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New Books on Politics: A Special Feature

Kazin on Eisenhower's Memoirs

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Drawings by Saul Steinberg and David Levine

Secret Agent U-2**The Craft of Intelligence**

by Allen Dulles.

Harper, 277 pp., \$4.95

Malcolm Muggeridge

The Brothers Dulles might well, one feels, like the Brothers Karamazov, provide the subject for a novel of our time. When we consider them as non-fiction, however, we have to take account of the historical fatality whereby one of them, Foster, became Secretary of State under a President only too content to entrust him with the shaping and execution of American foreign policy, and the other, Allen, took over the direction of the Central Intelligence Agency at a time of intensified cold war when its operations were commonly regarded as having crucial importance. The two of them, indeed, were key figures in what Pravda still likes to call American ruling circles. Foster, mercifully from a reviewer's point of view, did not live to write his memoirs; Allen, having now been induc-

ed to retire, has found time to record his impressions of the C.I.A., as well as of earlier experiences in the field of Intelligence.

There is no reason to suppose that, as is common enough among eminent contemporary personages, he has employed a ghost. Everything suggests that *The Craft of Intelligence* is his own unaided work. The Dulles prose style, like the Dulles style of oratory, is quite unmistakable. It has about it a kind of passionate ordinariness reminiscent of those forms of dementia which express themselves, not in howling and incoherence, but rather in an icily terrifying calm and banality. The Hebrew prophets, I should suppose, were tiresome enough, but at least their wild appearance and words matched their prophetic role. Supposing their ferocious admonitions had been proclaimed in the accents and the attire of a Rotary get-together! Then, surely, it would not have been enough to drop them, like Jeremiah, down a deep well; to ensure their extinction, a large stone would have had to be dropped in after them.

Mr. Allen Dulles has witnessed, and personally participated in, the stupendous growth in American Intelligence activities, from nothing to the present

vast, imposing, and variegated edifice. No one knows what it costs the American Exchequer, but certainly a great deal. Some idea of its range is given by Mr. Dulles when he mentions, in passing, how "some good work of field collection in Arizona" pointed to the imminence of a *coup d'état* in Iraq. One knew, of course, that the C.I.A. men were thick on the ground in places like Laos and Afghanistan; one would expect to rub shoulders with them in the bars and bordellos of Brazil and Montevideo, and to find them dispensing funds where Africa's sunny fountains roll down their golden sand. But Arizona!

As a wartime officer in M.I.6. I witnessed the first O.S.S. arrivals among us after Pearl Harbor. They came from Yale and Harvard, from studying *The Wasteland* and *Beowulf*; from selling motor cars in Prague, and real estate on the Riviera; linguists, some in unfamiliar uniform, and some neat, some plutocratic or even senatorial offspring for whom a niche had to be found in the lush, less exacting branches of the armed forces. All were inclined to hold our legendary Secret Service in a certain awe. This was the innocent springtime of American Intelligence. It soon passed. The remuneration commanded by agents went soaring up, and grumbles were shortly to be heard in M.I.6. offices about these clumsy, affluent American interlopers who, in the name of the noble-agent

from one-time pads. It was in the course of a tirade on such matters that Allen Dulles's name. Of all impertinences, he was, it appeared, operating in Switzerland, and sending in reports independently of Our Man there. Clearly, they were non-sensical and should be disregarded. All the same!

How drastically the English and American roles were to be reversed, in Intelligence as in other fields! The poor old Secret Service is legendary no longer, except in James Bond novels. It has come to have a positively comic connotation, more particularly in its counter-espionage activities. Mr. Dulles is really very charitable when he bestows a word of faint praise on our Official Secrets Act. He goes on to remark, in what is surely one of the great understatements of all time, that our "practices in hiring and retaining personnel leave a good deal to be desired"—an observation which ought to be good for a hearty laugh whenever the Macleans give a dinner party in Moscow.

In any case, the C.I.A. now bestrides the so-called Free World like a colossus, with other N.A.T.O. Intelligence Services peeping out at one another, not always amiably, from between its huge legs. Mr. Dulles, not unnaturally, considers the enormous proliferation and expansion of American Intelligence agencies both inevitable and beneficial, especially when they come, to a greater or lesser degree, under the C.I.A. umbrella. He is even prepared to take a fairly stoical view of a more or less independent rival establishment like the Defense Intelligence Agency created by Mr. McNamara in 1961, though at lower levels, one gathers, competition is intense to the point of being murderous.

There would seem to be some natural trend towards in-fighting within and between Intelligence organizations ostensibly on the same side. I often used to reflect in the war that if only this hostility could have been directed towards the enemy a speedy victory would be assured. It was comforting, after the war, to learn that an exactly comparable state of affairs prevailed on the German side with Ribbentrop, Himmler, and Admiral Canaris more concerned to cut one another's throats than ours. Happily, too, from all one can learn, Soviet Intelligence personnel are far from being a band of brothers. There is, indeed, a close similarity in Intelligence theory and practice the whole world over. Our spies, like our beats, engage in the same eccentricities of dress and behavior, and the writing of reports for Soviet Intelligence—for instance, Alexander Orlov's *Handbook of Intelligence of Guer-*

rilla Warfare—are indistinguishable from Mr. Dulles's.

How far the American people get value for all this expenditure of money, personnel, and effort is, of course, difficult to say. Mr. Dulles does not provide much guidance. He reminds me, obliquely, of a bawdy French song I once heard called "*Les Fraises et les Framboises*." It was sung by a lisping village maiden, which made the gross meaning all the funnier. Mr. Dulles, presiding over the C.I.A., and all its nefarious activities, is in a similar case. His ostensible innocence contrasts hilariously with the sordid transactions in which he finds himself involved. "While homosexuality," he gently observes, "has played a prominent role in the most notorious recent cases, such as Vassall's, adultery or promiscuity is the more usual lever." On the other hand, he goes on, "blackmail based on the threatened exposure of illicit sexual acts is a powerful instrument when applied to men of certain nationalities, not so when applied to others. It depends on the mores, on the moral standards of the country of origin." Thus, he concludes, "the citizens of those countries where a certain value is placed on marital fidelity and where social disapproval of infidelity is strong are naturally the most likely victims." "A certain value" is good!

Mr. Dulles is at some pains to rebut the widespread notion that he and his colleagues gave the President unsound advice at the time of the ill-fated Bay of Pigs adventure. He may, for all I know, be right. Yet, frankly, I myself would always take it for granted that Intelligence appreciations, whatever their source, must be misleading. It is difficult to think of a single case which suggests the contrary. In North Africa, for instance, what with cipher-cracking, and one thing and another, we had excellent sources of information about Italy. Yet when the Fascist regime collapsed, with virtually no one even to regret its passing, let alone fight for its survival, none of our reports had envisaged anything of the kind.

The point is (and Mr. Dulles provides an excellent example) that Intelligence personnel, at all levels, inevitably lose contact with reality. The trade attracts fantasists, and its practice encourages any tendency that way, if it does not create it. There is a couplet by Blake which ought to be prominently displayed whenever two or more Intelligence officers are gathered together:

*They ever must believe a lie,
Who see with, not through, the eye.*

I doubt, however, if it would do any good. Intelligence is, by its very nature, a with-the-eye pursuit.

One can summon up a smile of sorts at the operational side of Mr. Dulles's business, recalling, for instance, the amazing collection of bric-a-brac the unfortunate Powers was carrying. The smile fades when the subject of Security crops up. Then the antiseptic taste really gets into one's mouth; then the trolley of surgical instruments moves silently into view:

People whose lives and records appear clean as a whistle when they are employed may, some years later, develop latent weaknesses, which may or may not be discovered in the course of security reviews. No one can suggest that even the most frequent security examinations will point up all weaknesses. The best one can do is to have the most thorough examination that can be given, and I feel that one should not exclude, in the examination, technical aids, such as the polygraph, more popularly known as the lie detector.

There is no need for me to stress the loathsome implications of the above passage. Torquemada, Beria, Himmler, or any other of the Security Maestros of history, would recognize it as sound doctrine. How happy are those countries which have no secrets to secure, no subversion to fear; where the narrow mind and abnormal sense of rectitude of a Dulles can find innocuous expression in public and board-rooms, instead of being armed with the authority, wealth, and dangerous toys of a modern state. □