

**The Tenth Fleet by Ladislav
Farago. Book review by
Kenneth A. Knowles**

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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM

THE TENTH FLEET. By *Ladislav Farago*. (New York: Ivan Obolensky. 1962. Pp. 366. \$6.50.)

This is the best comprehensive account of U.S. antisubmarine operations in World War II that has come to this reviewer's attention,¹ putting many aspects of them into print for the first time. It is based upon meticulous research into a wide range of source material, including U.S. Navy and captured German Admiralty documents and records, and just about everything that has been published on the subject.² The main criticism that can be directed at the book arises from the author's dramatic compulsions, the most annoying of which is to portray the good guys as supermen and the bad guys as villains. As one of the good guys remarked on reading the book, "My friends are going to feel damn embarrassed for me and my enemies are going to say, 'Why, that SOB must have written it himself.' "

The total unpreparedness of the United States for operations against the German submarines was quite apparent when Admiral Doenitz began his American offensive with only five of them in January 1942. In just ten days of action, beginning with the sinking on 11 January of the British freighter *Cyclops* 160 miles south of Nova Scotia, these five U-boats destroyed twenty-five ships of about 200,000 tons. Not a single U-boat was as much as shaken by a stray depth charge. By May 1943, U-boats had operated in the Western Atlantic for seventeen months with virtual impunity, sinking more than seven million gross tons of shipping.

It was no wonder that Admiral King was worried. In his hard look at the problem he conceived the idea of centralizing antisubmarine warfare at Cominch (Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet) Headquarters, having in mind, according to the author, four major considerations:

(1) Antisubmarine warfare needed a commander of the highest rank, whose prestige and influence would be paramount and who could make his decisions prevail.

(2) The organization he had in mind would have no ships of its own, but would have recourse to every vessel of the United States Navy with inherent and explicit power to commandeer whatever forces when and where needed for antisubmarine operations.

(3) It had to be a small organization with assured and easy access to any and all agencies of the Navy, and especially to the various existing intelligence services and their resources.

(4) It had to have the status of a fleet, partly to simplify its personnel and administrative structure in a headquarters-type organization, partly to function along operational lines, and mainly to be able to use the channels of fleet communications.

It was an inspired and fortunate decision that Admiral King chose to wear a third hat as Commander, Tenth Fleet, in addition to those he wore as Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, and as Chief of Naval Operations. Although he seldom exercised personally the functions of this command, his name lent it the authority it needed. Rear Admiral Francis S. Low, as Chief of Staff in the new organization, in fact ran the show and imbued the Tenth Fleet with his own high standards of performance and conduct.

The Tenth Fleet was formally established on 20 May 1943. In the previous eighteen months American forces had sunk only thirty-six U-boats, but by the end of 1943, when the Tenth Fleet was six months old, our sinkings totaled one hundred and one. With respect to ship losses, between January and June 1943 the U-boats sank 229 ships of 1.5 million gross tons, but during the following six months the sinkings dropped to sixty-six ships of about one-third million gross tons.

The outstanding feature of the Tenth Fleet was that intelligence and operations were completely welded. Looking back after an interim of some twenty years, this reviewer does not recall a single operation that was laid on without full review and use of all intelligence factors. In most

cases it was intelligence that initiated the operations. We were fortunate in having direct and immediate access to all sources of information affecting the Battle of the Atlantic, from the high-frequency direction-finder bearings on the latest U-boat transmission to the most detailed interrogation reports on recently captured U-boat crew members. We were working closely with the British and exchanged estimates several times daily. Intelligence was never so vital nor so well used.

The efforts of thousands of unsung heroes went into every move in that amazing chess game which to its players seemed to have no beginning and no ending. Round the clock, day in and day out, for more than three years--nearly six years for our British colleagues--the ebb and flow of the battle continued. Just when we thought we had the U-boats on the run they would come back hard with some improved device or tactic that would give them a new lease on life to start the cycle anew. Even at war's end the Germans still had 336 of them, and deliveries from new construction were exceeding twenty per month. These were the new prefabricated Types XXI and XXIII, equipped with a greatly improved telescopic snorkel and capable of high surface and underwater speeds to outflank any but the fastest escorts.

Shortly after the close of the European War this reviewer visited the various German submarine building yards. The one that impressed him most was at Bremerhaven, housed in a huge, monolithic concrete complex and capable of turning out a completed, ready-to-run, 1,200-ton Type XXI boat every other day. Even direct hits with the heaviest blockbuster (and several such hits had been scored) could not penetrate the 20-foot-thick reinforced concrete overhead. It was fortunate that these U-boats developed a series of teething troubles, including badly vibrating periscopes, before they could be put on war patrols. Actually only one finally set out, and it did not reach its operating area before the German surrender. Had the war lasted another six months the onslaught of these radically improved submarines could well have changed the whole balance of sea power in the Atlantic.

In an Epilogue Mr. Farago makes an impassioned case for an all-out effort in the present U.S. antisubmarine program, pointing out that a few Soviet Polaris-type submarines could mount a devastating attack on the United States. He notes that even at their peak of efficiency the American defenses could not prevent the World-War-II-vintage U-boats from penetrating to our Atlantic seaboard on the eve of Germany's surrender, and he emphasizes how far greater is the problem of finding

and killing a nuclear-powered submarine equipped with 1500-mile missiles. He pleads for a Tenth-Fleet-type organization to bring together under single management the whole U.S. antisubmarine development effort now scattered among semiautonomous bureaus in the Navy Department and elsewhere.

The Tenth Fleet was indeed a unique organization well suited to its time and place in history. In this reviewer's opinion, however, it is not the answer to today's problems. It was primarily a war operations activity, tuned to the fast-changing situation in the Atlantic and bringing intelligence, research, and development into close rapport with operations.

In the Tenth Fleet the intelligence input to the command problem was greatly assisted by the extensive use of radio by the German U-boats. Literally every convoy sighting and ship sinking on their part required a report to the BdU headquarters, which directed all wolf-pack attacks by remote control. This radio traffic was monitored by several score of Allied high-frequency direction-finder stations located on the periphery of the North and South Atlantic. As refinements were made during the course of the war, fixes of considerable accuracy were achieved. The efficiency of the HF/DF nets and their communications linkage frequently enabled operating forces to receive the locations of a U-boat within an hour after it had signaled.

It is not to be anticipated that the Soviet Navy will be so cooperative or so talkative. The task of intelligence in the next Battle of the Atlantic will have to be borne in large measure by the operating forces. To locate a modern nuclear-powered submarine in a very large and very deep ocean is unbelievably complex and difficult. The solution we seek is not the Tenth Fleet, ever so gallant a part though she once played.

--Kenneth A. Knowles

1 Reviewer Knowles was in effect the Tenth Fleet's chief of intelligence and is the number two hero of Farago's hero-oriented book.

2 A glaring if peripheral exception is *The Secret Capture* (London, 1959)

by S. W. Roskill (whose other writings Farago frequently cites and admiringly quotes) which tells of the Royal Navy's 1941 boarding and capture of the U 110. After describing the U.S. capture of the U 505 in 1944 and mentioning the earlier captures of one British and one Italian submarine, Farago writes, "From early in the war, boarding parties were established in all the Royal Navy's antisubmarine ships . . . But no effort was ever made to actually board a disabled U-boat . . ."

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CONNOISSEURS AND SECRET AGENTS in Eighteenth Century Rome. By Lesley Lewis. (London: Chatto & Windus. 1961. Pp. 282. 30/-.)

The eighteenth century was the heyday of the antiquarians, when the great houses in England and villas on the continent were being furnished with--sometimes erected primarily to house--collections of antique work of art, and antiquarians shared with artists the patronage and cultivation of the nobility. It was also a century of great political complication, putting a Hanoverian on the throne in England while letting a Stuart in Rome hold court as King of England under the protection of the Ecclesiastical State, seeing France sometimes allied with England and sometimes at war with her but always supporting the Pretender, suffering the separate Italian states to quarrel among themselves, witnessing a temporary break-up of the Holy Roman Empire, exchanging a conquering Sweden for a new aggressive Prussia, and pockmarked by the War of the Spanish Succession, the War of the Polish Succession, the War of the Austrian Succession, its English offshoot the 1745 Rebellion, and the Seven Years' War. It was therefore natural to the times that the international antiquarian business should become not only a garnishment for international diplomacy but a cover for international espionage.

This book is a scholarly review of intelligence reporting from Rome to London over the middle six decades of the century, mostly concerning the plans and activities of the Jacobite court. The two principal correspondents were first the antiquarian Baron Philip von Stosch and later Cardinal Alessandri Albani a power in ecclesiastical councils and

builder of the villa-museum bearing his name which is still a tourist attraction outside the Salaria gate; but the activities of a number of lesser agents are hinted at and in part revealed in the documents preserved in London and Vienna. Albani's secretary, for example, a Cardinal Giordano, was reporting, like his chief but without his knowledge, to Horace Mann in Florence and doing his best to undercut Albani, and Albani was called upon to smooth the way for a large number of Englishmen, some of them agents, in Rome.

Stosch's papers had been worked over before, mostly from the antiquarian viewpoint; the importance of his intelligence work for the first ten years had been obscured by the increasing triviality of his reports after he was forced to leave Rome for Florence in 1731. But this is the first exploration of the Albani correspondence. Unlike Stosch, an officially commissioned and salaried spy, Albani was what we would call today an ideological agent, motivated by admiration for the English and a community of antiquarian interest with Mann and his friends. Officially, among his other responsibilities, he represented the interests of the Imperial (Austrian) Court in Rome, and when Britain and Austria turned up on opposite sides of the Seven Years' War Mann and his superiors in London suspected that he was withholding information from them. But he remained "staunch as a heretic" throughout. His last major service was a matter of political action: when the Old Pretender died on New Year's Day of 1766 it was Albani's political skill and influence that brought about the Pope's decision not to extend to "Bonnie Prince" Charles the royal prerogatives his father had so long enjoyed.

If the international milieu a mere two centuries back seems strange and unreal today, there is an almost dreary familiarity about its version of the intelligence game. The fact that it was Stosch who was reporting under the pseudonym Walton was kept secret even from British officials in Italy, and one of them warned that he was an emissary of the Dutch Republic plotting in favor of the Pretender. But he foresaw exposure either through communications or through double agents. It was likely his mail would be tampered with, and the cipher would make people suspect that it was not merely commercial. Moreover, it was impossible, he wrote, that a man could serve well in Rome without employing spies, as he did every day, and it could not be avoided that some of these were in the pay of the other side too. Even these were useful to a man who knew how to manage them and hide his own hand, for they could provide a means to introduce into the mind of the enemy whatever it was desirable for him to think. Nevertheless one was bound in the end

to be betrayed by his own instruments.

When these forebodings had been realized and Stosch had been strong-armed out of Rome, the British government, "having rendered him quite unemployable by other powers and helped to encompass his financial ruin," had for the next 26 years to "go on paying him for the rest of his deplorable life, long after his information had ceased to be of any real value."

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ANATOMY OF SPYING. By Ronald Seth. (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1963. Pp. 368. \$5.95.)

In 1937 Richard Wilmer Rowan published *The Story of Secret Service*,¹ a history of espionage from the beginnings to the period before World War II. This book still remains the best over-all historical study of spying that has been written, despite Rowan's lack of professional background and the fact that his research often leaves much to be desired. Others have tried their hand in this field without much success, the latest being an Englishman, Ronald Seth, whose *Anatomy of Spying*² has now been brought out in an expanded American edition under the same title. The English edition has been unfavorably reviewed in this journal,³ but the additional material in the American edition requires more pointed comment.

Seth's limited intelligence experience was gained as a member of the British Special Operations Executive, into which he was recruited for his knowledge of Estonia. Parachuted into Estonia as a secret agent in 1942, he was at large for only twelve days before being captured and was kept in various German prisons for the remainder of the war. Whatever virtues his book on his wartime experiences⁴ may have, he soon discovered that even poor books on spying sell quite well, and he has been turning them out at a rapid rate ever since.

There is doubtless some useful material in *The Anatomy of Spying*, but it

is basically a rewrite of other sources and it contains enough errors to mislead the unwary student at many points; it cannot be recommended for uncritical use. It begins by rewriting a story of the French Resistance which had been told in much better form by the original author, Richard Collier.⁵ In describing the activity of the "Century" network in France, one of hundreds of sources of information on Hitler's Atlantic Wall, Seth extravagantly claims that "on the information supplied by Century, the Allied commanders based their invasion plans. . . . The work of Century stands out head and shoulders above the rest." He cites an incident in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 to show that it was the Japanese "who first treated captured spies with any show of chivalry," ignorant of or ignoring the American treatment of Major André in 1780. He declares that until the end of the seventeenth century "the spy was employed exclusively in times of war," apparently unaware of the writings of Kautilya at least three centuries before Christ. In this he has also recently turned skeptic of the stories that Moses had sent spies into the land of Canaan to reconnoiter the terrain and its economic potential: in 1961, in the British edition, he had said, "Moses was as fully alive to the value of knowing the economic potential of a selected victim as knowing his military strength." One can, I suppose, pass over without comment his statements that CIA reputedly has a staff of 40,000 official personnel and 100,000 secret agents and that there have been no cases in the past few years of British and French spies being caught. It is statements of this sort, however--and such citations could be multiplied at length--which so weaken the structure of what might have been a passable book that one must warn against it.

Bad as these errors are, it is another feature of the American edition that is downright reprehensible--the reproduction of several pages of clumsily fabricated "exposé" of the background of Allen Dulles. For this material Seth relies almost completely on the pamphlet *A Study of a Master Spy (Allen Dulles)*, a favorite Communist source-book for attacks on CIA written in 1961 by a far-left-wing British Labour Party MP, Bob Edwards, and Kenneth Dunne. Without acknowledging this source, he copies from it sometimes virtually word for word--and error for error. Some of the minor mistakes he thus perpetuates are saying that Allen Dulles' "mother's brother-in-law, Robert Lansing, became Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State in August 1915" rather than in June of that year, pulling out of context and misrepresenting a sentence from the Dulles memorandum of 30 December 1918 entitled *Lithuania and Poland--The Last Barrier between Germany and the Bolsheviki*, and

misspelling the name of Dulles' superior Ernest Dresel as "Dressel."

Seth carbon-copies a more serious error of the Edwards pamphlet in writing that "Dulles was also a director of the Schroeder Trust Company and of the J. Henry Schroeder Banking Corporation, American offshoots of the great German banking house of Schroeder," and going on to point out the role of the German Baron von Schroeder in Hitler's rise to power. This canard stems from a Russian propaganda gambit which first appeared in 1948 and after being utilized by Edwards and Dunne was further spread by Andrew Tully ⁶ and Fred J. Cook ⁷ before Seth picked it up. Actually, the firm of which Mr. Dulles was a director was the J. Henry Schroder Banking Corporation of New York, which was formed in 1923 by J. Henry Schroder and Company, a London firm established in 1804. Neither Baron von Schroeder nor the German banking house of Schroeder had any connection with the British and American firms of J. Henry Schroder.

Seth also spreads on his pages the misbegotten story of meetings in Bern during World War II between Mr. Dulles (under the cover name of Mr. Bull) and the German representative Hohenlohe, going by the cover name of Mr. Pauls. The Bull-Pauls memoranda are an old Soviet propaganda distortion repeated by many subsequent attackers of CIA and its former director, including Edwards and Dunne in their pamphlet.⁸ It is of interest that Seth's direct quotations from these memoranda differ in a few details from the text used by Edwards and by the Soviet New Times (No. 27, July 1960). Perhaps this was a device to obscure his copying; more likely it was pure carelessness.

Seth concludes now that in spite of major failures "Allen Dulles must be given a place in any consideration of outstanding directors of espionage," a tactful switch from his equally pontifical judgment in the London edition that Mr. Dulles "has certain qualifications as a spy-master, but is not in the tradition of the great spy-masters."

For his ill-starred drop into Estonia SOE agent Seth was given ("somewhat ironically," he says) the code name "Blunderhead." A reading of his recent books makes one wonder if this was very wide of the mark. After Anatomy of Spying, in particular, "blunderhead" may be one of the kindest things one could say of the author, and there would be little irony in saying it.

--W. P.

1 New York: Literary Guild of America, 1937.

2 Originally published in London: Arthur Barker, Ltd., 1961.

3 VI 1, p. A21.

4 A Spy Has No Friends. London: André Deutsch Limited, 1952.

5 Ten Thousand Eyes. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1958.

6 CIA: The Inside Story. New York: William Morrow and Co., 1962.

7 "The CIA." Special issue of The Nation, 24 June 1961.

8 For a detailed discussion of these attacks see Lester Hajek's "Target: CIA" in Intelligence Articles VI 1, p. 29 ff.

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