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**SPRING CONFERENCE 2006  
LADY MARGARET HALL, OXFORD,  
SATURDAY 6<sup>th</sup> MAY 2006**

**INTELLIGENCE IN PEACE & WAR<sup>1</sup>**

**Programme**

Dr Matthew Seligmann *British Intelligence in Germany before 1914*<sup>2</sup>

Dr Jim Beach *Haig's Intelligence – the Contribution of the Agent Networks 1916-1918*

Dr Paul Latawski *The Polish Intelligence Contribution in the Second World War:  
Historiography, Issues and Controversies*

Colonel John Hughes-Wilson *Intelligence Blunders*

The proceedings of this Conference are somewhat fragmentary due to the fact that the editor was unable to attend.

**British Intelligence in Germany before 1914**

**Paper by Matthew Seligmann**

**Report by Andy Grainger**

Matthew Seligmann told me that his paper took as its starting point Nick Hiley's article on the failure of British Intelligence on Germany before 1914<sup>3</sup>. He says:

“I suggest that the newly released files of the permanent under secretary of the Foreign Office substantiated and added to Hiley's claim that the foundation of the Secret Service Bureau in 1909 did not lead to a major advance in systematic British covert intelligence gathering before the outbreak of the First World War. Time was simply too short for this. However, whilst I agree with Nick Hiley on this point, my paper contested the idea that the ad hoc methods used to gather data on Germany before 1909 (and continued even after the founding of the SSB) were ineffective. Examples of reporting by service attachés, missions by Army officers to Germany, visits by British warships to German ports, and trips by British industrialists to German shipbuilding facilities were all used to show that high grade data could be obtained by such means. Finally the role of luck was also stressed, with the example being given of Arthur Lee finding out the details of the German 1912 naval manoeuvres by being in a railway carriage with a German Admiral and his maps.”

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<sup>1</sup> <http://intellit.muskingum.edu/index.html> offers what seems to me a very useful bibliography of intelligence related material.

<sup>2</sup> Members may be interested in the Journal of Intelligence History whose journal at their website <http://www.intelligence-history.org/jih/journal.html> offers some interesting leads on intelligence in the Great War.

<sup>3</sup> *The Historical Journal*, 26, 4 (1983), 867-889 and not as in the source at Note 20.



## **Haig's Intelligence: The Contribution of the Agent Networks, 1916-1918** **Dr Jim Beach**

The paper is derived from my thesis.<sup>4</sup> It summarises only one strand of a complex intelligence system built upon a variety of mutual supporting information sources.

The thesis has the advantage of being in the 'second wave' of First World War and intelligence historiography; building upon earlier work particularly that of Tim Travers, David French, Michael Occleshaw and Christopher Andrew.

Intelligence on the Western Front has been over-simplified until now (Charteris was a wrong 'un). The paucity of official British sources has forced a dangerous over-reliance on memoir literature. But also, rather paradoxically, the sheer volume of the final intelligence output has been a deterrent to in-depth research.

This has been overcome through pursuit of fresh private papers, use of British intelligence materials in foreign archives, and the collation of a complete database of GHQ's intsums for 1916-1918. The latter has allowed definitive responses to the all-important question of 'who knew what and when?' Examination of the agent networks has drawn upon, but also added to, the existing literature, particularly in assessing their utility at various points in the war.

Pre-war preparations have been chronicled extensively in Alan Judd's book *The Search for "C"*. However it has been possible to add an extra layer. For example the disappearance of C's officer in Belgium (Roy Regnart) in July 1914 can be explained by the fact that, as a RM reservist, he was summoned to join the Grand Fleet. More importantly it has been possible to identify C's officers in southern and eastern Belgium, known as DB and AC, as Demetrius Boulger (a veteran journalist) and James Cuffe (another RM officer). Their pre-war work was focused on the identification of potential agents and the production of intelligence handbooks for that region. However the German invasion rapidly overran this area.

The events of late 1914 were crucial in setting the espionage framework for the rest of the war. C's car crash on 3 October seems to have temporarily neutered the Secret Service's operations in France and Belgium. GHQ filled the vacuum with its own espionage operations. Subsequent rivalry caused by GHQ's pre-war doctrinal 'right' to run its own networks.

GHQ I(b) was the sub-section of GHQ Intelligence charged with running these operations. Historiography has tended not to distinguish between the rival organisations, however there were very significant structural differences. I(b) headed initially by Walter Kirke who quickly established binary networks using fellow RA officers (Cameron and Wallinger) as their heads. Similarly the Head of I(b) had a multiplicity of other responsibilities. However the key problem was their use, until 1917, of intermediaries in Netherlands to run their operations. This was compounded by the changing geographic focus of GHQ's operational interest and the demand for information from the German forward areas, where counter-intelligence was

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<sup>4</sup> Jim Beach, 'British Intelligence and the German Army, 1914-1918', unpublished PhD, University of London, 2005.



at its strongest. This led to reliance on air-dropped single agents and pigeon-dropping balloons.

The Secret Service had a number of structural advantages over I(b). It controlled its own budget and could recruit its officers from a wider pool. From late 1914 it began to fill the strategic intelligence vacuum in Whitehall. This gave it a much wider remit that was less time-sensitive, thus allowing more measured growth of its networks. Unlike I(b) who ran their operations through Flushing, the Secret Service was established as a unified station in The Hague/Rotterdam which gave better access to Belgium and liaison with the Dutch authorities.

The rivalry between the two organisations descended rapidly into bureaucratic stalemate. GHQ invoked its right to its own 'military' networks while Secret Service cited its wider 'political' remit to prevent a counter-takeover in Belgium. The Secret Service was hampered by collapse of its networks in early 1916 but they were re-built rapidly by Henry Landau. The log-jam was broken by replacement of Kirke by Drake in March 1917 with GHQ networks declining noticeably in 1917 and 1918.

The contribution of the agent networks to the operational intelligence picture can be extracted (by process of elimination and the tag-line '*not to be reproduced*') from GHQ's intelligence summaries. Reports are either identifications of units behind the lines or troop movements by rail. Unfortunately it is impossible (at this stage of the research) to distinguish between the reports of the GHQ and Secret Service networks.

The networks made a unique contribution in that they allowed the proactive pursuit of answers to the perennial question of the location and intention of the German theatre reserves. Although a cumulative picture, often reliant on other sources for corroboration, they provided an excellent insight at key moments. Conversely the absence of this intelligence was a serious handicap. At least two clear examples can be provided.

The collapse of the (mainly Secret Service) networks in early 1916 coincided with preparations for the Somme offensive. The sudden shrinkage of geographical coverage left GHQ with a flawed intelligence picture that suggested the absence of German reserves, thus contributing to 'breakthrough assumptions'. Improvement in networks allowed better monitoring and reinforced an attritional approach later in the battle.

Until the winter of 1917/1918, the critical weakness in the networks' coverage was their inability to monitor German lateral rail movements. However before the German offensives of March 1918, the Secret Service extended southwards into the Ardennes and beyond. This gave Haig an excellent picture of German north-south movements, giving him the confidence to 'hold his nerve' when under pressure to shift forces southwards to assist the French in May/June 1918. Similarly it also showed the evaporation of the German reserves opposite the BEF in July which contributed to his confidence to go onto the offensive.

In summary, the agent networks did not provide the same insight as ULTRA later would, but they did provide a usually reliable insight into German operational intent. We can only speculate as to whether, had C been a better driver, the reliable 1918 end-state might have been achieved earlier?



## **The Polish Intelligence Contribution in the Second World War: Historiography, Issues and Controversies**

Dr Paul Latawski<sup>5</sup>  
RMAS

Tessa Stirling, Daria Nałęcz and Tadeusz Dubicki (eds.), *Intelligence Co-operation between Poland and Great Britain during World War II, Vol. 1: The Report of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee*, (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2005). [Hereafter: RAPHc-1]

Jan Stanisław Ciechanowski (ed.), *Polsko-Brytyjska współpraca wywiadowcza podczas II wojny światowej/ Intelligence Co-operation between Poland and Great Britain during World War II, tom II/vol. II: Wybór Dokumentów/Documents*, (Warszawa: Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych – Wydział Wydawnictw, 2005). [Hereafter: RAPHc-2]

### **Introduction**

The history of Poland's contribution to the Allied victory during the Second World War has yet to be written or even integrated into the voluminous literature in the English language on the war. There are many reasons for this omission not the least being the lack of linguistic ability among many historians to read primary and secondary sources in Polish. A certain amount of prejudice has contributed to this gap by regarding Polish military efforts as inconsequential, safely ignored or merely laughable. This phenomenon is illustrated by the often repeated myth that in the 1939 invasion of Poland Polish cavalry charged German tanks. Despite a large historical literature in Polish on the disastrous September campaign, there is no history in English that offers a comprehensive look at the campaign which utilises both Polish and German sources and moves away from such myths. Instead tired clichés are trotted out in place of balanced and thorough historical research. Given the often parlous state of the historiography on the Polish military contribution to the Second World War in English, the recent publication of the two volume report of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee on Intelligence Co-operation between Poland and Great Britain during the Second World War represents a major and remarkable step forward in filling, as the Poles would say, the *biały plamy*, the blank spaces in the history of Poland's wartime contribution to the Allied victory.

### **II Historiography and Archival Sources**

The number of books written on Polish intelligence during the Second World War is relatively modest and mostly in Polish. The areas that have received the most coverage in historical literature are twofold. The first concerns Enigma, the code breaking of the German cipher machine. Although the number of books is great the Polish role is less well covered than the story of Bletchley Park. The second area reasonably well covered, concerns the role of the Polish underground, the *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army) in the collection of intelligence. Apart from a few narrow, if important themes, the work of Polish intelligence has not received much in the way of overarching investigation.

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<sup>5</sup> Dr Paul Latawski is a Senior Lecturer in the Defence and International Affairs Department, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. The views expressed in this review article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of RMA Sandhurst or the UK Ministry of Defence.



The first comprehensive examination of Polish intelligence appeared in 1995. Written by Andrzej Peplowski, *Wywiad Polskich Sił Zbrojnych na Zachodzie 1939-1945* [Intelligence of the Polish Armed Forces in the West 1939-1945]<sup>6</sup> was the first comprehensive treatment of the subject to appear in any language. A Professor of History at an institute in Słupsk, Peplowski is, if not the only person working on Polish intelligence in the wartime period, the undoubted leading figure in the field. His 400 page research monograph drew heavily on the surviving papers of Polish intelligence service held at the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum (PISM) in London and various archives in Poland to make this book a well researched piece of work that utilises much available primary source material. The book tells the story of the wartime establishment abroad first in France and then later in Britain of Oddział II, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau of the Polish General Staff, Poland's intelligence service. The book has much to commend it. Among its strengths are its coverage of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau's relations with Allies particularly the critical relationship with Britain and its links with the Polish underground movement. In addition to this book, Peplowski has written a number of articles on 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau's dealings with military intelligence in the United States. Peplowski's professionally researched and ground breaking work has not received the attention that it deserves outside interested elements of the Polish academic community.

Following Peplowski's pioneering work there appeared a very valuable addition to the story of Polish intelligence. The publication of the two volume report of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee on Intelligence Co-operation between Poland and Great Britain during the Second World War has marked a significant milestone in the historiography of Polish intelligence. The roots of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee that produced the two volumes lay in an exchange of letters in October and November 1999 between the then Polish Prime Minister, Jerzy Buzek and British Prime Minister Tony Blair. In his 18 October letter, Buzek in effect asked that the British government help locate any undisclosed Polish records in the possession of the British government particularly concerning wartime Polish intelligence. From Blair's positive response resulted the setting up of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee. The Committee's remit in its terms of reference required it 'to identify and evaluate surviving documents illustrating the importance of the contribution of Polish intelligence to the outcome of the Second World War'.<sup>7</sup> The full committee numbered some twenty individuals with other historians also contributing to the project.

Published in 2005, the two volume work of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee is the most comprehensive treatment to date of Polish intelligence during the Second World War. The first volume is entitled *Intelligence Co-operation between Poland and Great Britain during the Second World War Volume 1: The Report of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee*. It contains fifty-nine papers divided into six overarching sections that endeavour to deliver a comprehensive analysis of all the major aspects of Polish intelligence efforts. Inevitably, as in most multi-author works, there is unevenness in the quality of the papers with a mixture of properly referenced papers and essays with minimal notes. Nevertheless, the authors represent an impressive list of contemporary British and Polish historians with a sprinkling of knowledgeable British officials contributing to Volume 1. Despite this caveat, Volume 1 is an extremely valuable secondary source offering the only comprehensive survey

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<sup>6</sup> Andrzej Peplowski, *Wywiad Polskich Sił Zbrojnych na Zachodzie 1939-1945*, (Warszawa: AWM, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> RAPHC-1, p. xviii.



in English of the wartime activities of the Polish 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau. Volume 1 is published in both an English and Polish language version.

Volume 2 of the report is a selection of documents on the wartime activities of Polish intelligence. It contains 133 documents selected from a dozen archives in Britain, Poland and the United States. This hefty book runs to 1033 pages and its length can be attributed to the fact that all the material within its pages appears in both English and Polish. For historians, Volume 2 provides a wealth of important primary source material. The editor of the volume, Dr Jan Ciechanowski, provides a useful introduction to the material and biographical details of names mentioned in documents to guide the reader through the myriad of personalities. Indeed, the biographical notes are an amazing resource as they are a kind of who's who of the Polish intelligence community in the Second World War. Curiously, Volume 2, a collection of primary source material of enormous value to historians, does not appear to have been published in the United Kingdom but only in Poland.

As important and laudable the work of the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee is, it represents an effort that was born out of controversy and mystery surrounding the loss by the British authorities of the Polish 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau archive. Handed over 'in trust' after the war, the British government has not been able to determine the circumstances of their destruction.<sup>8</sup> The unclear circumstances regarding the loss of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau archive has provided and will continue to provide the stuff of a historical 'who done it'. Whether the loss of these papers can be put down to British 'conspiracy' or cock-up', it is doubtful that the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee will put this saga to rest. In fact, the loss of the Polish intelligence archives is a more complicated story where the destruction of material may have proceeded at the hands of the Poles themselves. What do we know about the loss of the Polish intelligence archives?

With the wartime politics of the Polish question pointing to a Soviet takeover from 1943 onwards, concerns in the Polish intelligence community began to mount as, from their point of view, it was unthinkable that they should be transferred to the hands of a Soviet controlled Polish puppet government. With the withdrawal of British recognition of the Polish government-in-exile in July 1945, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau leadership acted to prevent any transfer of highly sensitive material to Soviet control. In a directive dated 6 July 1945, Lt Col Leon Bortnowski, issued instructions regarding the future retention of the Polish intelligence archives. From this directive, it is clear that some categories of papers would be retained. The directive also mandated the large scale destruction of papers:

Everything else is to be burnt immediately and in situ. This applies without exception and in particular to all the documents pertaining to:

- Information on the USSR
- Co-operation with the British, Americans, etc.
- Personnel records, accounts, etc.<sup>9</sup>

Bortnowski's directive made clear the urgency of the task: 'This work is to be carried out as soon as possible, sacrificing accuracy if necessary'.<sup>10</sup> Despite the decision to destroy

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> RAPHC-1, p. 15.



material, clearly some Polish intelligence officers took material with them and some of these papers have since made their way to Polish archives such as the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London.

The outstanding question that remains is the fate of the material *not* destroyed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau in 1945 that was handed over to the control of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS - - MI-6). It is these documents and the fate of thousands of Polish reports delivered to SIS in the course of the Second World War that remains unresolved in the minds of some historians. The British authorities have indicated that no Polish intelligence documents can be found because they have been destroyed. However, there are no records of when, where and why these materials underwent destruction.<sup>11</sup> This lack of documentation undoubtedly fuels suspicions regarding the final fate of the Polish intelligence papers and about their possible continued existence.

### **III Wartime Operations of the Polish 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau**

Relocating an intelligence service abroad is no simple task and yet this is what was done twice by the Polish 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau in 1939 and again 1940. In November 1939 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau of the Polish General Staff reformed in Paris. With the collapse of France in the summer of 1940, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau found itself on the move to London where it established a new home in the Hotel Rubens in Buckingham Palace Road that would last until the end of the war. Each of these wartime moves led to the appointment of new chiefs of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau. On arriving in London, the post was first held by Col Leon Mitkiewicz from July 1940. Formerly a military attaché in Kaunas (1938-39), Mitkiewicz was trusted by the Polish commander-in-chief, Gen Władysław Sikorski but his lack of experience in the intelligence world saw him quickly replaced in December 1941 by his deputy, Lt Col Stanisław Gano, who would lead the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau until the end of the war. In fact, Gano had been running the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau before formally being appointed its head. Mitkiewicz moved to Washington later in the war where he became Head of the Polish Mission to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, a post that suited his undoubted political and diplomatic skills.

When the 46 year old Stanisław Włodzimierz Paweł Gano became head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau in December 1941, he was a man with formidable experience on intelligence matters. Moreover, he also was a soldier who mixed his career in intelligence with line command appointments during the interwar years. Gano's military career began in the Russian army in August 1914 and he subsequently served on the Austrian front. In August 1918, he joined Gen Żeligowski's all-Polish formation in the Russian army, but a few months later joined the ranks of the newly formed Polish army as a junior officer. During the Polish-Soviet war (1919-21) he served as a platoon and company commander. Soon after the war he attended the Polish War College and thereafter enjoyed a string of appointments to staff and line units. The dominant feature of his career, however, was his association with Polish intelligence. In the late 1920s he served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau and became head of the 'East' section concerned with the Soviet Union between 1929 and 1932. He was military attaché in Helsinki 1933-35. He was recognised as a specialist on the Soviet Union within Polish intelligence. In 1939 he was given an important task of 'Chief of Evacuation and Special Equipment' in the chaotic

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> RAPHC-1, p. 12.



collapse of Poland and made his way, along with valuable materials, to France by way of Romania. In Paris, he headed the Intelligence Department, one of the key posts in the organisation, and in London became deputy head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau. During the war he even arranged to have his wife smuggled out of Poland. After the war he finished his days as an administrator in a mining company in Morocco. He died in Casablanca in 1968.<sup>12</sup>

The organisational structure of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau in London consisted of six major departments:

- I General Department (Wydział Ogólny)
  - Personnel Section - - Records on intelligence officers including former interwar staff; military attaches
- II Intelligence Department (Wydział Wywiadowcy) Sections included:
  - Translation
  - Central
  - East
  - Overseas
  - Intelligence Communications
  - Offensive Counter-Intelligence
  - Technical
- III Analysis Department (Wydział Ewidencji i Studiów) Sections included:
  - Germany
  - East
  - General
- IV Finance Department (Wydział Finansowy)
- V Air Intelligence Department (Lotniczy Wydział Wywiadowczy)
- VI Intelligence Department of the Naval Command (Wydział Wywiad. Kierownictwa Marynarki Woj.)<sup>13</sup>

The most critical part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau was the Intelligence Department. It was the wheel from which many spokes radiated to other elements of the organisation. In terms of its personnel, the Intelligence Department attracted the most able and experienced officers. Although it is not the intention here to look in detail at the entrails of Polish intelligence either in terms of its organisational structure or personal, the head of the Intelligence Department was a crucial appointment and as such its office holder is worthy of closer examination.

Maj Jan Henryk Żychoń headed the Intelligence Department from July 1940 to February 1944. A highly experienced and able intelligence officer who specialised on Germany, he was also a figure who became enmeshed in controversy. His military career began in 1914 and by the end of 1916 he had joined the Polish Legions led by Józef Piłsudski, the future leader of Poland. Late in the war he moved to the Polish Military Organisation (Polska Organizacja Wojskowa - - POW), a clandestine organisation set up by Piłsudski where Żychoń worked against Austrian and German interests. In the interwar period his career was almost entirely in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau on assignments related to Germany. Żychoń, however, had his enemies in

<sup>12</sup> Henryk Piotr Kosk, *Generalicja Polska: Popularny słownik biograficzny Tom I: A-L*, (Pruszków: Ajaks, 1998), pp. 146-147 and RAPHC-2, p. 300.

<sup>13</sup> Peplowski, *Wywiad Polskich Sił Zbrojnych na Zachodzie 1939-1945*, p. 57.



the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau. Throughout the war he was accused of collaborating with the Germans and in effect of incompetence in what was a highly vicious battle of internal office politics. His opponents managed to have him charged and stand before a court martial. He was declared innocent but the court martial criticised some of his past actions. Unhappy that his name was not fully cleared, Żychoń requested transfer to a line unit. He died on 17 May 1944 in the battle for Monte Cassino. Żychoń was the recipient of a *Virtuti Militari*. Although his work was not always valued and subject to criticism by some of his Polish colleagues, he was considered able by the SIS and American intelligence.<sup>14</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau's relationship with British intelligence was vitally important as well as unique. Hinsley's official history of British intelligence during the Second World War hints at the importance of the relationship in its discussion of cooperation with Allied intelligence services:

*With that of the Poles, who were already operating an extensive network of agents in Europe, with efficient W/T channels, liaison presented few difficulties. The Polish government agreed to hand over to the SIS all the intelligence it gathered except that dealing with Poland's internal affairs, and in January 1941 the Polish IIC Bureau became the sole link for passing this material and for receiving British requests for information.*<sup>15</sup>

A formal agreement on Anglo-Polish intelligence cooperation defined the relationship between the two allies. Incredibly, no copy of this agreement has been found.<sup>16</sup> In general terms, however, the parameters of Anglo-Polish intelligence cooperation were that in exchange for Polish intelligence (except that regarding Polish internal matters), the British secret services provided financial, technical and logistical support. As mentioned in the Hinsley quotation, intelligence was funnelled through a single channel. On the British side, the central figure in the liaison arrangements was Commander Wilfred Alfred 'Biffy' Dunderdale RNVR. Biffy was known to his Polish counterparts by the code name 'Wilski' and the organisation he headed was the Special Liaison Control (SLC). The SLC had responsibility for liaison with major Allied intelligence services such as the Polish and French. In 1921 he joined the SIS. Earlier in his career he was posted to Istanbul 1922-26 and was SIS station chief in Paris 1926-40. In Paris Dunderdale was put in touch with Gano beginning a close cooperative relationship for the duration of the war.<sup>17</sup>

#### **IV Conclusion: Assessment of the Wartime Contribution of the Polish 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau**

Any assessment of the Polish intelligence contribution to the Allied victory in Europe would have to start with Enigma. Its impact on the success of the Allied war effort was immense and has been examined in detail by many historians. There is far more to the story of Polish intelligence than Enigma, however. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau offered considerable strength in other areas. These included:

<sup>14</sup> RAPHC-1, p. 84 and RAPHC-2, pp. 77-78.

<sup>15</sup> F. H. Hinsley et al., *British Intelligence in the Second World War, Its Influence on Strategy and Operations, Volume One*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1979), pp. 276-277.

<sup>16</sup> RAPHC-2, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> RAPHC-2, p. 231.



- HUMINT - - particularly regarding Germany and occupied Europe both east and west
- Soviet Union and intelligence behind the eastern front
- The extension of Polish intelligence capabilities through the Polish underground Home Army
- Other areas of the world - - the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau had a global presence

From the documents collected by the Anglo-Polish Historical Committee, it is possible to get a fuller picture of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau's intelligence contribution to the war effort in statistical terms. In a report prepared by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau in 1945 one can determine the number of documents passed over to British intelligence between August 1940 and December 1944:

- August 1940-December 1940 - - 1174
- January 1941-September 1941 - - 4681
- October 1941-May 1942 - - 4014
- June 1942-June 1943 - - 8492
- July 1943-December 1943 - - 6712
- January 1944-December 1944 - - 7351<sup>18</sup>

By any measure, this represents an impressive effort sustained during the course of the war. There is another overview that was provided by Commander Dunderdale to Winston Churchill at the end of the war. According to Biffy Dunderdale, his liaison office received 45,770 reports of which 22,047 (roughly half of all received) were supplied by the Polish 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau between 3 September 1939 and 8 May 1945.<sup>19</sup> Dunderdale's 1945 report to Churchill at the end of the war also concluded with an overall assessment of the value of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau's wartime efforts:

*It will thus be seen that Polish agents worked unceasingly and well in Europe during the last five years, and that they provided, often at great danger to themselves and to their relatives, a vast amount of material of all kinds on a wide variety of subjects. The Polish IS [Intelligence Service] made an invaluable contribution to the planning and the successful execution of the invasion of Europe, and to the ultimate victory of the Allied forces in Europe.*<sup>20</sup>

The last word on the subject of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau's wartime contribution should go to Lt Col Witold K. Langenfeld, who headed its Intelligence Department 1944-46:

*The Polish contribution is enormous. I don't want to say that we were the best intelligence service. However, we belonged to the world's top intelligence services. . . We have introduced an incommensurably large contribution into the common capital. It has not yielded any profits, but we are not to blame. Let the history point at those who are guilty.*<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> RAPHC-2, pp. 411-412.

<sup>19</sup> RAPHC-1, pp. 166-167.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> RAPHC-2, p. 436.



## **SOME HISTORIC INTELLIGENCE BLUNDERS ... and their cover ups?**

**John Hughes-Wilson<sup>22</sup>**

John offered, first, a number of personal lessons learned:

- Never march on Moscow...
- Try not to wage war in South East Asia
- The easy way round is the MINED way
- If you can see the enemy, they can see you
- Your gun was made by the cheapest bidder
- Never stick your bayonet in when you can see a little red light on the video camera ...

More seriously...

... by and large, senior officers and politicians don't welcome intelligence unless it's either:

1. Good news;
- or,
2. They agree with it ...

What is 'Intelligence'?

*"Evaluated and accurate information, passed to decision makers in sufficient time for them to take the necessary action."*

As an example he cited Operation Overlord, the Wehrmacht's Greatest Intelligence Failure.

The Intelligence problem was...

*"We know that the Allies plan to invade... but:*

*When?*

*Where?*

*And in what strength?"*

As we know, the Germans vaguely got to the "Where" but completely failed on the "When" and "in what Strength?".

He then looked at a personal list of notorious Examples of Intelligence Blunders

1941 - The Nazi Invasion of the USSR

1941 - Pearl Harbor

1941/42 Malaya

1968 - The Tet Offensive

1973 - Yom Kippur

2001 - The World Trade Centre or "9/11"

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<sup>22</sup> Military Intelligence Blunders and Cover-ups by [John Hughes-Wilson](#) pp432, March 2004, Constable and Robinson ISBN: 1841198714



### **STALIN AND "BARBAROSSA"**

#### **103 Warnings!!**

Disregarded by a Boss who didn't want to hear the facts

The Boss always knew best

The Boss's definition of fact was fact...

Disagreeing with the Boss was dangerous\*

The Boss is NOT ALWAYS RIGHT...

\*"Dangerous" is defined as fatal...

### **PEARL HARBOR**

A total failure of intelligence

No national co-ordination of intelligence

Competing agencies

Inter service rivalry

Under-estimation of the enemy

No analytic capability

No sense of threat

A cover up ..... will we ever know the truth?

### **TET, VIETNAM 1968**

Head Office laid down the rules

Accountants ruled

Competing agencies

Political pressures

No overall assessment of the threat

Ignoring the man on the ground

Bureaucratic tangles

### **THE WTC ("9/11") 2001**

Warnings were ignored ...

The enemy was under-estimated

The CIA identified the plotters

The FBI watched the plotters

The NSA listened to the plotters

No-one was in charge or co-ordinating

The CTC was under-resourced

Organisations hadn't changed with the threat....

### **COMMON INTELLIGENCE BLUNDERS**

...what do all these stories have in common?

Underestimate the opposition

Refuse to commit resources to intelligence

Fail to believe or use available intelligence

Have their own agenda, disregarding facts.....and all led to disastrous and expensive mistakes.

### **MALAYA 1941-42**

*"The Worst Disaster Ever to Befall British Arms"*

Intelligence in the Far East:

Underestimated its enemy

Failed to co-ordinate

Lacked intelligence resources

Was not taken seriously by policy makers

A failure of policy...

### **PEARL HARBOR**

Successful collectors, but...

No organisation for pooling intelligence

Agencies competing

Complacency

No sense of urgency

No overall single focus

### **YOM KIPPUR 1973**

Hubris - 'we always win'

Conceit - "we're #1, the best..."

Under estimating the opposition

Ignoring warnings

Head Office lays down the rules

Doing it the same old way...

Bad int on enemy capabilities & tactics

Techint failure

### **THE WTC 2001**

Successful collectors, but...

No organisation for pooling intelligence

Agencies competing

Complacency

No sense of urgency

No overall single focus

Does this slide look familiar?