

always been determined by the pressing realities of a hostile state and antagonistic majority population, have always been more opportunistic with regards to tactics than their southern comrades. Thus it has been the pre-'69 southern republicans who have been the main obstacle to the modernization of republican strategy carried out by Gerry Adams since the late 1970s. The conflict culminated in the secession of leading members of this group and the formation of Republican Sinn Fein in 1986. The most interesting aspects of the book concern the oral history of the 1986 split and the much more important, founding split of 1969/70. The lasting value of the analysis will reside in the interviews which provide revealing material on contemporary republican mentalities

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Bryden, John. *Best-Kept Secret: Canadian Secret Intelligence in the Second World War*. Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1993.

It is generally well-known the role intelligence played during World War II as a decisive factor in the Allied victory. What is not well-known is that Canada made a notable contribution to secret intelligence and, while a great deal has been written about intelligence in general and UK and US signals intelligence (SIGINT) in particular, little has been written about Canada's wartime SIGINT effort. *Best-Kept Secret: Canadian Secret Intelligence in the Second World War* by John Bryden, sheds new light on some wartime intelligence activities in Canada.

John Bryden's first book, *Deadly Allies: Canada's Secret War 1937-1947*, discussed our pioneering role in chemical and biological warfare research. Noted for his painstaking research, Bryden was able to glean interesting nuggets of information from declassified and sanitized documents unavailable in other countries. Now the Member of Parliament for Hamilton-Wentworth, Bryden applied the same technique during his research for *Best-Kept Secret*. In fact, his second book is a first-class collation effort. However, good collation did not result in good analysis, and Bryden—despite all the information available to him—has been unable to place consistently his data in its proper context.

*Best-Kept Secret* covers a wide range of activities in chronological order, discussing the role of operational intelligence in the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), low-level cryptography and postal censorship. With regard to censorship, the author's seemingly anti-establishment tone and journalistic background comes to the fore, and he is clearly uncomfortable with the need for and requirements of censorship during wartime, applying the mores of the 1990s to a wartime situation. Indeed, describing Allied censorship as the "most elaborate and systematic invasion of privacy in world history" (p. 152) is rather melodramatic, given the pace and nature of all forms of censorship carried out by the Axis.

*Best-Kept Secret* is truly a Canadian story, describing names and circumstances well-known to Canadians. As Bryden discovered, Prime Minister Mackenzie King apparently knew about secret intelligence than is revealed in *The Mackenzie King Record*. One of Bryden's more interesting hypotheses is his claim – based in large part on a circumstantial SIGINT record – that the Allies dropped atomic bombs on Japan not to force the Japanese to surrender (since, according to Bryden SIGINT said they would), but to demonstrate the West's resolve and the bomb's power to the Soviet Union. Bryden bases his case solely on the SIGINT evidence, and while his revisionist hypothesis is interesting, he does not provide additional corroborative evidence to substantiate his case. Indeed, SIGINT is very susceptible to disinformation (as any reader of *Bodyguard of Lies* will appreciate), but Bryden makes no assessment as to the likelihood of the diplomatic reports' accuracy. He does not account for the possibility that even if the decrypts were true, the Allies directing the war effort may not have been entirely prepared to accept the possibility – owing to the fanatical fighting in the Pacific islands campaign – that the Japanese were truly eager and ready to surrender. One must remember that sensitive SIGINT sources must be subjected to the same scrutiny and evaluation as other, more readily available ones.

On the positive side, what Bryden points out is that Canada did play an important, though relatively small, part in Allied secret intelligence during the war. Our contribution was affected by lack of experience, insufficient resources, and a reluctance on the part of some officials to collect signals intelligence. Nonetheless, we carved out a small niche for ourselves rather than achieving complete cryptographic independence. Indeed, once the war ended and our cryptographic "innocence" was over, it could be said that Canada's reliance on foreign resources had shifted from the British to the US.

*Best-Kept Secret* has many merits; however, it suffers, regrettably, from a number of errors which affect adversely its credibility and impact. Bryden does not appear to have grasped adequately the scope of his subject. There are a number of particularly glaring errors, and while Bryden states at the beginning of the book that he is reporting "fact, not hearsay," his claim that for "more than forty-five years ... Canadians believed Canada had no secret agency actively engaged in gathering intelligence" (p. 2) is clearly exaggerated. Indeed, *The Fifth Estate* aired a program called "The Espionage Establishment," which discussed government SIGINT activities in January 1974. Moreover, articles in journals such as *Conflict Quarterly* and the *Journal of Contemporary History* show that Canadians who chose to look learned about Canadian intelligence activities much earlier than Bryden contends.

Second, Bryden uses the terms PURPLE and ENIGMA interchangeably, eventually leading to confusion concerning the PURPLE cypher, or the PURPLE machine. In the Atlantic, for example, the TRITON cypher was used on the ENIGMA machine. The intelligence derived from decryption of a high-grade code such as TRITON resulted in ULTRA. In the Pacific, the Japanese encyphered text using – what the Americans called – the JN-25 cypher on the PURPLE machine.

The intelligence derived from decrypting this traffic resulted in MAGIC. The most important errors he makes are in not appreciating why the Operational Intelligence Centre at Naval Service Headquarters (NSHQ) in Ottawa received kudos from the Admiralty for its work at the height of the Battle of the Atlantic, and not mentioning the contribution made by the Staff Signals Officer at NSHQ to the Canadianization of the HFDF network. In the first case, the Allies could not read TRITON from early January until early December, 1942; therefore, any operational intelligence acquired via HFDF which could provide timely data to commanders ashore and afloat of impending U-Boat attack was vital. In the second case, it was the Staff Signals Officer (LCdr. G Worth, RCN) who sorted out the communications necessary to ensure that SIGINT was passed to those who needed it. In short, Bryden appears not to have grasped the significance of intelligence techniques, as he seems – like so many others – to be over fascinated by the Ultra story; nor does he appear to appreciate the difference between intelligence at the operational and tactical levels.

Finally, Bryden relied, in this reviewer's opinion, too much on primary sources, in the sense that some are not fully exploited or appreciated due to insufficient background reading. Indeed, that may explain why he missed the importance of HFDF during the TRITON blackout. Although it is important to use primary sources wisely, too much reliance on one source is, in the intelligence game, exceedingly dangerous. In fact, if a few more secondary sources had been employed, he would have been able to provide the necessary context which his book lacks. While not advocating organization charts for their own sake, one or two showing the organization and structure of the Canadian intelligence community during the war would have helped the novice reader. In addition, a map showing the intercept sites would have been valuable.

That said, while others with more knowledge or experience may have preceded him, Bryden's work certainly breaks new ground in the study of Canadian intelligence and, especially given his excellent collation effort, lays a good foundation for further study. What makes it even more valuable is that *Best-Kept Secret* is a Canadian story told from a Canadian – rather than British or American – viewpoint. In any field of endeavor, one must always know where one has gone before deciding where to proceed in the future. Canadians know far too little about their past; *Best-Kept Secret* will help to illuminate a little-known chapter in our history.

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