



## SPOOKS IN BLUE

*Doug Henwood*

*I don't see why we need to stand by  
and watch a country go Communist due  
to the irresponsibility of its own people.*

Henry Kissinger on Chile, 1970

A statue of Nathan Hale stands in front of the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, Virginia. It's paradoxical—though quite appropriate to a profession whose reputation far exceeds its accomplishments—that the man now remembered as our first spy has achieved this status through failure. As Robin Winks says in *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War 1939–1961* (Morrow), “Hale was ill-prepared for his mission, accomplished no intelligence objective, and . . . in the words of a later director of the CIA, Allen Dulles, ‘quite possibly was the wrong sort of man’ to be in the business.”

The Hale statue is a replica of one on the campus of Yale University. Yale alumni have figured heavily in the history of American espionage, starting with three members of the Culpeper spy ring who graduated with Hale in the class of 1773. But unlike the British, we had no independent intelligence agency for most of our history; spying was a rather informal affair, confined to the wartime military. With the outbreak of the Second World War it became clear that we needed a large-scale operation in a hurry. What better place to turn than to academe? Winks's book is the story of these academics-turned-spies, with a particular emphasis on the crowd from Yale, where Winks is a professor of history.

As everyone knows, the Office of Strategic Services was founded in 1942 and its first director was “Wild Bill” Donovan. The heart of OSS, and the home of most of its academics, was the Research and Analysis branch, or R&A; other branches handled the nastier, novelistic end of the business, like counterintelligence, black propaganda and sabotage. It was agreed from the outset that R&A's mandate was broad and long-term; the academics in R&A—

social scientists, historians, linguists and even literary critics—were instructed to study friends and enemies, real and potential, present and future. OSS researchers began to turn their attention to the Soviet Union well before the war was over, though, as Winks notes, some of the leftish academics performed this new task with a decided lack of enthusiasm.

Because of its tweedy aura, R&A was usually called the campus—a name that stuck to its organizational offspring, the CIA, and to the Agency's headquarters in Langley, Virginia. Winks's chapter on R&A focuses on three scholar/spooks—William Langer, the Harvard historian; Wilmarth Lewis, the Yale bibliophile of independent means whose lifework was a forty-eight-volume edition of the papers of Horace Walpole; and Sherman Kent, a Yale historian. By the end of the war, R&A had gathered 3 million index cards, 300,000 photographs, a million maps, 350,000 foreign serials, 50,000 books, thousands of loose postcards—all indexed and cross-indexed under the direction of Lewis, who loved the apparatus of scholarship. (Many of these documents were gathered under the cover of the Yale library.) "Nothing is better reading (except a good index) than footnotes," said Lewis, which helps explain the triumph of form over substance that is the Yale Walpole.

So what? asks Winks—what did R&A contribute to the war? They refined estimates of German armaments production, contributed to the planning for the invasion of North Africa and evaluated potential bombing targets. But, as Winks concedes, the work of R&A was romanticized by those, led by Donovan, who hoped to keep the OSS alive after the war over the objections of those who felt—not irrationally—that a peacetime intelligence agency was an affront to American democracy.

R&A lives on in the interdisciplinary area studies departments in American universities. In 1964, McGeorge Bundy, president of the Ford Foundation, which encouraged the development of these departments, said: "In very large measure the area study programs developed in American universities in the years after the war were manned, directed, or stimulated by graduates of the OSS—a remarkable institution, half cops-and-robbers and half faculty meeting." Thus began the transformation of the universi-

ties into regional offices of the American Imperium's executive committee.

**R**&A lends a tweedy image to spycraft, but it makes for rather dull reading. The real star of *Cloak and Gown* is James Jesus Angleton, Yale '41. Intelligence ran in Angleton's blood; his father, James Hugh Angleton, headed the National Cash Register franchise in Italy; in the course of visiting NCR's European operations, he set up his own amateur spy operation, which was of benefit to the United States when the war broke out. Angleton *père* was a Mason, and a professed admirer of Italy and Germany in the 1930s.

Angleton  *fils* plunged into the literary life at Yale; he edited three student magazines, most notably *Furioso*, which he published with his roommate, Reed Whittemore. For a student journal, it featured a very tony cast of characters, including Williams, Stevens, Pound, Cummings, and Empson. Classmates described Angleton as "a fanatic in the making," "a mysterious Satan," living a sly life of "mysterious guile." As Whittemore said, Angleton began his undercover work early: he delivered copies of *Furioso* in the dead of night, dropping them outside of subscribers' doors.

Angleton joined the counterintelligence (CI) branch of OSS, X-2, which was headed by another Yale, Norman Holmes Pearson. While with X-2, Pearson supervised the accumulation of files on a million enemy agents and organizations, a practice Pearson strongly felt should be continued after the war, despite its offensiveness to traditional Jeffersonian notions of government. Such quaint objections, as we know, were quickly overcome, as the term "enemy" acquired a very liberal definition.

X-2 also handled the Ultra intelligence, spycraft's greatest coup, which was kept secret for thirty years after the war. The British, with Polish assistance, had cracked the German codes and were eavesdropping on communications the Germans thought secret. Intelligence partisans think Ultra was crucial to the war effort. Maybe. Advertising its importance is a nice way for paper-pushers to upstage GI Joe and Rosie the Riveter, who also had something to do

with winning the war—as did the Soviets, who really destroyed the Nazi army.

Pearson's specialty was American studies, particularly Hawthorne, but his OSS service interrupted his scholarly momentum. He published little, and though he didn't perish, he certainly didn't flourish, remaining at a junior level for decades after his return to Yale. His major academic accomplishment was the promotion of American studies at home and abroad. Like foreign-area studies, this new discipline was of clear imperial import, in that it allowed us to understand our unique fitness for our postwar role as the world's governor, and encouraged a finer appreciation of our cultural sophistication among the ruled.

Back to Angleton. He stayed with CI after the war, running the Agency's counterintelligence operation until he was forced out by his longtime nemesis, William Colby, in 1974. (The ostensible reason was the revelation of the CIA's extensive domestic spying operations, directed by Angleton, which were uncovered in a series of articles by Seymour Hersh in the *New York Times*. But Colby never liked Angleton and thought that his CI empire had grown inappropriately large for a trade now dominated by gadgetry.) Counterintelligence is one of the spookier aspects of the espionage game. Its aim is to undo the enemy by analyzing his intentions, neutralizing his agents, scrutinizing the bona fides of defectors—and examining one's own ranks for traitors. It is not a way to win friends, but it is a way to influence people. Its landscape is "a wilderness of mirrors," a phrase from Eliot's "Gerontion" that Angleton quoted frequently. A ruder definition was provided to Winks by an anonymous critic of Angleton and his discipline: CI is like a dog returning to its own vomit.

Angleton, a withdrawn and secretive man, was ideally suited to CI. He doubted everything, suspected everyone. He suspected that Joe McCarthy, by making anticommunism look so bad, might be a Soviet agent. After the treachery of the Cambridge trio, Burgess, Maclean and Philby, was brought to light, suspicions that there was a mole burrowing about in the CIA proliferated. Angleton suspected everybody; some suspected Angleton. He had, after all, failed to discover Philby! Angleton thought the Soviet-

Chinese split a ruse designed to dull the West into complacency. Angleton's men tortured the defector Yuri Nosenko for three and a half years, trying to determine if he was a living ruse; they kept him in solitary, fed him poorly and subjected him to at least four different drugs. (Winks's account of this is notably short on detail.) Mortal minds boggle in the face of this "chilled delirium," another phrase from "Gerontion."

Of course, what drove the postwar Angleton was that old bugaboo, International Communism. With the temporary enemy—fascism—defeated, the United States could turn its attentions back to the long-term enemy, Moscow. When the war was winding down, Angleton was posted to one of the cold war's first battlegrounds, Italy. As Winks tells it: "Angleton knew that the Italian partisans, most of them Communists, had fought bravely against the Germans, but he firmly believed that they had at once shifted their loyalties to an international order and were now working for Moscow." Angleton didn't like internationalists; he thought, incredibly, that a world of competing nationalisms would be more stable. He also dreaded Communism because it undermined religion; he was a High Church Anglican who believed "in the energizing power of guilt."

The first priority of the U.S. government was preventing the loss of Italy to the forces uncharmed by guilt and nationalism. Without U.S. intervention, the left would probably have won the 1948 elections. So, in December 1947, one of the early directives of the new National Security Council, NSC 4/A, ordered the young CIA to prevent a Communist victory and to take whatever covert actions were necessary to achieve that goal.

And act they did, dispensing oodles of money and propaganda. Angleton et al. rebuilt Italian intelligence, relying heavily on Mussolini veterans (Winks doesn't share this personnel detail with his readers); creating and financing the Christian Democrats (though Winks treats such details of the party's paternity as mere rumor); funding journalists and entire newspapers (Winks attributes these claims to Soviet propaganda and those busy rumor mills). Among the newspapers was the English-language *Rome Daily American*, whose star reporter was Claire

Sterling, by the lights of Winks “a courageous and enterprising investigative journalist with mysteriously quick access to top stories.”

Winks, who clearly knows how to dig into an archive and weave his findings into a readable narrative, could have done much better with Italy. For Italy was the dress rehearsal for the cold war. Earl Brennan makes a brief appearance in *Cloak and Gown*, identified only as “a man with deep Italian contacts,” among whom was Vatican Undersecretary of State Giovanni Battista Montini, later Pope Paul VI. Brennan’s mission, unexamined by Winks, was to forge a coalition among previously immiscible rightists—Fascists, Freemasons, the Vatican and the Mafia. (Connoisseurs of Italian politics will note the longevity of this coalition, as revealed by the recent scandals involving the Vatican Bank, the Mob and the secret neofascist P-2 Masonic lodge, whose members included high-level soldiers, intelligence agents and businessmen.)

Montini was part of Allen Dulles’s “great coup,” Winks’s description of the wittily named Operation Sunrise—the separate peace Dulles had been negotiating with the German army in Northern Italy. Six days before V-E Day, Operation Sunrise succeeded. Why was Dulles so eager to negotiate with the Nazis? Winks tells only part of the story. He does recount, rather uncritically, the recruitment of SS General Reinhard Gehlen, head of military intelligence for German forces in the Soviet Union. Gehlen’s information was of substantial interest to those planning the cold war, so he and his organization were enlisted in the good fight against the Soviets. Washington, unlike Dulles and Donovan, was initially not fond of this scheme; Dulles was clearly exceeding his authority. Winks, eager to discount the image of an American embrace of the SS, emphasizes that it took Gehlen a year to persuade Washington to let him sign up. But as the cold war “heightened,” as Winks puts it—with no small contribution from the likes of Dulles—Washington overcame its initial objections. Under watchful American eyes, Gehlen and his men plied their trade, and Gehlen became director of the West German intelligence agency on its establishment in 1955. The roots of Bitburg run deep.

Aside from noting Sherman Kent’s “bothered” interest

in the Gehlen connection, Winks sees nothing criminal in this—but there was more. As Peter Dale Scott argues in an article in the Winter 1986 edition of the indispensable *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, the Gehlen deal was only part of a larger scheme, masterminded by Dulles, to recruit large numbers of SS officers for cold-war service. (Winks impugns the accuracy of *CAIB*, but cites no example of its failings, offering only a vague rebuttal of an article in the now-defunct *CounterSpy*. He even cites *CAIB* in his notes without dispute.) According to an article by John Loftus in the *Boston Globe* (May 29, 1984), Dulles, with the assistance of the Vatican, engineered the escape of thousands of Gestapo and SS officers. Among these, it now seems likely, were Josef Mengele, Klaus Barbie and possibly Adolf Eichmann. Exfiltrated Nazis were free to offer their services to Latin American dictators and drug traffickers as well as the CIA. As John Foster Dulles said (out of Winks's earshot), "For us there are two sorts of people in the world: there are those who are Christians and support free enterprise and there are the others."

Winks wonders why the CIA "shot itself in the foot" after the end of his Golden Age of U.S. intelligence. His answer is that, as intelligence got professionalized, it ceased to attract public citizens educated in civic virtues by our finer universities—the Ivy League, plus a few honorary Ivies, like the University of Virginia. (As a product of both, I recall little such coursework: maybe I was poorly advised.) With all the state university types now filling the CIA, it's no wonder Langley's feet are bullet-riddled. Sherman Kent could lead the invading U.S. army through the "Dantesque" streets of Palermo—and now "one could not even be certain that anyone read Dante anymore," mourns our Virgil in this netherworld.

But it was these public citizens educated in civic virtue who recruited Nazis, manipulated the Italian elections, fed LSD to the unwitting, opened our mail and overthrew the governments of Iran and Guatemala—all in the Golden Age. The Bay of Pigs disaster was planned in large measure by two Yalies, Richard Bissell and Tracy Barnes. In the name of what? Not civic virtue, but empire.

There is something profoundly antidemocratic about the

culture Winks admires. The CIA's Yale is the Yale of secret societies, like the infamous Skull and Bones, whose alumni fill the Agency. As far as I know, these secret societies are unique to Yale. They are housed in large, windowless sepulchers scattered around the Yale campus. Every year, each society taps a dozen juniors to join their upscale fraternity, where they recount their sexual histories, perform strange rituals, and prepare for a life among the ruling classes. (Secret society members living and dead include Dean Acheson, Cyrus Vance, William Sloane Coffin, William F. Buckley, Henry Luce and several Tafts and Whitneys.) Bones is considered the cream of the crop; it allegedly has ties to those staples of conspiracy theorists, Freemasonry and the Illuminati. Members reportedly get \$15,000 on selection, and are guaranteed a lifetime of remunerative employment. They even have a secret number—322. (Winks's chapter on Angleton begins on page 322, whatever that means.) All this ritual secrecy would seem hopelessly adolescent if its ethic didn't pervade the highest levels of our society.

Winks's specialty as a historian is empire, specifically the British empire. He asks, but shies away from answering straightforwardly, whether there is such a thing as an American empire. Of course there is. And it was conceived by the very virtuous scholars Winks celebrates. A story lurking between the lines of *Cloak and Gown* is the intellectual origin of the cold war. The use of the singular in Winks's subtitle—*Scholars in the Secret War 1939–1961*—is a tip-off: Germans, Russians, Iranians, American radicals are mere instances in a protracted war of Us against Them. The alleged Golden Age of U.S. intelligence is the symptom of an unexamined nostalgia—in this case, a nostalgia for the days of the short-lived American Century, a phrase coined, appropriately enough, by a right-wing Yale, Henry Luce.

