



The Torment of Secrecy: The Background and Consequences of American Security Policies

Edward Shils

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Edward Shils's *The Torment of Secrecy* is one of the few minor classics to emerge from the cold war years of anticommunism and McCarthyism in the United States. Mr. Shils's "torment" is not only that of the individual caught up in loyalty and security procedures; it is also the torment of the accuser and judge. This essay in sociological analysis and political philosophy considers the cold war preoccupation with espionage, sabotage, and subversion at home, assessing the magnitude of such threats and contrasting it to the agitation—by lawmakers, investigators, and administrators—so wildly directed against the "enemy." Mr. Shils's examination of a recurring American characteristic is as timely as ever. "Brief...lucid...brilliant."—*American Political Science Review*. "A fine, sophisticated analysis of American social metabolism."—*New Republic*. "An excitingly lucid and intelligent work on a subject of staggering importance...the social preconditions of political democracy."—*Social Forces*.

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