

During the Cold War, the CIA maintained a vast web of clandestine "media assets"—reporters, magazine editors, freelance writers—and other agents in positions to distribute propaganda "themes" around the globe. The Agency, as the CIA is called by insiders, also used its propaganda sources to help or harm foreign political leaders. The classic example is the attempt to discredit the Chilean Marxist-socialist leader, Salvador Allende. Between 1963 and 1973, the CIA spent over \$12 million in Chile on anti-Allende propaganda.

From its headquarters in Langley, Virginia, the Agency produced a flood of information flowing secretly into hundreds of hidden channels around the world. Some seventy to eighty covert media insertions were made each day into newspapers and magazine in other nations (including fellow democracies). As part of this effort, the Agency developed a wide array of front organizations in the United States to help spread its propaganda overseas. Frank Wisner, the first chief of the Agency's covert political warfare, compared these organizations to a "Mighty Wurlitzer" organ pumping out messages from America across the latitudes.

Wilford traces the CIA's creation and nurturing of these fronts. They included émigré factions, intellectuals, labor unions, religious organizations, the media, ethnic groups, and student associations. One was the National Student Associations (NSA). A leak disclosing the NSA's ties to the CIA attracted newspaper headlines in 1967 and led to the collapse of the CIA-front alliances in this subterranean war against Communism. The author tells us that rarely were the individuals and groups involved in the front activity unaware ("unwitting") of their partnership with America's premier espionage agency.

Wilford observes that the CIA's use of front organizations jeopardized the reputations and possibly even the safety of students, journalists, intellectuals, and others who had nothing to do with these fronts—a potentially dangerous guilt by association for innocents living or traveling abroad. Were the propaganda efforts worth it? The answer "is very much open to question," the author concludes (p. 252). He adds: "Cultural diplomacy, the winning of hearts and minds, should be left to overt government agencies and genuine, nongov-

ernment organizations. This is the most valuable lesson to be drawn from the history of the "Mighty Wurlitzer" (p. 254).

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J. Edgar Hoover and the Anti-interventionists: FBI Political Surveillance and the Rise of the Domestic Security State, 1939–1945. By Douglas M. Charles. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007. x, 197 pp. Cloth, \$39.95, ISBN 978-0-8142-1061-1. CD-ROM, \$9.95, ISBN 978-0-8142-9140-5.)

In *J. Edgar Hoover and the Anti-interventionists* Douglas M. Charles uses newly released Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) files to study with great precision the collaboration between the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration and J. Edgar Hoover's FBI in a campaign to surveil, discredit, and, in a few cases, prosecute FDR's isolationist critics between the August 1939 outbreak of war in Europe and the attack on Pearl Harbor. Charles provides new insights and a wealth of information on what the historian Leo Ribuffo has felicitously called the "brown smear," efforts by a broad coalition of interventionists to discredit isolationism by associating it with a supposed Nazi "fifth column" in the United States. The campaign culminated in that summa of the brown smear, John Roy Carlson's best seller of 1943, *Under Cover: My Four Years in the Nazi Underworld of America*, and a sensational sedition trial of "fifth columnists" in 1944.

Charles examines the FBI investigations of Charles Lindbergh; the America First Committee; senators Burton Wheeler, Gerald Nye, and David Walsh; and Congressman Hamilton Fish. He argues that in none of those cases did the FBI have sufficient grounds to conduct criminal investigations, although it might be argued that the Bureau had reason to investigate how Nazi propaganda had been sent under the congressional frank of some of those isolationist congressmen. Many investigations have been launched with less to go on than that, and, as Martin Luther pointed out, in law as in farming it is all a matter of whose ox is gored.

Charles insists that Hoover's efforts to help

the administration combat critics of its policies laid the foundation for what he calls the domestic security state, later the national security state of the Cold War. He points to Hoover's widespread use of illegal wiretaps against the isolationists, since federal wiretapping was outlawed by the Communications Act of 1934 until the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act. But on at least one occasion FDR gave public support to Hoover after his agents had been caught installing a wiretap. Administration lawyers argued that the prohibition in the Communications Act on intercepting and divulging phone conversations came into effect only if the government divulged the intercepted conversations (which it had no intention of doing), and FDR himself maintained in a May 21, 1940, letter to Attorney General Robert Jackson not quoted by Charles that the 1939 *Nardone v. United States* Supreme Court decision was "never intended . . . to apply to grave matters involving defense of the nation" (quoted in Richard Gid Powers, *Secrecy and Power*, 1987, p. 237). Since there was seemingly plausible evidence of a nexus between the isolationists and Nazis, the FBI could have and would have argued it was justified in investigating whether such links really existed.

In the end, it is not altogether clear just how significant Hoover's efforts against the isolationists were, since events, the isolationists' own ineptitude, and FDR's masterful polemical skills (demolishing the leading congressional isolationists with the mocking refrain, "Martin, Barton, and Fish") probably would have done them in without any assistance from Hoover and his G-men. But Charles certainly proves that if the anti-isolationist campaign had failed, it would not have been for any lack of effort by Hoover.

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Soapy: A Biography of G. Mennen Williams.
 By Thomas J. Noer. (Ann Arbor: University
 of Michigan Press, 2005. xvi, 419 pp. \$79.95,
 ISBN 0-472-11508-1.)

From a wealthy conservative Republican fam-

ily, G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams began to question laissez-faire philosophy while a student at Princeton University during the depression. Williams became a liberal Democrat while attending the University of Michigan Law School (1933-1936). He was influenced by the New Deal, the Liberal Club, and Nancy Quirk, a liberal social work student whom he met in 1935 and married in 1937.

In his first campaign for public office, Williams, a protégé of U.S. Supreme Court justice Frank Murphy, was elected Michigan's governor in 1948. Williams was an indefatigable campaigner, promoting a liberal program, appealing to fellow veterans, and appearing before unions, white ethnic groups, and African American audiences. He was part of a political network that included his wife; Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) unions; and key mentors and allies, especially Hicks Griffiths, Martha Griffiths, and Neil Staebler. That network revitalized the state Democratic party, helping Williams win reelection five times.

Thomas J. Noer's core argument is that Williams "never hesitated or wavered in his convictions or in his belief that he was right. It was his greatest strength but also his most telling political weakness" (p. 214). Williams's confidence came from a strong attachment to his Episcopalian faith and his belief that the Episcopal message was an egalitarian one and that by promoting liberalism and civil rights he was doing God's work.

Noer argues that Williams was too confrontational and missed opportunities to compromise. His best example is Williams's losing confrontation with the Republican legislature over the budget, which led to the state's bankruptcy in 1959. Williams was forced to go along with the Republicans' approach and to abandon his hopes for the presidency.

The reader is left to wonder how Williams succeeded in securing from Republican legislatures increased funding for social programs and for the Mackinac Bridge, but Noer does explain well how Williams worked effectively with a Republican ally to pass a fair employment practices law in 1955. During his first three terms, in a climate of anticommunist hysteria, Williams had to contend with a Republican push for anticommunist laws. Williams signed several such laws, including some

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