied against the population of a government, to cause it to fall away from the controlling government which then collapsed and could be changed. Once the population could no longer continue under the attack of bombs, the government could no longer continue. In other words, the population became uncontrollable.

BUT WITH the advent of the atomic bomb it became impossible for a government to protect its population. The atomic bomb is an unlimited weapon—there is no defence against it. This is mainly because of atomic testing, which causes pollution of the atmosphere by radiation. There is no defence against a radiation impregnated atmosphere at this time, and it is as deadly against the population of the government which is atomic testing as it is against any other population.

A weapon against which there is no defence is an unlimited weapon, and formal government cannot exist with the use of an unlimited weapon. Atomic testing is an unlimited weapon because it can cause hysteria which will throw a populace out of control.

THIS SITUATION is well understood by Communist governments who do their sabre rattling

MADE EASY

tongue in cheek. Their real energies are directed at subverting the governments of non-Communist countries and here the same principle holds good—if they can subvert institutions and organisations of a country to the point of bringing them out of the control of their leaders, they can eventually cause so much strife and confusion among a populace that the government loses control of its people.

It is therefore a matter of absolute necessity for all institutions in a democratic country to counter subversion by careful security checking of personnel.

For government departments, security checks for all personnel is mandatory.

A new scientific instrument developed by American electronics experts is now being used by some organisations in Australia with great success. It is called an "E-METER."

THE THEORY behind this extraordinary instrument is that of the

psycho-galvanic reflex. This is a discovery made some 40 years ago and used in the cumbersome and very expensive "lie-detector."

Exact circuits and the use of transistors have now enabled the development of a portable instrument which has been brought to a high standard of accuracy by electronics experts.

THE "E-METER"

The person being security checked is asked to hold the two terminals of the "E-METER" while the operator asks suitably worded questions as to the person's intentions and purposes. If the person is guilty in answering these questions, the needle of the "E-METER" will drop, irrespective of the verbal answer given.

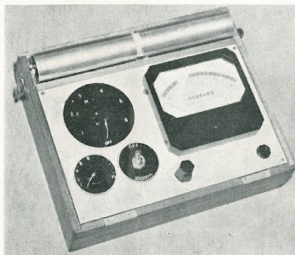
The instrument can be carried in a small case, and therefore many people can be checked in a short time. Thousands of performance checks have proven this checking exact and reliable.

However, the use of this instrument requires a certain level of technical skill, and an eight-week course which costs £150 is needed to train an expert operator.

DUTIES CHECK

THE "E-METER" is also used to check a staff member on the performance of his duties. The person to be checked holds the "E-METER" terminals while the operator reads out the set of duties applicable to that person's post. The needle drops whenever a duty is mentioned which the person is guilty of not having carried out.

Knowledge of these scientific testing methods should be helpful to department heads who are constantly confronted with personnel problems.



THE "E-METER"

The Zone-Plan in the ALP

"PROBE can help you in your work by providing through its pages an up to date presentation of the latest advances in management techniques and administration methods – especially in the fields of communication of control – which can assist the solution of problems arising in Government organisations."

"We trust that you will find its articles of sufficient value to warrant your authorizing a subscription for every member of your staff."

ASIO on Wearne (1962)

Below: Phillip Bennett Wearne (1962)

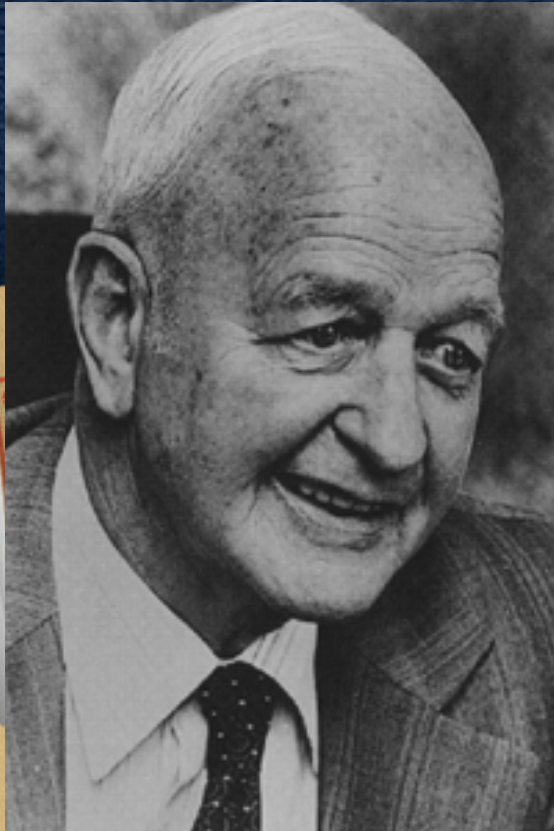


ASIO Assessment, January 30, 1962

“There is little doubt that WEARNE is certainly a go-getter, one might almost say a con-man, who is prepared to approach anybody or anyone if he can see a chance of making a bit for himself.”

Wearne and Dax

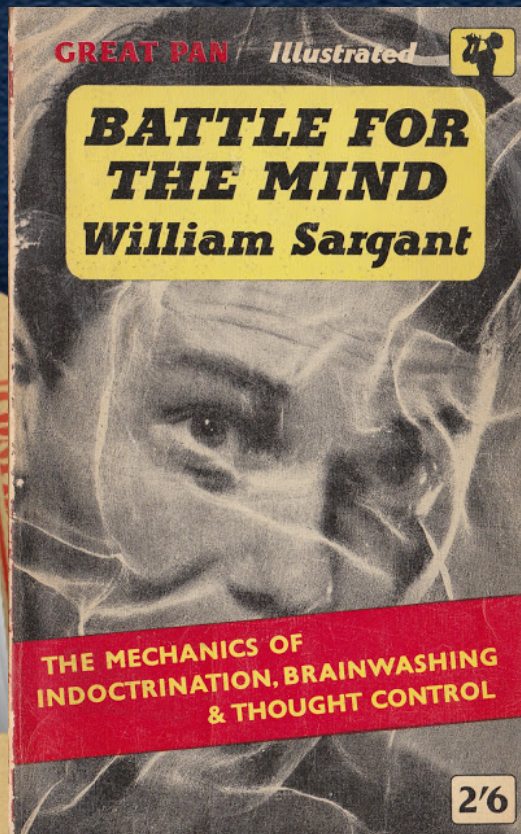
Below: Eric Cunningham-Dax.



Letter from Wearne to Commonwealth Police Service (November 10, 1963).

“The exact processing techniques used in this brainwashing is described in correspondence between myself and a psychiatrist, Dr. Fennessy and Dr. Cunningham Dax of the Mental Hygiene Commission (sic.), and I will make copies available if you require them.”

Brainwashing Ideology Down Under: Dax and Sargant



Sargant Visits Australia

August 14, 1962 – William Sargant gives the keynote address at the Centenary Celebrations of the University of Melbourne School of Medicine, entitled “Brainwashing” at the invitation of Dr. Eric Cunningham Dax.

Below: Details of Sargant’s Visit 1962.

Beattie Smith Lecture

TUESDAY 14 AUGUST

PUBLIC LECTURE THEATRE, 8 p.m.

WILLIAM W. SARGANT, M.A., M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P.

‘THE MECHANISM OF BRAIN-WASHING AND CONVERSION’

Chairman:

The Vice-Chancellor, Sir George Paton

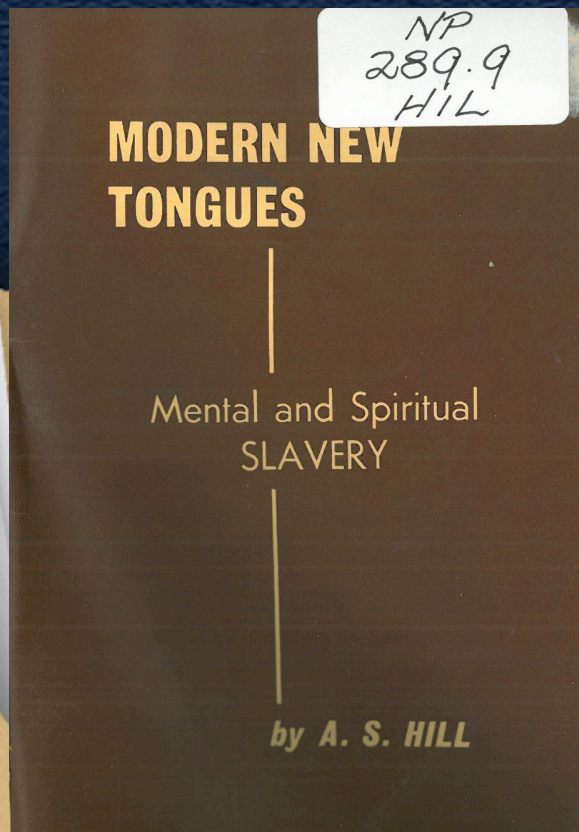
Admission without ticket. Dress: Informal

Dr William Sargant has been Physician in Charge of the Department of Psychological Medicine at St. Thomas’ Hospital, London, since 1948 and is a well-known figure in world psychiatry.

He has travelled in Europe and America on lecture tours and has spent a year at Harvard University and a further year at Duke University, studying particularly methods of religious revival and the psychiatric aspects of conversion. His book ‘Battle for the Mind’, published in 1957, is widely read both in Britain and America.

Dr Sargant contributed extensively to the understanding and management of war neuroses in the second World War.

Local Brainwashing Advocates



Early Australian Anti-Cultists.

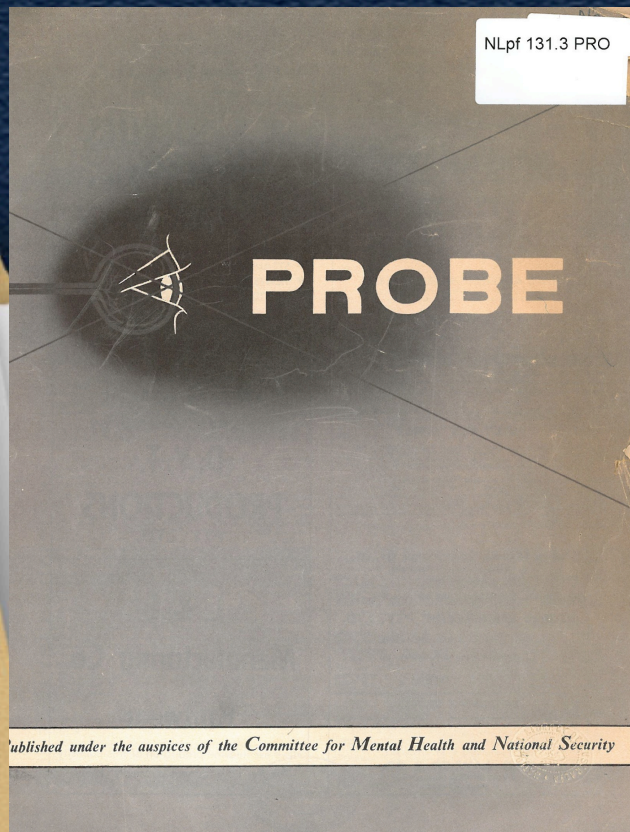
In 1960 Alan Hill published the first Australian authored work on Brainwashing entitled:

Modern New Tongues: Mental and Spiritual SLAVERY.

Hill later became involved with Wearne and his Committee for Mental Health and National Security.

Australia's first Anti-cult Group: The Committee for Mental Health and National Security

Below: 1964 Publication by Committee for
Mental Health and National Security



Events.

December 3, 1963 – Wearne
founds the Committee for
Mental Health and National
Security.

Wearne became star witness
at the Anderson inquiry
which led to repressive
legislation against
Scientology in three
Australian states.

Scientology Bans and Police Raids

Below: Newspaper headlines

**POLICE SEIZE
SCIENTOLOGY
MATERIAL**

**Detectives Raid Cult
HQ, Seize Papers**

**Stamp out
Scientology**

Anti-Scientology Legislation

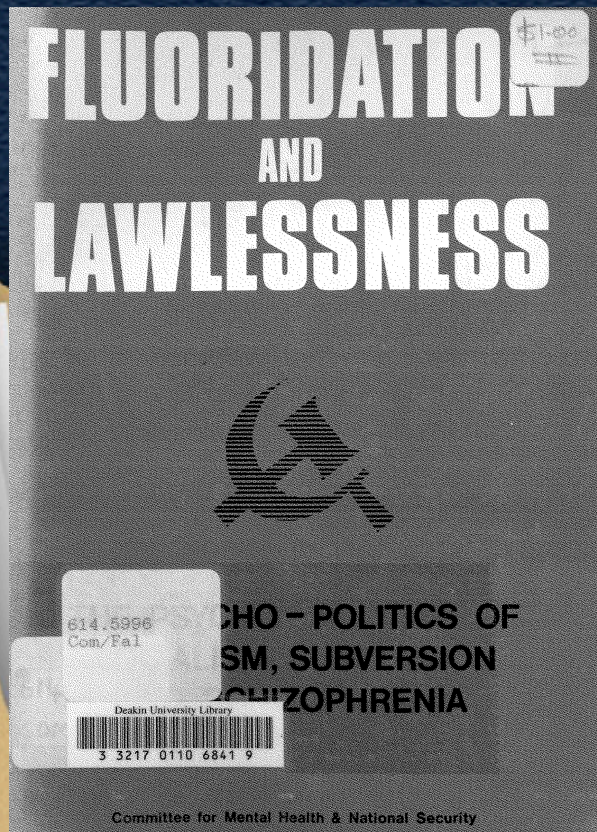
*Psychological Practices
Act 1965* – Victoria.

Scientology Act 1968 –
Western Australia

*Scientology (Prohibition)
Act 1968* – South
Australia.

ASIO on Wearne (1970)

Below: Publication of the Committee for Mental Health and National Security



ASIO Assessment - February 19, 1970

“He was and may still be an undischarged bankrupt and is something of a con-man in business. Wearne appears to suffer from psychoneurotic condition and consideration will be given to blacklisting. At next contact Wearne may be informed that his activities are of not concern but at same time he should be firmly discouraged from meddling on fringe of security.”

Wearne's Death and the Mysterious Affidavit



Wearne died March 7, 1971, according to Australian Scientologists after an assault outside a nightclub.

Wearne swore an affidavit in Sydney on January 6, 1969 claiming possibly CIA interest in Anderson Inquiry and to have provided ASIO with Scientology documentation around August 1963 (this formed the basis of Garrison's account of the Anderson inquiry).

(Note: Records indicate Wearne did not contact ASIO directly until July 1965 and not about Scientology. However, Wearne did contact Commonwealth Security Police (CSP) in November 1963 and seems to have confused the two organizations, ASIO did not have access to the CSP material which was sequestered in the Department of Immigration).

“Vermin!”: ALP left-faction members on ASIO

Below: Bob Gould – ALP member,
bookstore owner and anti-war activist.



Events

1971 – National Conference of ALP in Hobart Bob Gould proposes a motion to adopt a policy of abolishing ASIO. AL votes narrowly (by one vote, that of leader Gough Whitlam) not to adopt this as a policy platform.

Ironically, Lionel Murphy was the chief left-faction member who argued that ASIO should **not** be abolished.

“It’s Time.”

Below: Gough Whitlam – Prime Minister of Australia 1972-1975



“It’s Time”

1972 – Whitlam elected to office (**international intelligence community very unhappy**)

1972 – Whitlam refuses to have his personal staff security vetted by ASIO.

February 15, 1973 – Attorney General Lionel Murphy registers Scientology as a recognized denomination under s. 26 the *Marriage Act* making Scientology bans in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia redundant.

1974 – Whitlam publicly exposes CIA intelligence operations at Pine Gap (Northern Territory) and Nurrungar (South Australia).

November 11, 1975 – Gough Whitlam “Dismissed” as Prime Minister.

Suspicion of ASIO in Whitlam Government

Below: George Negus – Journalist and Former Press Secretary for Lionel Murphy



On Whitlam and Murphy reading ASIO files.

“Lionel Murphy had asked for the files of the six most dangerous or subversive people in Australia...looked at them and laughed, and said to the bloke ‘I *know* these people. They are not subversives, they’re old fashioned marxists whom you needn’t worry about. Can you get me some real subversives? Some Russians who are in the woodwork out there?’...When he [Murphy] told Whitlam they both laughed – and they seldom laughed together.”

Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood (Ustasha)

Below: Aftermath of Ustasha attack on Yugoslav travel agency in Sydney, September 18, 1972.

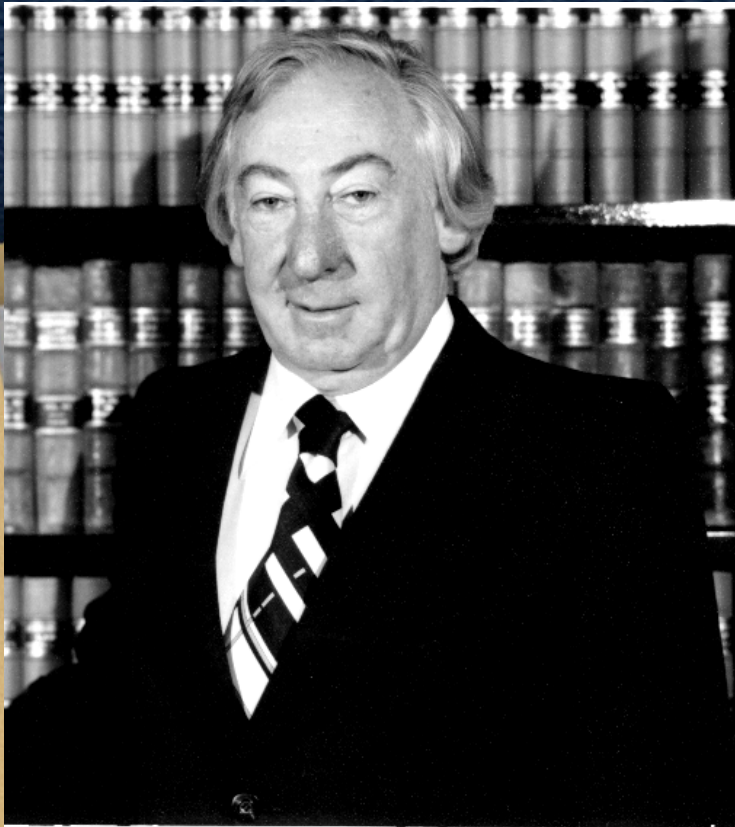


The ASIO Double-Standard

ALP and others believed (with good reason) that ASIO had a double-standard, harassing anti-war demonstrators whilst ignoring right-wing Croatian nationalists setting off bombs in city streets (23 bombings between 1963-1972).

The ASIO “Raid”

Below: Lionel Murphy – Attorney General (1972-1975). Later Justice of the High Court (1975-1986).



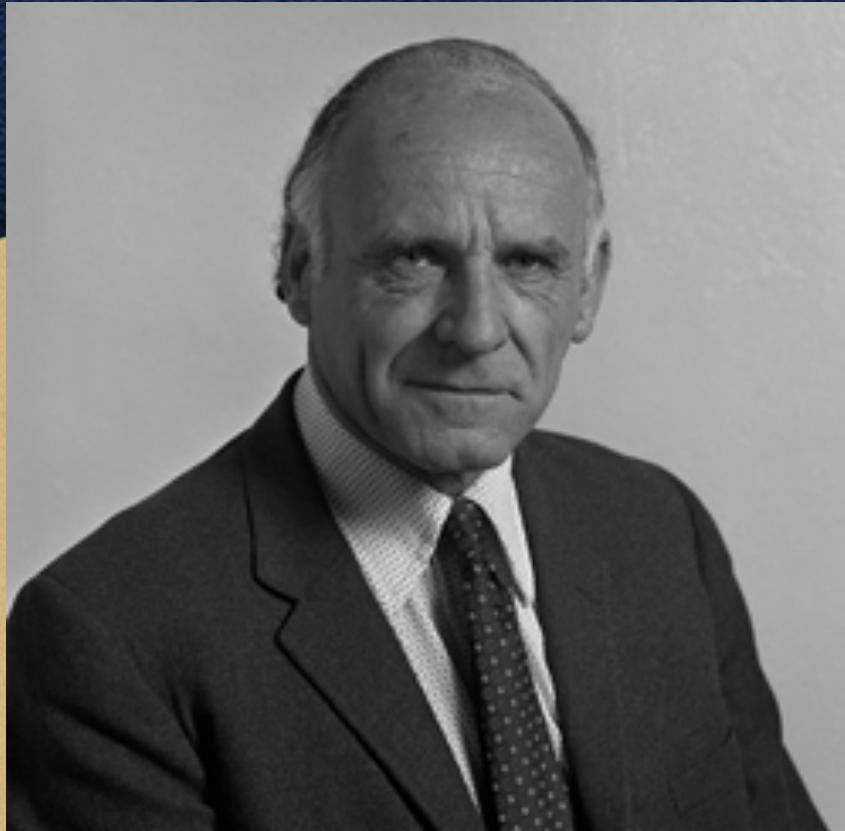
ASIO Accountability

March 16, 1973 – Murphy and the Australian Federal Police “raided” ASIO headquarters in Melbourne, after fears about a possible Ustasha attack planned for the visit of Yugoslav Prime Minister Džemal Bijedić and that ASIO were concealing information from him.

This led to the calling of the Royal Commission on the Intelligence Services under Justice in order to examine the behavior of Australia’s intelligence community.

Royal Commission into the Australian Intelligence Services (RCIS)

Below: Justice Robert Hope.



Events

August 21, 1974 – Whitlam establishes RCIS.

RCIS reported to the Fraser government in 1977 and was highly critical of ASIO (though recommended extending its powers subsequent to internal reform).

Scientology's Response to Establishment of the RCIS

Letter to Director General of ASIO Peter Barbour (August 29, 1974)

“It has come to our notice that your dossier system contains information disseminated in Victoria by the late Phillip Bennett Wearne and others. Such data remaining on your file, is a source of false, defamatory and damaging statements in respect of our Church and its Australian membership.”

Note: ASIO checked all their files before refusing Scientology's request to view them to ensure that they were acting within their charter (Justice Hope later slammed ASIO for its poor record keeping).

Below: ASIO Cartoon by 2003



The Scientology Submission to RCIS

“The Church respectfully submits that it has tendered evidence that clearly shows that ASIO was involved in covert intelligence operations which deliberately lead (sic.) to the Inquiry into Scientology [i.e. the Anderson Inquiry]; that it played a major role in the Inquiry itself, and that it, via Mr. Galbally [Victorian ALP Leader who instigated Anderson inquiry], had a prime influence over the Inquiry proceedings itself, and the resulting report.”

Justice Hope on Scientology Allegations

“I found that ASIO had informed itself in the past about scientology by collecting available information and that it made inquiries of overseas sources. *It did not conduct any form of surveillance.* ASIO notified relevant authorities that *the group was not of security interest for the purposes of the Act.*”

RCIS II, p. 14.

(Note: this was not published until the second RCIS was held beginning in 1983, this statement appeared in the 1985 Report, Hope had neglected to include his original investigation in the first Reports in the late 1970s).

Opposition to ASIO

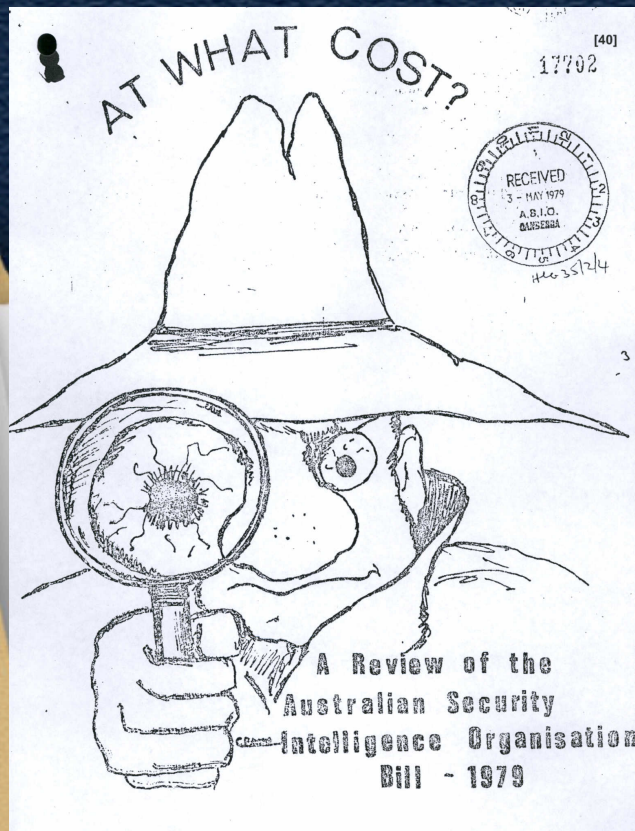
Below: Joan Coxsedg – Founder of the Committee for the Abolition of Political Police (CAAP)



Over the course of the 1970s, as revelations from the RCIS slowly became public, opposition to ASIO grew, especially amongst left-wing activists. These activists founded groups like CAPP (Committee for the Abolition of Political Police) and staged protests outside ASIO buildings. Scientology joined in with its own group Society for the Protection of the Privacy of the Individual (SPPI) in 1976.

Society for the Protection of the Privacy of the Individual (SPPI)

Below: SPPI Pamphlet



SPPI Activities (1976-1979)

1. Protests outside ASIO Regional Offices
2. Pamphlet Campaigns
3. Lobbying against *ASIO Bill* 1979 which gave ASIO more powers.

Ananda Marga and Scientology

Below: the Aftermath of the Hilton Hotel Bombing, February 3, 1978.



Scientology and SPPI had frequent contact with Ananda Marga from the mid 1970s to express support for the group for what both considered undue intelligence harassment.

Scientology partially funded the legal defence of the 'Yagoona Three', three Ananda Marga members charged with planning to bomb the home of a right-wing activist in 1978.

The 'Yagoona Three' were convicted in 1979 but eventually pardoned in 1985 (though one was later re-tried, convicted and then acquitted on appeal in 1991).

“...the next target will be the Church of Scientology.”

Below: High Court of Australia, Canberra.



The Affidavit of James Patrick Cusick.

The document attached to the affidavit was a real ASIO memo and led to much consternation within ASIO about its leakage. Moreover, ASIO noted that the affidavit contained real knowledge of operational practices of ASIO unknown to the general public.

Church of Scientology v. Woodward (1982)

1. The Cusick Affidavit (leaked ASIO-NSW SB document).

2. “Unexplained interferences”: stolen mail, phone-lines being cut, tampering with motor vehicles, house break-ins, alleged surveillance outside houses, cancelled travel bookings to anti-ASIO protests.

Below: Church of Scientology Ideal Org Sydney.



Murphy's Dissent



“Because of the experience that secret organizations of this kind from time to time misuse their powers in relation to individuals and institutions, it is essential that the judicial process be exerted, no doubt with caution, but if occasion warrants it, firmly, to keep the organization and officers within the law.”

Tentative Conclusions

1. Scientology was not considered “subversive” or a serious security threat and figured low on ASIO priorities.
2. The claim that ASIO played a major part in state legislation against Scientology is not born out by the evidence, especially as this pertains to the role of Phillip Wearne.
3. Scientology’s beliefs that it was under surveillance became a self-fulfilling prophecy, especially when it became involved in the 1970s campaign to make ASIO more accountable.
4. Who watches the watchers? Today ASIO is even less accountable.

“Who watches the watchers?”
(Juvenal, *Satires* VI.347-8)



Archival Files

For citation details see:

<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs07.aspx>

NAA: A6122, 2608.

NAA: A6122, 2609

NAA: A6122, 2610

NAA: A6122, 2611

NAA: A6122, 2612

NAA: A6122, 2613

NAA: A6122, 2614

NAA: A446, 1967/70790

NAA: A10074; 1979/73

NAA: A10074; 1980/42

NAA: A10074; 1980/77



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