

Fall 2016

# Book Review: The Central Intelligence Agency: An Encyclopedia of Covert Ops, Intelligence Gathering, and Spies

Todd J. Wiebe

Hope College, [wiebe@hope.edu](mailto:wiebe@hope.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/faculty\\_publications](https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/faculty_publications)

 Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

**Repository citation:** Wiebe, Todd J., "Book Review: The Central Intelligence Agency: An Encyclopedia of Covert Ops, Intelligence Gathering, and Spies" (2016). *Faculty Publications*. Paper 1469.

[https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/faculty\\_publications/1469](https://digitalcommons.hope.edu/faculty_publications/1469)

**Published in:** *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, Volume 56, Issue 1, Fall October 1, 2016, pages 56-57. Copyright © 2016 American Library Association, Chicago, IL.

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Hope College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Hope College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@hope.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@hope.edu).

## SOURCES

entry are also inconsistent in density and quality; suggested further reading on the topic of Algerian author Albert Camus leads the reader to an online biography created by the European Graduate School, the link to which is broken and for which a search on the larger site produced no results.

With so many other comprehensive reference works on Africa available to libraries, including Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Kwame Anthony Appiah's *Encyclopedia of Africa* (Oxford University Press 2010) or John Middleton's older benchmark title *Encyclopedia of Africa: South of the Sahara* (Scribner, 1997) this encyclopedia is recommended primarily to school or public librarians with a corresponding curricular or programmatic focus.—*Kristin J. Henrich, Reference and Instruction Librarian, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho*

---

***Border Disputes: A Global Encyclopedia.*** Edited by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015. 3 vols. Acid-free \$294.00 (ISBN: 978-1-61069-023-2). E-book available (978-1-61069-024-9), call for pricing.

This is a three-volume work that tackles the job of giving clear, concise information on the issue of border disputes. The work is divided into three types of disputes: territorial, positional, and functional. It is edited by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, who studies public policy and border disputes at the University of Victoria, British Columbia and is the editor of the *Journal of Borderlands Studies* (Taylor and Francis/Routledge). Over fifty scholars from around the world contributed entries for this encyclopedia, which outlines the differentiation between geopolitical, legal, and cultural boundaries in its discussion. One of the first things the editor addresses is a recognition of the limitations of a reference work on ever-changing geopolitical turmoil; new states arise every year, so the work is described as being representational of the kinds of border disputes happening and is not in any way meant to be an exhaustive discussion of current affairs. It is also meant to discuss a very specific aspect of international affairs, and while it does address other complicated geopolitical themes at play, its main focus is clearly on that of borders. This is apparent in the entries on Israel-Jerusalem-Palestine, Israel-Lebanon, Israel-Syria, and similar. Some of the most complex political situations have the shortest entries, likely for several reasons; they are ongoing, some of the contestations fall outside the scope of border disputes, and it could probably be more thoroughly addressed in a more comprehensive work on the topic suggested in the further readings recommendations.

The editor suggests the audience for these volumes includes high school students and undergraduates. While the encyclopedia does not go into as much depth on complex foreign policy concepts as some others—for example, *Border and Territorial Disputes*, edited by Alan Day (Gale 1982), it does give a clear, concise history of the dispute at hand as well as its implications and the most recent status of the events. It also appears to be one of the most comprehensive and current attempts to represent as many relevant border

disputes in one work, and is a very welcome update in the field of international relations. Suggestions for further reading are included at the end of every entry for those who wish to investigate further. The final volume includes a glossary and excerpts from selected primary documents. The organization of entries into three clear thematic volumes is a helpful effort to streamline incredibly complex geopolitical issues into researchable entry points for newer undergraduates who are just beginning to delve into research, as it makes it very easy to browse for topics based on region or type of dispute. The editor opens each volume with a brief discussion of why these disputes are categorized as they are, which gives additional context to the political issues being addressed.

There don't seem to be many comparable reference works on this specific element of geopolitics. The aforementioned *Border and Territorial Disputes* edited by Alan Day covers this area, but over thirty years after its publication date it is missing many of the most important examples of border disputes. It is true that this information will become quickly outdated, but it provides a crucial first stepping stone in exploring territory and border issues within international relations. As there is no end in sight for the occurrence of these types of disputes in the world, *Border Disputes: A Global Encyclopedia* would be a valuable addition to an academic library.—*Amanda Babirad, Research and Education Librarian, Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz, New York*

---

***The Central Intelligence Agency: An Encyclopedia of Covert Ops, Intelligence Gathering, and Spies.*** Edited by Jan Goldman. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 2 vols. Acid free \$189.00 (ISBN: 978-1-61069-091-1). E-book available (978-1-61069-092-8), call for pricing.

This two-volume reference set offers a well-rounded look at the CIA from its inception to the present. As is made clear in the introduction, it is intended to be much more than a straightforward history of the CIA as an organization, but rather a compendium covering the broader spectrum of related topics. It would appear to live up to this claim. It does provide a detailed timeline chronicling the historical highlights, but moves right into over two hundred individual entries comprised of important events (i.e., operations, projects, cases, etc.), key players and names, and other relevant terms (e.g., "Contras," "Handwriting Analysis," "Torture"). Entries are substantial, too, ranging on average between five and ten paragraphs, with many reaching the teens, peppered with black and white images throughout. Naturally, I compared a handful of entries with their Wikipedia counterparts, and can say with confidence that there is no comparison—that is, this encyclopedia wins. (As we all know, this is not always the case.) Included are the usual cross-referenced entries and "Further Reading" suggestions, but what I find especially helpful is the referencing of associated primary documents.

This leads us to volume 2. Here, ninety-eight primary documents are organized chronologically, starting in the 1940s and ending with the 2014 Senate Select Committee

on Intelligence's "Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program." I did some sleuthing and not surprisingly, many (probably most or all) of the documents are freely available online at cia.gov, dni.gov, senate.gov, etc. But, as I often say, just because something is online does not mean a researcher will come across it, or even be aware of its existence. Having these documents coupled with the encyclopedia entries makes for a convenient starting point and solid base for a broad range of CIA-related topics.

To my knowledge, the *Encyclopedia of the Central Intelligence Agency* (Facts on File 2003) is the only other encyclopedic volume primarily devoted to the CIA. Aside from being thirteen years out of date, its entries are noticeably skimpier, many being simple definitions. Another comparable reference is *Spies, Wiretaps, and Secret Operations: An Encyclopedia of American Espionage* (ABC-CLIO 2010). For a wider look at everything "American espionage," especially for pre-CIA operations (dating back to colonial times), this title would be worth checking out.

Back to the title at hand. It definitely has something to offer both students (high school through undergraduates) and the general public. If your library is short on CIA-related materials, especially those more general in nature, this set would be a worthwhile addition.—Todd J. Wiebe, *Head of Research and Instruction, Van Wylen Library, Hope College, Holland, Michigan*

---

***Clothing and Fashion: American Fashion from Head to Toe.*** Edited by José Blanco F. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 4 vols. Acid free \$415.00 (ISBN: 978-1-61069-309-7). E-book available (978-1-61069-310-3), call for pricing.

*Clothing and Fashion: American Fashion from Head to Toe* is a comprehensive, four-volume, encyclopedic reference guide with more than eight hundred entries that cover American fashions and style from the year 1600 to present day. Organized chronologically as a whole, each volume covers specific eras and provides a historical overview of the eras included.

This work is intended as a resource for both students and scholars interested in the history of clothing in America. The entries are thoughtful and summarize the significance and uses of the garments as well as the textiles used in their production. The treatment is expansive enough that researchers from a multitude of disciplines will find this resource valuable, but it contains enough introductory information to be accessible for beginners in the field. An entry that exemplifies this is "African American Clothing, 1715–1785," because it handles the topic of slavery objectively and manages to focus the entry on how clothing impacted the lives of slaves and served as another means of control over them. This is accomplished using newspaper notices for runaway slaves from this time period, which provide detailed descriptions of both the slave's person and clothing. Providing these primary resources as evidence enriches the entries and provides a

much needed connection to the lives of the individuals who wore the garments in question.

Although American fashion eras have been covered many times in reference resources, this edition sets itself apart with the way it connects clothing to the daily lives of Americans, major historical events, and historical figures. From the impact of the American Revolution on textiles to David Bowie's influence on fashion and culture, the authors make sure to hit the major influences and show their impact. If there is one area that this resource suffers, it is in the shortage of illustrations. This set has four volumes and almost two thousand pages, but it only has a handful of illustrations in each volume. Many people know what a bustle looks like, but an entry on something as obscure as the Steinkirk neck cloth would have benefitted from an accompanying image or illustration. This resource has more strengths than weaknesses, and selection should be based on your patrons and budgetary constraints.

Overall, this work is an easy-to-use reference resource that provides an interesting historical overview with an objective tone. Given the price of the item, I would recommend this work only for university and research libraries supporting relevant majors.—Marissa Ellermann, *Head of Circulation Services Librarian, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois*

---

***Crimes of the Centuries: Notorious Crimes, Criminals, and Criminal Trials in American History.*** Edited by Steven Chermak and Frankie Y. Bailey. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 3 vols. Acid free \$310.00 (ISBN 978-1-61069-593-0). E-book available (9781-61069-594-7), call for pricing.

This three-volume set's biggest strength is its unique focus. While many encyclopedias of crime exist, focusing on types of criminals, locations of crimes, and types of punishments, I have yet to experience a set that focuses on the notoriety of the crimes it discusses. The introduction details the philosophy employed by the editors in choosing the content for this set, noting that they sought crimes that are notorious in the sense of uniqueness, newsworthiness, and timeliness to other political, social, or cultural happenings. A quick search of Amazon confirmed my suspicion that scholarly reference work on these types of crimes has been a niche in the literature that has remained, until recently, largely unfilled.

The set is structured in such a way that it proves quick and easy to utilize. It includes a chronology spanning from 1692 to 2015 that also includes important political, cultural, and social events to help students situate crimes within their historical context. A useful feature, particularly for students unaccustomed to using multivolume reference works, is a full table of contents included in every volume. Another feature that will prove useful for students just beginning research is the "Guide to Related Topics." Entries are grouped by topics such as: bank robbers, crime and sports, hate crimes, labor