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Simon Ball. *Secret History: Writing the Rise of Britain's Intelligence Services.*
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Simon Ball has written a history of the British intelligence services from roughly the start of the First World War to the beginning of the Cold War. Ball's main purpose is to present the myths, misconceptions, and misunderstandings of the intelligence services. He discusses intelligence from such angles as policy and civilian agencies and military operations. An added benefit of the book is its inclusion of the often underappreciated and under-researched British government's funding of the intelligence services. Ball delivers on his intended goals by researching various historical personalities and their contributions to the history of intelligence services, along with financial concerns of intelligence.

Each chapter covers a historical era and five themes within that period: victory of British intelligence in the First World War, effectiveness of military intelligence versus civilian agencies, lack of funding for intelligence services, British intelligence paranoia about Bolshevism or the USSR, and failure to understand Russian penetration via moles and spies into British intelligence agencies. A great deal of the book deals with justifying the cost of intelligence to taxpayers. Also, Ball examines how the government voted on funds for various agencies.

Ball describes the various intelligence agencies and their areas of responsibility. He notes, for example, that in 1921 the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) took over responsibility of the passport control officers who were stationed around the world. This passage of the book illustrates well the challenges and opportunities faced by the fledgling agencies and their still developing intelligence networks.

An interesting theme that flows throughout the chapters is the structure of civilian and military agencies, specifically, the various agencies' responsibilities, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence. Ball's uniform approach throughout the book describing areas of responsibilities is helpful in understanding change in priorities from agencies that performed one or more of the same tasks. His approach in describing the duties and some-

times overlapping areas of concern gives the reader a holistic view of the trajectory of civilian and military intelligence agencies. A fascinating example is the establishment of the Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre (CSDIC), a military prisoner-of-war agency of the Second World War. The British military built and staffed the agencies based on feedback from a government performance review of civilian intelligence agencies called the Bland Report.

Continuing with the history of intelligence during the Second World War, Ball masterfully balances the importance of ULTRA (the designation for wartime signals intelligence obtained by breaking encrypted radio communications via the code-breaking work at Bletchley Park) with the undervalued and unglamorous use of the Order of Battle, intelligence gathering done by MI14, which sifted "endless minutae" to understand enemy assets (p. 185). Countless books have been written on the subject and importance of the British ULTRA code work. Ball does include useful detail but makes a stand that ULTRA did not win the war. He specifically states that "allied materiel superiority had won the war" (p. 188). Here lies the strength and distinction between Ball's book and other works on British intelligence. Ball highlights the work and due diligence of lesser-known intelligence-gathering activities over the more glamorous and high priority intelligence work from the same period, 1914 to the 1960s.

Ball discusses Germany's state and military intelligence challenges for nearly half of the book, civilian intelligence cases such as the Oxford Five for another quarter of the book, and the USSR and its Cold War beginnings rounding out the remaining discussion. Regarding Joseph Stalin's intelligence agencies, such as the NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs), Ball states that the Soviets were better at penetration/infiltration or espionage, for example, the Oxford Five spy ring. The British simply lacked equally trained espionage agents. Conversely, he argues that the British, by the 1950s, were better at deception and intelligence through technological advancements. However, again here, we see that the purpose of the written histories of intelligence was for the justification of the cost of operating such agencies and the price of not having equal footing as the other world powers.

Although Ball's book is first rate in quality of writing and research and is aimed at an academic readership, there are a few drawbacks. First, there is a lack of a list of military and civilian agencies terms, which many history books have after the table of contents. The book includes military and civilian jargon, such as MI5 and GC & CS, which stand for the Defence Security Service and Government Code and Cypher School, respectively; a list of such terms would have been useful for readers. Readers might find themselves searching the internet for various military and civilian appellations used. This is certainly a distraction from the flow of the book. Another drawback is the amount of space that is devoted to intelligence myths, such as the exaggeration of German war production materials during the Second World War and Russian penetration of British agencies during the Cold War. Conversely, Ball's research on government funding of civilian intelligence agencies and their various areas of responsibility is to be commended.

The book overall addresses the "rise of the British intelligence machine as a necessary and welcoming response to external threats" (p. 208). Various British intelligence agencies history, growth, lifespan, and mergers, infused with various historical actors and aided with detailed researched archival documents, are the essence of *Secret History*.

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