

On the track of treachery — the assault on Norman

by Michael G. Fry

*Two fairly recent books have dealt with Herbert Norman, the Canadian diplomat who took his own life in Cairo in 1957. The books are both concerned with the attacks on Norman's loyalty made both during his lifetime and since. They take opposite views, and the more recent one is the subject of this article by Michael Fry. That is the volume by James Barros entitled *No Sense of Evil: The Espionage Case of E. Herbert Norman*, published in Mississauga, Ontario, by Random House of Canada (1988 paper edition, 330 pages, \$5.50).*

Michael Fry, onetime Director of the Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University in Ottawa, is Professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. He is engaged in a project on the Suez crisis of 1956, and in that pursuit has been researching under Freedom of Information provisions into the papers of General Douglas MacArthur and the newly opened portions of the papers of President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Those documents provide some fresh material on the world in which Herbert Norman served.

Long before the state of affairs that Raymond Aron called "guerre impossible, paix improbable" prevailed, and was labeled the Cold War, for centuries before we faced the relationship between and the consequences of the emergence of bipolarity and the development of nuclear weapons, the great powers, in their external affairs, behaved in ways that blurred the distinction between war and peace, organized armed conflict and diplomacy, friends and enemies. Whether formally at war or enjoying peace, dealing with allies or antagonists, acting unilaterally or in alliances, great powers, persistently, systematically, often justifiably, and always out of perceived necessity, practised what one might call quasi-war and diplomacy. The presence of terrorism, non-state actors and international organizations merely adds fresh dimensions of complexity.

Pushing towards the frontiers of war, governments, legally and illegally, and with varying degrees of constraint and success, involve themselves in plots, assassinations, kidnapping, coups d'états, revolts, uprisings, arms supplies, the provision of weapons training and advisers, sabotage, demolition, subversion, guerrilla warfare, resistance movements, and in support of the enemies of their enemies be they revolutionary governments or revolutionaries. These activities are the darkside of govern-

ment, the agenda, for example, of the SOE, and then the CIA, special and covert operations wrapped in the imperative of "plausible denial." As the critical National Security Council directive of 1948 pointed out, "United States actions in support of the aforementioned anti-communist groups were to be so planned and executed that any United States government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if uncovered then the United States government can disclaim any responsibility for them." These activities are a form of policy implementation. Straddling the boundaries of diplomacy and the more conventional work of embassies, governments seek information, called intelligence, that is military, political and economic. They do so, more opaquely in war, more translucently in peace, from friends and enemies. They seek to deny intelligence to friends and enemies, if not equally so, at home and abroad. These are the agendas of the intelligence and counter-intelligence communities of the state, of the CIA, MI5 and MI6, the KGB, and the intelligence branches of various government departments. It is a world of moles and spies and their recruiters, masters, controllers, catchers and interrogators, of agents, double and triple, of espionage and counter-espionage, of defectors and couriers, of surveillance, intercepts, cryptology, code-breaking and deciphering, of disinformation, propaganda and their uses. It is a technology-sensitive world, on the ground with bugs, wiretaps, listening devices and filmed documents, in space with satellites, and under the oceans, tapping the cable traffic. Its various activities, in peacetime, are subject to conventions, rules and restraints, even shared values, to the extent that one might speak of an intelligence regime. Intelligence operations are an essential part of policy formulation; intelligence gathering and assessment are an integral part of decision-making processes, an aid to logical debate and rational choice. The world of intelligence and counter-intelligence has its compelling moral themes affecting individuals, groups and society as a whole — disloyalty, treachery and treason. They impose a stern moral obligation on those who write about it.

Evidence

Military history, in its various forms, and diplomatic history now reinvigorated and called international history, are established, venerable, clearly definable parts of the discipline of history, and components of the field of inquiry that is international relations. The study of intelligence, and covert operations, are, by comparison, still in their academic infancy. At the root of this situation lies neither the absence of problems and puzzles