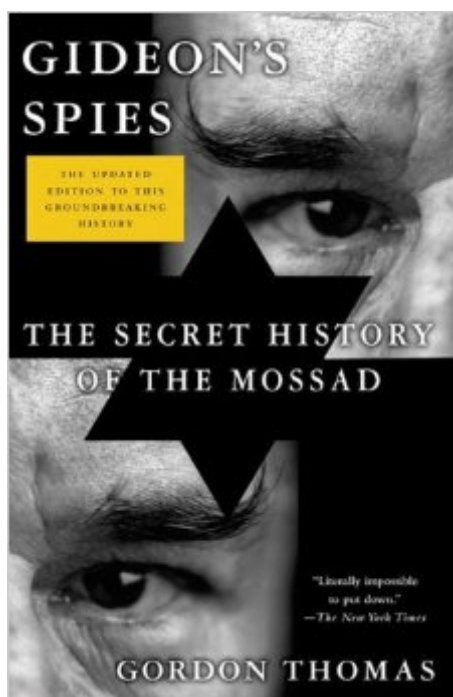


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Gideon's Spies: The Secret History Of The Mossad



Synopsis

THE SIXTH EDITION OF THE COMPELLING AND CONTROVERSIAL HISTORY OF ISRAEL'S SECRET INTELLIGENCE AGENCY In the secret world of spies and covert operations, no other intelligence service continues to be surrounded by myth and mystery, or commands respect and fear like Israel's Mossad. Formed in 1951 to ensure an embattled Israel's future, the Mossad has been responsible for the most audacious and thrilling feats of espionage, counterterrorism, and assassination ever ventured. Gideon's Spies draws from classified documents, confidential sources, and closed-door interviews with Mossad agents, informants, and spymasters to reveal the organization's deepest secrets. Revised and updated for 2012, this new edition includes the story of how Mossad assassinated the Hamas terror commander in Dubai in 2010, a look inside the modern Mossad training school, the departure of long-serving Mossad chief Meir Dagan and appointment of Tamir Pardo, Mossad's failure to provide the intelligence for the infamous Gaza flotilla raid, and the unresolved murder of a Mossad spy in London.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I thought this book was great in most ways. The Mossad is presented as an agency that will do anything to save Israel, to the point of assassination and framing their own agents. I have one major quibble though: his organization of the case histories/biographies/modern Israeli history was so annoying I wanted to tear my hair out by the end of the book. For example, a priest at Robert Maxwell's funeral leads to a shadowy meeting in the Vatican which goes to a flashback to Golda Meir meeting Paul VI to a flashback of James Jesus Angleton & Pius XII. A flashback to a flashback

to a flashback?!?! And he starts the book with the Princess Diana tragedy, hinting more than a little it wasn't just a car crash. Apparently a Mossad agent was attempting to enlsh Henri Paul around the time of her death. But after she dies, the Mossad is barely mentioned for 30 pages except that they probably know something about it. I know he's an English journalist and the Diana death makes juicy copy, but why don't we start a book on the history of the Mossad with SOMETHING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE MOSSAD?!?! So, I give Gideon's Spies 5 stars on content but a half a star on organization.

Books about the history and activities of espionage organizations (both gathering intelligence and covert operation) are by nature subject to be taken with a grain of salt, since the nature of the business is secrecy. Gordon Thomas does a good job unveiling that secrecy through his various sources, some named, some not, some within the Mossad organization itself, and many from without. He explicitly names these sources on an "acknowledgment page," citing his sources within Israel and Elsewhere. One can only judge the credibility of the information by comparing it to other accounts of the same operations, and asking oneself if it is believable based upon consistency with factual events. Thomas pulls no punches in portraying the Mossad as arguably the most effective intelligence service in the world. He reveals their various tactics including psychological warfare, their legendary human intelligence capabilities, their worldwide presence (Thomas claims the Mossad has a mole in the White House, which the FBI has been searching for for years), and their covert assassination teams (known as kidons), and their ruthlessness in getting the job done in the defense of the State. Thomas excels at this, especially with this new, updated 2007 edition that covers the role Mossad plays and continues to play in the Iraq War, and probably an upcoming pre-emptive war with Israel's arch foe, Iran. He reveals tidbits of information, such as the unconfirmed "fact" that Israel possesses three nuclear missile armed submarines, currently in the Persian Gulf, off the coast of Iran, completing its triad of nuclear umbrella cover. This, as an example, is something that Israel would probably never really officially confirm or deny. But it passes the "does it make sense?" test with flying colors. Israel's land based nuclear facilities at Dimona (in the Negev Desert) is probably the worst kept military "secret" in the world." Nuclear payloads can be delivered by missile, aircraft, or seaborne vessels. Bombing Iran by air would not be practical due to the long ranges involved, so it does indeed make sense that it would need a third, seaborne leg of its nuclear capabilities. Other accounts conflict to varying degrees with other sources. Since covert agents routinely use aliases, this is not unexpected; however, Thomas identifies the famous "man who captured Eichman" as the long term Israeli spymaster Rafi Eitan.

Others, including Peter (Zvi) Malkin wrote a book on the subject some years ago, in which he takes credit for making the first physical contact with Eichman on that audacious mission in 1960. There are several useful resources included in the book, including a comprehensive index, a list of the Directors-General of Mossad, along with their years of service from 1951 through the present, a general glossary, and an additional brief glossary of Arabic terms, and of course a bibliography and acknowledgment of sources and credits. My only criticism is that the time line of events recounted is not linear, sometimes making it difficult to follow. But the more you know about Israeli history, the easier it is to overcome this. Also, the sheer length of the book (587 pages, not including addenda), makes for a long, but fascinating read. The newly released 2007 version of this came out just in time - a lot has happened since the original version. This book should appeal to anyone interested in Israeli defense, politics, and especially espionage. Highly recommended for serious students of Israel..

If only half of what Thomas divulges in this book is true, it's a blockbuster. And I would speculate that perhaps half has the ring of truth- but which half? Probably just the well-documented parts used to give a veneer of truth to the fabricated bits. Amid all the stories of the deceptions and intelligence games played by the world's secret services, it's tempting to suspect that Thomas is being played as much as any of the other dupes he tells of. Did Khomeni order the assassination of John Paul? Did the Mossad kill Robert Maxwell? Who knows? The tales Thomas tells are often very critical of the Mossad, yet running through the book is the implication that the Mossad is the only competent intelligence organization on the planet, and that all other intelligence organizations are staffed with bumbling fools. The book seems to give the impression is that Thomas' principle source of information is one or more retired or discharged Mossad officers who have both a pride in the organization as well as an axe or two to grind, but the reader begins to doubt that at least halfway through the book. Many of the stories just don't add up. Some, like the story of Gerald Bull, are absolutely at odds with versions told by well-established sources and thoroughly documented. The Bull story in particular reads like a sloppy fabrication by someone who hasn't done a lot of research. Most of it is completely unverifiable, and a great deal of it strikes me as completely fabricated. And maybe, just maybe, the book is a piece of disinformation itself, designed to mislead and confuse. Who knows? File it on your bookshelves somewhere midway between Le Carre and Fleming.

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