

ALICE IN
BONDLAND
by Saul Landau



THE LOOKING GLASS WAR by John Le Carre. New York: Coward McCann. 320 pp. \$4.95.

John Le Carre's spies live in the same world that Alice in Wonderland found when she stepped through the looking glass: everything she knew as commonplace was turned around and she had become a pawn in a gigantic chess game. Backwardsland is the Cold War milieu, where values are reversed and good and evil are words resting upon a grotesque seesaw, mocking each other as they go up and down with the weight of the wind.

It is not only the engaged spies who are drawn into the game, but the innocent citizen, living a simple, uninvolved life. He too becomes pawn in the machinations of super-secret agencies that the Cold War has created for us as "reality."

The poison of James Bond as the modern hero is given a powerful antidote by John Le Carre. His heroes are pathetic, cowardly, inept, poor lovers—they are real. Le Carre's protagonists are even more mundane than Graham Greene's heroes in his entertainments. Unlike Bond, they never sleep with beautiful women and are as ill at ease with weapons of death as Bond would be at Oxford.

There are the three protagonists in *The Looking Glass War*, each pathetic in his own right, but sadly ridiculous when put into the role of international agent. Each one bungles his mission; two die as a result. There is a nearly-retired civil servant, dragged away from his lifelong desk job because there was no one else available. He is murdered after he receives some microfilm.

The second character, a nervous young intellectual unable to cope with his wife, goes to collect the dead agent's body under a shabby pretext, so that everyone is made aware that the super sleuths are pulling a typical cloak and dagger stunt.

The third character is a British Pole who once worked on a mission during World War II and could send messages in Morse code. He is recruited by the gentlemen aristocrats who run the Service by being made to feel inferior; they seduce him with the chance to become really English.

The mission, which entails crossing the East German border, is unclear; but the technicians and the planners get together and rationalize from the flimsiest coincidences that there *must* be something important going on or else the first agent

... persuaded
by the sales
pitch ...

would not have been murdered and MIGs would not have harassed the passenger plane that was illegally photographing East German territory. From this evidence the apparatus goes to work, and although this particular branch of the Secret Service is obsolete and everyone knows it, the men upstairs are persuaded by the sales pitch.

The reader is aware that it is a useless, senseless process. The director of the obsolete intelligence agency is desperately clinging to his post and this could be the mission that proves that his unit is vital to Free World security. But unlike Bond's missions, where the fate of England or the world is at stake, where the weapon being hidden would be a world destroyer, Le Carre's spies risk and lose their lives on trivia, relevant only within the crackpot realist framework of the Cold War—and even then only to the super-sleuths on both sides of the curtain.

Just as in *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, so too in *The Looking Glass War* the highest priority goes to maintaining the prestige of the agency. Not only are unhappy spies killed and manipulated but innocent people are used as pawns in a chess match that no one can win, or even try to win. Spies and non-spies alike are expendable pawns and the game always reaches beyond the scope of the chessboards in the little old buildings that house the secret services: death and destruction; new tensions in the Cold War—these are the results of the "missions."

In *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* a young English woman is shot while unwittingly playing the cops and robbers game—in addition to the agents who regularly bite the dust. That's something the technicians and planners didn't count on, but it's all part of the game. In *The Looking Glass War* an East German border guard is killed by the Pole who murders from fright and awe. The aristocratic leftovers from Kipling have convinced him that he is doing this for the Empire.

The fact that these clowns do run the Secret Service—and their American counterparts possess the same fanaticism without the gentlemen tradition in the Civil Service—is a clue to a larger madness. For it is the policy-makers, elected and appointed, who have established the conditions for the spy mania and its frightening perpetuation.

Le Carre is worried about the effects on human beings of this web that tangles men into war discipline when there is no war, into a state of eternal crisis that does not

... clowns
do run the
Secret Service ...

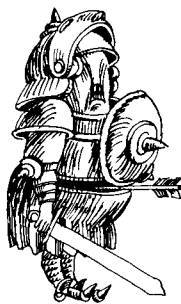
... each one
bungles his
mission ...

allow for the easing of tensions. The agencies themselves, working for the same government, quarrel and bicker over jurisdiction and cut each other's throats to prove that one is better equipped to handle this kind of security rather than the other kind. There is no wise M, or fearless 007; there are only technicians, planners and cannon fodder.

In the end, one agency discovers that the other had fouled up and causes the mission to be canceled, while the East Germans capture the poor Pole whose message-sending was so slow that they caught him on the second night. It didn't matter because he could not possibly have succeeded in any case since there was nothing to find. It was simply a movement of troops, routine maneuvers.

With the foolishness exposed, the obsolete agency director and his staff of "old pros" continue on their idiotic way as if "you can't win 'em all." The aristocratic chief tells his rival after he apologizes:

... play the
war rules
in this
game ...



"We must all get back to London. There's the report . . . troop disposition in Hungary; something new . . ."

"Be a soldier," he advises the young intellectual emasculated by the experience and now mourning the fate of the Pole. "Fortunes of war; keep to the rules! We play the war rules in this game." Then he turns to his gentleman rival. "You must dine with me in London. My club is not your mark . . . but it's quiet there; a good set."

This is Le Carre's world of real spies in a looking glass war where they can see no further than each other, and even then everything is backwards. No naked girls to seduce; only an occasional pimply girl who is lonely and needs any man. There are no exciting chases where the hero escapes. *The Looking Glass War* is about a world where nonsense is sense, where insane assumptions are accepted and logically worked out in policy — and there is no one who seems able to set it right.

LEARN, BABY, LEARN!

This paraphrase of the Watts battle cry is a summons to all men of good will. Despite active involvement in the area, the Jewish community was caught as unprepared as any other for the outbreak. Why? Because there was a lack of information and sense of urgency.

The truth is that we have no publication that is involved on a daily basis, enlightening and alerting the community. The Yiddish press does not reach most of our people. The Anglo-Jewish weeklies and monthlies do not appear often enough, but events no longer will wait a week or a month for an authentic Jewish report or reaction.

For the New Year 5726 we propose to remedy

this serious flaw by publishing a daily Jewish newspaper in English. Besides civil rights, we have other burning issues to digest and debate: our relation to Israel, to Germany, to the Ecumenical movement; the fate of Russian Jewry, the future form of our religion and communal institutions.

This is a special introductory offer. For \$5, you and three friends may subscribe for one month to America's only modern daily for the Jewish home. If you don't have three friends, you still can receive the paper for \$2 per month. Jewish tradition teaches: "If we are not for ourselves, who will be for us? If we are only for ourselves, what are we? If not now, when?"

JEWISH DAILY NEWS Hotel David, 480 Geary, San Francisco, California 94102

☐ \$2 enclosed ☐ \$5 enclosed Foreign rates on request.

Please send the paper for one month to:

Your Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Friend's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Friend's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Friend's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Free 10-day trial

See Greece through the eyes of its greatest poet in

THE VOYAGES OF ULYSSES

A photographic interpretation of the Odyssey

How can you photograph the *essence* of a poem—its special grace, its meaning and mood? First, you have to be a poet with a camera—and Erich Lessing is. Then you have to see what the poet saw, feel what he felt—as Erich Lessing did. He followed Ulysses to the very places he visited and photographed them in all their ageless impact.

In 110 stunning pictures, Lessing captured the *feeling* of the *Odyssey* much as another photographer, a few years ago, caught on film the *aroma* of a rose. Both required cameras of the greatest sensitivity. Like Chapman, who brought Homer to millions of grateful readers, Lessing has translated the *Odyssey* into yet another language—the language of film. He has achieved a Baedeker of rare beauty—one that takes you through both the soil and the soul of ancient Greece.

Here, in full color, is the hill where Ulysses' palace stood; here lived Nestor and Agamemnon. Here you see the view from the cave of Polyphemus, and the great rock he flung after the fleeing Ulysses. To this lovely stream, Nausicaa came at Athene's bidding and met Ulysses. In this peaceful setting, Circe turned men to swine. Here is the land of the lotos-eaters (the "lotos" flower caused men to lose their longing for home). These are the "monster" rocks of Scylla and Charybdis; here is the Naiads' cave where Ulysses planned his revenge on the suitors. In this limpid bay, Telem-

achus beached his boat; on this tempest tossed hill lived Aeolus, master of the winds. Here is the true landscape of poetry, for according to the most painstaking research, these are the actual sites Homer had in mind when he wrote the *Odyssey*.

YOUR INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL BOOK SOCIETY

THE VOYAGES OF ULYSSES is offered to you by the International Book Society, a division of TIME-LIFE BOOKS dedicated to bringing out in this country—in exclusive English-language editions—the five or six finest books to appear abroad each year. To discover such deserving books, the Society's Editors search all the publishing centers of Europe, Asia and South America. Like THE VOYAGES OF ULYSSES, each selection must satisfy the highest standards in both form and content, and as proof of their value, they must win your approval on the basis of a free ten-day trial.

Besides accompanying Ulysses through the actual itinerary of his adventures, the book traces him through 700 years of Greek art as well. Here, in statues, carvings, vase and wall paintings is how the ancient Greeks saw their favorite hero. To track down these works, photographer Lessing undertook an odyssey of his own, traveling some 16,000 miles.

As a magnificent frame for the photographs, THE VOYAGES OF ULYSSES

contains three commentaries. Michel Gall—who devoted ten years to the tracing of Ulysses' travels—explains how the actual sites were identified and gives the history of the various theories that were once held about them. Archaeologist Hellmut Sichtermann discusses the role of Ulysses in the historical context of Greek art, life and religion. Professor Carl Kerényi, today's most famous authority on Homer, examines the origins and wider implications of Ulysses in Greek mythology. Seen through these commentaries and Erich Lessing's lens, Homer's Greece will be as much a voyage of discovery to you as it was to him, for this is the Greece not only of scintillating color and incandescent light, but the Greece of the great age of literature and legend, too.

THE VOYAGES OF ULYSSES is available only through the International Book Society. And it is just \$19, far less than the retail price of such a lavish volume. If you would like to browse through it at home—for 10 days, free—simply fill out and mail the coupon. If you're not fully satisfied with the book, just return it. Since it costs you nothing, though, and since you probably *will* enjoy THE VOYAGES OF ULYSSES, we suggest that you read it first and decide later. The International Book Society offers you an opportunity to see* and to own some of the most stimulating and sumptuous books being published anywhere in the world, so why not take advantage of it today?

TO: TIME-LIFE BOOKS, DEPT. 4647
TIME AND LIFE BUILDING, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611

Please send me *The Voyages of Ulysses* for ten days' free examination and enter my trial subscription to the International Book Society. If I decide to keep the book, I will remit \$19 which includes all charges for postage and handling. I may buy as many or as few books as I wish, and return any volume after inspecting it without obligation.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

(Please include zone or zip code number if known)



If you enter a trial subscription, you will be notified of future selections with the right to decline a 10-day free examination of each. Each offering will be described in advance and its price clearly stated. An enclosed reply form will permit you to decline the opportunity of inspecting the book.

Among future volumes you will find GREAT SAILING SHIPS, GREAT RIVERS OF EUROPE, PLEASURE OF RUINS AND JAPANESE TEMPLES.



Both the beauty and the strength of the Greek coast are captured in this view from the Cyclops' cave.

Size:
10½" x 12".
Luxuriously
bound in
heavy textured
cloth, boxed.
110 illustrations
in full color,
276 pages,
fully indexed

THE VOYAGES OF ULYSSES

*A photographic interpretation of Homer's *Odyssey* by David Levine*



A powerful rendering of Polyphemus, whose real life counterpart was probably an active volcano.



An early Minoan version of the minstrel whose song moved Ulysses to tell his story.



In depicting the sea monster Scylla—who was probably inspired by an octopus—this sculptor used more than a little poetic license.

Here is the dreaded Charybdis strait, where Ulysses was shipwrecked onto the island of the seductive goddess Calypso.

Ramparts

December 1965

Seventy-five Cents

Arnold Toynbee
on "Supersam"
Bernard Fall
on Vietnam

