

# The Hamburg mafia and 'Irangate' deals

by Mark Burdman

On Aug. 24, the chairman of Britain's Lonrho conglomerate, former Tory parliamentarian Sir Edward Du Cann, issued a call for Britain to take the lead in opening friendly ties to Iran and to distance itself from U.S. military actions in the Gulf. Du Cann was quoted in the Aug. 25 *Daily Mail*: "You only have to be in Iran for a few hours to appreciate the popularity of the ruling Shi'ite Muslim regime. Its leadership may strike us in the West as, at best, eccentric and, at worst, fanatic, but the odds are that it is here to stay. The lesson is clear. We have to come to terms with it."

In Iran "for a few hours"? Du Cann, in the company of Lonrho's chief executive, Tiny Rowland, had been in Iran, for at least three days, sometime during mid-August. While this voyage is shrouded in mystery, all evidence points to it ushering in a new phase in Western commercial deals with Iran, as blackmail payment for hostages taken by Iranian terrorist assets throughout the Middle East.

Rowland would, then, be the new "back channel" for deals with Iran, and he is somebody well-equipped and well-connected for the job. He is an asset of a powerful faction of the British oligarchy, having been given his first promotions in Lonrho, during the 1960s, by Mr. Angus Ogilvy, a member of the British Royal Family.

At the same time, Rowland has solid ties to the U.S. State Department, to the U.S. branch of the Trilateral Commission, and to the Israeli Mossad. In Israel, he maintains intimate ties with Irangate protagonist David Kimche, former director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, dating from the days when Kimche was Mossad station chief in Africa and Rowland was building his Africa business empire.

But what most comes into play in the recent Rowland-Du Cann diplomacy, is what is becoming known as "The Hamburg Connection" to Irangate.

In the Tower Commission report on Irangate, one point of emphasis, is the role played by Hamburg in some of the early wheeling-and-dealing that led to the complex of Iran-Israel-U.S. arms deals. Before there was an "Irangate," *EIR* had pointed to Hamburg as a key point of support for the Khomeini coup, because of the close ties of Hamburg Mosque head Ayatollah Beheshti to the inner circles of Hamburg freemasonry. That Hamburg mosque, today, is a center for Iranian terror networks in Europe.

Reliable reports are that Rowland is seeking to buy a

temporarily out-of-use Mobil Oil refinery in Wilhelmshaven, in northern Germany, in order to expedite the refining and marketing of Iranian oil in Europe. Reportedly Rowland's partner in these negotiations is the Hamburg-based Marimpex company, a subsidiary of which, German Oil, had in the past been refining Iranian oil.

At the same time, the complex of institutions in Hamburg that deals with the Middle East/Gulf, is in full mobilization to open negotiations with the Khomeini regime. A central role is being played in this by the Deutsche Orient Institut of Hamburg, headed by Prof. Udo Steinbach, adviser to West Germany's Iran-allied Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. Steinbach has revealed that, in the first half of 1986, he was deeply involved in policy probes toward Iran, to some extent on behalf of U.S. interests. All was going quite well, he says, until Irangate struck. Now, however, that process is being revived, with the aim of West Germany establishing itself as the "arbiter" for the West with Iran.

Steinbach is creating a new "German-Iranian roundtable." On Aug. 31, at the offices of the Hamburg-based German-Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Steinbach was to present his ideas before an audience including the West German ambassador to Teheran, Jens Petersen. On Oct. 21, he will make another presentation at the Hamburg "Haus Rissen" think tank at a conference co-sponsored by the Deutsche Orient Institut and the Hamburg-based Near and Middle East Association.

Steinbach and the Institut are among the hands and feet of "The Hamburg Trust," the complex of banking, trading, and shipping families who have established an international power base in this centuries-old port city.

The *primus inter pares* of these families is the Warburgs, whose financial base, today, is in the merchant bank Warburg, Brinckmann and Wirtz. The Brinckmann scion, Christian Brinckmann, is the president of the German-Iranian Chamber of Commerce, an institution which his father founded in the 1930s.

Under the Warburgs, one finds other families like the Toepfers (key in commodity trading, grain, shipping, banking), the Muenchmeyers (banking, centered in the scandal-ridden Muenchmeyer, Schroeder and Hengst Bank), and others.

Aside from short-term business deals, Tiny Rowland has solid Hamburg connections. Lonrho wholly owns the Hamburg-based Kuehne and Nagel freight-transport company, which is one of the companies which funds and supports the work of the Near and Middle East Association.

An intriguing point is that "Rowland" is not his real name. Tiny was born in Germany. His original name was "Fuhrhop." One London source reports to *EIR* that there is a persistent rumor in Britain, that the 70-year-old Rowland was a Nazi sympathizer during World War II. That would certainly help explain the great sympathy felt by Du Cann and himself for the "popularity" of the Nazi-like Khomeini regime.