

CAVEAT LECTOR

FROGMAN EXTRAORDINARY and DANGER FROM MOSCOW. By *J. Bernard Hutton* (pseudonym for Joseph Heisler). (London: Spearman, Neville; and Toronto: Burns & MacEachern. 1960.)

These two recent accessions to the literature respectively of counterespionage and international Communism want careful marking. The pieces have a common taint that makes them suspect at a time when the East's hot war of words against the West appears to be putting more and more reliance on forgery and prevarication. "Hutton's" efforts may be merely a pecuniary speculation by an exile fabrication mill, or they may be something more sophisticated, a product of Moscow's cold warriors; a case can be made for either view. It is necessary in any event to call attention to the fraud and its perils.

Frogman Extraordinary, dubbed by its publishers "The Counter-Espionage Book of the Year," purports to be the inside story of the fatal underwater mission carried out by Commander Lionel Crabb on 18 May 1956 against the Soviet cruiser *Ordzhonikidze* in Portsmouth Harbor. According to "Hutton," the Soviet internal security service called its acolyte services together in Moscow early in August 1959 and passed them a dossier on the Crabb case (and several others) for use in training their operatives. The core of the book is the alleged dossier, translated from a German original of which the usual facsimiles are shown. "Hutton" attributes Western acquisition of these materials to "those men and women who, in the Soviet rear, daily risk their lives to obtain information for the Western world."

The story, like most such fabrications, contains no provable facts not made public in the news coverage during and since the Crabb affair. Whether or not the dossier was fed to "Hutton" by Soviet agents, with or without his knowledge, the Soviets clearly stand to gain from its publication. Soviet intelligence is shown as omniscient. It is alleged to have known the details of the Crabb operation before it was carried out. At one point there is a serious reference to the "brilliant brains of the Soviet security officers." It is also depicted as humane: after immobilizing, capturing, and conveying Crabb

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to the USSR, it "rehabilitated" the frogman instead of shooting him.

Finally, there are 31 assertions in the text that the Crabb operation was sponsored by U.S. Naval Intelligence. The sequence of the references is an interesting example of conditioning technique. Most British and Canadian readers, by the time they finish the book, will have the Crabb affair firmly associated with U.S. intelligence. Because U.S. intelligence in the past year has become a primary Soviet propaganda target everywhere, this linking of it to the Crabb case and placing it in the sponsor's role serves the overall Soviet purpose. On the one hand, British public opinion may be nudged toward anti-Americanism; on the other, American confidence in British security and operational skill would be weakened if U.S. readers were persuaded that Soviet intelligence had the Crabb operation so thoroughly penetrated that it knew everything in advance.

Danger from Moscow is based on the device of "secret instructions," a standard fabrication come-on throughout the existence of the Cominform which still appears in intelligence frauds. It is the classic mixture of fabrication and previously published fact. Without taking into account "Hutton's" own murky Communist past—Heisler belonged to the Czech Party—the possibility persists that his writing may reflect deeper origins in some paper mill group such as those that operated most successfully in the late forties and early fifties.¹

Except for a chapter on developments in the Middle East, the piece consists entirely of retold news stories superimposed on "secret Cominform instructions" by which overt developments in the U.K., the United States, West Germany, and the rest of the world are attributed to "hidden Communist activists." In a final chapter, "On the Home Front," Hutton develops the provocative thesis that Russia is constantly on the verge of a popular revolt against the Communist regime. The Middle East treatment was quite apparently written by another pen: here, though the material is overt, it is assembled in a professional manner and is not saturated, like the remainder of the book, with émigré self-interest. The book

¹ See Intelligence Articles II 1, p. 95 ff.

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contains no real or reliable knowledge of the workings of the Communist conspiracy in the U.K., the United States, or West Germany which would be beyond the resources of the periodical room of a good library.²

²A third book from the same author and publishers, and presumably of the same ilk, is being advertised, as this caveat goes to press, under the title *School for Spies*.