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NEW ANACHRONISM

Ralph Riposte

There can be no quarrel with the charge in the foregoing article that Americans generally, and some intelligence personnel as well, tend to transport their homes abroad along with their baggage, consort with other Americans to the near exclusion of foreigners, attend Hollywood films in Bond Bros. suits, etc. Nor can there be any doubt that the insularity of some intelligence officers creates grave disadvantages. Mr. Tidwell's proposals, however, carry within them problems quite as grave as those he seeks to solve.

First, it must be assumed that the writer is speaking of staff employees rather than contract personnel. The "outside man" under unofficial cover is in many places abroad close to the local population. If the article's admonitions are intended for him, they will have for him none of the stimulus of a new idea. Personnel under official cover, on the other hand, cannot follow a pattern of conduct conspicuously different from that of their colleagues in the cover organization without attracting the attention not only of those colleagues but of local services as well.

The basic objection to admonishing all our people abroad, or as many as possible, to adopt any one line of conduct is that the admonition is Procrustean. Our intelligence officers are individuals. Our task is to see that each man knows his strengths and weaknesses and, both for the organization's sake and his own, exploits the former and guards against the latter. The question, "How should intelligence officers act?" is wrong *per se*. The right question is, "How should *this* officer act?"

The Richard Halliburton type of intelligence officer became obsolescent before World War I and obsolete thereafter because this century has witnessed a marked increase in the sophistication and skill of counterintelligence in many nations. It is no longer possible, with the aid of Max Factor's makeup kit and a soiled burnoose, to slip shadow-like among the Arabs and ferret out their plots. The cop wants to see the ID Card; and if it isn't backstopped—as it won't be unless the purpose of the

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deception has been defeated at the outset—then our hero's troubles are even blacker. The only way in which we can learn about Arab plots today is to ask Arabs.

In some areas the appeal of Americans is their Americanism. For years after the war—and perhaps even now—Germans, for example, viewed with a narrow eye those Americans who spoke their tongue too glibly and followed their conventions too automatically. They suspected such Americans of being Jews who had fled Germany in the thirties and returned to employ official power for personal revenge and benefit. Most people, even citizens of rather hostile governments, like and are willing to help the foreigner whose efforts to learn their language and history are as sincere as they are naive. But this pleasant atmosphere may vanish if the American is suspiciously sophisticated. Here too, the point is not that some foreigners will not be deeply impressed by a sophisticated assimilation of their culture. The point is that a uniform mode of conduct would be wrong in concept not only because intelligence officers are individuals but also because potential agents are individuals.

The security risks intrinsic in Mr. Tidwell's recommended behavior-pattern are precisely those which are likeliest to remain invisible to the devil-may-care, bash-on-regardless hero most apt to act upon the recommendation. A study of the provocation techniques employed against us in Hungary and elsewhere makes it plain that the disadvantage of an English-Russian dictionary with curves is that she is very likely to be a Russian-English dictionary as well. Of course it may be very useful for an intelligence officer to establish intimacy with a foreign woman. But before he does so, he not only name-traces her but also submits his operational plan for approval. However wide-spread his contacts should be, they must remain thoroughly discriminate. The officer who followed whole-heartedly the spirit of Mr. Tidwell's advice would probably find himself well tiddled. He would not only lose the cover over him; he'd also find nothing between him and the cold, cold ground but one thin native girl.