



The Lawn Road Flats: Spies, Writers and Artists (History of British Intelligence)

By David Burke

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The Isokon building, Lawn Road Flats, in Belsize Park on Hampstead's lower slopes, is a remarkable building. The first modernist building in Britain to use reinforced concrete in domestic architecture, its construction demanded new building techniques. But the building was as remarkable for those who took up residence there as for the application of revolutionary building techniques. There were 32 Flats in all, and they became a haunt of some of the most prominent Soviet agents working against Britain in the 1930s and 40s, among them Arnold Deutsch, the controller of the group of Cambridge spies who came to be known as the "Magnificent Five" after the Western movie *The Magnificent Seven*; the photographer Edith Tudor-Hart; and Melita Norwood, the longest-serving Soviet spy in British espionage history. However, it wasn't only spies who were attracted to the Lawn Road Flats, the Bauhaus exiles Walter Gropius, László Moholy-Nagy and Marcel Breuer; the pre-historian V. Gordon Childe; and the poet (and Bletchley Park intelligence officer) Charles Brasch all made their way there. A number of British artists, sculptors and writers were also drawn to the Flats, among them the sculptor and painter Henry Moore; the novelist Nicholas Monsarrat; and the crime writer Agatha Christie, who wrote her only spy novel *N or M?* in the Flats. The Isokon building boasted its own restaurant and dining club, where many of the Flats' most famous residents rubbed shoulders with some of the most dangerous communist spies ever to operate in Britain. Agatha Christie often said that she invented her characters from what she observed going on around her. With the Kuczynskis - probably the most successful family of spies in the history of espionage - in residence, she would have had plenty of material. DAVID BURKE is a historian of intelligence and international relations and author of *The Spy Who Came In From the Co-op: Melita Norwood and the Ending of Cold War Espionage* (The Boydell Press, 2009).

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Editorial Review

Review

Burke's book is constructed like the building itself: each chapter has at its centre a life story of one or other key resident of the ISOKON, and these stories are as interconnected as were the tenants at the Lawn Road Flats. ... (Its) history has now been meticulously restored by David Burke. **TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENTA** fascinating book. **CHARTIST**Burke intersperses his painstakingly detailed research with fascinating glimpses of life at the time, drawing on stories and letters that bring his account into vivid relief. **TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT A** lively and vivid chronicle of a generation shaped by war, political upheaval and idealism. **HISTORY TODAY** Cocktails, glamour, spies - Bond would love it. **SAGA MAGAZINE**Burke proves to be a brilliant sleuth...and is insightful on the...daily detail of a spy's life. **TIMES** This book, like the Lawn Road flats themselves, is full of surprises. **SUNDAY TIMES** (Lynn Barber) Reveals the staggeringly rich artistic and political machinations that took place within. **FINANCIAL TIMES**

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Tammy Crider:

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vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort that will put every word into delight arrangement in writing *The Lawn Road Flats: Spies, Writers and Artists (History of British Intelligence)* however doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest along with based confirm resource information that maybe you can be considered one of it. This great information can easily drawn you into completely new stage of crucial contemplating.

Jack Nguyen:

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