

## Letters

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### We did it

Referring to the controversy surrounding the death of Patrice Lumumba in 1960, Bernard Porter quotes Calder Walton's conclusion: 'The question remains whether British plots to assassinate Lumumba ... ever amounted to anything. At present, we do not know' (*LRB*, 21 March). Actually, in this particular case, I can report that we do. It so happens that I was having a cup of tea with Daphne Park – we were colleagues from opposite sides of the Lords – a few months before she died in March 2010. She had been consul and first secretary in Leopoldville, now Kinshasa, from 1959 to 1961, which in practice (this was subsequently acknowledged) meant head of MI6 there. I mentioned the uproar surrounding Lumumba's abduction and murder, and recalled the theory that MI6 might have had something to do with it. 'We did,' she replied, 'I organised it.'

We went on to discuss her contention that Lumumba would have handed over the whole lot to the Russians: the high-value Katangese uranium deposits as well as the diamonds and other important minerals largely located in the secessionist eastern state of Katanga. Against that, I put the point that I didn't see how suspicion of Western involvement and of our motivation for Balkanising their country would be a happy augury for the new republic's peaceful development.

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