

Robertson, K.G., ed. War, Resistance and Intelligence: Essays in Honour of M.R.D. Foot. Barnsley, UK: Leo Cooper, 1999.

John Ferris

Volume 21, Number 2, Winter 2001

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/jcs21_2br08

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The University of New Brunswick

ISSN

1198-8614 (print)

1715-5673 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Ferris, J. (2001). Review of [Robertson, K.G., ed. War, Resistance and Intelligence: Essays in Honour of M.R.D. Foot. Barnsley, UK: Leo Cooper, 1999.] *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 21(2), 167–167.

Robertson, K.G., ed. *War, Resistance and Intelligence: Essays in Honour of M.R.D. Foot*. Barnsley, UK: Leo Cooper, 1999.

M.R.D. Foot is a respected elder of the tribe in the study of intelligence, whose personal influence has been wider than even he knows. He was foredoomed to *festschrifte*, and this one certainly has attracted a constellation of stars. As a genre, essays in tribute are always problematical - focus is hard to retain, since any scholar so honoured will have written work with wide ramifications, while most aspects of influence must be represented. The best of *festschrifte* may fairly be called a curate's egg. That problem affects this volume, even though the editor has taken the drastic step of excluding contributions on Michael Foot's greatest monument of scholarship, his work on William Gladstone. This is a book of parts, but good ones, distributed between the three categories of the title. There are miniatures from greater works: Kathleen Burk on A.J.P. Taylor, Ian Kershaw on Adolf Hitler and David Stafford on Churchill and intelligence. The most substantial contributions under the category of war are Philip Bell's account of Churchill's policy toward France and the United States in 1943-45, and Peter Lowe's discussion of British relations with the last Shogun, Douglas MacArthur, between 1945-50 - both useful pieces of revisionism which should be read by specialists. Beyond this, John Lukacs examines the general topic of historical revisionism on the origins of the Second World War. The material on resistance in Europe and the role of the Special Operations Executive is the most unified in the book, and the most useful. Any specialist in intelligence must read the papers by Ralph White, Mark Seaman and H.R. Kedward, which offer critical assessments of the literature and illuminate key issues, such as why people resist or collaborate. There are also contributions from veterans of special operations, for Michael Foot was not just a scholar but also a man of action - as the editor says, a "warrior historian." Christopher Wood's account of the escapades of one SOE officer in Italy during 1945 offers a fascinating insight into the politics of Axis forces in Italy during the last weeks of the war, and shows that truth indeed can be stranger than fiction, while Hugh Verity discusses the infiltration and exfiltration of members of the French resistance by air. This section on intelligence includes several useful pieces. E.R.D. Harrison's account of Malcolm Muggeridge's experiences in SIS in Mozambique during 1942-43 is one of the best accounts from primary documents on human intelligence during the Second World War; Chris Andrews correctly and powerfully raises the question of how historians of the Cold War must prepare to make use of the signals intelligence record; while Peter Hennessey raises interesting problems regarding the recent past and the near future of British intelligence. The work is rounded off by a study by Michael Foot's wife, Mirjam Foot. It will remind many of their debts to a scholar and a gentleman.

John Ferris

The University of Calgary