

to p. 55 of Lammie

3/12/72

Lammie-DeVosjoly--Initial impressions, through Chapter 3

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His representations of French politics are grossly inadequate. For example, he mentions those known in the US as Synarchists without using that word, not important except as a possible reflection that his American editors are unfamiliar with the politics and political groups of that period, referring to them as the Cagoule and the wearers of hoods, whereas they are known in the US and elsewhere as the Cagoulards. His first mention of Jacques Soustelle, a real fascist, is flattering and without reference to his politics, his second even more glowing and with the same omission.

In short, subtly disguised in anti-Germanism, I'd say this man is a fascist and was from childhood. He was immediately, instinctively and remained anti-deGaulle and Anti-FDR. His chief opposition to FDR is presented as opposition to FDR's intrusion into local French politics, as in organizing a military government for the liberation. To deV this means FDR was against "genuine democracy", that being represented by the undefined. Somehow, with no government ready to take over when the Germans were out, the French people were to have a spontaneous democracy, genuine at that. Without such things as even a machinery for elections.

The best he is able to say, when it is stripped down to what he does say, of his own early career in deGaulle's intelligence, where he was in charge of the United States and the Far East, is that he is without personal accomplishment, being able to produce from the US only what was fed without inspiration by those already there and that he was so out of contact with the Far East that an exploit that should have captured everyone's imagination was unknown to him. This was that of an anti-Japanese young Frenchman who shaved his dog, wrote intelligence data on the skin, let the hair grow back, and then escaped with his dog. In short, he is a bureaucrat whose preoccupation is with internal politics, a man whose only genuine and persisting animosities are against those who actually did most of the anti-German work, deGaulle and the Communists. Whether this is the view of the older man may be a question, but from the internal content I'd judge it existed from the beginning of his adult life. I'd not be surprised if he had been a member of the Croix de Feu, which is never once mentioned, as is none of the politics preceeding the fall of France. He begins with the accomplished fact and imposes limited politics as indicated above beginning with after that fact.

It may be exaggerated, but to the point I've reached, which is about 1/5 of the way through the book, I'd say that he began anti-American, which is consistent with the politics I impute to him. Also, I'd say the writing of this book is not within the educational



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I find myself wondering if there is any suggestion of similarity in concept between his code name, "Lamia" (the assignment or selection of which has not yet been explained, so I presume it is of a later period of his life) and of the "James" in the assumed name Hepburn. It is difficult to believe that L'Amérique Brule was given a made-up name because one of the people involved had a thing for Audrey Hepburn, leading to J'aime Hepburn or James Hepburn. In Lamia, which can have an entirely different explanation, there is still "Ami", which is suggestive of "aime" and seems to be of common root.

I find that Roosevelt's determination to end colonialism is to him anti-democratic, more, against "genuine" or "real", I've forgotten the exact word, democracy, which it would seem is really "democracy".

One of this is to suggest that it is not an authentic adventure to save one's own life under the conditions he ascribes to his early exploits, those included; nor am I suggesting that the saving of any life by helping with a border-crossing is not a good thing, regardless of whose life is saved. There are parts of this that are entirely unexplained and can in themselves lead to provocative questions (example: where the hell a kid of 19 or 20 got all those thousands of francs he had on his escape and for his adventures prior to that becoming necessary by his own stupidities only). What I am suggesting is that his self-portrait is of a man without subtlety or real ability, a man at best minor in the widespread opposition to the Germans and who sits in adverse judgement on those who did the daring and really risky things (and I in later life knew girls whose bravery greatly exceeded his own representation of his courage), and a man who got the job given him only because there simply wasn't anyone available who had the qualifications. His own escape and the fact that he was alive seem to have been his only qualifications, from his own representation. His protestation that he really wanted to be dropped back inside France and be a secret agent is either a cheap literary device or a self-portrait of an incredibly stupid man, for he was and he knew he was wanted by the Germans and by the Vichy police. I think it is partly both, false representation of daring and an insensitivity to his own shortcomings, which he didn't realize and still doesn't. The subconscious reflection of this may be part of his representation that he opposed the job assigned him because he knew nothing of the US or Far East. From my own experience, I can attest the meaninglessness of this, for I sat on a desk in which I had no language familiarity at all and no knowledge of the people or their culture and was able to perform well enough.

I do not know enough about the published literature to make a judgement, but if some of the early secret communications between deGaulle and the British government and other such documents quoted have not been published, then he started stealing secret files at an early age, and I would not presume this was intended for later literary use. It is more reasonable to ask if that early, meaning almost as soon as he was assigned to CERA, he was part of a political and opposition ring. All he quotes is anti-deGaulle. It is clear that he was opposed to deG from the outset, and that makes one wonder much about him and more about his then politics or not political alignment. When to this I add that by far his most glowing endorsement, including of his intellectual capabilities, is of Soustelle, and in that he hides Soustelle's politics, I am without serious doubt. This man was a spy within a spy agency when the survival of the country he pretended to be serving was in doubt. ...The various opinions he does not or cannot avoid about people and events cast the same kind of light and in the same focus. Only later reading can make this evaluation viable and perhaps it will not, but it is the impression of a critical reading, because I begin with dark suspicions about this man and his self-concept and his ignorance, arrogance or gross dishonesties in the claims he makes for himself, as with the Cuba Missile Crisis, where he simply was not the source he claims to be, that being known to me.

To the point I have reached, there is no single thing to dispute the advance opinion that this is a book that could have been fostered by the CIA, other and anti-democratic forces or both.



Well, de Vosjoly, who is not deVasjoly, having taken the "de" to give himself a bit of class, one of his more persistent criticisms of almost everyone he has ever known being of similar character, has finally gotten himself to the United States. He, naturally, was the only man the French secret service, as he calls SDECE, could send, because he knew nothing about the country and prior to his coming here there was nobody who could brief him in France (and it was sinister when the British offered to have their man here do it, naturally, because that turned out to be Philby, later), and prior to his coming he was so well informed in such matters he could not distinguish between the CIA and FBI and knew nothing of the structure of either. In fact, it was a mystery to him. Not that any French correspondent or embassy flunky couldn't have told him. But everyone else is suspect. He found Dulles the world's most erudite man, always right about everything. And when General de Lattre de Tassigny got here, that was a great blessing. One would never know de Lattre's history from the description, "a great military chief and a very clever diplomat".

What really comes out is that the entire world conspires against poor deV. The government had shabby quarters for him, one room and no secretary, and he complains about it, not letting it be known, as I personally do from my own contact with those offices, that in the three buildings to which I went besides the embassy itself there was an acute housing shortage. I knew of cases where four people shared the same office in rented homes, and more than one such. It was common.

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This is a French Otepka. He writes "history" easily ("It was through the efficiency of his secret service [i.e., deV] that de Gaulle had been able to seize power" (129) And such representations: "The military revolt in North Africa plus the pro-French Algeria element in France made him [deGaulle] fear being overthrown by so-called rightist organizations" (150) He has an all-pervading anti-Communism and whatever they are for or do is wrong and it is a natural assumption that they are the enemy, wherever, whoever, elected or not, and he is Galahad. Interesting commentary on SDECE's capabilities re Farewell, etc, beg. 159. Of course, nobody else ever understands. Many passages marked.





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