



Plateaus of Freedom: Nationality, Culture, and State Security in Canada, 1940-1960 (Canadian Social History Series)

Mark Kristmanson

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'Canadians are not accustomed to thinking of censorship, secret intelligence, and propaganda as a single entity. Much less do they consider that these covertly militaristic activities have anything to do with culture.' So writes Mark Kristmanson in this important study of the intertwining activities and careers of those involved in Canada's security agencies and in the state-sanctioned culture industry during the height of the Cold War.

The connections between secret intelligence and culture might appear to be merely coincidental. Both the spies and the arts people worked with words, with symbols and hidden meanings, with ideas. They had regular informal luncheons together in Ottawa. Some members of the intelligence community even found careers in the arts. Less than a decade after defecting, the Russian Igor Gouzenko wrote a pulp fiction Cold War spy novel- for which he received a Governor General's award. And Peter Dwyer, Britain's top security official in North America during World War II, was a playwright who after the war worked in Canada's intelligence community before drafting the founding for the Canada Council and becoming its first director.

But *Plateaus of Freedom* details much more than a casual relationship between security and the arts. As Kristmanson demonstrates, 'the censorship-intelligence-propaganda complex that proliferated in Canada after World War II played a counterpoint between national culture and state security, with the result that freedom, especially intellectual freedom, plateaued on the principle of nationality.' The security and cultural policy measures examined here, from the RCMP investigations at the National Film Board that led to numerous firings, to the harassment of the extraordinary African-American singer and Soviet sympathizer Paul Robeson, 'attest to the fragility and the enduring power of art to effect social change'.

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