

Portrait of a Cold Warrior by Joseph Burkholder Smith

(Putnam: 422 pp.; \$10.95)

Paul Blackstock

Joseph Burkholder Smith's *Portrait of a Cold Warrior* is a welcome change from the recent spate of books that both analyze and reveal the CIA's secret operations abroad. These works tend to fall into several general categories. First are the outright and damaging exposés such as Philip Agee's *Inside The Company: CIA Diary*, designed to cast CIA operations in the worst possible light and to blow the cover off as many officials as possible. Second are the critical analyses such as Marchetti and Marx's best-selling *CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* that, although censored by the agency before publication, earnestly advocate reforms that the authors insist would strengthen the intelligence community rather than destroy it. Third are basically historical studies such as Ray Cline's *Secrets, Spies and Scholars* that stress organizational changes through time and call for a far-reaching reorganization regarded by the author as necessary if intelligence is to play its proper role in foreign policy decision-making. Finally there are books such as Rositzke's *CIA's Secret Operations* that, although highly critical of certain cold war adventures, use the personal memoir format as a cover for institutional advertising in the tradition of Lyman Kirkpatrick's earlier *The Real CIA* or Miles Copeland's tendentious *Without Cloak or Dagger*.

In contrast to the heavy, didactic tone of most books dealing with the CIA, Smith's memoir is an engaging, almost lighthearted account of service rendered during "twenty-two years as a covert action specialist in the Clandestine Services." Like Agee's *CIA Diary*, it is based on "personal recollections supplemented by a careful reading of newspapers and periodicals covering the years and events described." Here the resemblance ends. Smith was revolted

by Agee's "dreadful betrayal" of scores of CIA officers. Rather than add to the list he has altered the identities of several people. "in order not to endanger any former colleagues who are still active or their operations, whatever they may be."

In other words Smith has written a responsible book, even though in his foreword he invites the reader to "call me a disgruntled employee if you like," and continues: "After the Agee incidents, I was more determined than ever to examine the events of my life and my participation in the cold war as carefully as I could. I wanted to be sure that I comprehended them. I wanted to write an account that would explain these things to others—to my children, to my friends and acquaintances, to everyone else who had not personally taken part in my covert life."

In the wake of the congressional investigations and other exposés of CIA operations there were many personal tragedies in "company" families as children turned against their fathers in revulsion at a frequently distorted image of their work. And, indeed, as Smith notes in his final chapter: "I had spent the best years of my life in pursuits my father and grandfather would have considered the profession of depraved or desperate men." Nevertheless, the older readers who have lived through the cold war decades will find in Smith's self-portrait much with which they can identify because it reflects many of the ideals to which, if they served their nation at all, they, too, dedicated the best years of their lives.

In reflecting on his career he repeatedly emphasizes "without apology" that "I believed in the American Century. I have concluded that the American Century lasted only twenty-five years. It began April, 1950, when

Harry Truman signed NSC 68 and the Clandestine Services became a vital part of the resources that document called for to help America protect the free world. It ended in April, 1975, when we withdrew our support and the weak, corrupt, and ineffective client state we had propped up in Saigon since 1954 collapsed almost before we could get out of town.

"We may not be living in the American Century but we are living in a disturbed, turbulent and hazardous world. The view of the world now prevailing in the United States is that we should be much less involved everywhere, but this view does not prevail in the Soviet Union.... The United States may not need cold warriors but it must have a professional intelligence service. The point need not be belabored. If you don't believe me, take a KGB man to lunch."

Coming as it does near the end of Smith's self-portrait, this line packs a special punch, since the preceding chapter, "Let's Recruit the Tass Man's Dentist," describes his attempt to recruit a KGB man during a three-hour lunch that had been preceded by months of study, massive surveillance, and cautious cultivation. The attempt failed miserably. It is described by Smith as follows: "He had drawn the line. He wanted me to understand I could never recruit him. We could have these friendly conversations, probing each other's weaknesses while pretending we were having a highly civilized chat, but he wanted me to know that the KGB and the CIA are locked in a continuing conflict.... This young man was telling me politely he was my mortal enemy."

With this defeat, Smith writes, he "suddenly felt old and tired" and that it was time he examined his illusions. "The image of the world I had in my mind in the 1950's was as clear-cut as the gray flannel suit, my school uniform at Harvard, which I continued to wear in Washington. When our war babies grew up most of them refused to wear proper clothes or think proper thoughts. For the last decade we have been living in a mixed-up world. The illusions that the Soviet Union directs a world Communist movement so powerful that any means are justified in combating it and that the United States has the right to shape other societies so that we feel safe have been happily abandoned. I hope

the illusions that the Soviet Union is just a state like all the rest and that its security service is not devoted to destroying us do not replace them for too long."

This is very persuasive writing, which graphically describes the continuing adversary relationship of the Soviet and American clandestine services. But Smith completely ignores the other, equally important, side of the coin, namely, that so far as covert action is concerned, this relationship is also mutually self-supporting. There follows a basic principle of international relations that has not been recognized by political scientists, since covert operations have, until recently, been studiously ignored, namely: Whenever an adversary relationship exists between two powers the covert action agency of each justifies its existence and operations on the grounds that the adversary is conducting them. This produces a stimulus-response reprisal pattern, especially when clandestine intervention is involved, which escalates the level of reciprocating intervention and creates a "mirror image" situation in which each

power condemns the other for such intervention. This kind of pattern clearly developed in the case of reciprocal U.S.-Soviet intervention in Angola in late 1975 and early 1976.

In regard to the cold war operations of both the United States and the USSR Arthur Cox writes in *The Myths of National Security* (1975): "...both CIA and KGB have been rationalizing the continuing existence of certain operations on grounds that the other is conducting such operations... But organizations are flawed, both are dated, and both are still conducting political and psychological operations which tend to run counter to the objectives of each others' foreign policies. Yet, the continuing existence of these organizations is used as a sort of litmus paper, by both sides, to test the true motivation and relative hostility of the other."

To test the validity of this observation, take a KGB man to lunch or, better yet, take someone like Paul Nitze, the perennial super cold warrior who drafted NSC 68 with which the American Century began back in 1950, and for whom time has stood still.

rise to the book; one by Philip Rule, an Australian professor of Chinese studies; and four by colleagues of mine at the Gregorian University in Rome—of these, two are Americans, Robert Faricy and Francis Sullivan, one Italian, Dominico Grasso, and one Australian, Gerald O'Collins.

The essays are all objective in trying to state clearly the Christian arguments about the essentially human and "Christian" value of the China of Mao Tse-tung. That the Båstad and Louvain conferences were a product of a current kind of religious "enthusiasm," in Ronald Knox's sense, there can be little doubt. That such enthusiasm ought to be seen in a much colder light is what this book is about. For the most part it succeeds.

The theological propositions that emerge from the Båstad and Louvain conferences can be summarized:

1. Mao Tse-tung, in eliminating poverty and exploitation—it is taken for granted he has done that—has changed the heart of the Chinese people and produced a "new man" not unlike the new Adam of Scripture.

2. The God of Mao is the Chinese people collectively.

3. The success of Mao is a "sign of the times" and an event in Salvation History, as the Christians know it.

4. "Salvation" is what is being produced in China: It is the "horizontal level" of God's love.

There are, however, as several of the authors of *The New China* suggest, two immediate problems connected with this kind of Christianity. One school of thought wants to carry the "secularization" of Christianity to the extreme; "God Is Dead—the People Are God." Thus faith is defined as a process to produce a better "this" world, which is all there is, and is therefore ultimate. This conveniently solves the problem of what to do with the centrally transcendent aspect of Christianity and makes the reconciliation of Christianity with Chinese Marxist thought quite easy: We simply join them. The second and more important approach seeks to take certain Christian themes—with the apparently convincing refrain of "how can you ignore one-fourth of the human race?"—and identify them with what is going on in China.

The burden of the arguments in *The New China* insists on retaining the central transcendent notions of Christianity, along with the reality of Christ's

The New China: A Catholic Response edited by Michael Chu, S.J.

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James V. Schall

With the center of attention about Marxism currently focused on the Russian dissidents, Fidel Castro's Africa, and Jimmy Carter's notion of human rights, we might be tempted to pass over a fascinating little discussion going on about China. The question is whether the only other Christian besides the One, as Nietzsche unkindly quipped, who died on the Cross, was not perhaps one Mao Tse-tung. The death of Mao, in venerable old age and not on the Cross, has already changed much of the glamour of the debate about Christianity and China.

Nonetheless, there is a significant group of Christians of various persuasions who in the past decade have argued that the Chinese experience under

Mao was a success based upon principles that are either directly Christian or reducible to it. Two well-reported conferences—one in Båstad, Sweden, under Lutheran sponsorship, the other in Louvain, under Catholic auspices—have attempted to give intellectual respectability to this approach. *The New China: A Catholic Response* is not a new investigation of what goes on inside the New Middle Kingdom but a statement by and about those who argue so favorably about China in terms of the main doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. The book, whose Italian edition has sold quite well, is composed of six short essays: one by Julia Ching, who attended both the Båstad and Louvain conferences, which gave