

INTELLIGENCE IN RECENT PUBLIC LITERATURE

OSS: THE SECRET HISTORY OF AMERICA'S FIRST CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY. By *Richard Harris Smith*. (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif., 1972. 458 pages.)*

On its face, at least, this work on the OSS has made and will continue to make a good impression. Even a cursory glance reveals the diligence of the young author who has done a large amount of research and who writes engagingly. Several discerning readers have given him very good marks for his effort, among them Arthur Schlesinger whom the author thanks for his pre-publication tour through the entire manuscript and for his helpful comment and criticism. Other OSS alumni were consulted about parts of the book in which they had a notable role, and some of them thought the effort commendable and said as much. One at least was well pleased at Mr. Smith's approach to his subject, which he saw as an implicit rebuttal of the cynical interpretation of American foreign policy which revisionist historians of the New Left have been touting. (More about this approach later.) I must confess that my own first reactions were favorable; to be sure I found a number of errors in the chapters whose content was most familiar to me and a number of surprising omissions, but as some readers will, I charitably concluded that other chapters—the ones whose substance lay not within my personal OSS experience—were probably sounder than the ones I knew about. The earmarks of scholarly endeavor which stuck out all over the book were an earnest of the author's training in systematic research.

A word about these earmarks—because in most works on a secret organization like OSS they are signally lacking. Spread through the book's 11 chapters and 353 pages of text there are 823 references which will lead you ultimately to a bibliography of 344 items (books, articles, and documents—published and unpublished). They will also lead you to a list of 75 persons whom the author interviewed (man-to-man or by telephone) and 103 other persons from whom he received written communication. Practically all of his respondents were OSS alumni. In addition to this display of scholarly apparatus, there are 238 proper footnotes at the bottom of the page which furnish important bits of information about people and things. Some of this is striking in its detail—even in the case of relatively minor figures. It is added evidence of Mr. Smith's busy researches and his tact in not revealing a present CIA connection of certain individuals who would prefer it that way.

All of the above, taken with the style of the writing and the scope of the book—it covers the field activities of OSS wherever they took place: Africa, western and southeastern Europe, China, and Southeast Asia—is bound to incline a reader to a ready-for-the-best frame of mind. I regret that a little time invested in a careful and critical second reading leaves me with a very different impression. Almost every way I look at it, I find the book wanting in most of the attributes of quality. My objections can be covered under four headings: general approach, approach to sourcing and the sourcing itself, errors, and omissions.

As one takes the book in big gulps, he gets the distinct feeling of reading about an institution whose inner soul—and outward conscious policy—was one

*With this, all thanks to Walter Pforzheimer and his associates, Linda Benton and Corinne De Lisle, for a lot of invaluable help.

in sympathy with the world's leftist movements. At a guess this is the residue of an earlier essay on OSS which Mr. Smith submitted to a graduate school for an advanced degree. Its central theme was that OSS was disciple and leader of what Mr. Smith called "social idealism" and that OSS had a conscious policy of backing—say—the extreme left against the extreme right, and the left of center versus the right of center, in all its major initiatives. Another guess is that someone who knew better tried to set Mr. Smith right in the matter. They explained that there were all kinds of people in OSS, ranging from Serge Obolensky (who wore his Tsarist ribbons) at one end of the political spectrum, to some ideological Marxists and self-professing Communists at the other. They also must have explained that just because a lot of OSS field officers were sympathetic to foreign leftist causes, and a lot more were unsympathetic with rightist ideologies related to that which we were trying to extirpate in general war, there was little reason to coalesce these individual (and in the circumstances quite normal) attitudes into a formal OSS party line. Those who knew General Donovan best knew that he had one overriding goal for his agency, and that was to do the enemy the greatest hurt in as many ways, in as many places, and as fast as possible. They also knew that he was a stickler for observing broad lines of national policy where they had been clearly established, such as, for an obvious example, the maintenance of the solidarity of the alliance. As to other lines of national policy—especially those on non-war issues, and those affecting the post-war world—few indeed had been clearly defined anywhere, and Donovan's people were no less free to roam this undemarcated area than the officers of other departments and agencies of the government. Many roamed freely. Mr. Smith's second effort, the book under review, shows that he was aware of the great diversity of people in OSS, but that he could not bring himself to reject out of hand his cherished dream thesis. The result is that you get both points of view throughout the book—with the emphasis on the earlier thesis.

It seems gratuitous to call attention once more to the fact that Americans everywhere were conscious of the political, social, and economic goals of the New Deal and that many Americans, especially young Americans, were sympathetic to them. It seems unnecessary to state that innate distrust of Soviet Communism was inevitably softened by the realization that the USSR was an ally, and an ally which was absorbing the overwhelming proportion of the Nazi war potential, and that, after all, the enemy *was* the Fascist Axis. As if these were not in themselves enough to account for the left-leaning posture of many young (and old) officers of OSS, there were also compelling pragmatic reasons. To be pro-monarchy in Italy was not merely to back a royal family which had gone along with Mussolini, but also to back a sure loser. To be pro-Tito and for the Communist irregulars in northern Italy and in France was perhaps far less to be accounted for on ideological grounds, than upon a realization that among the sketchily reported hordes of underground warriors these stood out for their organizing ability, their courage, skill, and resolve. That another OSS group had a close relationship with Ho Chi Minh in northern Indochina is not so much to be cited as evidence of OSS's moral devotion to anti-colonialism, as evidence of the fact that the principal task of the group was to collect intelligence, and they found Ho's apparatus an admirable source of supply. I do not wish to suggest that Mr. Smith is ignorant of how these practical considerations influenced OSS Chiefs and lone Indians, but I do wish to say that he plays down their importance to nurture the alternative thesis.

The saddest result of all this turns up in the final chapter, where—to clinch his point about OSS—he chooses to contrast that agency with what he would term its direct lineal descendant, the CIA. According to Mr. Smith, critics of the present organization

have often wondered how an amateur secret service that once gave hope to Ho Chi Minh's guerrillas could have evolved into an "invisible government" of the Cold War era. The answer is simple. The CIA is no aberrant mutation of "Donovan's dreamers" [the heading of Smith's first chapter]; it is in many ways the mirror image of OSS.

The comparison thus drawn between the two institutions must be weighed in terms of Mr. Smith's license to speak usefully about either. As is already clear, I cannot share one of his basic thoughts about OSS, and I am not ready to admit that he knows much more about CIA. While awaiting proof to the contrary, we must guess that his store of knowledge of the Agency derives from a nine months' tour in headquarters at a junior grade and the reading of the materials cited in his bibliography like the books of Tully,* Wise and Ross,** and the long article of Fred Cook which constituted a special issue of the *New York Nation*.***

There is another aspect of Mr. Smith's general approach which calls for comment, and this is the undue stress he gives to the lack of organization and discipline in OSS. It is just irresponsible journalism to decorate Chapter One with pixie tales of General Donovan's supposed impatience with organization diagrams and administrative detail. Whatever example of this sort the General may have set, it stopped right there. It did not go beyond the Buxtons, Chestons, Magruders, the branch directors, and on down the line. Administration at headquarters and in the large units overseas was no more chaotic than anywhere else in a wartime government, and a lot less than in many another war agency. With a few notable—and to me inexplicable—exceptions, Donovan's principal lieutenants were an able no-nonsense group. What went on in tiny units operating far afield in friendly and especially in enemy territory obviously could not be controlled as closely as a headquarters company. Even so, there was a lot less irresponsible free wheeling than Mr. Smith and the other romanticizers of OSS like to pretend.

"Insubordination became a way of life for OSS officers, but Donovan was unconcerned," begins a paragraph in the first chapter. The theme then continues for the best part of three pages and is recalled elsewhere in the book. If the reader comes away with the feeling that indiscipline was basic to the institution, this is not because he has misread Mr. Smith. Yet how wrong he was. And how better to illustrate his wrongness than his own account of General Donovan's peremptory handling of Robert Solborg's and Arthur Roseborough's disregard of instructions. This sort of response is far closer to the way most OSS alumni will think of the matter of indiscipline than in terms of the whimsical anecdotes of uncaught and unpunished culprits.

Now about the sources for Mr. Smith's book and the way he used them. The first thing to say on this subject is that Mr. Smith, like his recent predecessors, did not have access to the official OSS archive. He knew that this was the way it was going to be before he started, and that if he was to write the book he would

**CIA, The Inside Story* (Morrow, New York, 1962).

***The Invisible Government* (Random House, New York, 1964) and *The Espionage Establishment* (Random House, New York, 1967).

****The Nation* (Special Issue, 24 June 1961).

have to use the next best thing. A more discriminating student would have perceived that the next best thing—with a few exceptions—was a pretty poor substitute, and that a book resting upon it was doomed from the start. Solid workmanlike history has seldom, if ever, been written from the stuff that leaks out around the edges of a secret organization.

Have a look at what Mr. Smith had to work with. The very best of it consists of papers which some officers of OSS took with them into private life and then turned over to public repositories. There is, for example, the collection which Preston Goodfellow, a chief of the Special Operations branch and trusted Donovan lieutenant, bestowed upon the Hoover Institution at Stanford (supposedly under seal until 1980)! Judging only from Mr. Smith's footnote references, the documents touch upon a number of OSS matters and are highly illuminating. There are also the papers of Joseph Hayden, who began life in OSS as a member of the Board of Analysts of the Research and Analysis Branch (he was a political scientist by trade, with a specialty in the Far East), and moved over to one of the clandestine branches and served in China. There are the papers of Captain (later Vice Admiral) Miles, famous as the American deputy director of the Sino-American Cooperative Organization and for 10 months the Chief of OSS in the Far East; the papers of Francis P. Miller (one of the principal officers in the Sussex operation) and among which Mr. Smith says he found a copy of the official history of Sussex. Lastly there are the papers of Harley Stevens (who, among other jobs, was commander of the OSS detachment in Chungking); of Leland Rounds (one of the control officers in North Africa nominally in place to police the U.S.-North African economic accords and in fact one of the purveyors of highly important intelligence prior to the Torch operation of 1942); and of DeWitt Poole (Chief of the Foreign Nationalities Branch of OSS).

There can be no question of the value of this sort of material to a historian, but one suspects that it cannot illuminate more than a tiny fraction of the vast screen of total OSS activities.

So it will be with the next echelon of material. This consists of books and articles written by OSS officers at a time when their memories were still fresh, or perhaps later with the aid of letters or diaries; plus similar publications of other civilian officials and military men whose business took them into contact with this or that part of OSS. I would include in this group books like Mr. Dulles's *Secret Surrender*,* which, though published in 1966, rests solidly upon a long memo for the record which Mr. Dulles and his colleague Gaevernitz wrote in 1945; Carlton Hayes's *Wartime Mission in Spain*,** and General Stilwell's *Papers*.*** I would include some others like the books of Donald Downes and Peter Tompkins with a warning about their reliability. These books, with the documents of my first category, would constitute what a critical scholar would call his primary materials. When taken all together and stacked against what one ought to have at hand to describe the multifarious real-life activity, the myriad undertakings, and signal successes and failures of the OSS, you have something perilously close to nothing at all.

Of course, Mr. Smith must have been aware of just that, and so he dropped down to the next category of written testimony. This is the material that constitutes the bulk of the bibliography and an odd lot it is. Some of it has no more

*Harper & Row, New York, 1966.

**Macmillan, New York, 1945.

***Sloane, New York, 1948.

than a whiff of relevance to Mr. Smith's task. For example, he includes some books which recount the adventures of some British Special Operations Executive operatives in Italy, perhaps to compensate for what Mr. Smith could not find out about OSS's special operations in this theatre. He includes the book of Joyce Lussu (wife of the liberal Italian political figure) which was published in 1969 and is seemingly an undocumented reminiscence. The book is about the turmoil in Italy and about Lussu; on one page the author adverts to Benedetto Croce's presence on Capri in the fall of 1943. Since it was at this time that Croce recommended to Donovan that the Americans put the Italian General Pavone in charge of a combat legion of anti-Fascist Italians to fight at the side of the Anglo-American forces in Italy, the Croce incident becomes relevant to the OSS story, and the Lussu book which relates to Croce becomes, by extension, a legitimate item of the bibliography. There are a good number of entries whose claim to notice are as tenuous as this one.

Others have a much better claim, in that their content and their authors are closer to the subject and to OSS activities. But the bulk of this group of books was written long after the fact, largely on the basis of unaided memory—few if any reveal any other source and to this reviewer seem in large part trivial, self-serving, or grossly inaccurate, or all three. Take for example the two books of Robert Alcorn. Mr. Alcorn in 1962 and 1965 wrote as if he had been a privileged and important OSS insider, while in fact he held a modest administrative position in London which afforded him no more than observer status—and that, usually, at several removes from the action. In these circumstances I for one am not surprised to find a number of Mr. Smith's passages written upon Alcorn's authority that I know to be aimless woolgathering or inexcusably erroneous.

The peril of relying upon this sort of published material was nowhere better illustrated than in Mr. Smith's use of the book of James Dugan and Carroll Stewart (cited in a footnote only) on the Ploesti raids. In a section devoted to the evacuation of downed American flyers from Rumania, the authors take a breather from their main task to recount how an OSS team came to recently-liberated Bucharest to lend a hand in the rescue, to inventory the damage to the Ploesti refineries, and to pick up any materials of intelligence interest which the retreating Germans had left behind. The Dugan/Stewart account is full of jocular fantasy, most of which Mr. Smith found out when he checked the story with Frederick Burkhardt—one of the OSS team members. Despite what nonsense Burkhardt was able to purge from Mr. Smith's original understanding, perhaps a dozen significant errors remain in Mr. Smith's single paragraph.

Mixed among the irrelevancies and the balderdash of the bibliography are perhaps a score of books written after the events they describe which are sober, sound, and careful. I note them with pleasure as a judicious corrective to what has just gone before. But let me add that there is no critical phrase anywhere in the bibliography which will identify them. In your innocence you will be left to flip a coin as to which is the better book: the Corey Ford, Alistair McBaine *Cloak and Dagger*,* which contains scarcely a paragraph without some dismal error of omission or commission, or the Roger Hall *You're Stepping on my Cloak and Dagger*,** which is a humorous and at the same time accurate account of an OSS man's training for irregular warfare. If Mr. Smith knew the difference, he does not let on.

*Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 1946.

**Norton, New York, 1957.

Beyond the written word there was that vast reservoir of oral testimony to be tapped, and Mr. Smith exploited this with commendable zeal. He uncovered an astonishing number of OSS alumni (and less than half a dozen alumnae), got in touch with them, and pumped. Some of what he got from them is cited in the footnotes, but no one save the author can know what else they contributed. Where his informants requested anonymity, they got it. There can be no question of the value of the information Mr. Smith acquired from these interviews and exchanges of correspondence. Important parts of the book could not have been composed without them. Yet in his use of oral testimony Mr. Smith was up against two disadvantages. The first is the obvious one that these memories which he tried to journey through were already 25 years stale. The second is that, however good or poor individual memories were, Mr. Smith approached them without the basic tool of the interrogator's trade—namely, as full a pre-knowledge of the subject as only the official or other authoritative sources could afford. Without access to the OSS archive, and without an inventory of solid background information, Mr. Smith was at best at a very serious disadvantage. The results are clear. Holes and misremembrances in this or that man's recollections are all but impossible to cope with, and the other non-additive episodic memories which were tapped led more surely to misconstructions and distortions than to the detached overview that Mr. Smith sought. In fact, the business of trying to patch together scores and scores of flawed and disparate bits of oral testimony is, I fancy, one of the reasons that the book is as it is.

Surely it will account for some of the errors, not all. Irrespective of their source, there are far too many of them. Some of the most damaging are the errors of innocence. Not one of these is much in itself; in fact, most would be wholly unimportant if they did not underscore the fact that no part of what Mr. Smith knows of his subject derives from his personal experience. OSS was one year dead before Mr. Smith took his first breath, and as far as he is concerned, OSS might almost as well have existed in the forties of the nineteenth or eighteenth centuries. That there were living witnesses around to query seems not to have compensated for his unfamiliarity with the institution or its era. How, for example, could anyone professing a knowledge of intelligence matters put the headquarters of the Gehlen organization in an "OSS compound near Frankfurt" and have the Gehlen group "fed and clothed by Donovan's officers"? How could a serious investigator of OSS put Rudolph Winnacker, Milwaukee- and Madison-educated and an American citizen since young manhood, among the recent German emigrés on the R and A staff, or speak in the same phrase of Edward Mason and Walt Rostow as if they were co-equals? In the early 1940's, Mr. Mason was already a senior Harvard professor and among our country's half dozen leading economists; Walt Rostow, still in his mid-twenties, was a junior research assistant to Mason. How could one mention Harold Macmillan three times with three different points of reference without once connecting him to the man with the same name who became the British Prime Minister. Is it possible that Mr. Smith did not know? When he speaks of someone in "OSS uniform," another "with the assimilated rank of OSS Major," and identifies the Purple Gang with Philadelphia, one is nudged to fear the worst.

The damage which this sort of error does to Mr. Smith's credibility on more important matters is augmented by the multitude of simple run-of-the-mill mistakes. There are hundreds of them. One group of them has so incensed a reader that he has muttered about legal action. Another, surrounding the murder of William Holohan in northern Italy, by ignoring the findings of the Italian court and accepting the story of one of those found guilty by it in absentia, has stirred justifiable muttering of another sort. Among the many other errors there

are two at least of special concern to readers of this review: one is the canard which identifies Mr. Dulles as one of the directors of the J. Henry Schroder banking concern (which is correct) and which then links that concern with that of the German financier, Kurt von Schroeder, who was one of the Nazis' financial angels (the linkage is dead wrong). Through this line of argument, Mr. Dulles becomes part of the circle of Hitler's early well-wishers and financial backers. This malevolent and silly story began in one of the publications of the Soviet propaganda mill in a pamphlet called *Falsificators of History*,* published in 1948 in Moscow in English. Fred Cook borrowed it (without attribution) for his previously cited article on CIA in the *Nation*. Inasmuch as the Moscow piece does not appear in Mr. Smith's bibliography and the Cook article does, one must assume that the source was Cook. Incidentally if Mr. Smith has concluded that the OSS was motivated by the spirit of liberal idealism, his reading of Fred Cook would cast the CIA as its mirror image, and make no mistake.

Another error which offers more important hurt to the reputation of OSS is the allegation (p. 6) that

unaware that a top secret [U.S.] naval intelligence team had broken the Japanese military code, OSS men in Portugal secretly entered the Japanese embassy and stole a copy of the enemy's code book. The Japanese discovered the theft and promptly changed their ciphers. Washington was left without a vital source of information, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were irate.

Mr. Smith's source for this is a popular book, *Cloak and Cipher*, by Dan Moore and Martha Waller.** What he learned from this book he incorporated in that paragraph of Chapter I which begins "Insubordination became a way of life for OSS officers, but Donovan was unconcerned," and in which he goes on to list a few places where OSS operatives got out of line without bringing down directorial reprimand or punishment. The story from Moore and Waller so nicely fitted the requirements of the paragraph as perhaps to inhibit more research into the matter which might add confirmation (unnecessary?) or denial (unwanted?). In all events, there is no evidence that Mr. Smith knew that the primary source was a far more credible and weighty affair than the slight offering he seized upon. The true source was part of a long letter which none other than General George C. Marshall addressed to Governor Thomas Dewey (dated 27 September 1944) and which a year later General Marshall introduced in his testimony to the Congressional committee investigating the Pearl Harbor attack. (The committee subsequently published it.) Toward the end of the communication is the following:

...some of Donovan's people (the OSS), without telling us, instituted a secret search of the Japanese Embassy offices in Portugal. As a result the entire military attaché Japanese code all over the world was changed, and though this occurred over a year ago, we have not been able to break the new code and have thus lost this invaluable source of information, particularly regarding the European situation.

The occasion for the letter was General Marshall's concern that Governor Dewey, in the heat of the presidential campaign, would reiterate the allegation of President Roosevelt's complicity in the Pearl Harbor attack and in so doing build his case on Roosevelt's familiarity with Japanese diplomatic traffic and the U.S. capability to read it. To avoid the horrendous consequences of such a disclosure, General Marshall sent the Governor what has been called "the most

*Soviet Information Bureau, Moscow, February 1948.

**Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1962.

revealing single document in the annals of cryptology."* In it he told of the stunning successes of the U.S. crypt-analytic effort on Japanese communications, and how they had made possible a number of decisive American naval actions against the Japanese. Wishing above all to underscore the sensitivity of the source, he noted that the report of Justice Roberts on Pearl Harbor had had to be purged of all reference to our ability to read the Japanese traffic before it was made public. And then just to cap the point, he included the two sentences I have quoted about OSS in Portugal.

Most readers of this review will know that General Marshall's initiative was successful; that Governor Dewey with some reluctance read the letter and then scrupulously observed its injunction. Few readers will know that General Marshall had been previously misinformed about the incident regarding OSS in Lisbon, and had made an incorrect charge which the likes of Moore and Waller and now Richard Harris Smith perpetuate. No one without access to the OSS and other intelligence records could possibly set the matter to rights.** The short of it is that whatever the OSS people in Lisbon got out of the Japanese naval attaché's office was not related to the attaché code, and that whether or not the Japanese were alarmed at the scent of an OSS penetration of the Lisbon premises, they did little or nothing to make the attaché communications system more difficult to read. We were reading virtually all of it both during and after the events at issue. With this I hope that OSS is exculpated from what would appear the most damaging charge ever made against it.

As I have remarked, little personal blame should be attached to Mr. Smith for his (unknowingly, to be sure) going along with General Marshall in this particular error. His omissions, on the other hand, are not so easily pardoned. From something that he wrote to one of his contacts—and which is borne out by the general character of the book—his concern focused on the overseas field operations of OSS. His successes, such as they are, lie largely in his accounts of the doings of the secret intelligence (SI) and special operations (SO) branches and the operational groups (OG). But the other field activities—X-2 (counter-espionage), MO (morale operations), MU (Maritime Unit), even the FP (field photographic), all of which had substantial duties (and successes) overseas—get little notice or none at all. But this is not the worst.

Far more serious is the omission of almost all reference to the entire Washington scene. If this was a well-formulated intention, it would have been considerate of him to have put some such confession into his subtitle instead of the garish "The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency." It would have been prudent of him to have given the matter a paragraph in his preface. But he did not, with the result that the studious reader is left to wonder about what formed, directed, and nurtured these overseas empires, who received what they reported, and what was done with it.

Setting his sights thus, Mr. Smith is under no obligation to examine the fundamental problems of the OSS: things like General Donovan's leadership where it counted—his relationship with the President, the Congress, the Joint Chiefs, the Services and their intelligence branches, and the rest of the war agencies. There is no obligation to look to the principal executives and administrators (the men I have mentioned earlier and a number of others), to their tasks, and how they performed them. There is no need to look at recruitment, training, cover, commo, the medics, security, the vast logistics service, personnel and its problems with both the Civil Service Commission and the military, and the OSS

*David Kahn, *The Codebreakers*, Macmillan, New York, 1967, p. 605.

**My thanks to Mr. Thomas F. Troy who led me to the appropriate OSS folders.

budget. With the bathwater, out went these babies plus another which is to the reviewer painful on both personal and professional accounts. This is the Research and Analysis Branch, which to be sure gets its marginal mentions (often wrong) in the context of its people in the overseas posts, but nothing else.

The large majority of R and A's staff stayed in Washington, and the bulk of its work was designed for high-level consumption within the national government and the Pentagon building. Clearly, then, it was not within Mr. Smith's terms of reference, but in leaving it out he denied himself the chance to discuss a "first," and a distinguished one, in American intelligence history and an important contribution to OSS's remarkable record. Incidentally, of all the branches, R and A was the most overt, the one most authoritatively commented upon by former insiders, and the one whose substantive output has been largely declassified. Leaving it out of the story was to leave out the part most manageable to a diligent student working without benefit of the closed official record.

Is this the kind of book that OSS is owed? The answer is, of course, no. Is this the best that can be expected? The answer here is both no and yes. In the first place, given Mr. Smith's diligence, his book did not have to have this one's grievous shortcomings. With more skepticism about what he read and what he heard and more caution about what he decided to commit to print, he could have written a much better book. But it would still be far short of what the subject requires. It would be because the job is bigger than a two-man/year stint with the materials which Mr. Smith used, and bigger than a 20-man/year stint with access to the official OSS archive. Other scholars have looked at the task, plumbed its magnitude and turned to more rewarding projects when they learned that the archive would not be opened to them.

Our cousins have made a start of doing things differently; they have liberated part of the archive of the British "Special Operations Executive" and made it available to a mature and critical scholar, M. R. D. Foot. Mr. Foot's book, *SOE in France: An Account of the Work of the British Special Operations Executive in France, 1940-1944** is a praiseworthy example of an outsider trying "simply to explain what happened, without conscious bias in any direction," and endeavoring to write a healthy corrective to "the turmoil of under-informed publicity that has surrounded what has so far appeared in English about secret operations in France. . . ." The writing of the book's first draft took more than two years (note: for SOE in France, *only*). What happened next—namely, the clearance by "a number of people who had a claim to be heard on what it said," the consequent "further research and . . . some changes and amplifications of text," plus the actual publication—took another four years. From the book's beginning, when Prime Minister Macmillan authorized some research on the subject, through an official announcement of the project made to Parliament, to the actual printing, which was done by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, it had the standing of a piece of government-sponsored business. This is one way to handle an important bit of national history whose sources were highly classified 30 years ago. There are many other ways, any one of which would probably better serve the national interest than the one adopted by the author of *OSS*.

Sherman Kent

*Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1966.