



# Odd People: Hunting Spies in the First World War (Dialogue Espionage Classics)

*Basil Thomson*

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First World War espionage was a fascinating and dangerous affair, spawning widespread paranoia in its clandestine wake. The hysteria of the age, stoked by those within the British establishment who sought to manipulate popular panic, meant there was no shortage of suspects. Exaggerated claims were rife: some 80,000 Germans were supposedly hidden all over Britain, just waiting for an impending (and imagined) invasion. No one could be trusted... Against this backdrop, as head of Scotland Yard's Criminal Investigation Department, it was Basil Thomson's responsibility to hunt, arrest and interrogate the potential German spies identified by the nascent British intelligence services. Thomson's story is an extraordinary compendium of sleuthing and secrets from a real-life Sherlock Holmes, following the trails of the many specimens he tracked, including the famous dancer, courtesan and spy, Mata Hari. Yet his activities gained him enemies, as did his criticism of British intelligence, his ambition to control MI5 and his efforts to root out left-wing revolutionaries - which would ultimately prove to be the undoing of his career. *Odd People* is the insightful and wittily observed account of Thomson's incomparably exciting job, offering us a rare glimpse into the dizzying world of spies and the mind of the detective charged with foiling their elaborate plots. The *Dialogue Espionage Classics* series began in 2010 with the purpose of bringing back classic out-of-print spy stories that should never be forgotten. From the Great War to the Cold War, from the French Resistance to the Cambridge Five, from Special Operations to Bletchley Park, this fascinating spy history series includes some of the best military, espionage and adventure stories ever told.

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