

In search of honorable men

HONORABLE MEN. MY LIFE IN THE CIA

by **William Colby**

Simon and Schuster. 474 pp. \$12.95.

IN SEARCH OF ENEMIES

by **John Stockwell**

W.W. Norton. 288 pp. \$12.95.

It is a sad duty to review these books by former CIA officials William Colby and John Stockwell shortly after a Virginia judge denied Frank Snepp permission to write a few innocuous articles dealing tangentially with his CIA experience.

Those who tell the truth about the CIA are severely punished, contrary to the slander put forth by Agency propagandists that those who criticize the CIA get rich on tales out of school. Snepp's modest profits from his Vietnam expose, *Decent Interval*, have been expropriated, and his livelihood for the immediate future, at least, is gravely jeopardized by the Virginia judge's decision.

Meanwhile, one of the CIA's whistle-blowing pioneers, Victor Marchetti, continues to labor under what amounts to a gag order imposed on him following the writing of *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* with John Marks in 1973. Under severe financial pressure, Marchetti and his wife eke out a living near Washington through his articles and reviews and her income as a doctor's receptionist. It



Deborah Bright

is a difficult life for a proud and honorable man.

That brings me to *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA*, by former CIA director and clandestine operator William E. Colby and Peter Forbath. A rather more clever than demonstrably honorable man, Colby opens his ghostwritten book with a dramatic re-creation of his firing by Gerald Ford. From there it is all downhill, in every aspect. He reviews his undercover career from World War II in Scandinavia and Italy, plods on through the 1950s and 1960s in Vietnam, and finishes with Watergate and its aftermath. He leaves no dirty deed unrationalized. Today, Colby can be spotted about the corridors on Capitol Hill, where he often comes to testify on intelligence matters. You see, Colby wants to be helpful; he believes in the democratic way, to a point.

"But I realize that my view of American intelligence and of its leading element, the CIA, is much different from that of the ordinary citizen, and even from that of the well-informed minority," he writes in the last few pages. "Their harsh opinion," he admits, "in part, is, of course, the result of those questionable activities that have come to light and have cast a shadow of meanness, cynicism, and amorality over the intelligence profession." Look at the forest, he pleads, not the trees.

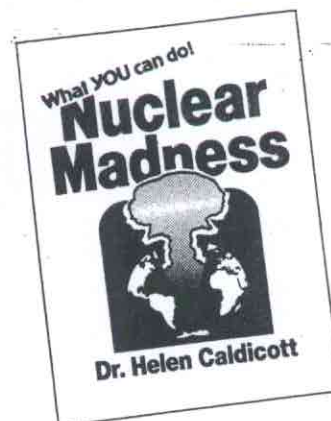
So, it is handy to have John Stock-

well's tight little narrative about the CIA in Angola, *In Search of Enemies*, to evaluate Colby's treatment of at least one important CIA episode. Colby, as CIA director, was responsible for what the CIA did in Angola; Stockwell, a CIA career spy-handler, was put in charge of carrying out the program. The CIA's program, of course, failed.

Colby discusses Angola in only four pages, Stockwell in 254. They differ radically on the basic facts of the situation. Colby, for instance, begins his narrative with a recitation of what the Soviets were doing — arming the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), headed by Augustinho Neto, in "late 1974." Moving on to sum up Soviet postures in the Indian Ocean, Somalia, and Guinea, and a purported Soviet attempt "in the middle 1960s to establish a position in the Belgian Congo [now Zaire]," Colby reports that against this backdrop in "early 1975," the National Security Council's Forty Committee (that is, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger) began a secret program of assistance to two contending Angolan factions.

Stockwell, however, points out something Colby omits: that back in July 1974 the "CIA began funding Roberto [Holden Roberto, leader of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, or FNLA] without Forty Committee approval, small amounts at first, but enough for word to get

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around that the CIA was dealing itself into the race." It was the following month that Moscow announced its backing for the MPLA.

Colby reports that the CIA "stayed well away from" South African forces, who were backing another U.S.-supported group, Jonas Savimbi's UNITA, or National Union for the Total Independence of Angola. Stockwell, on the other hand, details incidences where the U.S. and South African intelligence services cooperated in covertly shipping aid to the rebels. "Especially in the field, CIA officers liked the South Africans, who tended to be bluff, aggressive men without guile. They admired South African efficiency," Stockwell writes.

Colby says that "no CIA men were permitted to engage in combat or train" in Angola. Stockwell reports the movements of CIA case officers in Angola, as well as the secret operations to hire mercenaries to fight there. A handful of Americans died in Angola. Finally, Colby volunteers that he was

obliged to keep Congress fully informed. Then, as now, he does not.

Stockwell's rich and sometimes terrifying narrative recounts other details Colby avoids, such as planting "black" propaganda stories in the American media to bolster the images of Savimbi and Roberto, smear Neto and the MPLA, and etch the conflict in Cold War outlines. It is, unfortunately, an utterly fantastic, and true, story, as subsequent accounts in the press and the version told by former Assistant Secretary of State Nathaniel Davis have shown.

Although such sentiments may be unfashionable, it seems not entirely out of line to suggest that such graduates of the "honorable men" school of national security should somehow be punished for spreading their lies. But Colby (now a lawyer), Richard Helms (a lobbyist for the Shah of Iran), and David Phillips (the former Western Hemisphere chief of dirty tricks who panders myths and mischief as a full-time ex-officio spokesman for the spook kingdom) remain tantalizingly out of reach, plying their business-as-usual trades with the blessing of everybody, it seems, except Joseph Kraft, who apparently doesn't like Colby's Catholicism.

This is indeed a sad and unfortunate thing. Snapp and Marchetti remain muzzled, whipped by the courts at the CIA's bidding. Stockwell, for twelve years a CIA officer who resigned in April 1977, must be an inviting target. Perhaps you should read his moving, appalling tale before it, too, is confiscated, and he, the son of a missionary, is sent off to his own gulag.

—JEFF STEIN

(Jeff Stein, a former intelligence officer in Vietnam, is Washington correspondent for the Boston Phoenix.)



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SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPE

edited by William E. Paterson and Alastair H. Thomas
St. Martin's Press. 444 pp. \$19.95.

The Social Democrats who organized the Second International in Paris in

1889 on the centenary of the French Revolution were convinced that political power would inevitably pass into their hands. The process turned out to be slower than even pessimists among them expected. The Social Democrats were split by the Bolshevik Revolution, defeated by Hitler, and out of power during the Cold War in the 1950s everywhere except in Scandinavia, Austria, Israel, and briefly France, where Guy Mollet saddled the party with the responsibility for the Algerian War.

But the last decade has seen the triumph of the Social Democrats not only in Scandinavia but in Austria, Britain, Germany, and Portugal; they have shared governmental power in Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, and Italy. In post-Franco Spain, the Socialists emerged as the major party of the Left, and in France, under Mitterand, they displaced the Communists from that role.

Surprisingly, Social Democratic dominance in Western Europe has occasioned little comment; it is the Eurocommunists — serious contenders for power only in Italy and (as junior partners) in France — who have captured the attention of press and publishers. Some of the reasons for this become apparent when one reads *Social Democratic Parties in Western Europe*, edited by William E. Paterson and Alastair H. Thomas. This somewhat uneven collection of fifteen essays, penned by British and European political scientists, provides the best account available of the current state of the European Social Democratic movement.

The picture is mixed. A loss of vision is coupled with achievement of some of the old dreams. Marxist rhetoric has been replaced with an ambiguous blend of managerial moderation and realistic radicalism. The Social Democrats have become a governmental party with all that that entails, including the ability to implement their program and the fear of losing office by doing so.

The form of this book — a series of essays on various parties capped by an essay on international cooperation among them — robs it of unity. There are fifteen different patterns of development. But its disunity mirrors