

Jonathan Haslam, Karina Urbach, eds.. *Secret Intelligence in the European States System, 1918-1989*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013. 256 pp. \$54.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8047-8359-0.



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Jonathan Haslam and Karina Urbach aim to recover intelligence history and help secure its place in the context of military and diplomatic history. Suggesting that “intelligence history has arguably failed to integrate itself into the mainstream by not taking diplomatic and military history sufficiently seriously on their own terms,” they seek to integrate trends and events in intelligence history with other aspects of national security, yielding a more complete understanding as a result (p. 3).

Secret Intelligence has a number of important strengths. One is its early and earnest concession that “the jury is evidently out as to how far secret intelligence is valuable or critical to the successful conduct of international relations” (p. 8). Having thus set the tone, the reader can explore the question through the case studies that comprise the remainder of the work. Similarly, the explanation that “secret intelligence and its acquisition are ... more often humdrum prose than inspirational poetry” p. (4), the editors do important work in dis-

PELLING fanciful mental images about the nature of spy work.

Several of the chapters are admirably informative and accessible. This seems particularly to be the case with respect to Jonathan Haslam’s chapter on the early development of Soviet human intelligence, David Holloway’s dual study of Soviet intelligence regarding the Nazi buildup toward Operation Barbarossa and Anglo-American work toward a nuclear weapon, and Oliver Bange’s chapter on the East German Stasi’s activities during the era of West German *Ostpolitik*. As is frequently the case with projects that circumscribe very large spans of time or space, readers are likely to find some of the chapters more accessible than others. This factor may account for a portion of this effect in the book.

The organizational model, designing and placing the chapters in a chronological progression and producing as contiguous a geographical flow as possible, is an important and useful decision on the part of the editors. The first two chap-

ters examine the Soviet Union from the time of the Bolshevik Revolution to the close of the Second World War. The next three chapters follow French and British intelligence during the overlapping period from the aftermath of the First World War deep into the Cold War. The book's final two chapters study the intelligence services and activities of the two Germanies in the Cold War. As noted, the work's interest in meshing the study of intelligence with other relevant security history issues is another astute approach to a field that is complex as well as esoteric.

Secret Intelligence does have its oversights, however, and they are modest but avoidable ones. The first is the lack of an overarching conclusion chapter to tie the book's various threads together for the reader. The absence of at least a short section recapitulating the themes and issues and drawing some conclusions from the chapter case studies seems both to miss the opportunity for symmetry and to leave the reader to his or her own devices in the midst of a topic that the editors from the outset admit is a difficult one. A second, complementary, problem is the way that the chapters vary dramatically in length from one to the next. The longest of the chapters, at forty-seven pages, is more than twice as long as any of the other six chapters in the work. The wild range in chapter length is a distracting feature that detracts from the strong organizational concept guiding the book.

In conclusion, *Secret Intelligence*, through case studies, brings several opportunities to put light on an often obscure aspect of security affairs and historical study. It draws attention to intelligence history while remaining cognizant of the fact that intelligence is a significant but elusive part of a complex puzzle in understanding how countries pursue their policy objectives.

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