

studies in Intelligence, Vol. I, No. 1
Winter 1962

INTELLIGENCE IN RECENT PUBLIC LITERATURE

ANATOMY OF SPYING. By *Ronald Seth*. (London: Arthur Barker. 1961. Pp 256. 18. -.)

Ronald Seth, prolific British writer in the popular history of wars and espionage, has had some personal experience in the field. He was trained comprehensively by the wartime Special Operations Executive and parachuted on a lone mission into German-occupied Estonia, where after losing his radio and wandering in the woods for twelve days he was picked up by the Gestapo. He successfully withstood a three-hour hanging by the genitals and other tortures and, taken then to Germany, was able to deceive his interrogators as to his linguistic skills and into believing that he was cooperating with them. This experience lends some realism to his otherwise too facile and uncritical pluckings from the annals of espionage.

In this latest compilation, although its title and the chapter headings—Organization, Security, Communications, Counter-Espionage, The Double-Spy, etc.—give it the aura of a doctrinal synthesis based on historical example, these really serve only as a framework upon which the author can hang episodic capsules ranging from Odysseus' wooden horse to Powers' U-2 mission, most of them repeated from his earlier books. The reliability of his case history presentations can be gauged in two from the American Revolution and Civil War, respectively. Edward Bancroft, the British agent who penetrated at top level Benjamin Franklin's mission to France, he puts into the "despicable" category of double agent, "no less a scoundrel than Montgalliard," the French Royalist-Republican double operator. And in the Civil War he inflates the role of Lafayette Baker quite beyond recognition:

One of the most brilliant natural spies of history, . . . Baker volunteered his services . . . and to Jim Pinkerton, with great relief, handed over the direction of espionage and counter-espionage. . . . Under Baker, the role played by both espionage and counterespionage services in the North's ultimate victory was a considerable one. . . . In Baker's make-up, however, . . . the

¹See John P. Vaillancourt's "Edward Bancroft (6 Edwd Edwards), Estimable Spy," in *Intelligence Articles* V 1, p A53 ff.

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traits peculiar to the adventurer . . . unfortunately . . . became predominant and . . . this led directly to the assassination of President Lincoln . . . *

Seth devotes his introduction and his final chapter to the case of Francis Powers, "condemned by his own superiors before he was ever brought to trial by his captors." He commiserates with American agents, who "must have had their morale assailed by secret doubts about the good faith of their masters." If the spy in trouble sees that his masters "give evidence against him gratuitously, the unsteady ground on which he habitually walks must become a veritable quicksand." The author concludes that Allen Dulles "is not in the tradition of the great spy-masters," whether because he sanctioned the public statements about the U-2 flight or because he "is not the unfettered chief of the CIA that he should be," having "no powers to prevent the politicians from making him and his organization look ridiculous."

*For a realistic assessment of Baker's work as head of a small local detective bureau without even responsibility for the protection of the President, see the review of Jacob Moglever's *Death to Traitors* in *Intelligence Articles* V 3, p. A78 ff.