Studies in Intelligence Vol. 47 No. 2 (2003)

# Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf

***Intelligence in Recent Public Literature***

**Compiled and Reviewed by Hayden B. Peake**

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

*Foreign At Home And Away: Foreign-Born Wives in the U.S. Foreign Service*. By Margaret Bender. Lincoln, NE: Writers Club Press, 2002. 355 pages.

There are aspects of service overseas—excitement, worry, and boredom, for example—that are common to all who have shared the experience. But the perspective of the foreign-born Foreign Service wife could best be appreciated by someone who had been down that road, until Australian-born Margaret Bender wrote her book. She is not writing about a numerically small group: one-third to one-half of Foreign Service wives are foreign born. Bender interviewed 40 women from 28 countries and she tells their stories with eloquence. The first one portrays Prabhi Kavaler: born in India, married in England, and buried in Arlington National Cemetery, the victim of the terrorist Embassy bombing in Nairobi. The others are less dramatic but equally compelling. Added to the pressures of living away from their former homes, they must also adapt to a new country (American citizenship is required), and in many cases learn a new

country (American citizenship is required), and in many cases learn a new language. Professionals, such as lawyers, doctors, and educators, are faced with an added burden: the long, difficult, and often humiliating process of professional recertification.

In a chapter titled "CIA Wives: To Love, Honor, and Take the Polygraph," Bender tells how many wives react to the revelation that marriage to their fiancé—who has just admitted he works for the CIA—requires a background investigation and a session on the box. The rules for foreign-born CIA wives are special and Bender discusses many of them, some of the foul-ups that occur, and the various support services available.

This is an interesting informative book for the prospective foreign-born Foreign Service wife, or husband for that matter, and for the general reader who will gain a new appreciation for those who serve in official capacities abroad.

*Spying 101: The RCMP's Secret Activities at Canadian Universities, 1917-1997*. By Steve Hewitt. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. 295 pages.

If you were expecting a book about a course in basic espionage, look elsewhere. *Spying 101* is predominantly a study of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's involvement on Canadian university campuses for eight decades monitoring radicals and subversive activities inspired by communists and Quebec separatists. Historian Steve Hewitt sees this period less as one of "monitoring," than as one of infiltration, subversion, and spying. But, however one characterizes it, when the radical targets and their supporters found out that the government was watching and listening, they were furious and still are. Hewitt admits there was indeed plotting against the State, but suggests that it was, for the most part, nothing serious. He contends that the RCMP, with the concurrence of its political masters, intentionally exaggerated the threats to secure an inflated budget and arouse public antipathy.

The story, told in four parts, covers the history of the RCMP and its security mission. It is well documented, although the author's analysis does not always track with the facts. For example, he asserts that the case of Igor Gouzenko (the first major post-World War II Soviet military intelligence defector):

*. . . ultimately harmed Mounted Police countersubversion operations in two respects . . . it left the Force unable in the 1960s to appreciate the*

*respects . . . it left the Force unable in the 1960s to appreciate the fundamentally different nature of the challenges to the state . . . and it created a problem that would dog the RCMP security work for decades: unclear definitions of what constituted subversion."*

Neither the reasoning behind these statements nor their validity is ever established.

Hewitt finds it hard to accept that any serious subversion or espionage was going on, even in the United States. After acknowledging that the VENONA decrypts revealed spies, he goes on to say that, in America, "witch-hunting ensnared witches and non-witches alike. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, one involved in espionage and the other most likely not, went to their deaths by electrocution." Of all the cases to choose, this is a strange one. Witches do not exist, the Rosenbergs did, and whatever Ethel's role, she was certainly involved. By invoking that tired cliché—witch hunting—Hewitt attempts to color the facts, arguing that there were only a few communists in Canada and they should have been left alone. He ignores the reality that, at the time, the Communist Party of Canada and its companion in the United States were the pools in which the Soviets found many ideological espionage agents. True, as Hewitt shows in hindsight, the era of the ideological agent came to an end after World War II, but this was not obvious until well into the 1950s and did not mean that agent recruitment ended.

On the central theme of monitoring academics, two key points are overlooked. First, the RCMP could not tell whether the secret plotters and screaming demonstrators were serious without monitoring them. Second, with possible individual exceptions, neither the government nor the RCMP was breaking the law. In the late 1970s, however, sufficient allegations of RCMP irregularities resulted in what became known as the MacDonald Commission to advise the government on the adequacy of the law with regard to the RCMP security mission. In 1984, as a consequence of the Commission, the Security Service was replaced by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), which in turn reported to another new organization, the Security Intelligence Review Committee, which provided the oversight deemed lacking in the past. But, "up until the late 1980s," Hewitt concludes, "CSIS was little different from the Security Service of a decade earlier." Not all would agree with him on this point. Eventually, the countersubversion organization was abolished and the focus was changed to counterterrorism and counterintelligence operations, moves that he concedes were begun under the Security Service.

At the intelligence core of this book are the operations conducted by the Security Service, and later the CSIS, under liberal and conservative governments, to stay on top of radical activities in Canada—which were viewed as moving from the "campus to the community." The problems are common to all nations and much can be learned by examining the Canadian experience. Hewitt is probably correct that academics in general oppose policies that intrude on the campus and other non-government political organizations. They view the universities as vehicles for "challenging the status quo." They should be left alone—under a kind of academic immunity or sanctuary—to deal with political issues, anti-globalization, and the threat of terrorism as they see fit, without government monitoring by clandestine means. Whether he feels they will achieve their goals in the post 9/11 era is not made clear.

*Stalin's Loyal Executioner: People's Commissar Nikolai Ezhov 1895-1940*. By Marc Jansen and Nikita Petrov. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2002. 274 pages.

More than a million Soviet citizens were arrested during the Red Terror of 1937-1938, which was conducted, at Stalin's direction, by the NKVD, headed by Nikolai Ezhov. At least 700,000 were executed. When it was over, the NKVD officer corps was decimated and Ezhov was dismissed, tried, and shot. Stalin forbade the mention of Ezhov's name. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, authors Marc Jansen and Nikita Petrov gained access to the NKVD chief's personal files in various archives—the records included his interrogation and his "confession." As with the confessions extracted under Ezhov's direction, most, but not all, of the charges in his own case were fabricated and his admissions were false. The irony of the situation lay in the fact that he was charged in many instances with involvement in the very arrests and executions that he had been directed to commit by Stalin. The files contain details about Ezhov's background that could be checked with Communist Party records and the authors have done this. They supplemented these data with records left by survivors, many eventually "rehabilitated."

The resulting story differs substantially from Ezhov's official biography published after the death of Stalin. For example, he had little of the

revolutionary and leadership experience attributed to him. He was, in fact, a five-foot-tall, poorly educated, Party hack, who had a baritone voice and liked to sing Russian folk songs. Before his call to the NKVD, he was apparently well liked; after a taste of dealing with the "opposition," however, he was described by his former friends as a cruel, immoral, ruthless, loyal zealot.

What Ezhov did to earn his reputation has never been in doubt, but the kind of person that could do it has long been a matter of speculation. Jansen and Petrov have filled in some of the gaps in the case of the man called the "bloodthirsty dwarf."

*In The Pirate's Den: My Life as a Secret Agent for Castro*. By Jorge Masetti. New York, NY: Encounter Books, 2002. 300 pages.

Like his political role models—Stalin and Mao—Fidel Castro has a sycophantic following. Adoring members ignore or discount the realities of his rule, no matter how strong the evidence of its true nature. Jorge Masetti, a disaffected agent of the General Intelligence Agency (DGI), makes the latest contribution to the saga of the Cuban dictator in these memoirs that outline his life serving the DGI from 1973 to 1989. Masetti was an Argentine citizen, a fact that allowed him to escape to Spain in 1990. His DGI assignments took him to Nicaragua, Mexico, and Angola, before he was posted to the United States, where he was to blow up the "transmission balloon of Radio Marti." This final assignment ended before it began when his senior DGI mentors were arrested for drug dealing and he decided to leave Cuba. There is a strange irony here. Masetti, the witness to so many illegal acts by the Cuban government and a man with extensive knowledge of DGI operations—from bank robberies to terror—assumes he will be allowed to leave the dictatorship . . . and, in fact, he is. The only complicating factor, according to Masetti, is that he wants to take his Cuban-born wife with him. And, after some difficulty, he does.

This is a thin book in many ways. While we learn of Masetti's many loves, his admiration for his father's friend, Ché Guevara, and something of his operations in various countries, one senses that he is holding back. Still, it is a firsthand account that makes clear that the tradition of show trials is not over and the tools of dictatorship have not changed.

*Swedish Signal Intelligence, 1900-1945*. By C. G. McKay and Bengt Beckman. London: Frank Cass, 2003. 310 pages.

Historian C. G. McKay's 1993 book on Swedish intelligence concentrated on foreign intelligence service operations in Sweden during World War II. [1] The current volume, with Bengt Beckman, a former member of Sweden's NSA (the National Defence Radio Establishment), takes a broader view, with principal emphasis on the origins and development of Swedish SIGINT during the pre-World War II period. There are seven chapters. The first two provide background through World War I. Chapters 3 and 4 cover the interwar years and the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union that had direct effects on Swedish SIGINT operations. Chapter 5 tells about solving the German Geheimschreiber (secret writer) encrypted traffic that allowed neutral Sweden to keep track of German activities. This is the most technical chapter in the book, but much can be skipped by the non-cryptographer without losing the historical significance.

When World War II began, the Swedes realized that some reorganization and expansion of their SIGINT service was necessary to cope with intercepts of communications from nations with diplomatic representatives in Sweden. Chapter 6 deals with these matters, which include monitoring foreign agent traffic. It is here that the authors tell how Swedes came upon a message that suggested the date of Operation OVERLORD against the Normandy beaches, and how it was kept secret. Also mentioned is the controversial Operation STELLA POLARIS, which involved the transfer of Finnish codes, ciphers, and personnel to Sweden near the end of the war to prevent their falling into Soviet hands. The final chapter discusses the extent to which Sweden broke foreign cryptosystems and the extent to which Sweden's own codes were read by other nations. It will surprise no one that all were successful to varying degrees, though Swedish ciphers, in general, were well protected. The authors acknowledge that this may be due in part to the marginal interest of neutral Sweden to the main belligerents.

At the end of World War II, Sweden was left with an expanded SIGINT service, and the authors make clear that, during the Cold War, it continued to serve its country. They leave the details of that story for the next book.

*Covert Entry: Spies, Lies and Crimes Inside Canada's Secret Service*. By Andrew Mitrovica. Toronto: Random House of Canada, 2002. 358 pages.

Andrew Mitrovica is a journalist with *The Globe and Mail* in Toronto who began writing "investigative stories about the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)" in 1999, when he decided that Canadians did not know enough about their domestic security organization. Mitrovica sees "CSIS's ability to invade the lives of Canadians" as "unmatched in government . . . where family, friends and neighbors can . . . be subjected to . . . suffocating scrutiny."

John Farrell, a convicted felon, one-time postal inspector, and later contract agent with what Mitrovica calls the Special Operational Services (SOS) of CSIS, was not happy when he did not the get the overtime pay he thought he was owed. He was also miffed because CSIS terminated their relationship. So he told Mitrovica about his troubles, adding, in 150 hours of interviews, charges of "abuses of the public purse by senior intelligence officials [all named]," "on-the-job drinking by intelligence officers," instances of cheating on entrance RCMP exams, and "tales of incompetence, corruption and law-breaking inside CSIS."

Mitrovica acknowledges, indirectly, that Farrell was something of a loose canon. And though he does not explain why CSIS hired this Inspector Clouseau-like character in any capacity, neither does he realize that it made sense to dispense with his services, albeit a little late.

What is certain from reading *Covert Entry* is that both the author and Farrell do not feel kindly about CSIS or the Canadian Senior Intelligence Review Committee. But their allegations remain in doubt because there is no documentation—beyond some copies of Farrell's contract with his employers (in an appendix), which are not relevant to the charges Farrell makes. In any event, he presents no evidence to substantiate his role in that or any other CSIS illegal venture.

Farrell has offered to testify against CSIS if given immunity. Mitrovica thinks he should get that protection, because he is a whistle blower and CSIS should be held to account. The book ends with Farrell's fate undecided and this reader wondering why the book was not titled: *Farrell's Revenge*.

[1] C. G. McKay, *From Information To Intrigue: Studies in Secret Service based on the Swedish Experience 1939-1945*

(London:  Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1993), 306 pages.

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