

Barking Up the Wrong Tree

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The newly published and authorised history of the British intelligence agency MI5, has some interesting observations for politicians who get carried away with the evils of porn. *Defend the Realm*, by Christopher Andrew, tells the story of how Arnold Deutsch, arguably the most successful master spy ever, (because he recruited the five British double agents; Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, Anthony Blunt and John Cairncross) was investigated by the Viennese Police but escaped detection.

They were investigating him because of his association with the celebrated sexologist Wilhelm Reich (also a Communist) who was trying to synthesise the work of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud to bring birth control and sexual enlightenment to Viennese workers.

Reich, said Andrew, earned a probably undeserved reputation as “the prophet of the better orgasm.” He was suspected of dabbling in “pornography” for his comments.

He was under surveillance by the Viennese police in 1934, when he moved to London. It was likely, Andrew wrote, that even if the Secret Service had known of Deutsch’s involvement with Reich and the sex-pol movement, they would have regarded his unusual career as improbable cover for a Soviet spy.

Deutsch had the lead role in recruiting the Cambridge Five with his new recruitment strategy of cultivating young radical high-fliers from leading universities before they entered the corridors of power.

It will be interesting to discover when the authorised history of ASIO appears in five years time whether and how spies in the Australian intelligence and foreign services escaped detection. There were some. And whether the sexual smokescreen managed divert some from their real work.

