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# MOST SECRET WAR

R.V. Jones



Datuk Seri Najib,

if one is at a disadvantage  
in a conventional war,  
one should seek unconventional  
means to victory."

Abdul Aziz Adnan  
25/12/2022





# MOST SECRET WAR







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R. V. JONES

PUSTAKA PERDANA



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FOR SWORTH EDITIONS



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## DEDICATION

To all those in Nazi-occupied Europe who in lone obscurity and of their own will risked torture and death for scientific intelligence, like 'Amniarix' (Jeannie Rousseau, Vicomtesse de Clarens), Leif Tronstad, Thomas Sneum, Hasagar Christiansen, A. A. Michels, Jean Closquet, Henri Roth, Yves Rocard, Jerzy Chmielewski, and the author of the Oslo Report: to reconnaissance pilots like Tony Hill: to radio observers like Eric Ackermann and Harold Jordan: and to the men of the Bruneval Raid. For 'courage is the quality that guarantees all others'.



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# FOREWORD

by the Vicomtesse de Clarens

*who, then known by the name 'Amniarix', gave ten months' warning of the V-bombardment of London (see pages 350-375)*

A MAN such as Churchill should have written the foreword to this fascinating work, which reveals extraordinary intuition, based on encyclopaedic knowledge; but once again, its author has done the unexpected, and asked the little man at the other end of the string to introduce his work. The honour is great; the gratitude being no smaller, I felt I could not dodge.

Seeing side by side the drawings of German radars he made 'sight unseen', and the actual drawings that the Germans themselves made, for instance, is flabbergasting. But reading is still more enlightening: each episode tells the story of a major breakthrough in pure knowledge and into the enemy's weaponry and strategy. It also tells the story of many men and women who painstakingly collected the information that either led to discovery or confirmed intuition. Professor Jones speaks of them with such understanding that it is only fitting to tell him how important it is to know for certain—and not only to surmise—that the mountain of apparently unrelated data was sorted, checked, reassembled, turned into useful information and then used for directing action.

Those who worked underground in constant fear—fear of the unspeakable—were prompted by the inner obligation to participate in the struggle; almost powerless, they sensed they could listen and observe. During the war, they could but hope that what they did would be of some service, but seldom knew for sure. Now, those who survive and those who keep the memory of the dead will have the proof that indeed no information, however irrelevant at first sight, was left unsearched. All was used in the gigantic puzzle Professor Jones and his team fitted together.

How rewarding!

Some of us were told to collect pedestrian facts; others were given

specific instructions; others still were asked to keep ears and eyes open for the unusual, the improbable; all were working in small, compartmented fields in almost complete isolation—the price to pay for lessening danger—and yet saw friend after friend, comrade after comrade fall into the ever gaping trap.

It is not easy to depict the lonesomeness, the chilling fear, the unending waiting, the frustration of not knowing whether the dangerously obtained information would be passed on—or passed on in time—or recognized as vital in the maze of the ‘couriers’.

This book, in addition to being invaluable for the historian, will give the poor soldier in the field an unexpected bird’s-eye view of those years.

I for one, having made it a rule not to stir old memories, did not meet Professor Jones until 33 years after the events. The encounter was a great personal experience but also shed a clear light on the past; from what he tells us, our efforts were worth it.

Thank you dear, unique, Reg.

Amniarix.

## Acknowledgements

Much of this book is based on my World War II reports; these are Official documents, and I must therefore thank the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office for permission to quote and to use sketches and photographs from them. Other material has come from my wartime colleagues Sir Geoffrey Tuttle, Colonel James Langley, Mr. Leslie Mitchell, Mr. Thomas Sneum, Professor Yves Rocard and Commodore Paul Møtch. I am grateful to some old and respected opponents—General Josef Kammhuber, Dr. Hans Plendl, and Colonel Viktor von Lossberg for their photographs, and to Herr Fritz Trenkle and the Deutsches Museum, Munich for photographs of Knickebein and Wotan installations and of V-2 rockets respectively. I am similarly grateful for photographs from the Ministry of Defence and the Imperial War Museum, and from the Editor of *After The Battle* Magazine. I also acknowledge help from Mr. Brian Johnson of the British Broadcasting Corporation, Mr. Simon Welfare of Yorkshire Television, Dr. Rupert Cecil, Professor A. T. Hatto, Dr. Colin Knight, Professor Nicholas Kurti, Mr. James Sharp and the Wiener Library.

Besides referring to the relevant Official Histories, I have drawn freely on books by other authors who had consulted me while they themselves were writing. They include Ronald Clark (*The Rise of the Boffins*, Phoenix House, 1962 and *Tizard*, Methuen, 1965), David Irving (*The Mare's Nest*, Kimber, 1964, *The Virus House*, Kimber, 1967, and *The Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973), James Leasor (*Green Beach*, Heinemann, 1975), George Millar (*The Bruneval Raid*, The Bodley Head, 1974) and Alfred Price (*Instruments of Darkness*, Kimber, 1967 and Macdonald & Jane's, 1977). I have also drawn on Marie-Madeleine Fourcade's *Noah's Ark*, the story of her 'Alliance' network (Allen & Unwin, 1973), George Martelli's *Agent Extraordinary*, the story of Michel Hollard (Collins, 1960), and Jozef Garlinski's *Poland, S.O.E. and the Allies* (Allen & Unwin, 1969).

Sir Charles Frank, Colonel John Day, Mr. Robin Denniston, Mr. Robert Newton, and Group Captain E. B. Haslam (of the Air Historical Branch of the Ministry of Defence) all read the first draft, and I have

been most grateful for their comments and help. In this same direction I have also had the benefit of advice from Mr. James Heard, Mr. George Greenfield, Mr. Roger Machell and Mr. Joseph Kanon. Photographs and diagrams, often from difficult wartime originals, have been prepared by Messrs. G. Coull, G. Shepherd and T. Wratten; and both drafts of the text have been admirably typed by my secretary, Mrs. Maida Pirie. The index was made by Mrs. D. L. Mackay, of Duns.

## INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK tells of the rise of Scientific Intelligence in warfare as I saw it in World War II. It is thus a personal memoir in which I hope that general readers may find some entertainment, intelligence officers some working examples of their trade, historians some matters of interest, and scientists some instruction in the value of sticking to basic principles.

The work took me into several fields of warfare, and it has not been easy to summarize these fields in a single title. I had long decided that if ever I were to write a book on Intelligence its title should be *Merchants of Light*, in allusion to the first scheme for a scientifically enlightened state, the *New Atlantis* of Francis Bacon. As a recognized and important section of his scientific society he had twelve fellows 'that sail into foreign countries under the names of other nations (for our own we seek to hide) who bring us the books and abstracts and patterns of experiments of all other parts. These we call merchants of light.' I am advised, however, that this is not a 'selling' title and, although I believe that it is no less relevant to this book than *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and *The Road to Endor* were to their respective contexts, and although *Merchants of Light* would admit the happy subtitle *Never a Dull Moment*, I have searched widely for an alternative.

One that I would certainly have considered, had it not already been most appropriately used by Alfred Price, is *Instruments of Darkness*, which comes from *Macbeth*: 'the instruments of darkness tell us truths, win us honest trifles, to betray's in deepest consequence.' It is peculiarly fitting for the great night battles fought in the air first over Britain and then over Germany. And mention of truth invites the adaptive plagiarism of another recent title to *Bodyguard of Truth* or of the motto of the Central Intelligence Agency 'And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free' to, perhaps, *Shall the truth make free?* or again, some derivative of Robert Peel's comment to Lyon Playfair 'I am indeed sorry that you are compelled to make so unfavourable a report, but the knowledge of the whole truth is one element of security'.

Since this is a book about a war in which I was involved, another Shakespearean title *With Advantages* might have served to remind me of

the dangers of personal recollection: 'old men forget; yet all shall be forgot but he'll remember with advantages what feats he did that day'. And since it is also a book about Intelligence its title might be found somewhere in King John's pained stricture: 'Oh, where hath our intelligence been drunk, where hath it slept?' But since the Intelligence with which I was concerned was in the main both sober and continent, a more apposite title might be the inscription on the Pillars of Hercules which was *Ne Plus Ultra*, because one function of this book may be to relate the contribution of what has been called *The Ultra Secret* to those of other forms of intelligence.

The simple title *Watchdog* had some appeal, because this is how I regarded myself; but it would run the gauntlet of any critic who knows his Shakespeare well enough to strike home with 'the watch-dogs bark, Bow wow. Hark hark! I hear the strain of strutting Chanticleer cry Cock-a-diddle-dow!' And that in turn suggests yet another possibility: the call of the German air controllers to their nightfighters at the end of a night's operations—'ENGÜLTIG KRÄHE'—*Final Crow* but this gets ominously near *Last Trump*.

The writings of Winston Churchill are a resplendent source of inspiration, for they scintillate with such phrases as 'the gleaming wings of science'. And indeed he wrote his own account of some of the episodes that I am going to describe, introducing them under the title *The Wizard War* with the comment 'no such warfare had ever been waged by mortal men'. Referring to me he quoted that part of *The Ingoldsby Legends* which might suggest *Jones Depones* as a boisterous title for my own book; but the mention of the surname might invoke memories of the man who addressed the Duke of Wellington with 'Mr. Jones, I believe?' and met with the riposte 'If you believe that you will believe anything'.

Inevitably, *The Secret War* suggests itself; it has been the title of a recent television series dealing with some of the episodes in this book. But apart from the fact that two other but unrelated books have already used the title, the definite article sounds somewhat vainglorious. Churchill himself wrote of our work that 'this was a secret war' and so *A Secret War* would have the highest credentials. Finally, hesitating between the vainglory of the definite and the timidity of the indefinite articles I realized that neither was necessary and that confusion with other books could be avoided by going to the superlative—blatant though it sounds, it fairly reflects the fact that the affairs that I shall describe were mainly in the 'most secret' (=American top secret) category when they happened.

Even so, the title goes somewhat against the grain, for although the events of which I tell occurred on the average 35 years ago, and although they have now become available to the public through the 30-year rule, I would still have an ingrained reluctance to write of them; but the 70 or more reports that I wrote during World War II are now available for inspection in the Public Records Office, and the major secrets such as Ultra and Double Cross have been released. Moreover more than 30 other books have described one facet or other of my own activities; and a permanent record of events as I saw them will, I hope, give some sense of perspective.

As for sources, I kept no diary during the war partly because I would not have had time, partly because I could not have foreseen its historical value, and also because the keeping of diaries was expressly forbidden. But it happened that whenever I felt that one of my intelligence investigations had reached the stage where it was worth presenting to the operational staffs, I wrote a report about it; and the resultant series of reports has been my major source, along with the diagrams and lantern slides that I retained for my post-war lectures at the Air Staff College. In addition, the many books that have been written in the intervening years have added to my knowledge and I have drawn on them freely.

A point that I must emphasize is that I am describing events as I saw them; although I have been as objective as possible, I may well have not been able always to give credit where it was deserved. I can imagine, for example, that some brilliant work was done by Resistance Organizations in the Occupied Territories on the V-weapons which failed to get through to me, or which for one reason or another I failed to appreciate, and that any survivors will be justly disappointed not to find their services acknowledged. To them I apologize. Again, I have described scientific and technical developments in Germany as I saw them at the time; and although I have sometimes compared the state of our knowledge with what was actually happening in Germany, this book is not a definitive history of German military technology or more than a sketchy account of some of the major new German weapons.

The passage of time, while permitting greater detachment in viewing events, has unhappily borne away some of those to whom I owe much. These include among my immediate colleagues Harold Blyth, Denys Felkin, 'Bimbo' Norman, Rowley Scott-Farnie, Hugh Smith, Peter Stewart, and Claude Wavell. I hope that this book will give their relatives some idea of the value of what they did.

Although I can only write of what became known to me and which

therefore affected the course of the war, I much hope that the episodes that I witnessed will show the debt that we in Britain—and in America—owe to the men and women of many nations who worked for Intelligence in one form or another. And in a Britain that has been drifting downstream ever since 1945, I hope that this story will show one facet of what we could achieve no more than 40 years ago, and what therefore—since a people cannot change its basic make-up so quickly—we could do again if we could only replace the present mood of self-seeking easement by a sense of purpose and service.

In recording some of the heights of bravery and self-sacrifice to which men and women rose in our work, I hope that the book will prove more than just a good story. Although it has been pruned of undue anecdote, I have from time to time described my personal circumstances and feelings; I have inevitably mentioned some of the difficulties that I encountered, and I have had to record how things went wrong at the end of the war. In this I have tried to avoid rancour; my object has been to show future Intelligence Officers, and others, the kind of difficulties that they may have to face, in the faith that whether they meet with personal triumph or disaster their work will have been worthwhile.

# PART ONE

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**MOST SECRET WAR**

*Most Secret War* is R.V. Jones's account of his part in British Scientific Intelligence between 1939 and 1949.

It was his responsibility to anticipate German applications of science to warfare, so that their new weapons could be countered before they were used. Much of his work had to do with radio navigation, as in the Battle of the Beams, with radar, as in the Allied Bomber Offensive and in the preparations for D-Day and in the war at sea.

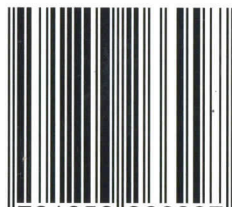
He was also in charge of intelligence against the V-1 (flying bomb) and the V-2 (rocket) retaliation weapons and, although the Germans were some distance from success, against their nuclear developments.

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Illustration: *Mobile radar unit, 1946*

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