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The Intelligence Officer's Bookshelf

Intelligence in Recent Public Literature

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.

Intelligence Wars: American Secret History From Hitler to Al-Qaeda. By Thomas Powers. New York, NY: The New York Review of Books, 2002. 450 pages.

With the exception of the introduction, the 24 chapters in *Intelligence Wars* each appeared in *The New York Review of Books* between 1977 and 2002. Many of the important books on intelligence are reviewed with Powers' characteristic thoughtful eloquence. In fact, one learns as much about his views on the intelligence matters of the day as about the books he reviews. And while he is addicted to the theory that the "government is addicted to secrecy," he nevertheless manages to accomplish his intent to "convey . . . what the intelligence business is like, and how the Americans have gone about it."

From the books about Donovan and the OSS to those about the KGB, post-World-War-II Berlin, Penkovsky and the Cuban missile crisis, Vietnam, and the CIA from its inception to the present, Powers examines the interrelationship of the intelligence agencies and the major political issues of the day. He provides little documentation, but leaves no doubt as to his

judgments. *The Spy Who Saved The* World, by Jerrold Schecter and Peter Deriabin, is, he tells us, "one of the best intelligence books in recent years, filled with surprises." [1] Likewise, Powers finds Burton Hersh's *The Old Boys* "indispensable," noting that "no other recent book has aroused the anger of CIA veterans as much as this one." That may be true, but not because Hersh is "disrespectful . . . sharp and dismissive," as Powers suggests, but because Hersh gives such a distorted picture of the CIA and made so many errors. [2]

Powers' own judgments were not always right at the time, and unfortunately he has not updated the major errors in light of the new material available. For example, he comments about the American "embassy's pathetic failure to protect its own security, thoroughly documented by Ronald Kessler in *Moscow Station.*" [3] In fact, that entire episode is now known to have been a KGB deception designed to protect Aldrich Ames, as Pete Earley's *Confessions of a Spy*—which, sadly, Powers does not review—made clear. [4] Similarly, Powers twice attributes the VENONA code-breaking successes to the acquisition of a Finnish codebook, a cover story long ago put to rest by Robert Louis Benson and Michael Warner in their 1995 study, *VENONA.* [5]

At the outset, *Intelligence Wars* gives new insights into Powers' relationship with former DCI Richard Helms and how his book about Helms, *The Man Who Kept The Secrets*, came to be written. [6] The final chapters focus on the present day CIA and its role in the war on terrorism. Powers is skeptical: The decisionmakers may disregard good intelligence and/or the CIA may not get it right. No matter his position, Powers makes one think. The literature of intelligence is the richer for his efforts.

Espionage In The Ancient World: An Annotated Bibliography. By R. M. Sheldon. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2003. 232 pages.

Rose Mary Sheldon is a classical scholar and a history professor at the Virginia Military Institute. She has written extensively about intelligence in ancient times. In this volume, she presents 839 entries—a "Rosetta Stone" for scholars—citing books and articles mainly in Western European languages plus Latin and Greek. The geographic areas covered include the ancient Near East, Greece, the Roman Republic and Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the medieval period, and the Islamic world, plus Russia,

China, India, and Africa. The intelligence topics included are military intelligence, cryptography, espionage and its tradecraft, counterintelligence, and security services. The annotations give a short summary of the content and in many cases references for further study. For those interested in the ancient history of intelligence this is an essential reference work.

Trust No One: The Secret World of Sidney Reilly. By Richard B. Spence. Los Angeles, CA: Feral House, 2002. 527 pages.

Anyone studying the history of the KGB will, in the course of their readings, come across Sidney George Reilly, called by some the "Ace of Spies" and by others a con man, drug smuggler, forger, gun-runner, blackmailer, bigamist, murderer, and secret agent. University of Idaho historian Richard Spence has pursued the truth about this enigmatic figure since the 1980s. This book presents his findings.

What is generally accepted about Reilly's life can be summarized in a few sentences. He was born Solomon Rosenblum in Polish-Russia, raised near Odessa, and educated to some extent in Europe. Passport records show he arrived in England from France in 1895 and went on to have business dealings in Russia, the Far East, Europe, and New York. He joined the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) in Canada in October 1917. In March 1918, he became a British SIS agent and was sent to Russia where he became involved in the so-called Lockhart Plot, a failed attempt to overthrow the communist government. Sought by the Cheka, Reilly escaped to London. In 1925, after several trips to Russia for the SIS, Reilly, now on his own, returned one more time to the Soviet Union, as part of the TRUST operation, hoping to assist in overthrowing the communists. He was captured, interrogated, and shot. But the story did not end there. As Prof. Spence shows in great detail in his final chapter, Reilly's post-execution sightings set a precedent matched only by Elvis.

In *Trust No One*, the author attempts to fill in the matrix of events over time in order to reconcile Reilly's colorful, if not unscrupulous, reputation with what can be documented. This Herculean effort was made all the more difficult by Reilly himself, who gave many complex and often contradictory variations of his background—his arrival in England from service in Brazil being one totally fictitious instance.

A few additional examples are in order. That Reilly had several wives at

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onetime is not disputed, but how many and where they were has not been ascertained with confidence. Likewise the date and personnel involved with his recruitment into the Royal Flying Corps varies with the author. Prof. Spence gives one date and Andrew Cook, in his *On His Majesty's Secret Service,* [7] another—Cook appears to be the better documented. A similar discrepancy applies to the dates when Reilly became an agent of the SIS and his subsequent arrival in Russia on his first assignment. Here, too, the Cook documentation is more reliable—Spence has Reilly in Russia before he joined the RFC. In his business dealings, most notably in wartime commodities and always as an independent contractor working on commission, Reilly left a trail of unhappy customers in his wake. Typical of his transactions, shipments of machine tools and nickel ore arrived short. Some, it was later discovered, had been diverted to Germany. Still, Reilly made millions, and just what happened to that money has never been determined. At one point, Reilly said he gave most of it to Boris Savinkov to finance his attempts to overthrow the Soviet government, but Spence shows that to be a lie.

There are several instances where Prof. Spence adds details to the Reilly history not mentioned by others, as for example Reilly's contacts with Vidkun Quisling, a onetime intelligence officer and, later, World War II Norwegian traitor. But overall, the 500 pages of this book do more to show how little is reliably known about Reilly than how much. The subject lends itself to rhetorical questions and the book is filled with them, nearly all unanswered. For nebulous, ambiguous speculation, nothing comes close to this work.

In the end, despite an impressive display of names, dates, and events involving Reilly, the outcome is such a bewildering mix of lies and half truths that even Prof. Spence is forced to conclude with an admission that Reilly's "entrance and exit from this world are equally shrouded in mystery." The same can be said of the time in between.

Robert Maxwell, Israel's Master Spy: The Life and Murder of a Media Mogul. By Gordon Thomas and Martin Dillon. New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2002. 448 pages.

Czech immigrant and British media tycoon Robert Maxwell drowned alone at night while yachting off the Canary Islands in November 1991. The autopsy listed heart failure as the cause of death. Maxwell's monumental

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financial obligations suggested to others that skull-duggery had been involved. Authors Gordon Thomas and Martin Dillon agree. Maxwell, they argue, was blackmailing his former employers—the Mossad—and they decided to eliminate the source of unwelcome pressures.

To show the plausibility of their position, the authors do their best to establish Maxwell's links to the Mossad and several other foreign intelligence services. They quote author Victor Ostrovsky—a one-time Mossad officer—who wrote in his book, *By Way of Deception*, that Maxwell was a Mossad agent. [8] Author Seymour Hersh said even more in his book, *The Sampson Option*. [9] Rupert Allason (*aka* espionage author Nigel West), then a Member of Parliament in Britain, implicated Maxwell and a key member of his staff in the nefarious dealings mentioned by the others. Allason did not, as Thomas and Dillon claim, rely on his parliamentary privilege to avoid Maxwell's lawsuits. When Maxwell sued Allason, outside of Parliament, Allason produced documentary evidence supporting his charges and won.

Maxwell's American activities are covered, and, according to Thomas and Dillon, they include setting up the publishing house Pergamon-Brassey, Inc., in McLean, Virginia, as a Mossad front. Also in the mix is author David Kimche, a source for this book, who was at one time deputy head of Mossad and a close friend of Maxwell. Broadening the scope, British author and MI-6 turncoat Richard Tomlinson wrote that MI-6 had monitored Maxwell and his links to the KGB. Thomas and Dillon also document Maxwell's frequent meetings with KGB chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov, as well as his connections with the Bulgarian security service.

Surely Maxwell was in a position to embarrass a number of people. But why assassinate him? There is much in this biography to stimulate the conspiracy theorists, and possible answers to this question feed them all. Thomas and Dillon conclude that Maxwell wanted the Mossad to pay the $600 million in interest due on his debts.

In reaching this judgment, they review his humble beginnings in Czechoslovakia, the anti-Semitism he endured, his move to Britain, and his service in the Army in World War II. The authors describe his ambitious, though embellished, battle for status in Britain, his sad family life, and his unsavory years in the world of international business and finance that led to his death.

The 18 pages of notes on sources are intended to convince the reader of

the book's veracity, despite not providing many specific sources for specific facts. What the authors do not say, not surprisingly, is that one of their sources, Ari Ben-Manashe, is a well-known liar. [10] Similarly, author Gordon Thomas in his earlier book, *Gideon's Spies*, linked the Mossad to the death of Princess Diana and claimed to have a source inside the Clinton White House. [11]

That Robert Maxwell was a ruthless, corrupt, tax-dodging international businessman who served as an Israeli agent is highly probable. But Thomas and Dillon have not established the relationship with high confidence, nor the corollary that he was murdered.

Code Name Kindred Spirit: Inside the Chinese Nuclear Espionage Scandal. By Notra Trulock. San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2003. 385 pages.

Notra Trulock is the product of a middle-class Indianapolis family and a late-1960s education at Indiana University, where many professors of the day "allowed students to grade their own efforts." A self-confessed mediocre scholar, he volunteered for the Army Security Agency, asking to study any language that would keep him out of Vietnam—Russian it was. With failure to achieve proficiency guaranteeing a free trip to the war zone, Trulock developed new learning skills that eventually earned him a job with NSA as a transcriber. In *Code Name Kindred Spirit*, he tells of his bureaucratic travels from NSA to the Department of Energy, where, as Director of Intelligence, he encountered the Wen Ho Lee case that became known as KINDRED SPIRIT.

Several scientists at Los Alamos National Laboratory, where nuclear weapons are designed, told Trulock in 1995 that they thought recent Chinese nuclear tests indicated that American nuclear secrets had been acquired by the PRC through espionage. The central focus of the book is what happened from that moment until Trulock was eased out in 1999 after declining to go along with the official report of the espionage investigation, which he viewed as a whitewash to protect the guilty including many in the Clinton administration. None of the principal players or agencies look good in this story. The press leaks; the bungled investigations by the FBI, DOE, and the independent commissions; and the coverups by DOE and the White House are all well documented. It is a messy, unpleasant story of what happens when politics outweighs security and a whistle blower tries to set things right and loses.

The Archaeologist was a SPY: Sylvannus G. Morley and the Office of Naval Intelligence. By Charles H. Harris & Louis R. Sadler. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2003. 450 pages.

Sylvannus Morley was "arguably the greatest American spy of World War I," write authors Harris and Sadler, both historians at New Mexico State University. In 1917, Morley was a 33-year-old Harvard-trained archaeologist studying the Mayan civilization in Mexico and Central America. He had many friends and professional contacts in the region. Thus, his proposal to the Office of Naval Intelligence that he and a group of colleagues serve as agents in Central America was eagerly accepted. The plan was for them to provide data on German, and later Japanese, efforts to establish submarine bases in the region. And that is what they did. The authors deal in some detail with ONI organizational problems, agent communications, relationships with American firms in the area, and the problems of maintaining cover when suspected of being spies. After the war, Morely continued his association with ONI on a less formal basis while working in Central America, notwithstanding the attack on his wartime service by a leftwing scientist for "betraying science by using it to cover . . . nefarious activities as spies." *The ArchaeoLogist was a SPY* gives long overdue recognition to some able agents and expands the public record on ONI World War I operations. It is well documented with copies of Morely reports and primary source citations. While the authors' suggestion that ONI should serve as the model for the CIA leaves much room for discussion, their book is a valuable contribution to the intelligence literature.

Elite Forces: The World's Most Formidable Secret Armies. By Richard M. Bennett. London: Virgin Press, Ltd., 2003. 374 pages.

Richard Bennett's earlier book, *Espionage: An Encyclopedia of Spies and Secrets* had little to recommend it beyond being a source of unreliable entries. His current work suggests that he learned little from the experience. The book is endorsed with a Foreword by Barry Davies, a former SAS NCO, who helped rescue the Lufthansa airliner hijacked by terrorists to Mogadishu in October 1977. But Bennett's description of the event is in error leading one to wonder if Davies read the book. There is also a story about SAS officer Brian Franks murdering Germans after

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World War II because they were not being dealt with officially by the British government. Author Anthony Kemp showed this story to be a myth in his book in 1986. [12] Although Bennet's *Espionage* is described as comprehensive, there is no mention of the CIA's Special Operations Group or the efforts of Mike Spann in Afghanistan. There are numerous unit misidentifications, British and American, and the historical details cannot be accepted as written. For example, the statement that "The first directors of CIA were veterans of OSS" fails the accuracy tests on several points. Thus, Bennet's topic is timely, but the book is unreliable.

OSS Special Operations in China. By Col. Francis B. Mills (USA, Ret.), Robert Mills, and Dr. John W. Brunner. Williamstown, NJ: Phillips Publications, 2002. 550 pages.

Although Gen. MacArthur would not allow the OSS to operate in his theater of command, he did not control the China-Burma theater and the OSS functioned in both. Col. Mills was in charge of OSS Special Operations in the area of China north of the Yangtze River, including Peking. His book tells the story of the guerrilla operations—blowing up bridges, ambushes, and sabotage—by his teams behind Japanese lines. They also had to deal with the Chinese Communists who were less than sympathetic, capturing Team SPANIEL and keeping members imprisoned until the end of the war. Communications and resupply were constant problems. Complicating the situation, both the Communists and the Nationalists suspected the teams of spying and the Chinese warlords urged the locals to "shoot, kill, steal, and loot as they pleased from the devil Americans."

While the authors state that the book is based mainly on declassified records, the records are not cited. There are long quotes from diaries, intelligence reports, and team communications, but they are not referenced in any way that would allow a scholar to find them in the archives without going through all the files. Nevertheless, this is a valuable memoir about OSS in China with a level of tactical detail not found elsewhere.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to the CIA. By Allan Swenson and Michael Benson. Indianapolis, IN: Alpha Books, 2003. 315 pages.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Spies and Espionage. By Rodney Carlisle. Indianapolis, IN: Alpha Books, 2003. 340 pages.

The *Guide to the CIA* is a lighthearted, if not flippant, treatment of a subject well known to most *Studies in Intelligence* readers, though it should be of value to family members, friends, students, potential employees, and interested laymen. Although filled with clichés—the "second oldest profession," for example—it gives a good overview of the organization, mission, history, and functions of the Agency. A number of helpful appendices clarify abbreviations and provide definitions (*e.g.,* "spookspeak"), a bibliography, and a list of other relevant intelligence organizations. The historical facts sprinkled throughout should not, however, be accepted on faith. For example, there were five, not four, Cambridge spies; no names appear next to the memorial stars in the CIA's main lobby; Allen Dulles did not recruit the agents needed to arrange the Nazi surrender or form Operation Paperclip; and it was not Seymour Hersh's article that prompted the Rockefeller Commission. Read with care. Swenson and Benson have provided a useful introduction to the topic.

The same cannot be said of *Spies and Espionage*—it is an encyclopedia of errata. After short comments on intelligence in Elizabethan times, the American War of Independence, and the Civil War, the book focuses briefly on the formative interwar period in the early 20th century before turning to World War II and continuing to the present. Typical of the errors are the wrong date for the formation of the FBI (1935, not 1930) and the fact that Elizabeth Bentley spied for the NKVD, not the GRU. Also, there was no Swiss Red Orchestra and the British did not feed ULTRA through the *Lucy* Ring to the Russians. It does not stop: Alexander Foote was not a double agent; the German agent Cicero did not disclose war plans; Donovan was appointed Coordinator of Information, not Coordinator of Intelligence; Philby was not stationed in Turkey in 1946, nor was he dismissed from MI-6 in 1955; Michael Straight was never asked to be a talent spotter; and Penkovsky never visited President Kennedy! While the identification of organizations and events is useful, the details are suspect. *Caveat emptor*.

Democracy, Law and Security: Internal Security Services in Contemporary Europe. Jean-Paul Brodeur, Peter Gill, and Dennis Töllborg, eds. New York: NY: Columbia University Press, 2003. 354 pages.

The academic attention to intelligence as a factor in international relations and domestic security has increased markedly in the last twenty years,

and this book is a good example. The editors of have drawn from papers presented at two symposia in Gothenburg, Sweden, that compare intelligence services in 10 countries: Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The various chapters look at historical, organizational, and political differences. Of particular interest are the countries that only recently adopted a democratic form of government. To facilitate comparison, the authors each comment, to varying degrees, on the same features—compartmentation, sources, doctrine, security, accountability, secrecy, privacy, and human rights. In most cases, very little has been published in English about the services discussed, and that enhances the book's importance. For students of intelligence, and especially counterintelligence, this is a very worthwhile contribution.

Operation Cyanide: Why the Bombing of the USS Liberty Nearly Caused World War III. By Peter Hounam. London: Vision, 2003. 289 pages.

The *Liberty* incident just will not go away, and that is probably a good thing since the official version of the story differs so much from the facts presented by those who experienced the Israeli attack on their ship. British journalist Peter Hounam has reviewed the data again and provides some new information obtained from crewmembers and Israelis heretofore reluctant to break their silence. He is persuasive when it comes to the argument that the attack was deliberate. But when he attempts to explain *why* Israel attacked a ship flying a big American flag, he strains credibility. Unlike James Bamford in his *Body of Secrets*, he does not attribute the attack to an attempt to hide the commission of Israeli atrocities elsewhere. Hounam claims that *Operation Cyanide* was a "clandestine CIA and Mossad plan to foment the Six Day War and guarantee an overwhelming victory for Israel." And, he asserts, the outcome nearly caused a nuclear war between the super powers. Hounam identifies the sources for his facts but not his conclusions, which he admits are speculative. He also notes important gaps in the story that can only be explained when the *Liberty* files are available. Although the recent release of *Liberty* documents did not help, those still classified may. Until then, the truth about the *Liberty* incident will remain uncertain.

None So Blind: A Personal Account of the Intelligence Failure in Vietnam. By George W. Allen. Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2001. 296 pages.

This is a story of strategic intelligence needs ignored and of intelligence distorted for political and personal gain (not the author's). It is told by a firsthand participant, George Allen, a World War II Navy veteran and DIA analyst before joining the CIA. His assignment to Vietnam as an analyst was not enthusiastically received by the military ground-pounders there, nor by some of the so-called diplomats, for that matter. But he did more than pay his dues, and in nearly three years in-country, he earned their respect. His subsequent positions at CIA Headquarters as a senior analyst combined to produce credentials few can match. "More than a few intelligence officers in Washington felt from the beginning that our defined aims [in Vietnam] overreached our ability to achieve them," he writes. Moreover, the planners in Washington did not like intelligence that suggested this or other policies that contradicted their views. Allen gives plenty of examples. Robert McNamara's role gets the attention it so richly deserves and the Sam Adams order-of-battle numbers controversy is treated with fairness. If the reader can only read one book about the problems of strategic intelligence in Vietnam, make it *None So Blind*. [13]

[1] Jerrold Schecter and Peter Deriabin, *The Spy Who Saved The World: How a Soviet Colonel Changed the Course of the Cold War* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992), 421 pages.

[2] Burton Hersh, The Old Boys: *The American Elite and the Origins of the CIA* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992), 536 pages.

[3] Ronald Kessler, *Moscow Station: How the KGB Penetrated the American Embassy* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989), 305 pages.

[4] Pete Earley, *Confessions of a Spy: The Real Story of Aldrich Ames* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1997), 362 pages.

[5] Robert Louis Benson and Michael Warner, *VENONA: Soviet Espionage and the American Response 1939-1957* (Washington, DC: CIA/NSA, 1996), 450 pages.

[6] Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1979), 393 pages.

[7] Reviewed in *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 46, No. 4, 2002, p. 86.

[8] Victor Ostrovsky, *By Way of Deception: The Making and Unmaking of a MOSSAD Officer* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 396 pages.

[9] Seymour Hersh, *The Sampson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Random House, 1991), 354 pages.

[10] For comments on Ari-Ben Manashe's unreliability, see Tom Bower, *Maxwell: The Outsider* (London: Mandarin, 1991), p. 528.

[11] Gordon Thomas, *Gideon's Spies: The Secret History of the Mossad* (New York, NY: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Griffin, 2000), 382 pages.

[12] Anthony Kemp, *The Secret Hunters* (London: Coronet Books, 1986, 128 pages).

[13] See also the review by James J. Wirtz in the *International Journal Of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, *Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 460-63*.

Hayden B. Peake is curator of CIA's Historical Intelligence Collection. This section is unclassified in its entirety.