

Stein and Day Book for Early 1977 to Uncloak The World's Secret Intelligence Activities

"Some of the best sellers in recent years dealing with intelligence secrets were about only one aspect of covert activities, as secrets about one operation or another were released. FitzGibbon is handling an entire century of covert intelligence, which gives you two world wars—plus all the preparation beforehand and the aftermath that followed." Sol Stein talked to *PW* about Constantine FitzGibbon's early 1977 book for Stein and Day, "Secret Intelligence in the Twentieth Century."

FitzGibbon, author of several novels ("When the Kissing Had to Stop" among them) and other works of non-fiction (including a biography of Dylan Thomas) has turned this time to the shady world of covert intelligence and to this he brings a perspective of his own. During WW II, he was a member of the Ultra team and served both in the British and American armies. He was attached to General Bradley's 12th U.S. Army Corps. "All this," Stein remarks, "allows him to write with a sophistication that many journalists covering the subject just don't have."

"Secret Intelligence in the Twentieth Century" is a survey of all intelligence organizations—Russian, French, American, British, German—that have acted *sub rosa*, and Stein asserts that many of the facts FitzGibbon unveils in the book dispute commonly held notions.

One of the more startling incidents FitzGibbon reports is his conversation with a British intelligence officer, Cavendish-Bentinck. The officer told FitzGibbon privately that the British knew when the Japanese fleet, thought to be heading toward Alaska, altered course and steamed toward Hawaii just prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The British reportedly informed the American officials of this diverted sea route suggesting a potential threat, but the U.S. failed to act.

"For me, one of the most illuminating things, in view of certain current crises," Stein continues, "is FitzGibbon's view of the CIA." He quotes from the book, "It [the CIA] was lumbered with far too much power abroad." FitzGibbon also remarks that a secret espionage agency, which is what the CIA was organized to be,

should not be responsible for the OSS-type activities it was assigned. FitzGibbon considers that the CIA was forced to ape the unhappy experiences of its early German counterpart and, subsequently, matters got out of control.

FitzGibbon contends that, almost without exception, journalists involved in the war effort were not privy to the innermost parts of wartime secrets, particularly the Ultra Secret. The logic being pursued there was simple. In their civilian lives, journalists disseminated information as a matter of course. It was decided by those in control that no such risks could be taken with precious intelligence secrets. In fact, even Allen Dulles, the man who would become head of the CIA, was not told certain things about the Ultra Secret during the war, FitzGibbon says. Dulles was operating out of Switzerland and, as such, he was considered geographically a "vulnerable person," one who could conceivably fall into the enemy's clutches. This was enough to prevent him from sharing in the total knowledge. When Dulles wrote his own book about matters of intelligence, FitzGibbon says, he was writing with gaps in his first-hand experience.

Stein thinks of FitzGibbon's work as a book that tells who has done what to whom in the name of covert activities. When asked if some of the author's observations about the methods utilized by these agencies weren't a bit scary, he comments, "It is frightening to see that just about all countries are doing this, acting like this, but it's also rather reassuring because, in some ways, it's really a stand-off."

In a comparison between British/American and Soviet intelligence, FitzGibbon offers an intriguing analysis. With our two-party system and with the kind of games we play, two-sided usually, we often see our enemy's enemy as our friend. We tend to think uncomplicatedly. It's either us or them. The Russians, on the other hand, are adept at triangular warfare. They excel in their national game, chess. An understanding of the knight's eccentric moves adds complexity to their thinking and even leads to an acceptable necessity of the sacrifice of a man to win the game.

The author apparently does not shy from expressing his own viewpoint. "Throughout the book, he is giving the facts," Stein says, "but as he's doing it, he's critiquing them."

Although FitzGibbon was born in the U.S., his writing is crisp and brightly British, Stein says. "I encountered this one on my last trip to England," he recalls. "I read it straight through in one day. I bought it the same day." FitzGibbon researched his facts in England, France and the other countries whereof he writes. "But I don't know how he researched the very solid information he has on Russia," Stein admits.

Is there any factual material in the book likely to cause difficulties with any country's internal security personnel? "The truth is always sensitive," Stein remarks, "but nobody will be able to stop the publication of this book."

It might be added that FitzGibbon concludes on a rather chilling note as he writes of what he calls the Third World War. This encompasses the secret intelligence activities that have followed the world's latest military conflicts, as well as the covert shenanigans going on everywhere as you read this.