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The Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf

Intelligence in Recent Public Literature

By Sam Roberts. New York: Random House, 2001. 543 pages.

Compiled and reviewed by Hayden B. Peake

This section contains brief reviews of recent books of interest to both the intelligence professional and the student of intelligence.

Espionage: An Encyclopedia of Spies and Secrets. By Richard M. Bennett. London: Virgin Books, Ltd., 2002. 371 pages.

The dust jacket describes Richard Bennett as an "intelligence analyst since 1966," and lists other impressive credentials. Nevertheless, his encyclopedia of espionage, the most recent of the many books in this genre, stands alone as the most error filled contribution by any measure. This is particularly disappointing because reference works of this sort have a special obligation to get it right. In the Preface, David Shayler—the former MI5 officer charged with violating the Official Secrets Act— claims that the book is "a wealth of facts . . . which have never been available in one publication before." James Bamford, author of *Body of Secrets*, writes in the Foreword that Bennett "not only defines the language of spying, he also presents comprehensive outlines of the intelligence services . . . of the world today, and biographical sketches of key players, past and present." From these statements one can only conclude that the writers did not read the book or do not know the subject.

The entries are arranged alphabetically; they describe people, cases, and organizations intermingled with definitions and photographs. In this mix are included Bennett's own views supplied without the documentation that a conscientious analyst or reader would expect to see in footnotes. Typical examples include the statement that the "CIA does not seem to have an efficient, centralized analytic apparatus, one that can distinguish credible intelligence from fantasy;" and the identification of Philip Agee as a "whistleblower" rather than the DGI/KGB agent he became. In the same vein, many will be surprised to read that Anatoli Golitsyn was a "charming con-artist" rather than an irascible defector; that "Klaus Fuchs was a member of the Rosenberg spy ring;" that Rudolf Abel, not Willie Fisher, was the KGB illegal's true name; and that "Richard Helms had never been considered a leader or director, only a caretaker." There are a few accurate entries in this book, but trying to separate them from the inaccurate ones is too much work for the layman or student. The entire book is tainted by appalling editing and scholarship. In short, it is an encyclopedic disappointment.

The Maharajah's Box: An Exotic Tale of Espionage, Intrigue, and Illicit Love in the Days of the Raj. By Christy Campbell. Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 2002. 474 pages.

The story's antecedents are found in Switzerland where the hunt for Nazi gold stolen from the Jews in World War II produced a list of dormant accounts. All but one concerned Jewish claimants. The one that did not became the starting point for this book. The author, once managing editor of *Jane's* military magazine and later a correspondent for *The Sunday Telegraph*, spent years tracking down the history of the dormant account. The trail led him to the daughter of a Maharajah, the *Koh-i-Noor* diamond, British and Russian spies playing the Great Game, and the story of life under the Raj. Good history and a tale well told.

On His Majesty's Secret Service: Sidney Reilly, Codename ST1. By Andrew Cook. Charleston, SC: Tempus Publishing, Inc., 2002. 287 pages.

Reilly: Ace of Spies, was the multi-part TV series that brought actor Sam Neal to international attention. Based on a book of the same name by former MI6 officer Robert Bruce Lockhart, it was great TV but virtually all fiction. Aside from a few geographic locations, Reilly's name was nearly the only thread of truth. Several other authors—Michael Kettle (*Sidney Reilly*), Richard Spence (*"Sidney Reilly's Lubyanka Diary"*[1]) and Edward Van Der

Rhoer (*Master Spy*) to name three—have attempted to set the record straight; all failed. These accounts, based in large part on Reilly's own statements and unsupported speculation by the authors, present conflicting stories about his place of birth, real name, age, ethnic identity, education, travels, family, marriages, finances, MI6 service, and death.

Andrew Cook, a former aide to Britain's Secretary of State for Defense George Robertson, has examined passport and birth records, academic transcripts, immigration documents, marriage certificates, military records, business records, Russian intelligence files, and other primary source official documents to determine the most likely truth in each case. Reilly was indeed an MI6 agent in Russia who plotted to overthrow the Bolshevik government, but he was also a con man, bigamist, and murderer. Cook's account is both scholarly and fascinating reading. It qualifies as the definitive version of the life of this famous agent who was executed by the Soviets and buried in the courtyard of Lubyanka prison.

Licensed To Spy: With the Top Secret Military Liaison Mission in East Germany. By John A. Fahey. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2002. 209 pages.

In 1960, the author was a US Navy commander assigned to the US Military Liaison Mission (MLM) stationed near Potsdam in East Germany. The Soviet Army had a similar mission in Frankfurt, West Germany, and France and Britain had analogous arrangements. Although originally set up to resolve problems arising from the interaction of the forces involved, the missions quickly adopted an intelligence collection objective—mainly to report on order of battle. As a consequence, all sides established restricted areas and MLM intruders who were caught in one were detained and interrogated. Fahey had the distinction of being the US officer caught and interrogated the most times. With a sense of humor, he describes his adventures in East Germany and East Berlin photographing Soviet installations and equipment. Sadly, his tales reveal many examples of inter-service rivalry, including petty harassment of the only Navy officer assigned to the mission. Often, it appears, the Soviets treated him better than his Army commander. This is a valuable memoir, the first to tell the story of this important American military organization.

Nancy Wake: The Inspiring Story of One of the War's Greatest Heroines. By Peter Fitzsimons. London: HarperCollins, 2002. 310 pages.

Nancy Wake's portrait hangs in the British Special Forces Club's gallery of World War II heroes. Two books have already described her work with the Resistance in France: Russell Braddon's, *Nancy Wake: The Story of a Very Brave Woman* (1956) was the first; then, in 1985, Wake published her autobiography, *The White Mouse* (the Gestapo's codename for her), adding some personal details about her wartime adventures and postwar life. Why then another biography? Wake is now in her ninetieth year, and time has made possible the revelation of personal reminiscences that once might have offended friends.

Born in New Zealand, brought up in Australia, Nancy Wake went to France in the 1930s to pursue a career in journalism. She married a wealthy Frenchman and joined him in the Resistance after France fell. As part of the famous PAT (O'Leary) network, they helped Allied airmen avoid capture and return to England. In 1943, she attracted Gestapo attention and was forced to escape over the Pyrenees on foot. One year later, after Special Operations Executive (SOE) training, she was parachuted back into Southern France—wearing high heels—where she fought with the Maquis blowing-up bridges and battling the Gestapo. Returning to England in late 1944, she received the George Medal in addition to many awards from France and America. After the war, she served with MI6 in London before returning to Australia. Her first husband having been killed during the war, she eventually remarried and raised a family. In his book *Counterfeit Spies,* Nigel West tells of the many books by women about their World War II secret exploits that are complete fiction. *Nancy Wake* is not among them. Although Fitzsimons provides no endnotes, he did interview Wake at length. Moreover, her story has been verified by scholars like M. R. D. Foot as the real thing. It is a fine example of the little known roles that women played in the clandestine service during the war.

Beyond The Front Line: The Untold Exploits of Britain's Most Daring Cold War Spy Mission. By Tony Geraghty. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996. 355 pages.

This book tells the story of BRIXMIS, short for British Military Exchange Mission, in Potsdam during the Cold War. Based on interviews and access to "secret files and photographs," though without endnotes, it merits serious attention. My own contacts with BRIXMIS are consistent in every way with the story told here for the first time by Tony Geraghty, a veteran war correspondent. The rules for the Soviet and Western military missions

stationed in each other's territory were clearly laid out but ignored by both sides whenever possible. The British turned unauthorized intelligence collection operations into an art form that provided important results while infuriating the Soviets and the East German *Stasi*. Although much of the British effort was devoted to collecting order-of-battle data, they also were involved in counterespionage operations. For example, BRIXMIS exfiltrated KGB Capt. Aleksei Myagkov, a British agent for two years, when he fell under suspicion.

The interactions between the members of BRIXMIS and their Soviet counterparts are often humorous and always fascinating. The chapter on the Berlin Wall confirms that the Brits, too, noticed the stockpiling of cement and building materials prior to 13 August 1961, but concluded it was to be used for repairing war damage. BRIXMIS monitored Western arms control and missile treaties, was involved in old-fashioned train-monitoring, and managed escapes from the East Germany to the West. The mission was an extraordinary success and Geraghty gives a splendid account.

The Pueblo Incident: A Spy Ship and the Failure of Ameican Foreign Policy. By Mitchell B. Lerner. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2002. 320 pages.

On 23 January 1968, the *USS Pueblo* was attacked in the Sea of Japan, 15 miles off the coast of North Korea by a North Korean gunship. One crewman was killed; four were wounded. The captain surrendered the ship, the first peacetime surrender since the USS Chesapeake capitulated to the British in 1807. After nearly a year of negotiations, the men were released; the ship is still in North Korea. A TV movie told one version of the story in 1973. The ship's captain, Cmdr. Lloyd Bucher, told his version to a Naval Court of Inquiry and again in his memoirs. The consensus was that the communists were at fault; the *Pueblo* was in international waters and they should not have fired on the ship or taken it captive.

Mitchell Lerner now finds that conclusion to be "simplistic," one based not on the reality of the circumstances, but on "America's Cold War mentality" prevalent at the time. More than thirty years after the fact, he suggests that a series of US military and political errors combined to create the *Pueblo* incident—not North Korea. Had America recognized the differences between Soviet and North Korean communism and acted accordingly, the

incident would not have happened, he contends. Kim Il Sung's aggression is explained by America's failure to understand his "defining ideological tenets."

Professor Lerner's examination of the fabricated evidence presented by the North Koreans is thorough and fair, as is his treatment of the evidence given by the crew. He also makes the connection between the capture of the *Pueblo* and convicted-spy John Walker's delivery to the Soviets of the code keys for the encryption devices on the *Pueblo* earlier the same month —but he does not indicate whether the events were linked or just remarkable coincidence. Likewise, the errors made by the US Navy and intelligence officials during the *Pueblo* mission are well documented by Lerner—and they certainly should not have happened. They do not excuse North Korea's actions, however, and neither does Professor Lerner's communist apologia.

The True `Intrepid:' Sir William Stephenson and the Unknown Agents. By Bill Macdonald. Surrey, BC: Timberholme Books, Ltd., 1998. 429 pages.

In 1976, author William Stevenson published a hagiography of Sir William Stephenson, *The Man Called Intrepid* (still in print). The book promptly stirred vehement public controversy because reviewers alleged Stevenson had, to put it mildly, embellished the truth with Sir William's connivance. Summaries of the evidence corroborating these charges appear in Nigel West's *Counterfeit Spies* (1998), John Bryden's *Best Kept Secret*, and an article by Timothy Naftali.[2] Those familiar with these circumstances might well ask what more is there to be said on the matter?

Bill Macdonald has answered, "` a very great deal indeed." While looking into the background of this famous Canadian hero, Macdonald discovered that the biographic details in Sir William's obituary were false—at the time of his birth there were no Stephensons in Winnipeg, no Argyle High School either, and no record of his birth. The first third of the book tells how he established the basic details of Stephenson's early life. Not the least surprising is the fact that Stephenson, born Stanger, was adopted by the Stefansons, who later changed their name to Stephenson. The second third of the book examines many of the Stephenson myths and presents a good bibliographic summary of the stories written about him.

Not all the myths are dispelled, however. In one case, Macdonald repeats the story that Stephenson was a "WWII flying ace" with 26 kills. Official

British records show the figure to be 12. In a second instance, the author continues the conjecture that "indirectly it is possible the release of *The Quiet Canadian* might have had something to do with the defection of Kim Philby and boosting the morale of the Western security services."[3] But that cannot be—the Hyde book was published before, not after, Philby defected.

The final third of the book is based on interviews with those who worked with Sir William in New York during the war at the British Security Coordination (BSC) office representing MI6 and MI5. There are first-hand accounts of BSC turf battles with the FBI that often involved what J. Edgar Hoover considered personal slights as well as attempts to usurp his authority. BSC mostly lost.

A second edition, contains details that came to light after publication of the BSC-end of the war report in 1999.[4] Further new material comes from those not interviewed previously—e. g., Svetlana Gouzenko, the widow of former GRU code clerk Igor Gouzenko, whose 1945 defection contributed to the postwar collapse of Soviet operations in North America. Additional endnotes support narrative that appears in both editions but was not sourced before. *The True Intrepid* concludes that Stephenson was "perhaps the greatest unsung hero of the twentieth century," despite the myths that have surrounded the man and his role in the BSC. Spoken like a true Canadian.

Uncovering Ways of War: U.S. Intelligence and Foreign Military Innovation, 1918-1941. By Thomas G. Mahnken. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002. 190 pages.

Until World War II, conventional wisdom concerning the history of America's intelligence capabilities portrays cycles of rapid build-up during wartime and nearly total scaling back after hostilities end. Well-staffed peacetime intelligence services, designed to make the country better informed and diminish the chance of future surprise, were not approved by the government. Thomas Mahnken—a professor of strategy at the Naval War College—cites several prominent historians who characterize Army and Navy intelligence in the interwar period as "neglected and ineffective," contributing little to new weapons development or force structure—a traditional interpretation. He then successfully challenges these views. His approach is straightforward: he examines the primary sources and evaluates nine cases of "innovation," wherein Army and Navy intelligence

elements tried to do, and in several instances accomplished, just what they were supposed to do. Although not always successful, they were neither hobbled by preconceptions of warfare— "fighting the last war"—nor unaware of new technological developments. They foresaw Japanese amphibious warfare, for example, but not its carrier aviation development. Professor Mahnken also analyzes how the Army's Military Intelligence Division and the Office of Naval Intelligence performed against potential adversaries and allies. Then he reflects on the various attributes of intelligence, and develops what he calls "indicators of innovation" that can lead to success or failure. This is a very valuable study. Conventional wisdom has been refuted and some practical guidance for the future provided.

The Devil's Doctor: Felix Kersten and the Secret Plot to Turn Himmler Against Hitler. By John Waller. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 2002. 310 pages.

Dr. Felix Kersten was a Finnish citizen and secret agent of the Finnish government during World War II while he served as personal masseur to Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer of the German SS. By exploiting his ability to relieve Himmler's chronic intestinal pain and addiction to astrology, Kersten—whom Himmler called his Magic Buddha—was able to influence him to commit treason against Hitler, resist Hitler's plan to resettle 8 million Dutch and Flemish citizens in Eastern Europe, and save the lives of 60,000 Jews in concentration camps whom Hitler had ordered killed. At the same time, Kersten served as a secret contact with the American OSS[5] and formed a pseudo alliance with Walter Schellenberg—head of the Nazi foreign intelligence service and Himmler's protégè—aimed at ending the war before Germany was destroyed.

After the war, Kersten desired to settle in Sweden but was initially rebuffed despite having also served the Swedish government as an intermediary to Himmler and having been officially recognized by the Dutch government as a victim of Nazi aggression. It was not until 1956 that the matter was successfully resolved in Kersten's favor.

In telling this fascinating and little known story, John Waller provides a unique portrait of the weak, disgusting, evil Himmler, and his henchman, Walter Schellenberg, as they schemed to make peace with the West, turn the war against the Russians, and save something of the Third Reich.

Footnotes:

1. *Revolutionary Russia*, Vol. 8, December 1995, No. 2.

2. "Intrepid's Last Deception: Documenting the Career of Sir William Stephenson," *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 8/3, pp. 72-99. This article goes into much greater depth regarding the reasons for Sir Wiliam's embellished view of his role in World War II.

3. Macdonald, pp. 136-137.

4. Published in 2001 in Vancouver, BC, by Raincoast Books. This latest edition, which runs 414 pages, contains a new Foreword by Tom Troy and a new Preface by the author.

5. See "Dispatch from Wartime Sweden: Reichsfuhrer Himmler Pitches Washington," *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2002, pp. 31-38.

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