

Robert Bruce Lockhart 02.09.1887 – 27.02.1970



Robert Bruce Lockhart, the eldest of the five sons of Robert Bruce Lockhart, headmaster of Spier's School, Beith and his wife, Florence Stuart, was born in Anstruther on 2nd September 1887. He went to school at Fettes and like his fictional schoolmate, James Bond, his life might have been the stuff of fiction. His son Robin in fact wrote the book *Reilly Ace of Spies*, later to be a television film, about Robert's friend and colleague Sidney Reilly.

On leaving school he was sent by his family to study in Berlin and Paris, which encouraged his lifelong interest in travel and the study of languages.

In 1909 Lockhart went to Malaya to become a rubber planter. He fell in love with a young Malay princess called Amai. The relationship created so much local hostility it resulted in death threats and he was eventually "smuggled out of Malaya and forced to abandon his lover to an uncertain fate". He returned to London where he joined the civil service and in 1912 was appointed as Vice-Consul in Moscow.

After the outbreak of World War One, Lockhart returned to Russia and attempted to describe the different political groups that were fighting for power. He was recalled to London just before the Russian Revolution, when he gave a briefing to George V.

Bruce Lockhart returned to Russia in January 1918 as Head of Special Mission to the Soviet Government with the rank of acting British Consul-General in Moscow. He also had responsibility for the activities of British spies including Sidney Reilly. The main objective of this group was to overthrow the Bolshevik government. He had a meeting with Berzin, a senior intelligence agent based in the French Embassy. He was convinced that Berzin was genuine in his desire to overthrow the Bolsheviks and was willing to put up some of the money needed.

On 31st August 1918, Dora Kaplan attempted to assassinate Lenin. It was claimed that this was part of the British conspiracy to overthrow the Bolshevik government and orders were issued to round up the agents based in the British Embassy. Robert Bruce Lockhart was woken by a rough voice ordering him out of bed and was taken to Lubyanka Prison.

On 2nd October 1918, the British government arranged for Lockhart to be exchanged for captive Soviet officials. He worked for the Foreign Office until 1922 when he decided to start a new career in banking. His book, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, was published in 1932. During the Second World War Lockhart served as Director-General of the Political Warfare Executive. He died on 27th February 1970.