

## A “Political Translation” from Isaac Don Levine’s *Mind of An Assassin*

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Re: [\*The Mind of An Assassin\*](#), by Isaac Don Levine (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1959).

This book by an associate of Allen Dulles is presented by the author as a study of Trotsky’s assassination by Mercader, a study which Levine claims sheds light on the mind of assassins in general in the contemporary period. Documents from secret sessions of the Warren Commission reveal that Allen Dulles planned to use Levine to see to it that Marina Oswald would not testify that Lee Harvey Oswald was a U.S. government agent.[1]

The following quotations are of interest.

On the title page of the book, Levine quotes Camus: “In the twentieth century power wears the mask of tragedy.” This as well as other references make clear that his book is intended to refer to a general modern phenomenon.

p. 143 — Re: Mercader. “[H]e had a strong tendency to tell much that was truthful about himself. Hence, his subsequent statements to the police often involved a minimum of invention. All that was needed to bring out the truth in many of his accounts was to substitute the NKVD for the Fourth International.”

p. 214 — “The key to Mercader, who typifies the modern political assassin, is to be found in the special character of the organization in which he has enlisted for life. The Soviet power is an amalgam of a temporal state and a political religion. It is in the nature of a military order in which the government authorities and the Communist Party priesthood are one supreme source of faith and strength. Mercader became an assassin both as a servant of that government and a missionary of its communist faith, and is beyond redemption.”

p. 137 — Concerning Mercader’s “confession note”: “Experts would have recognized the letter as characteristic, both in style and content, of other known fabrications of the NKVD. However, this fact could not have been easily established had the assassin perished at the scene of the crime or escaped from it. Without being available for examination, the NKVD would have been enabled to make the Trotsky murder seem like an insoluble mystery. Yet the internal evidence that the letter was of NKVD manufacture was conclusive.”

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Since all understanding is to a significant degree projection, we are justified in asking whether Levine is talking about himself, Dulles, and the CIA as much as he is about the NKVD. In exploring

the question I suggest we need only translate the following terms:

“Trotsky” into “Kennedy”

“Soviet” into “American”

“communist” into “anti-communist”

“NKVD” into “CIA”

“Mercader” into “Levine/Dulles/CIA”

“Mercader’s fabricated letter of confession” into “release of the U.S. mass media”

In this case we then get the following:

Levine has a strong tendency to tell much that is truthful about himself and Dulles. . . . All that is needed to bring out the truth . . . is to substitute CIA for NKVD, etc. . . .

The key to Dulles, who typifies the modern political assassin, is to be found in the special character of the organization in which he has enlisted for life. The American power is an amalgam of a temporal state and a political religion. It is in the nature of a military order in which the government authorities and the anti-communist party priesthood are one supreme source of faith and strength. Dulles became an assassin both as a servant of that government and as a missionary of its anti-communist faith, and is beyond redemption.

Concerning the actions of the U.S. mass media surrounding the murder of Kennedy — Experts [such as Castro] recognized their releases as characteristic in style and content, of other known fabrications of the CIA. This fact could not be easily established because Oswald perished almost immediately and the others involved escaped from the scene. Without the “assassin” being available to be examined, the CIA was thus able to make the murder of Kennedy seem like an insoluble mystery. Yet the internal evidence that the press releases were of CIA manufacture is conclusive.

## Notes

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1. [§ Document Addendum to the Warren Report](#) (El Segundo, Ca.: Sigtex Publications, 1968), p. 200.