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Secret Service provides the first comprehensive history of political policing in Canada - from its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century, through two world wars and the Cold War to the more recent 'war on terror.' This book reveals the extent, focus, and politics of government-sponsored surveillance and intelligence-gathering operations.

Drawing on previously classified government records, the authors reveal that for over 150 years, Canada has run spy operations largely hidden from public or parliamentary scrutiny - complete with undercover agents, secret sources, agent provocateurs, coded communications, elaborate files, and all the usual apparatus of deception and betrayal so familiar to fans of spy fiction. As they argue, what makes Canada unique among Western countries is its insistent focus of its surveillance inwards, and usually against Canadian citizens.

Secret Service highlights the many tensions that arise when undercover police and their covert methods are deployed too freely in a liberal democratic society. It will prove invaluable to readers attuned to contemporary debates about policing, national security, and civil rights in a post-9/11 world.