

## Editorials

### Allen Dulles: A personal memoir

CPYRGHT

Allen Welsh Dulles, former Auburnian and for several crucial years head of the Central Intelligence Agency, was a man of courage and determination, who served his country well.

My friendship with him began more than sixty years ago, when his family moved here from Watertown. We were by way of being buddies. The Dulles family lived in what is now Warden McMann's home on South Street. Allen's father was on the faculty of the Auburn Theological Seminary and pastor of the old Central Presbyterian Church.

It was a charming intellectual household, but somewhat strict, as was the rule in ministerial homes early in the century. Allen was not allowed to play cards even for fun (he later became a first-class bridge player), nor did he attend Mme. Luce's dancing classes. But he was keen on chess, as I was, and we had many battles across the checkered board. We were also ardent golfers and made frequent trips by trolley car to Lakeside (now Emerson) Park and thence on foot to the Owaseo Country Club.

In summer I made week-long visits to the Dulles cottages on Henderson Harbor where we fished and picnicked daily with Allen's uncle, Robert Lansing later Secretary of State. (And good fishing it was!)

Our associations thereafter were intermittent but our friendship endured. He went to Princeton and I to Harvard; but he entered the foreign service, as I did, during World War I, and he paid me a visit in Berlin when he was assigned to Vienna. We met again at the Paris Peace Conference in 1918-19 and were members of an informal group of young attaches to the American Delegation, who believed that some of the terms of the Versailles Treaty, particularly the reparation clauses, contained the seeds of future wars.

Came World War II and Allen was given the assignment of running the N. Y. City branch of "Wild Bill" Donovan's Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of CIA. I resigned from the Conservation Department and went to work for him in his Scandinavian section in 1942.

Shortly thereafter he received secret advance information of the African landings and took off by air for Spain and thence, via France, to Switzerland. He managed spectacularly to cross the Swiss border just before the Nazis took over the whole of France. A few hours delay and he would have spent the rest of the war in a German internment camp.

The job he did in Switzerland in penetrating the German Secret Service and in establishing contact with anti-Nazis groups was an intelligence classic. Equally so was his success in expediting the surrender of the German armies in Italy, thereby saving thousands of American lives.

With this record it was almost inevitable that he should a few years later become head of CIA.

The work or the "craft" (as Dulles called it) of intelligence is a tough game that cannot be played according to books of etiquette or even according to Marquess of Queensberry rules. It is also a game in which long gambles must be taken and no excuses offered when they turn sour.

CIA has lately become controversial, particularly among the young. In my view, it is an absolutely necessary tool of defense at a time when we are faced with a deeply hostile power, the Soviet Union, which has its agents in every country in the world whose chief aim is the promotion of Communist objectives and the destruction of all free governments including our own.

Despite some errors CIA under Allan Dulles became almost certainly the best intelligence service in history. Its mistakes usually become known; its successes seldom. Still less the unsensational day-to-day, week-to-week collecting of bits and pieces of information—political, military and economic—which, when fitted together, are absolutely essential for the formulation of policy.

In carrying out a job which he had to learn from the ground up while he was doing it, Allen Dulles showed tenacity, courage and genius and a wonderful ability to accept criticism in silence, and to "meet with triumph or disaster and treat those two imposters just the same."

In the annals of Americans who have served their country well, he deserves a high place.

Lithgow Osborne