

IMPRESSIONS OF A TURNCOAT

THOSE PERSONS who commit acts of treason come in a variety of types and have a variety of motives. This is so whether the treason is at the highest, national level or at lower levels such as that of treason to political party, cause or faith. Sometimes the act of treason or treachery may be long planned in advance and engaged in for totally genuine ideological reasons. In this case the would-be traitor would join the organisation he intended to subvert, having right from the start no objective other than to subvert it. Every action in which he engaged, and every profession of faith emanating from his lips, would have the purpose only of building and securing his credentials as a loyal servant of that organisation so that he may advance within it up the scale of seniority in order to do the greater damage when the moment for his ultimate act of betrayal came; his whole role within the organisation up to that moment, in other words, would be no more than an act, put on to conceal purposes which were entirely opposite to the ones he professed to be working for.

But in another case treason may have an entirely different cause, being rooted neither in strong ideological conviction nor in any great forward planning; it may be the product solely of a weak, unstable, corruptible and opportunistic character, liable to collapse and surrender itself to another's will under stress of circumstances – poor health, emotional upheaval, financial difficulties or inducements, or simple fear. In this case it could very well be that the betrayer had no advance intention of committing any act against the organisation he joined but, on the contrary, joined it and for a time served it out of quite sincere sympathy with its objectives and a genuine desire to promote those objectives. Because of some innate character deficiency, however, such a person is always liable to be 'turned', as the saying goes, if the pressures on his person make him see some advantage in turning. In some respects this type of betrayer can be more dangerous, precisely because the actions and words he employed to build confidence among his associates were perfectly genuinely motivated at the time they occurred, thus

conveying the sincerity of a stage or film actor who so absorbs himself in his allotted role that he actually starts to think and believe in the same manner as the one whose part he is playing.

It is with these considerations in mind that we should reflect on the latest act of treason within the Nationalist movement to attract the glare of media publicity: the 'exposures' made by Mr. Ray Hill, by way of courtesy of the *News of the World* and Channel Four TV.

My first acquaintance with Ray Hill that was more than a nodding one was a meeting the two of us had in a hotel lounge in London which had been agreed upon when we learned by correspondence of each other's interest in reunifying the warring Nationalist factions that had become splintered in 1979/80. He expressed his political convictions articulately, intelligently and, on the face of things, with some sincerity. He had a good sense of humour and it was easy to like him. We came to an agreement to collaborate as closely as possible, in particular in the field of Nationalist unity. Later, in fulfilment of part of our objectives in this regard, we joined together as colleagues in the newly formed British National Party.

Warnings

At the time there were voices which urged me to have nothing to do with Ray Hill. I did not ignore them but indeed made a mental note of the warnings emanating from them. Neither did I rush wholeheartedly into acceptance of what they said; smear and counter-smear are a familiar feature of factional politics, and some of the sources from which the warnings came were themselves not deserving of the highest credibility. I weighed up what I had heard against Hill with my own personal observations and impressions. In order to give me an opportunity to pursue these observations and impressions further, my wife and I twice invited him and his family to stay some days with us at our home. As a result of this close contact, I came to the following conclusions:—

News of the World
hireling Ray Hill was
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but never completely
trusted, says
JOHN TYNDALL

The first was that, if Ray Hill was a committed enemy of Nationalism and did not genuinely believe in its ideals, he put on an extremely convincing act to the contrary, indicating that, not only had he got off pat those ideas that lie at the surface of Nationalist thinking, but he had given his mind to some of the deeper philosophical questions that underpinned the Nationalist creed. As he expounded his view of these questions, it was extremely difficult even for a sceptic like me – ever on the watch for 'enemies within' – to believe that such views were not sincerely expressed.

The second impression was one of the possibility of some fundamental inner character flaw. I will not go into too heavy detail over the observations which led to this feeling, as to do so would involve the airing in public of private conversations and confidences in a manner which always causes me revulsion when I see the practice engaged in by others. Suffice it to say that I came to feel that Ray Hill was a person who, under pressure of circumstances different to the ones in which we had entered into amicable collaboration – circumstances possibly of great personal stress, perhaps intensified by financial pressure or blackmail, might be induced to act in a way that could cause harm to the cause in which he professed to believe.

It is quite possible to perceive such a flaw in someone while genuinely liking them, and there was, as I have indicated, much to like about Ray Hill, apart from appreciating that he had talents which, pointed in the right direction, could be of valuable service to our movement.

I discussed my feelings about Hill with some of my closest colleagues, and the consensus of opinion amongst us was that, while evidence against him was not sufficiently conclusive at the time for us to exclude him from the party, neither were the marks in his favour sufficient on balance for us to take him completely into our confidence or to regard him as one of the true 'inner circle' of trusted friends and confederates. He should be given scope in the party to exercise his talents but he should be given no position

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or role which might enable him to influence decisions or exercise responsibility or power; least of all should he be made privy to information of any highly confidential nature.

He was given the title of 'Publicity Officer', which under the terms which I explained to him meant no more than using his imagination to devise ways in which the party could make media headlines, and then to present his ideas on such matters to me for my decision. He was never, as claimed in the *News of the World*, my 'deputy'; in fact no such position exists in the Constitution of the BNP.

Shortly after the General Election of 1983, Ray Hill wrote and informed me of his resignation from the British National Party. On making some enquiries, I became confirmed in my feeling that some circumstances in his private life had induced this decision. He was, apparently, in some kind of trouble. We remained on friendly terms personally, but it occurred to me that the nature of the trouble affecting him suggested that it might stem from the character failings which I had suspected I perceived earlier.

I was not therefore wholly surprised when I read the *News of the World* on Sunday, March 25th. Having read it, I make no apologies for having accepted Ray Hill as a colleague to the degree that I did accept him. Organisations like our own cannot possibly grow if we set up an exclusive wall against all comers who do not produce for us a 100 per-cent security clearance, if we fail to exploit talents in the offing for constant fear that those talents might be flawed. It is all very well for certain people to pontificate to the contrary, but it is noticeable to me that those people have never undertaken them-

selves the work of building any political movement beyond the range of tiny drawing room clubs. An organisation which, within barely more than a year of its inauguration, is able to put up 54 candidates in a General Election pays an inevitable price for its growth and development: the price of risking that one or two rotten apples could get into the basket.

Guard against infection

This business is not about keeping the rotten apples away, for that is a practical impossibility; it is about so organising and constituting ourselves that the rotten apples, if they get in, do not infect and destroy the basket as a whole. This involves, in terms of building a party, using careful discretion and discrimination in determining the degrees of initiation and confidence that one will extend to one recruit as against another. Such care is only possible in an organisation that is structured **HIERARCHICALLY** and in which decisions and appointments stem from the top. Even here there is no absolutely foolproof guarantee against infiltration, subversion and treachery, and I make no pretence to be offering it. What I can say is that the procedures I have outlined will drastically reduce both its probability and its effect.

In the event the harm Ray Hill did us was small, as can be seen in the fact that all the truly damaging information he came up with for the benefit of the *News of the World* and Channel Four involved people and groups not connected with the BNP. I am tempted to feel sorry for those people and groups but, if they think themselves aggrieved, they ought to ponder on their wisdom in allowing a character like Ray Hill to get so close to their operations — we never let him get too close to ours.

I suppose that what is galling is that I took Ray Hill into my home and treated

him as a friend, albeit a friend to be regarded with some inner circumspection. He sat at my wife's and my table and enjoyed our food and wine, and no effort was spared to make his and his family's two stays with us pleasant ones. Did he, as he received our hospitality, have treason and treachery in his mind? Still now I seriously question whether he did, but that does not reduce the revolting stench of that treason and treachery when it occurred.

I wonder if Ray Hill feels able to walk taller as a result of his recent actions. I wonder if he is able to look in the mirror in the morning without spewing his innards into the wash basin. I wonder if for the rest of his life he is able to proceed about his business without the impulse to look constantly over his shoulder. I ask these questions because I still do not believe that the man is wholly bad; somewhere in him there is a conscience, and it is not a conscience I would care to live with till the grave.

1984!

BRIAN CROPPER is deputy superintendent at the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool. Last year he was mugged by a gang of Blacks. Then shortly afterwards he read a report in a newspaper about two Blacks who had attacked an old lady.

On the latter occasion he was sitting having a teabreak in the company of the hall's superintendent and the local convenor of his trade union. Disgusted at hearing of the lady's experience and recalling his own, he made a remark not wholly complimentary to the coloured immigrant community.

This was duly reported, and now the union, the General Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union, is demanding that he receive the sack, and to that end has ordered a picketing of the hall and a work to rule by its employees.

Find out about the British National Party

Send 20p for information pack.

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Name.....

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I enclose.....