

BOOK REVIEW/ COMPTE RENDU

Kealey, Gregory. *Spying on Canadians: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Security Service and the Origins of the Long Cold War.* Toronto: University of Toronto, 2017, pp. 276, \$38 paper, ISBN 9781487521585

Gregory Kealey is one of the most notable historians of policing, security, and intelligence in Canada today. Adding to literature on policing, government secrecy, information, and power, *Spying on Canadians* brings together some of Kealey's definitive writings on "political policing and state repression in Canada..." (3) in a single source. Early on in the book, Kealey notes that the historical study of policing, security, and intelligence is crucial to understanding how prominent social control agencies were established. Kealey also reflects on recent surveillance laws created by the Harper regime (and continued under the Trudeau regime), (8) and why related agitation for accountability and justice (9) is worth it.

Chapter 1 of *Spying on Canadians* explores the origins of "Canada's secret service, our own domestic political police" (17). Kealey investigates nineteenth-century predecessors of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Security Service. These sources include two secret police forces created by the United Provinces of Canada in 1864 (22). During the 1860s, these police services conducted surveillance on both sides of the warring United States as well as Irish political movements, notably the Fenian circles in Canada. Chapter 2 examines this so-called Fenian threat in more detail, and documents how Canadian spies infiltrated Fenian meetings. Kealey contends "even at its birth, Canada's secret service went unchallenged" (31).

In Chapter 3, Kealey explores what he calls the origins of the long cold war. This entails an analysis of how political police monitored working class persons, organized labour groups, and the left between 1914-1920. Specifically, Kealey unpacks police surveillance of German and Bolshevik groups in Canada. He contrasts figures on surveillance from the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) and the Dominion Police, and assesses their mergence into the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in 1919-1920 (88). Kealey argues the RCMP "cuts its teeth in 1919" by monitoring and intervening in labour actions and strikes, and infiltrating Bolshevik sympathizers and radical labour groups. For

Kealey, “the links between Canada’s colonial legacy and its foray into political policing were extensive” (55). Chapter 4 outlines the extension of RCMP Security Service. Integral players in the so-called “Red Scare,” the RCMP turned their attention toward the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and other organized labour groups, extending their use of under-cover and secret agents (124). Kealey also documents the contracting of private security and investigators. According to Kealey, these developments resulted in the institutionalization of what he refers to as “the surveillance state” (131), which persists into the present.

In Chapter 5, *Spying on Canadians* explores RCMP Security Service activities during the 1920s. Kealey argues the RCMP assumed external security functions and collaboration with British intelligence from the Dominion Police, which resulted in a preoccupation with Bolshevism and Soviet Russia. Kealey also explores the internal organization of the early RCMP. Chapter 6 delves into the biographies of spies as well as spymasters and their allegiances to political power in Canada. Tracing the previous employ of these spies in the military, in other police organizations, in intelligence, Kealey shows how their aforementioned work influenced their tenure with the RCMP. Chapter 7 traces the RCMP’s involvement in racialized policing during World War Two, notably the surveillance of German and Italian groups, and harassment and internment of Japanese Canadians “...to Canada’s lasting shame” (203). Kealey suggests that the RCMP took the Nazi threat and forms of homegrown fascism seriously but did not consider these to be more threatening than communism and labour organizing (199).

The final two chapters of *Spying on Canadians* address matters of access and research methods. Chapters 8 and 9 demonstrate how difficult archival research can be, even for seasoned historians. A good deal of the material that Kealey analyzes was garnered through access to information law. One gets a sense of just how secretive the state can (still) be when it comes to accessing information regarding the surveillance state. Showing how fond and file organization matters for what can be known about a subject, Kealey reflects on issues of secrecy and use of access to information legislation in historical research, also commenting on appeals and working with commissioners to gain access to classified records.

Kealey is a masterful historian who has contributed much to academic understandings of policing, security, and intelligence in Canada, past and present. Sweeping in scope, *Spying on Canadians* critically examines policing, spying, and racialized social control of immigrant groups as fundamental to state formation. The book will be accessible to graduate students and upper year undergraduates. While I did find the

shift from historiography of political and police organizations to social history and biography and back a bit jarring, this undeniably displays Kealey's methodological nimbleness as a historian. Given its depth and breadth, *Spying on Canadians* should appeal to scholars across the social sciences who study policing, security, and social control.

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Kevin Walby is Associate Professor and Chancellor's Research Chair, Department of Criminal Justice, University of Winnipeg. He has published over 110 journal articles and book chapters. He is co-author with R. Lippert of *Municipal Corporate Security in International Context* (2015, Routledge). He is co-editor of *Access to Information and Social Justice: Critical Research Strategies for Journalists, Scholars and Activists* with J. Brownlee (2015, ARP Books), *National Security, Surveillance, and Terror: Canada and Australia in Comparative Perspective* with R.K. Lippert, I. Warren and D. Palmer (2017, Palgrave), as well as *The Handbook of Prison Tourism* with J. Wilson, S. Hodgkinson, and J. Piche (2017, Palgrave). He is co-editor of the *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons* as well as book review editor for *Surveillance & Society* and *Security Journal*.

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