

and other Communist leaders, and the many instances in which their behavior cannot be reduced to the pursuit of Communism. Such an approach denies the real, albeit subtle and often unadvertised, transformations in Soviet society. It fails to fathom that Soviet totalitarianism is itself a stage, not eternal doom, and that Communism is a plural rather than a singular phenomenon. Is it not more realistic then to think of totalitarianism itself as an infantile disease of Communism, which in some cases may prove fatal but in others may be outgrown and overcome as the organism matures?

Communist systems are not immune to the general pattern of regularization which all "developing" societies tend to experience. As societies and economies become more complex, for instance, greater specialization and functional differentiation become imperative; and these in turn are bound to produce differences in outlook, preferences, and values for various occupational groups. Like it or not, policy makers must increasingly suppress pride and prejudice and listen to experts rather than partisans. This is one of the lessons of the Chinese experience that have not been lost on the Soviet elite. And such processes have indeed been at work in Soviet Russia, too, however much both Soviet officialdom and analysts such as Bertram Wolfe would deny it.

Yet Wolfe's latest book should not be lightly dismissed. It is the cumulation of many years of informed research and reflection, and is bound to offer much that is challenging and instructive not only to those who agree but to those who don't.

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Espionage

THE SUPER SPIES

by Andrew Tully

Morrow, 256 pp., \$5.95

THE LITERATURE OF ESPIONAGE is more or less evenly divided between the allegedly factual, the category to which Andrew Tully has added his mite, and the frankly fictional. What is probably the oldest and is certainly the best written spy story is to be found in the second chapter of the *Book of Joshua*, which tells how that commander sent two agents into Jericho to collect intelligence on the city's defenses and the morale of its armed forces and civil population, and how Rahab, the harlot whose house was upon the city wall, concealed the agents in exchange for a guarantee that she and her family would be exempted from massacre. It sounds like fact; indeed, it is probably being re-enacted at this moment in the Republic of Vietnam.

Espionage is thus an activity as old as war itself, which is to say about as old as *Homo sapiens*. Like war, it has aspects of glamour and even nobility. Nathan Hale deserves his statues, although it is unlikely that the Soviet Union will ever erect memorials to



Messrs. Burgess and McLean, or even Kim Philby. The international code is careful not to confound spies with war criminals; a spy is executed in no spirit of contempt or disapproval, but merely for purposes of deterrence. So far as international law is concerned, he is entitled to be shot and buried with military honors. (A more practical advantage of the spy's superior status is the curious rule that one who manages to rejoin his own forces cannot thereafter be punished for his previous acts of espionage.)

In the classic branches of espionage that of the United States has always seemed rather backward compared, for example, to British Intelligence, at least in the latter's legendary form. There is no American equivalent of Mahbub Ali or Hurree Chunder Mookerjee, of Ashenden the Secret Agent, or even of their vulgar epigone, James Bond. In the days of homemade cryptography a century ago the best the telegraphers in the War Department could do to encode a message from President Lincoln to General Burnside was to pun or misspell all the words

(A. Lincoln became Ale in Can) and send them out in reverse order, trusting that Burnside's man at the other end would be more ingenious than any Confederate agents who might have tapped the wire. A British general in similar circumstances elegantly signaled his capture of Sind by telegraphing the single word "Peccavi."

Since World War II, however, the intelligence business has been mechanized and computerized on an enormous scale. Our national talents in these lines are considerable. The National Security Agency, an account of which forms the core of Mr. Tully's book, covers nearly 2,000,000 square feet of floor space, which are said to contain more electric wiring than any other building in the world. It holds some 12,000 employees and \$3-million worth of the products of IBM and its competitors. It orbits an undetermined number of SAMOS satellites, which watch and listen from 150 miles up. It probably spends a couple of billion dollars a year.

The labor of this mountain, and others only slightly less massive, such as the Defense Intelligence Agency (which perches atop the Office of Naval Intelligence and the G-2s of the Army and Air Force), produces a prodigious quantity of information. The quality of that information is debatable. The known facts, plus the anecdotes leaked to Mr. Tully, a generally friendly reporter, by the bureaucrats concerned, suggest that some of it is important (such as the U-2 photographs of Russian missile sites in Cuba), some curious and intriguing (such as de Gaulle's private opinion that Robert Kennedy had a "European, sophisticated intelligence," but suffered from "youthful arrogance"), and much more is neither. The unexciting is not necessarily unimportant: All intelligence services, of course, rely heavily on the laborious collation of data from open sources—newspapers, scientific publications, directories, and the like, even in the cases of such paranoiac, secretive countries as Russia and China. A junior attaché in the Soviet embassy, supplied with *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and a pair of scissors, can probably glean more really useful and reliable information than Colonel Abel with all his microfilms concealed in hollowed-out nickels.

Mr. Tully describes in considerable detail the work of the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and six other American super-spy bureaus—omitting, however, the Central Intelligence Agency, whose inside story he has already published. The trouble with them, their organization charts, and their IBM machines, and consequently with a large part of

Mr. Tully's book, is that they are not really very interesting. A row of computers, operated by a row of civil servants, is to Mata Hari (even if she wasn't in sober fact a particularly efficient intelligence collector) what a Quartermaster Supply Depot is to the 300 Spartans at Thermopylae. Eric Ambler himself couldn't write a thriller about an IBM 7090, even if it does perform 230,000 additions per second and cost \$3,300,000.

The author, a highly professional journalist, is apparently aware of this, for he has thrown in several chapters on human spies and defectors, which make much better reading. They tell of stolen documents left at a Hong Kong drop disguised as a tailor shop, of secret agents with forged credentials landed by night in rubber boats, of counter-intelligence agents shot and stuffed into luggage compartments, of *femmes fatales* climbing into bed with impressionable junior diplomats.

All this is good journalism and sure to sell the soft-cover edition. Unfortunately, it is written in bad journalese, reminiscent of the old Hearst Sunday supplement style, full of clichés and solecisms. Mr. Tully uses "stricture" as a synonym for "maxim," "agitate" for "militate," and "willy-nilly" where I think he meant "helter-skelter." And so forth and so on. It is a far, far cry from Rudyard Kipling and Somerset Maugham.

Despite all these crudities, *The Super Spies* makes a couple of points worth pondering, one explicit and one implicit. The explicit one, developed in several chapters, is that the United States carries on its espionage and counter-espionage through a crowd of overlapping, jealously independent and often mutually hostile agencies. As a result the President and other officers of government are likely to be confronted with intelligence estimates that contradict each other. Andrew Tully's chapter on the Tet offensive of January 1968 is an excellent illustration, and one that has the dismal ring of truth. Another result, of course, is waste of money on a scale unusual even for Washington. All the super spies obey the ancient law of bureaucracy that it is better to throw the unexpended balance of an appropriation down the nearest sewer than confess that the agency doesn't need as much money as it has been getting. In their case the practice is facilitated by the fact that some of their disbursements are "confidential" and subject to no outside audit. I don't know

whether Mr. Tully's proposed remedy, "a nosier Congress," would do any good, but it might be worth trying.

The implicit moral is the obvious one that military or diplomatic intelligence is no better than the human intelligence that evaluates and acts upon it. The ordinary human mind is as resistant as steel alloy to facts that do not fit its preconceptions. In 1941 Stalin, afflicted with the queer unwillingness of devious and dishonest men to believe that others can have equal duplicity, simply ignored a mass of evidence, all pointing to the conclusion that Hitler was planning a double-cross of monstrous proportions. Similarly, prisoner interrogations, captured documents, and intercepts should have warned General Westmoreland that the Communists in Vietnam planned an all-out offensive in early 1968, but the idea belied his own propaganda and he refused to believe it. Politicians, of course, are no better than generals in this respect: it is doubtful that even a truly intelligent intelligence service could plant in the cranium of Senator Stennis or Senator McGovern a fact that contradicted his Inner Voices.

Sometimes, of course, no blame can be assessed for the failure to make use of good information. If Mr. Tully's account is accurate (allowing for the fact that his sources were naturally more inclined to disclose their successes than their flops), the American intelligence services had picked up ample evidence that the Russians really did intend to quell the Czech heresy by invasion; but if the Soviet government had announced its plans a week in advance and sent out free tickets to the press and the diplomatic corps, there would still have been precious little the United States could have done about it. The super spies' top secret reports on whether the Soviet Union does or does not intend to zap the nefarious Maoists must, by this time, run to a good many thousand pages; yet even if they contain more and better information than the newspapers, it is hard to see what use President Nixon can make of it.

Despite all this, people still like to read about spies and the paraphernalia of their trade. Most of *The Super Spies* is harmless, unpretentious entertainment. The author and publisher, to do them justice, claim nothing more. In an era when practically every trade book is announced as the ultimate indictment of society, or at least a devastating exposure of the bourgeois Establishment, I am grateful for one that pretends to be nothing more than summer reading.

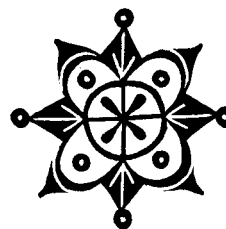
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Criminal Record

Fact


The Historian as Detective: Essays on Evidence. Edited by Robin W. Winks. Harper & Row. \$10.95. Scholarship links hands with jollity in this fine package. Mr. Winks (he teaches at Yale) tells us that he assembled the anthology "for fun," and he must have had a lot of it. His roster of expert witnesses includes Christopher Morley, Paul M. Angle, Allan Nevins, Millar Burrows, Richard D. Altick, Henry F. Pringle, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and a score or so of others, and the high concern of all of these authorities is such problems as phony letters that have made their way into standard



biographies, lost documents (such as the Boswell papers), and hoaxes perpetrated out of malice or just for the hell of it. Prime goods.

Who Done It? A Guide to Detective, Mystery and Suspense Fiction. By Ordean A. Hagen. Bowker. \$18.95. In 1918 President Woodrow Wilson, seeking a moment's relaxation from the strain of world war, picked up a detective story called *The Middle Temple Murder*. The author was J. S. Fletcher (as he always signed himself, on title-pages anyway). The President found the book to his liking and said so to somebody, and Joseph Smith Fletcher was soon sitting on the world (a colloquial expression then having a considerable vogue). Thus, one might

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LITERARY I. Q. ANSWERS

1 I, 2 E, 3 G, 4 L, 5 D, 6 J; 7 K, 8 F, 9 C, 10 H, 11 A, 12 B.