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The Week, 1933-1946, A leftist newsletter in times of appeasement and war.

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From the belly of the beast: *The Week*, 1933-1946

Peter O'Connor

In a 1968 review of *The Years of The Week*, Patricia Cockburn's memoir of her husband Claud Cockburn's (1904-1981) greatest achievement, the newsletter published here, Cockburn's old friend and fellow adventurer Graham Greene wrote, "...perhaps the only complaint I have against The Week is that it was never prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act".[1] This is droll and casual but it is also telling, for Greene and Cockburn had known each other since their schooldays at Berkhamsted, and both Cockburn's sources and the circles who opposed them, including those protecting Britain and the empire's official secrets, were peopled by an elite that he was born into. As *The Week* expanded its range and became the world's most fearless and best-informed local newspaper, so its sources dialled in from other elites in Europe, in East Asia, and most controversially in the Soviet Union.

The Week itself said of *The Times* editor, Geoffrey Dawson, that "...he is the unfortunate victim of a form of society ... which impresses deeply upon the consciousness and subconsciousness of its youthful authors a feeling amounting almost to awe in the presence of inherited wealth, inherited security", but *The Week* and its editor belonged to that world and benefited from information to which only that world was privy.[2]

Cockburn's *aperçu* on Dawson helps to explain why *The Week* was not only allowed to publish semi-official secrets but how it had access to such secrets. In the same *New Statesman* review Greene recalls that, "I once discussed with a former member of the French secret service the possibility — with the help of an old boys' network — of creating an international secret service which would publish all the information it obtained indiscriminately to all subscribers everywhere".[3] As Greene saw it, that project came to nothing, but that may have been because it was already a live endeavour in *The Week*.

Claud Cockburn was not the first journalist or even among the first wave of journalists to write and publish on subjects that the mainstream press was overlooking – that, after all, is the aim of every true journalist – but he was surely among the first to do so under such a limitless remit, especially at a time when the world was engaged in a power struggle between those who made it their business to control and manage information and those who sought to free it. People who grew up in the same school or joined the same club, or were indeed related by blood, took one or other approach, either ringing in or listening in to phone calls to ABBEY 1954, *The Week's* telephone number at 28 Victoria Street, SW1, or VICTORIA 1954, just down the road at number 24, calling from different rooms of the same corridor in government offices the world over. For Cockburn had been under official surveillance since 1924, when he and Greene travelled through Germany to 'study conditions' on visas provided by the German embassy in London.

1 Greene 1968.
2 *The Week*, No.166, June 17 1936.
3 Ibid.

By 1933, when he founded *The Week*, Cockburn's phone was being tapped, his letters opened and his every move followed and scrutinised, either by officers of the Special Branch (according to Watt, 1975) or agents of MI5, according to his son, Patrick, who went through all twenty-seven volumes of MI5 files on his father when they were opened at the Public Record Office in Kew, West London, in 2004.

> The MI5 files are packed with information, often absurdly detailed and compiled with immense labour by intelligence officers, policemen, informants and other agencies. Useless though this plodding accumulation of facts may have been for any practical purpose, it gives a unique portrait of Claud's life, which would have been impossible to emulate even if he and his friends had been meticulous diarists. No piece of trivia is too irrelevant, i.e. "It may be stated that Cockburn is a heavy drinker of whiskey. Observation continuing as circumstances permit."[4]

The Week is usually seen as the essential precursor to *Private Eye* magazine, but it was much more than that. Claud Cockburn knew the badlands of his country, and in exploring them, his weekly newsletter was a gadfly and an irritant to the powers-that-be. *The Week* served as a nagging reminder to Cockburn's former employers, *The Times* of London and its equivalents in New York, Tokyo, Paris and Berlin of the direction the Fourth Estate could have taken had it not, in the British case (but not uniquely), become so closely allied with evolving circles to the right of the British government and, in particular, the Foreign Office in the first half of the 20th century. When Cockburn set up shop on the top floor at 28 Victoria Street, SW1, just close enough to Whitehall to circumvent telephone taps and arrange meetings, he was still a short cab ride from Fleet Street.

There is a strong biographical foundation to the defiance and sheer publishing nerve of *The Week*, and to such classic Cockburnisms as "Never believe anything until it has been officially denied". In 1908, Claud's father, Henry Cockburn (1859-1927) had sacrificed his career in protest against official injustice emanating from Edward Grey's Foreign Office.

Claud was born in Beijing in 1904 while his father, who had been posted British Vice-Consul to Chonqing, was involved in negotiations in the Chinese capital alongside Sir James Mackay, resulting in the Mackay Treaty, an early precursor of the abandonment of British extraterritoriality in China. In 1905, the Cockburn family moved to Seoul, where Henry was appointed Consul-General, at the beginning of the Japanese protectorate that would morph into full annexation in 1910, Korea being, in effect, payback to the Japanese for picking Britain's East Asian chestnuts out of the fire in their war against Russia in 1904-05.

Intent on countering Japanese control of Korea, a British journalist, E.T. Bethell, founded English- and Korean-language newspapers in Seoul in 1906, challenging Japanese intentions and exposing British *realpolitik* there, in his *Korea Daily News* and the *Daehan Maeil Sinbo*, edited by Bethell's colleague, Yang Ki-tak. In 1908, both newspapers had raised Japanese ire to boiling point, Yang had been imprisoned and tortured, while Bethell had been imprisoned, released and now faced legal proceedings, which Henry Cockburn, on orders from Whitehall, had to judge, under considerable pressure from the office of the Japanese Resident-General. In fear for his life, Yang escaped prison and took refuge in the *Korea Daily News* building, which was protected by British ownership and a treaty with Britain. Under pressure from Whitehall, Henry Cockburn did eventually hand Yang over to the Japanese, but he then resigned as Consul-General in protest against his own government's policies in Korea.

Following the assassination of Resident-General Itō Hirobumi in October 1909, Japan went on to the full annexation of Korea in the summer of 1910. The Korean vernacular press was thereafter under Japanese control until the defeat of 1945. *The Seoul Press*, 1907-1937, published by the offices of the Resident-General, and then by the Governor-General (Sōtoku) of Korea, carried the Japanese version of

4 Cockburn, Patrick, "My Father, Claud Cockburn, the MI5 Suspect", June 2005, in *Counterpunch*.

the stifling of dissent, directed from Tokyo and Whitehall in the springtime of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, for which Bethell, Yang, and the *Korea Daily News* constituted a considerable problem.[5] Claud Cockburn was three years old when his father sacrificed his career on the altar of Korean independence and appeasement to a catch-up colonialist bully. As his grandson has described it, Henry's decision must have seemed reckless at the time, especially to those only too willing to step into Henry's shoes, but it made Henry Cockburn, alongside Ernest Bethell (Bae Seol) and Yang Ki-tak national heroes who are still memorialised in Korea's continuing struggle for national integrity.[6]

Greene's 1968 review also invited consideration of an interesting juxtaposition: "…how odd that England in that decade contained two genuinely revolutionary figures who, not knowing each other, fought on the same side with methods wholly contradictory — Claud Cockburn, the mask remover, and Kim Philby, the mask wearer".[7]

Which raises the question, on what side did Cockburn the unmasking journalist and Philby, the masked spy, fight? That they were both on the side of revolutionary socialism, and that Philby was well protected by Stalin's apparatus, is less clear when it comes to Cockburn. Certainly, discussion of Stalin in *The Week* is more muted than criticism and revelation of just about everything and everyone else then in power, but it has to be borne in mind that the Soviet Union was effectively Britain's ally from the time of Hitler's launch of Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, although Stalin did not become 'Uncle Joe' in British folk memory until the announcement of the 'Big Three' pact - Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States - following Churchill's secret mission to Moscow in August 1942. On August 16 of that year, Stalin and Churchill released a joint statement concluding that the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States of America would fight Nazi Germany until "the complete destruction of Hitlerism and any similar tyranny has been achieved".[8]

Returning to Patrick Cockburn's view, following a visit to the much smaller (compared to MI5) files on his father in the Comintern archives in the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History in Moscow, Patrick Cockburn found that his father's contributions to the Comintern cause, writing in the *Daily Worker* as Frank Pitcairn, were appreciated but considered erratic. Reading a report that in one *Daily Worker* article Claud had cut part of a 1936 interview Stalin had given to Roy Howard (1883-1964) of Scripps-Howard and UPI, Patrick Cockburn detected 'the edgy tone of inquisitors looking for heretics in their ranks'.[9] What said inquisitors thought of *The Week* is not known -

> "We know him from the negative point of view," wrote a Comintern official in Moscow, called Bilov, in a secret memo on Claud written on 25 May 1937. These were ominous words at a moment when the great purges were gathering steam across the Soviet Union and far smaller or non-existent errors had fatal results for their supposed perpetrators. Bilov goes on to explain that "in the middle of 1936 we suggested to the English Communist Party to sack Cockburn from the senior editorial management as one of the people responsible for the systematic appearance of different types of 'mistakes' of a purely provocative character on the pages of the *Daily Worker*."[10]

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5 The Seoul Press Online, Brill Publishers, Leiden.

6 The standard authority on Bethell, Yang Ki-tak, the Korea Daily News and the Daehan Maeil Sinbo is Chong, Chin-Sok. whose study *The Korean Problem in Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1904-1910* (Seoul, Nanam, 1987) is forthcoming in a revised edition ed. O'Connor, Peter from Brill Publishers, Leiden.

7 Ibid.

8 Greenberg 2020.

9 Patrick Cockburn 2005, ibid.

10 Patrick Cockburn 2005, ibid.

- but the odds on Comintern officials persuading the management of *The Week* to dispense with the services of its only editorial employee must have seemed impossibly long, even to the most fervent *apparatchik*.

There is considerable variation in contemporary estimates of Claud Cockburn and *The Week's* significance or influence. Gordon Martel's selection from the journals of A.L. Kennedy, a diplomat manqué who found himself as an influential Leader writer for *The Times* from 1919-1946, covers the daily musings and engagements of a spectacular appeaser who outdid even his own editor, Geoffrey Dawson's notorious reluctance to warn of the dangers posed not only by Hitler, but by expansionist Japan and Italy. Kennedy's Ribbentrop comesup ('Hitler ... cd. not have chosen a better man'), as does Vansittart, frequently, for his failings in seeing the Nazi threat and The Times as 'A minor national disaster'.[11] And yet there is no mention of *The Week* or of Cockburn in the selections from Kennedy's journals for this important volume. Given Neville Chamberlain's unusually friendly attitude to the press, his positions and those of *The Times* on disarmament and on the threats posed by European and Asian fascism must have seemed as inexplicable to a significant minority as they did to Cockburn himself. *The Week*'s unremitting campaign against appeasement did not endear it to either party, but subscriptions continued to climb.

[SUPPRESSED BY GOVERNMENT ORDER]
No......400......

46

THE WEEK

January 15th, 1941.

26 VICTORIA STREET,
LONDON, S.W.1

TELEPHONE:
ABBEY 1954

As one casualty of Churchill's long journey to an agreement with Stalin, *The Week* was suspended from issue No.400 of 15 January 1941 until No.1 (new series) of 23 October 1942. Issue No.400 ran an article pointing to a strong perception among ordinary Irish people that the recent Dublin aerial bombings had not a German but a British origin, possibly as part of an attempt by Churchill to force retention of Irish ports for the British war effort, among other rumours. That in his first (1937-48) Cabinet as Taoiseach Éamon de Valera had just declared the IRA an illegal organisation points to an even less likely culprit. *The Week*'s political sympathies may well have been another factor in the suspension. Churchill was deeply resentful of Irish neutrality, but it is highly unlikely that even if he could, he would have arranged the aerial bombing of Belfast as well as that of Dublin, but the suggestion that he had any hand in the incident may have been enough to bring about the suspension.

The Week resumed publication on 23 October 1942, two months after Churchill had engineered the 'Big Three' Pact with the Soviet Union and the United States. Stalin was now 'Uncle Joe', a friend to Britain, and the Soviet Union a British ally against 'Hitlerism'. Stalin's new ally set the most Marxist editor in Britain and his newsletter back into contention, and publication and subscriptions resumed from new premises at 21 Bloomsbury Way, WC1, telephone CHANCERY 6565.

The Week had lost none of its fire, but then its chief source never lost the power of his convictions. Cockburn's most durable and reliable informant, Sir Robert Vansittart, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office,[12] was an intimate witness to Churchill's nurturing of Ivan Maisky, the Soviet

11 Jabara 2002.
12 Watt, 2004, pp.276-286.

ambassador to London from 1932-1943. In the wake of Operation Barbarossa, Vansittart felt that it would be immoral for Britain to sacrifice Soviet territory to Hitler's land-grab despite the respite Barbarossa promised on the Western front.[13]

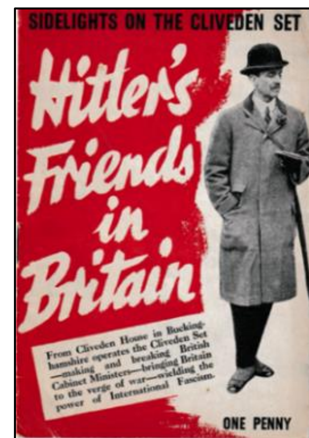
At private dinners with Maisky in town, at Chertwell, and in formal exchanges, Churchill redressed the fervent anti-communism of his earlier years in a long game that accommodated Stalin in order to form an effective opposition to Nazi Germany. Vansittart was as frequent a witness to these exchanges as he was to the many conversations and undertakings in high places that duly went the way of *The Week*.

Vansittart's support for *The Week* was principled and consistent: he distrusted Hitler and the Nazis and was absolutely opposed to appeasement. In this he was at one with Cockburn, and at odds with powerful circles in the upper echelons of British society determined to strike a deal with Germany rather than go to war yet again. Two hubs of appeasement were frequent targets of *The Week*: Cockburn's old employer, *The Times* and its editor Geoffrey Dawson, and Dawson's employer, Lord Astor, and the circle of Astor and his wife Nancy's friends who gathered at his country house, Cliveden, in Taplow, Buckinghamshire, upon whom Cockburn bestowed the collective epithet 'the Cliveden Set', a term so ingrained in the conversation of the day that Cockburn satirised his own coinage.[14]

> (In this connexion it is only necessary to recall the imaginary power which the German Government imagined itself to exert on British politics through the imaginary Cliveden Set, which -- as several million people have since been informed by way of articles and other communications from those who were imagined to belong to that Set -- was simply a product of the imagination of the Editor of THE WEEK.

Barely imaginable communities: issue No.314, May 10, 1939

Writing as Frank Pitcairn, Cockburn was a frequent contributor to the *Daily Worker*, and he could well have been the author of *Hitler's Friends in Britain*, a penny pamphlet published by the Communist Party of Great Britain in March 1938, with a first run of 10,000 reprinted the following March - had it been better written. Whatever the case, the popularity of this little pamphlet indicates the currency of Cockburn's phrase in the hothouse atmosphere of the late 1930s.



In March 1963, the term was revived by *Private Eye* magazine in a detailed summary of what was then known and often guessed of the Profumo Affair, in which a central figure, the osteopath Dr Stephen Ward, was renting a riverside cottage and holding parties at Cliveden.

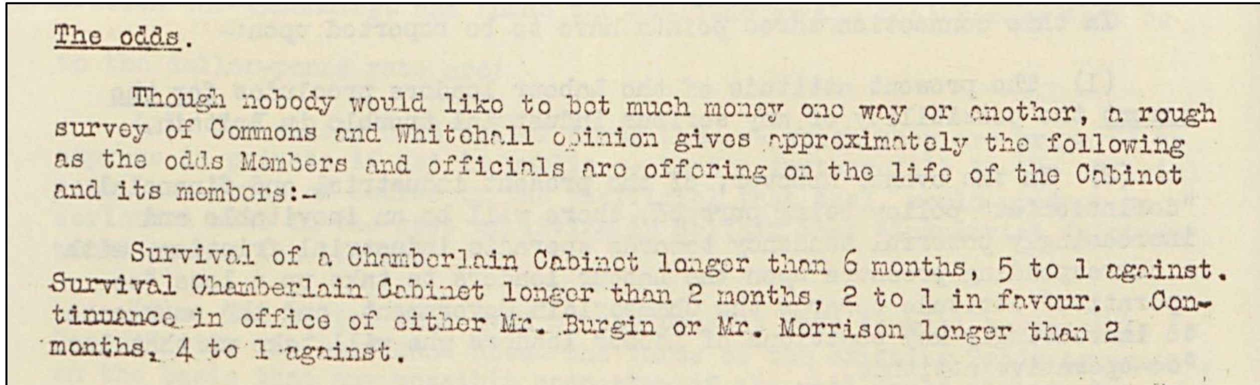
Two other appeasing *bêtes noires* of *The Week* were the press lords Viscount Rothermere of the *Daily Mail* and Lord Beaverbrook of the *Daily Express*.[15] As a second cousin of Evelyn Waugh, whose novel *Scoop* (1938) satirised the ignorance and vulgarity of British press lords, most notably in the character of Lord Copper, a composite of Alfred Harmsworth, Lord Northcliffe (1865-1922) and Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook (1879-1964), Cockburn had considerable form both in his pedigree and in his contempt for the best known newspaper publishers of his day,

13 Cowling 1975, p.156.

14 Goldman, 1972.

15 See *The Week* No.36, November 29 1933, on Beaverbrook and 'the thick reek of the Victorian Settlers' scandal'.

Beyond questions of influence and access lies Cockburn's mastery of his information and his ability to marshal it coherently and effectively. In September 1939, someone at large in Whitehall or Parliament was running a book on the survival chances of the current Chamberlain Cabinet. In this cheerful aside, Cockburn surveys the odds.


The odds.

Though nobody would like to bet much money one way or another, a rough survey of Commons and Whitehall opinion gives approximately the following as the odds Members and officials are offering on the life of the Cabinet and its members:-

Survival of a Chamberlain Cabinet longer than 6 months, 5 to 1 against. Survival Chamberlain Cabinet longer than 2 months, 2 to 1 in favour. Continuance in office of either Mr. Burgin or Mr. Morrison longer than 2 months, 4 to 1 against.

Parliament takes a punt: issue No.334, September 27 1939

Although the premature end to Henry Cockburn's career must have been something of a family tragedy, for his son, growing up with this unhappy experience of the highways and byways of the Anglo-Japanese relationship, during an alliance that ended when Cockburn was on his way up to Keble College, Oxford, must have helped Cockburn develop an acuity of interpretation that would have eluded more conventionally finished but less cosmopolitan readers of the political landscape.

Issue No.259, April 13, 1938 of *The Week* ran a story on a Japanese initiative to 'bring about a conclusion of the China Incident'. As *The Week* had it, a series of checks and outright defeats suffered by Japanese troops in the China quagmire brought Ishii Kikujirō (1866-1945) to the Japanese embassy in London as an unofficial emissary of Tokyo.

The background to this story, which Cockburn would have grown up with, was that in November 1917, this same Ishii had been instrumental in bringing about the Lansing-Ishii Agreement during a meeting with US Secretary of State Robert Lansing, in which Lansing set down on paper a degree of recognition that Japan's "propinquity" to China meant that Japan had some right to special interests in China – although Lansing's statement did not grant that Japan's interests could in any way diminish China's territorial integrity. Ishii and the Japanese government had stretched the significance of this agreement to breaking point during the years of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-22. It had since been considerably diluted by the abrogation of the Alliance and its replacement by the Nine-Power agreement signed off at the Washington Conference of 1921-22. Now here was Ishii in London with a Report on the situation in China putting forward the most attractive – to British ears – feature of Japan's mission in China, Japan's declared anti-Communist mission there, as *The Week* reported:

> The British government and the City of London "fully understands Japan's position in the Far East and are sympathetic towards Japan's determination to remove the menace of Bolshevism." There followed a long exposé of what the British would understand by "a realistic policy" in the Far East… The aim, both of the propaganda that will be conducted in Chunqing [Chonqing], and of course London, and of the negotiations with the Japanese, will ultimately involve in fact a partition of China - - on the basis of an "understanding", curiously parallel to the attempted British policy in Spain, that the interests of British capital are to be "respected" by the invader in the conquered territories.

In short, Ishii's offer was that if Japan were to be given a free hand in China, or the British were to 'help out' a little, a century of considerable British commercial investment there, particularly in Shanghai, would be protected from the depredations of the Communist Party of China by Japanese military might. But if Japanese incursions were to be resisted, the Chinese Communist cause would be reinforced and British commercial interests endangered.

Even this late in the 1930s, a significant consensus in Whitehall and Washington alike, and among Western settler communities and journalists in East Asia did see Communism as a far greater threat to peace than Japanese incursions in China. Part of this rested on a blinkered perception of Japanese military capabilities, as will be seen.

During a period when both Britain and the US were desperately short of Japan experts, and would remain so until both established language training programmes following Pearl Harbor, *The Week*'s analysis shows a thoroughness unusual for its time. Ishii Kikujirō had form in persuading Western governments to relax their vigilance on Japan's pursuit of what was known in Tokyo as the 'Asian Monroe Doctrine' and Cockburn here illustrates the reach and reliability of *The Week*'s network of informants and analysts.

Issue No.301 of February 8 1939 is even more prescient, with a report headed 'Ten Million Chinese' referring to a despatch to Russian newspapers 'from a man who had just returned to Chunqing [Chonqing] after a tour of far western China where he visited the "new" army now in training.' These reports in the Russian press spoke of ten million men experiencing thorough and extensive training over a huge area of camps and villages. This was one of many *Week* stories on the progress of Mao Zedong's and the Communist Party of China's martial preparations in Yan'an in northern Shaanxi, moulding party members, troops and the peasantry to a Communist orthodoxy, with Mao taking advice and advisors direct from Moscow.

"Sensation"

The news -- which for some reason has received virtually no notice in the British press -- has gone off like a depth charge among the "Far Eastern experts" in Tokyo, London, Washington and Paris.

Not only because of what is said, but because of its source, which is a sufficient guarantee that this is no cock-and-bull "sensation", and because of its implications, which are that an enormous armament is already in being in western China, and finally because the Russians now feel themselves

Bamboozling the experts: No.301, February 8 1939.

Within three months of this report, Japan's Kwantung Army (Kantō-gun) would clash with Mongolian then Soviet forces at Nomonhan on the border of Japan's puppet state, Manchukuo where, between May-August 1939 Japanese forces suffered serious defeats with heavy losses. Basking in the warmth of its prescience, *The Week* referred subscribers back to issue No.301, where it wondered rhetorically why so little attention had been drawn to the growing effectiveness of Sino-Russian cooperation.

The conclusion of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact led to a settlement in September and a series of diplomatic missteps by Japan in 1940, most notably by Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yōsuke (1880-1946), pursuing a strong pro-Axis stance and committing Japan to Germany, Italy and the non-aggression pact with the Soviets, and opposing all negotiations with the US. *Week* subscribers were kept well-informed during the run-up to this swirl of changing alliances until the suspension of January 1941, but its suspension kept subscribers in the dark during the crucial period from the launch of Operation

Barbarossa and Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt's eventual riposte with the 'Big Three' Alliance of August 1942, resuming in late October.

Unlike just about every military expert from Sandhurst to Westpoint to Singapore, *The Week* took Japan and the Japanese threat to peace in East Asia seriously, but in this Cockburn and his group of informants were very much among the small battalions because, as Antony Best has pointed out,

> …from the time of the Great War onwards, British policy in East Asia was characterized by a profound ambivalence about Japan and especially its potential threat to British interests. This arose because the policy makers within Whitehall held a double-sided image of Japan. On the one hand it was portrayed as a nation bent on regional domination, but on the other was seen as a backward power that lacked the resources necessary to achieve its goals. This dual image had its foundations in the Foreign Office's day-to-day experience of Japanese diplomacy and the observations made by the embassy in Tokyo about the political, economic and social life of Japan. In addition, it was influenced by commonly held racial assumptions about the inability of non-white nations to confront the modern Western states. The effect of this dual image was that Britain did not seek Japan's friendship, but at the same time did not view it as an irreconcilable enemy. This in turn helps to explain why Britain was prepared to see the end of the alliance in 1921, why it prevaricated about appeasing Japan in the 1930s, and finally why it underestimated the Japanese threat in 1940–41.[16]

The American and the British mainstream press, and policy makers in Whitehall and Washington were as blinkered in their understanding of Japan as they were in the peculiar mixture of fear and admiration they and their owners displayed towards Hitler's Germany. None of *The Week*'s contemporaries did much to alter the duality that Best identifies above, partly because their editorial line was so firmly, even inevitably, drawn within the geopolitical parameters of the day, but largely because they did not want, as many of their readers and constituents did not want to consider the consequences of looking at the situation head-on. Given Chamberlain's unusual willingness to play up to the contemporary press, the relationship between Downing Street and Fleet Street became at its height very like a *folie à deux*.

Cockburn's instinctive beeline to the heart of the matter, his ability to cut through the chatter (without excluding it) is what makes *The Week* so special. Cockburn provides all the spiciest pieces of the contemporary conversation, and then gives the longer view with his own take on events informed by innumerable conversations, a great deal of reading and the fruit of many friendships as much as by his own instinct for what was really going on. In so many ways, not simply because of shared political sympathies but because they had both lived at the heart of so many of the events they describe, Claud Cockburn had much in common with Eric Hobsbawm, whose powers of synthesis he may have envied – although anyone reading, for example, *In Time of Trouble* (1957) or *Crossing the Line* (1959) can see that Cockburn had synthesis in spades.

In his introduction to the 1985 reprint of Patricia Cockburn's *The Years of The Week*, Richard Ingrams, the second editor of *Private Eye*, writes about Claud Cockburn's total absence of 'side', in other words, that he was the same to everyone, and never the Grand Old Man. Expanding on this, Ingrams writes about Cockburn's appetite for going against the general consensus on an issue or a person of the day. Cockburn's instinctive suspicion of consensus lies at the core of his own and therefore *The W*eek's most valuable contribution to our understanding of what Cockburn himself called 'the Devil's Decade' and after.

16 Best 2002: pp.3–4.

Private Eye was inspired by *The Week* and Ingrams by Cockburn's example, as in his 1985 *Introduction* he remembers realising that 'one man writing and printing his own paper in a garret … It seemed to me the ideal career.'[17] He has warm recollections of Claud Cockburn's storytelling although of course Cockburn built up a considerable repertoire over the years and probably repeated himself, as we all do. But this appetite for a story and the ability to animate and overlay it with his own arch and astute perceptions must also lie at the heart of *The Week*, as it did at Ingrams' *Private Eye* and still does today.

As an office boy and successor to Andrew Cockburn at *Private Eye* through most of 1968, I was on the premises at 22 Greek Street in Soho when Claud Cockburn came over from Ireland to take up the guest editorship of the magazine. Until then, my awareness of our temporary boss had been confined to taking down copy when he called from a telephone box in Youghal, Co. Cork, his tobacco-laden rasp interrupted by the clunk of heavy coins going into the machine.

When Claud Cockburn visited the *Eye* sometime in the afternoon of a quiet day in I think the autumn of 1968, he took possession of an armchair in the main room and immediately began talking. I think my secret crush, the ineffably cool receptionist, Diana, whose boyfriend had just made an album called *Dr Dunbar's Prescription*, referring to a very generous GP, was there. So was Barry Fantoni. Ingrams would not have missed his mentor's arrival, although he was technically on holiday in Berkshire. Tony Rushton, the layout man and collector of Hockney prints, put down his scalpel. Dave Cash, the accountant who kept my salary down to £11.00 a week, deserted his adding machine. Tariq Ali, a regular visitor, was probably there. Paul Foot, for whom I worked directly in the *Footnotes* section, the *Eye*'s closest equivalent to Cockburn's own politics, was there too when Claud, still in his raincoat, sipping from a hip flask, his chequered hat just about keeping up with his head, lighting one cigarette from the end of another, started telling stories that were all without exception so absorbing, intriguing and amusing that it was early evening before the question of the content of the next issue was introduced and all adjourned down the street to the *Coach and Horses* and the hair-trigger *bonhomie* of its legendary proprietor, Norman Balon, to think it over.

For *The Week* is in essence a collection of stories picked from the wreckage of a very strange and awful time, dusted off and told with a cheerful defiance that must have given hope as well as a great deal of untilled information to its subscribers. The cheek, the wit and the sheer heart of these stories stays undimmed in this new edition of *The Week*, which I hope would have earned the approval of its author and I know would not have been possible without the generosity of his family.

Tokyo, March 2021.

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17 Ingrams, 1985, p. 4.

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