

Literary Quislings (Part 1 of 3)

by Earl P. Holt III

To his eternal credit, George Orwell once remarked that "*some ideas are so absurd that only an intellectual would believe them.*" By the 1930s for example, it became evident that many of the committees that awarded the more prestigious literary prizes often consisted of elitist dilettantes who had adopted the "*fashionable*" ideology of Marxism. As a result, certain celebrated American authors pursued a subtly Marxist agenda to improve their chances of winning such awards.

Among these celebrated authors were Ernest Hemingway, William Inge, Tennessee Williams, John Steinbeck, Harper Lee, Edna Ferber, and Arthur Miller. Each found their *niche* by promoting leftist causes, often by obsessing on some trivial or peripheral aspect of American society, and portraying it in an exaggerated and skewed manner that inevitably led to the conclusion that things were certainly rotten in America. Many had honors heaped upon them in return for their loyal service to what was essentially, a propaganda effort and an early manifestation of Cultural Marxism.

Ernest Hemingway was one of the worst offenders. Within the last 15 years it's been revealed that Hemingway was successfully recruited in 1941 by the Soviet NKVD (predecessor to the KGB,) and given the Soviet code-name "**Agent Argo.**" This conclusion is based on research into the ***Soviet Archives*** by academics John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr of ***Emory University***, and their co-author Alexander Vassiliev, a former KGB officer. Their book ***Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America*** was published by ***Yale University Press*** in 2009.

According to documents reproduced in ***Spies***, it was Hemingway who first approached Soviet Intelligence and "***repeatedly expressed his desire***

to help." His willingness to work for the NKVD would have remained a carefully guarded secret among a tiny handful of NKVD officers at its highest levels, owing to the "*compartmentalization*" practiced by all successful intelligence agencies. Thus, it's unlikely that his dalliance with the NKVD influenced his receipt of literary awards, since no one who served on the *Nobel* or *Pulitzer* selection committees would have known of it.

However, his leftist enthusiasms had been evident for many years and expressed in his own words, works and associations. It was probably these that gave him a leg-up on other authors when *The Old Man and the Sea* won the *Pulitzer Prize for Fiction* in 1953, and Hemingway won the *Nobel Prize for Literature* in 1954.

As a journalist in 1925, he wrote a flattering article about the *Italian Communist Party*. In 1933, he supported Cuban communists in their efforts to overthrow the conservative military dictatorship of Gerardo Machado. In 1934, he funded a benefit for Luis Quintanilla, a communist revolutionary, and in 1935 he wrote an article for **THE NEW MASSES**, a publication sponsored by the *American Communist Party*.

Probably attracted to Stalinist discipline, Hemingway penned the least impressive effort of his career in 1938 with **The Fifth Column**. It was a sophomoric story describing the activities of an American communist fighting for Spain's "*Loyalists*" during the *Spanish Civil War*, whose mission was to expose *Nationalist* spies for execution by "*Loyalist*" firing squads. Hemingway's enthusiasm for the Soviet-supported *Loyalist* cause had already revealed his profoundly leftist world-view, and exposed his willingness to support even those movements sponsored by one of history's bloodiest psychopaths, Josef Stalin.

As a supposedly objective war correspondent frolicking around Spain during the **Spanish Civil War**, his entourage consisted of a veritable

Who's Who of communist party members and Stalinist sympathizers. These included Soviet spy Michael Straight, Milton Wolff, Karol Swierezenski, Ilya Ehrenberg, Gustavo Duran, Luis Quintanilla, Nicolas Guillen and Gustav Regler. As Hemingway candidly volunteered in referring to his clique of *Loyalist* comrades, "***We're all communists.***"

The protagonist in ***For Whom the Bell Tolls*** was Hemingway's alter-ego, Robert Jordan, whose role was to dynamite bridges and kill innocent civilians for the *Loyalist* cause during the Spanish Civil War. Jordan was able to rationalize his crimes against humanity in the book, just as Hemingway was able to rationalize his communist sympathies in the face of Stalin's bloody and treacherous reign of terror in the Soviet Union. Hemingway also managed to rationalize Castro's endless firing squads, conducted very close to his private *dacha* in Cuba.



Hemingway and dear friend

William Inge was a homosexual "protege" of Tennessee Williams, and for my money, an equally reprehensible offender. He was the author of *Picnic*, *Splendor in the Grass*, *Come Back Little Sheba* and many other works for stage and screen. Among these is the misanthropic screenplay he wrote for the film *All Fall Down*, an adaptation of James Leo Herlihy's novel of the same name that reiterated Inge's contempt for Middle America that was so blatantly obvious in *Picnic*.

Inge saw the Midwest as a place characterized by sibling jealousy, paternal abandonment, ambitious and envious *ne'er-do-wells*, large income disparities, materialism, users and flatterers, and smoldering angst. We are led to believe its denizens live quiet lives of restlessness, frustration, discontent, and emptiness. His contempt for Middle America may be a reaction to the lack of acceptance he received at my Alma Mater, *Washington University* in St. Louis, as a homosexual, alcoholic and likely Marxist. (Ironically, by the 1970s, he could have been student body president...!)

His screenplay for the 1962 film *All Fall Down* consisted of a relentlessly contrived plot that one celebrated critic -- **clearly not on the *Pulitzer Awards Committee*** -- insightfully called "*distasteful and full of cheap situations and dialogue.*" That critic considered the movie's premise "*fatally flawed,*" consisting as it does of everyone fawning over a hedonistic sociopath (appropriately played by Warren Beatty,) who would have been disowned and ostracized long before he reached adulthood. (Bosley Crowther. *The Screen: "All Fall Down."* **NEW YORK TIMES**, April 12, 1962.)

Inge had won a *Pulitzer Prize* for *Picnic* in 1955, and quickly became known as the "*Playwright of the Midwest*" in New York literary circles, owing to his unflattering portrayals of that region. Effete Eastern pseudo-intellectuals, communists and queers on the *Pulitzer Awards Committee* must have eaten it up with a spoon. From the play *Picnic*,

it is clear that Inge perceived the Midwest as a corny, boring, banal and parochial place, where a thin veneer of seeming respectability and contentedness hides the rot, angst and emptiness found menacingly below its puritanical surface.



The play is centered around a charming and attractive *ne'er-do-well* named *Hal Carter* (portrayed by William Holden in the film,) who has lived a hobo life by hopping freight trains after dropping out of college, serving in the military and pursuing an unsuccessful acting career in Hollywood. Although possessed of great charm and physical appeal, he has come to a small Midwestern town desperately seeking a job from his former college fraternity brother, whose father owns much of the town.

At first, he is welcomed with the hospitality for which small-town America is renowned. However, as the play progresses, his selfishness and narcissism end up alienating just about everyone but his fraternity

brother's *fiancé*, a woman he eventually seduces. Most of the other women of varying ages find him equally charming and appealing. In fact, they find Hal so appealing he causes one of them -- a straight-laced spinster and school teacher -- to lose her respectable *vener* by getting *liquored up* and making a fool of herself by lusting after him.

Inge seems to be as clueless about women and heterosexual relationships as the *Pulitzer Awards Committee* were clueless about the Midwest. He depicts one elderly lady nearly getting the vapors -- like "*Aunt Pittypat Hamilton*" from *Gone with the Wind* -- at the mere prospect of having a man around the house once again. It is sometimes remarked that with fiction, one must "*suspend disbelief*," but this was made nearly impossible by Inge's bizarre perception of heterosexuals.

At the end of the film the fraternity brother's *fiancé*, "*Madge*" Owens (played by Kim Novak,) boards a bus to pursue the charming Hal to Tulsa after he has worn out his welcome and hopped yet another freight train out of town. **SHE DOES THIS DESPITE HAVING KNOWN HAL FOR ALL OF 24 HOURS.** There were several other relationships depicted between men and women that require comparable *suspensions of disbelief* because Inge's *insights* are clearly distorted by a lack of understanding or empathy for either women or heterosexuals.



There is little doubt that Inge's homosexuality worked to skew his perception of Middle America and alienate him from its culture. He apparently saw only rot in the nuclear family, conventional marriage, and heterosexual relationships in general, all of which he depicted as dysfunctional. This reflects the sad fact that some homosexuals like Inge are often incapable of understanding -- much less experiencing -- normal or even healthy relationships.

(To be continued...)