

of fundamental policies, to the articulation of shared interests, and to the investigation of the conditions for securing such policies and interests. The task, in its preliminary aspects, is one of stock-taking, of ascertaining and assessing with as much explicitness and specificity as possible, by utilizing all the insights and operational techniques offered by the contemporary social sciences, the policies actually sought and effectively applied by different decision-makers in their external interactions. From such stock-taking might emerge a map, as it were, of the configurations of public order that in fact presently obtain on a transnational scale. In its fullness, the task involved has been aptly described:

(1) to develop a jurisprudence, a comprehensive theory and appropriate methods of inquiry, which will assist the peoples of the world to distinguish public orders based on human dignity and public orders based either on a law which denies human dignity or a denial of law itself for the simple supremacy of naked force; and (2) to invent and recommend the authority structures and functions (principles and procedures) necessary to a world public order that harmonizes with the growing aspirations of the overwhelming numbers of the peoples of the globe and is in accord with the proclaimed values of human dignity enunciated by the moral leaders of mankind.¹⁸

This is the more precise statement of the challenging opportunity thrust upon scholars of international law. It is hoped that with or without further harassment, Mr. Jenks may turn his very considerable powers to the fuller exploitation of this opportunity.

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MASTERS OF DECEIT. By J. Edgar Hoover. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1958. Pp. 374. \$5.00.

WORKS such as the collage, African primitivist statuary, the canvasses of Jackson Pollack, and the finger painting of talented monkeys have revived debate recently over the classic problem of aesthetics—what is Art? Philosophers have noted that there are at least three analytical perspectives from which one can approach this question—the intention of the artist, the intrinsic merits of the work, and the subjective reaction of the viewer—and that one's judgment about a controversial work usually will depend upon one's vantage point. Although this seems a singularly inapposite opening for a review of J. Edgar Hoover's best-selling volume on communism, I find these exceedingly helpful terms in which to consider *Masters of Deceit*.

Hoover deals with five topics. He describes the personalities and doctrines of international communism from the days of Marx and Engels to the present,

18. McDougal & Lasswell, *The Identification and Appraisal of Diverse Systems of Public Order*, 53 AM. J. INT'L L. 1, 28 (1959).

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a description which includes a sketch of early American communists. He discusses communism's appeal to certain Americans and why most of these people have broken with the theory or the party. The contemporary American Communist Party is portrayed in its "open" activities and, in a separate section, in its underground operations. Finally, Hoover offers a refutation of the "false religion" of communism and presents a brief program for insuring that Americans "stay free."

The Author's Intention

Why, in 1958, did Hoover choose to write this book, and at its specific level? In his foreword, the author tells us that, since 1919 (when he made his initial "extensive and penetrating study" of the communist movement), he has been a close observer of communist ideas and activities. Now, he felt, it was vital to give the American public, without "sensationalism," the "basic, everyday facts of communism," presented "in almost primer form." Since Hoover describes Communist Party literature in the United States as "written in a simple style and slanted to the average reader," *Masters of Deceit* may be taken as an attempt to fight fire with fire.

His intention explains a good deal about the tone and flow of the volume. For example, the narrative of "day-to-day" life in the American Communist Party features passages such as the following:

Eleanor is washing the dishes. Her husband, Henry, has just gone to work. The two children are scurrying around the house, ready to leave for school.

Suddenly, there is a knock at the door. It is Ruth, who lives across the street. Ruth is chairman of the East Side Communist Club. Her husband, Robert, is state secretary of the Communist Party and a full-time paid functionary.

"Starting the day out just right," smiles Ruth. "The kitchen is all cleaned up. You can come and help us."¹

Portraits of the personalities who shaped the communist tradition are in the same genre. Here, for example, is Hoover on Marx:

He was an intelligent child, but temperamental. At school his marks were superior, and his capacity for work, a trait that was to continue all through his life, tremendous. But he did not make friends easily, perhaps because of self-pride. He made arrogant remarks and wrote satirical verse. He was a "smart" young man, but already vain, bitter, and rebellious.

Strangely, his heart held an inner love for a home-town girl, Jenny von Westphalen. . . . She was beautiful, charming, and of a socially high rank, much higher than that of the Marx family. She, too, was desperately in love, but she feared to tell her parents. What would they think—the daughter of Privy Councillor Ludwig von Westphalen marrying Karl Marx?²

1. P. 147.

2. P. 14.

Those who might wonder whether Marxist-Leninist theory lends itself to "primer" form will find this author equal to the challenge. Marx, he explains, "joined two very old ideas:"

(1) That everything in the universe, whether a blade of grass, a human being, or society itself, is constantly changing and at the same time is in conflict. This is called *dialectics*. (2) That God doesn't exist and the world is composed of "living" matter. Hence, man is walking dust, without spark or image of his divine Creator. This idea is called *materialism*; hence, *dialectical materialism*.³

Whether Hoover struggled through draft after draft to produce these simple sentences, filled with simple thoughts for simple people, or whether they tripped effortlessly from his pen, we cannot know. We do know that he eschewed the services of a polished ghost writer; that he set himself to write a primer and that no literary critic is likely to question this self-description. Sophisticates who no longer find McGuffey's sentence structure as challenging as they did in earlier years will not derive æsthetic satisfaction from these pages. They, however, do not compose the audience for which the author has written his book.

The Work's Intrinsic Merits

When primers are written about politics, however, literary quality is only one issue involved. More fundamental is the question whether the popularization has escaped the dangers of oversimplification. The author has not been altogether successful in this regard. For example, he outlines the theories of Marx and Engels but does not explain why these doctrines held so much appeal for the European radical through whom they entered the Western intellectual tradition. Hoover seems to imply that the emergence of communism was the result of a conspiracy. When he describes the coming of the Soviet Revolution, his focus is upon the small band of men who seized power in a mammoth state. Conspiracy is stressed to the exclusion of historical ripeness, war exhaustion, the ineffectiveness of the Kerensky government, and the like. In describing events after 1919, he makes no mention of conflicts or modifications between the doctrines of Lenin and those of Marx, or between Stalin and Marx, or of socialists and Stalinists. It is as though Marxism were a single intellectual stream, without deviation or internal disagreement among those who embrace it.

Where these simplifications can lead is shown in several of Hoover's comments about current matters. Because he does not consider the nature of the revolutionary situation, he can make much of the point that at times the American Communist Party has had as many members as there were Bolsheviks when they seized power. And there is a table showing how few Communist Party members there were in relation to the total population of such countries as Albania and Hungary when they came under communist sway.

3. P. 18.

At least some readers will wonder whether this presentation adequately distinguishes between, on the one hand, the capacity of communist parties to seize power when social disintegration has occurred or when Soviet troops are present and, on the other, the capacities of the communists when national populations are alert to communist tactics and the social systems are basically healthy. Obviously, the existence of one situation rather than the other has significant implications for the choice of communist control policies in a democratic society. Again, Hoover gives the impression that the advances of communism in the past decades have resulted solely from the spread of a cancerous doctrine. Some readers will feel that an adequate treatment would have to apportion responsibility among Russian expansion, the example of Soviet industrial and military progress (however brutally achieved), the appeal of the Soviet egalitarian myth among nonwhite peoples, the failings and frequent missteps of opposition among Western powers, and similar factors with which communist doctrine has interacted. In short, Hoover's doctrinal discussion prepares readers more for debate along the Potomac than for the ideological clash which is actually raging beyond our shoreline.

Since Hoover has access to what probably are the best archives in the non-Soviet world on the American Communist Party, as it exists above and below ground, many readers will look to these sections as the most promising in any book authored by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. And certain discussions of these topics—for example, Hoover's account of how a typical "Committee to Save John Doe" is manipulated by communist activists, and of how an opportunistic labor leader in the Midwest is brought into collaboration with the Party—are quite interesting. At one point, in telling about persons who are "concealed communists" passing themselves off as liberals, Hoover describes (but does not name) several persons whose identity will be immediately apparent to anyone familiar with the *causes célèbres* of recent years—for instance, "the editor-in-chief of a conservative book-publishing house,"⁴ and "the program director of a television station in a large Southern city."⁵ Assuming, as I do, that Hoover's information is accurate, this unequivocal identification is an intriguing footnote to those episodes.

Yet, even in these pages, the unidimensional quality of the accounts and the arguable assumptions which Hoover drops will doubtless invite dissent. For example, he quotes the estimates "of communist leaders themselves" that for every Communist Party member in the United States, "ten others are ready, willing, and able to do the Party's work."⁶ This assertion, which Hoover has quoted often at FBI appropriation hearings before Congress in the past decade, raises two substantial issues. First of all, its numerical basis was nothing but myth in 1958 when Hoover chose to give the figures new currency in this book. Whatever may have been the fact when Earl Browder made the obviously self-serving ten-for-one boast, such "popular front" days have disappeared

4. P. 87.

5. P. 88.

6. P. 5.

since, at the very latest, the Korean War period, and probably since 1948. That Hoover did not see the need to discard or revise this estimate is disquieting. Second, Hoover's assumption accepts the *communist* definition of allies, a remarkably unsafe technique and one which ignores the meaning of such alliances on the American scene. In point of fact, fellow travelers have shown a steady disposition to treat the communists like disease carriers whenever world events disclose the true nature of communism—during the Soviet purge trials, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the rape of Czechoslovakia, the Korean aggression, the Hungarian repression, and the like. At each point, and at every moment of deep crisis in United States-Soviet relations, the temporary nature of the American fellow traveler's adhesion to communism has been demonstrated, as with Henry Wallace's full repudiation of the communists in 1950 over Korea. Of course, popular-front movements serve to widen communist influence and to muddy the lines between liberalism, progressivism, and communism. But it is a mistake to talk as though ten or seven or even two fellow travelers per party member are simply glass-eyed zombies, under complete control on all issues and at all times, as Hoover implies. This picture simply tortures reality and even conflicts with Hoover's own description of how frequently people break from the "communist spell."

Viewed according to its intrinsic merits, then, *Masters of Deceit* is a study in equilibrium. For each issue that is simplified by Hoover's approach, a corresponding issue is raised by the simplification and left unanswered. Since any work which stirs the high school student and the adult primer-reader to thought about politics is a useful contribution, Hoover's text is welcome. To the extent that it is treated as Truth rather than Opinion, however, or that Hoover's special expertise in dealing with national security matters as a law-enforcement officer is taken to equip him for political analysis, *Masters of Deceit* is a misleading volume. Certainly, in comparison with another recent "primer" on the communist problem, Harry and Bonaro Overstreet's *What We Must Know About Communism*,⁷ Hoover's book must be rated as distinctly inferior in quality.

The Subjective Reaction of the Reader

This viewer has already provided decidedly subjective reactions, of course, but there is still another judgment about this book which should be offered as a personal response. The volume tells us much about the author himself, a matter of importance in light of his national responsibility. *Masters of Deceit* is the first of Hoover's books to deal with a subject other than criminal detection. Its pages provide an important contrast with the picture of the FBI director that tends to emerge from his statements at appropriation time or from his testimony before congressional committees on matters relating to communist-control legislation. In those moments, Hoover emerges as a man of the political right, or, at the least, as a "tough-on-communism" figure whose

7. Published by W. W. Norton & Co., 1958.

efforts are directed at thwarting those civil libertarians who call for restraints on the internal-security programs. While there have already been some indications of Hoover's more circumspect qualities,⁸ *Masters of Deceit* serves as an opportunity for him to enunciate his ideas about democracy, civil liberty, communism, and similar topics in full blown fashion. The effect is to present an image of a man who is much closer to the American center, perhaps even the liberal center, than most liberals assume. For example, Hoover emphatically states that opposition to anticommunist measures is part of everyone's right to free speech and does not create any imputation of communist inclination; that there is a clear line between socialists, who are democrats, and communists, who are not; that most Americans who stumbled into the Communist Party did so out of such motives as a desire for reform, rebellion in the face of discrimination against their minority groups, or similar reasons which deserve sympathetic understanding; and that society should help, not attack, former communists if America is to benefit by attracting back to our values those talented and useful people who have succumbed to the "communist spell." While deploring the way in which intellectuals have been lured into the Communist Party in the past, Hoover underscores the fact that the future of America's resistance to communism lies with the "free world's intellectuals," since it is they who must convince men of the superiority of liberal values.

In his chapter on communism and minorities, Hoover pens a strong endorsement of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and denounces those who try to assert that the NAACP is "communist controlled" or "communist inclined." In his chapter on Jewish groups, he denounces the canard that Jews have a peculiar susceptibility to communism. Because numerous Communist Party leaders claim a Jewish origin, Hoover notes, "does not . . . make them Jews, any more than William Z. Foster's Catholic background and Earl Browder's Protestant background give them standing in any present-day Catholic and Protestant communities in the United States."⁹ In one passage which is worth quoting in detail, Hoover warns against Know-Nothing anticommunism:

[W]e must be absolutely certain that our fight is waged with full regard for the historic liberties of this great nation. *This is the fundamental premise of any attack against communism.*

Too often I have seen cases where loyal and patriotic but misguided Americans have thought they were "fighting communism" by slapping the label of "Red" or "communist" on anybody who happened to be different from them or to have ideas with which they did not agree.

Smears, character assassination, and the scattering of irresponsible charges have no place in this nation. They create division, suspicion, and

8. Hoover, *Breaking the Communist Spell*, Am. Mercury, March 1954, pp. 57-61; Hoover, *The Role of the F.B.I. in the Federal Employee Security Program*, 49 Nw. U.L. REV. 333 (1954); Hoover, *Civil Liberties and Law Enforcement: The Role of the F.B.I.*, 37 IOWA L. REV. 175 (1952).

9. P. 255.

distrust among loyal Americans—just what the communists want—and hinder rather than aid the fight against communism.

Another thing. Time after time in this book I have mentioned that honest dissent should not be confused with disloyalty. A man has a right to think as he wishes: that's the strength of our form of government. Without free thought our society would decay.¹⁰

Other points which deserve notation in this regard are his discussion of the role of the FBI in disproving false charges levelled in the loyalty program, and his warnings against the dangers both of a national police force and of an FBI with evaluative powers. In his concluding section, Hoover warns that a negative attitude toward the communist issue is highly dangerous; democrats, he affirms, must be for something positive. In stressing such matters as social welfare and protection of individual dignity as the things we must be for, and must progress toward, he has closed on a note which many liberals can endorse.

It should be carefully noted, of course, that Hoover does not always apply his principles in a fashion which would bring unanimous applause from civil libertarians and his democratic credo has a few aspects, such as his stress upon religion as *the* foundation of democracy, to the exclusion of humanist or social-democratic bases, which will discomfit some readers. Nevertheless, the dominant picture which this book projects is that of a balanced and fair-minded man, one who may see more shadows in the land than others can always find but, withal, a man who mostly sees human beings and their human condition.

Viewed from this third perspective, *Masters of Deceit* should be a generally reassuring book for many who have been troubled about J. Edgar Hoover's ideology. Since he was not placed in office as a literary spokesman, we need not feel discomfited if his prose leaves much to be desired. Since he was not installed as our national political theorist, or as political historian of the American Communist Party, we can look to more trained and judicious writers for our volumes on these matters. Hoover holds office as chief of the nation's investigative bureau, and *Masters of Deceit* reveals a police officer with a high sense of fidelity to democratic ideals, one who will stand comparison with police officials in any foreign country or American state. In our society, he operates under standards set not by his own fiat but by the majority-will agencies of the nation—Congress and the President. If he at times influences these standards by what he urges upon the Congress or the President, he does so with the specialist's zeal, much as the soldier urges maximum weapons and the scientist maximum research expenditures. The wise policy for those critics who admit the necessity for some security measures (as for some weapons and some research) would seem to be opposition to Hoover's overextensions. At least, it seems to this writer that defenders of free speech sometimes appear to be angered that Hoover speaks his mind at all, rather than that he advocates particular measures. And his critics do not always take care to separate

10. P. 312.

Hoover's positions, as he enunciates them, from those of the McCarthyites who rush to praise Hoover but do not take his counsels of moderation.

In short, *Masters of Deceit* is most useful in showing how closely Hoover embodies the virtues and the vices of political man in our semipopulist democracy. He stops thinking at a point where the leaders and the led in our time have also struck a position of repose. We could have had far worse in an FBI Director and, given our society as it is rather than as the poets would have it, we may have done well indeed.

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