

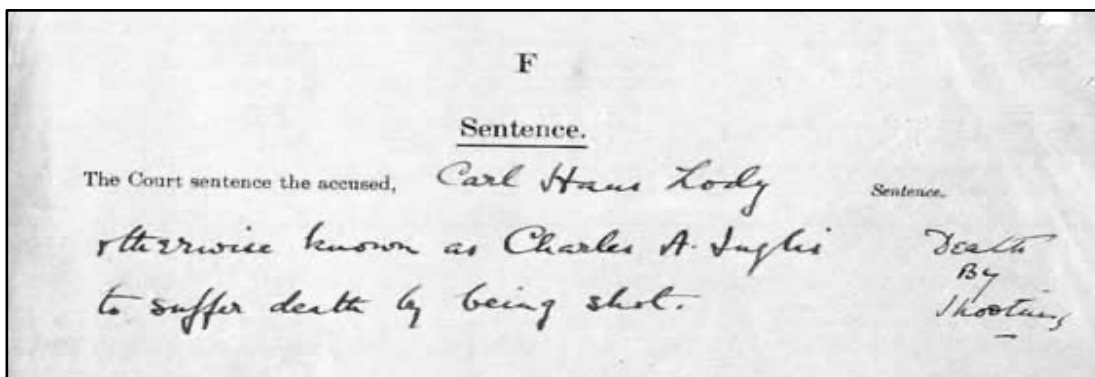
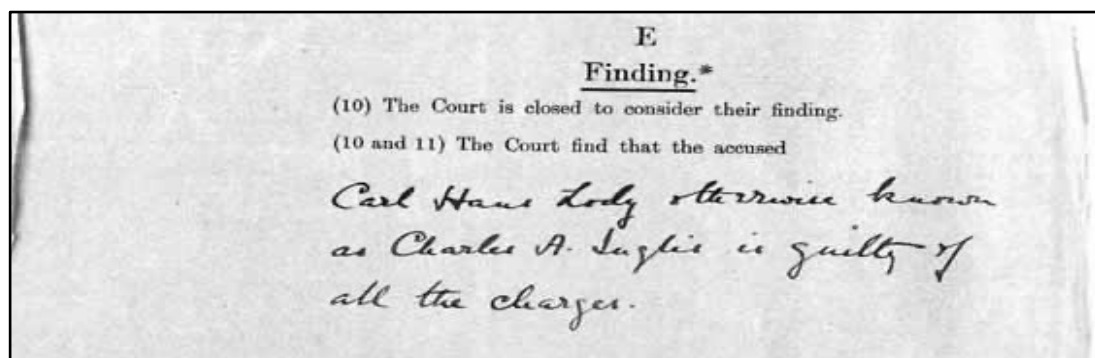
Espionage and Executions in two World Wars

In pre-First World War Britain, the growing military threat of Germany created a climate in which popular novels about espionage thrived. Writers such as Erskine Childers (1870-1922), author of *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) in which two heroes stumble across a German plan to invade England and although he served with the British Army in the First World War, he later joined the IRA and was executed by firing squad in Dublin in 1922, and William le Queux (1864-1927) a British Spy novelist and author of such books as "The Invasion of 1910 (in 1906) and German Spies in England – An exposure (1915) which depicted a sophisticated German Intelligence network laying the foundation for an invasion of Britain.

The truth was more prosaic. A small number of spies employed by the German navy were active in pre-war Britain. But between August 1911 and July 1914, the War Office's counter-espionage department (known today as MI5) arrested just ten suspects. Britain's own attempts to establish a spy network in Germany met with similarly little success. The triumph - even in the highest government circles - of journalistic fantasy over mundane reality had immediate repercussions when war broke out in August 1914. An unprecedented 'spy mania' gripped Britain. Although 21 real German spies were arrested on 4 August, thousands of imaginary acts of espionage were reported to credulous police and military authorities.

Threat of undercover German Spies - Trial of Carl Hans Lody

The German naval reserve officer Carl Hans Lody was the first spy to be executed in Britain during the First World War. Found guilty of all counts against him, he was shot at the Tower of London on 6 November 1914



In reality, the wartime operations of German espionage in Britain under Gustav Steinhauer were limited and largely unsuccessful. Between August 1914 and September 1917, only 31 German spies were arrested on British soil, 19 of whom were sentenced to death and a further 10 imprisoned. Enemy spy activity thereafter was so negligible that no further espionage trials took place during the war. Many of the men recruited by the Germans for intelligence operations were untrained and inept amateurs. As in the case of Lody, the first wartime German spy to be executed in Britain. Viewed even by his captors as a decent and patriotic man, Lody left a trail of clues from his intelligence-gathering operations in Britain during August and September and was arrested in Ireland on 2 October 1914.

Most of the information that he sent to his superiors - such as the telegram on 4 September describing how Russian troops had apparently been seen marching from Aberdeen to the south of England - was useless. Many of his espionage attempts had, in fact, been amateurish and inaccurate.

In November 1914, Carl Lody became the first person for more than 150 years to be executed in the Tower

