

# **SPIES IN THE SHADOWS**

## **LESSON 4: THE ROLE OF INTELLIGENCE AND ESPIONAGE IN CANADA DURING THE COLD WAR**

### **Overview**

In this lesson, students will look at the development of the Cold War after World War II (WWII), and the role of intelligence and espionage in this conflict. The lesson is divided into two parts: Part A focuses on the events leading to the Cold War and Part B examines the Gouzenko defection.

### **Outcomes**

Students will:

- conduct research and gather information using a variety of resources
- interpret and analyze information according to historical inquiry
- identify different viewpoints
- organize and record information
- express ideas and draw conclusions
- communicate the results of historical inquiries using appropriate terms and concepts in various formats
- examine and explore the cause and consequences of historical events

### **Duration**

several class periods plus research time

### **Skills**

writing, researching, communicating, critical thinking, interpreting and analyzing, organizing, summarizing, presenting

### **Materials**

- chart paper
- pens, pencils
- notebook paper or notebook
- overhead projector
- *Spies in the Shadows*' website (Espionage Timeline, The Secret Files, and Elements of Intelligence History document)
- BLM 1 Cold War Causes and Effects Fishbone Organizer (for Part A and B)
- BLM 2 Cold War Research Questions (for Part A)
- BLM 3 Canada's Cold War International Alliances (for Part B, Extensions)

## Teacher Background and Notes

Teachers will need to know some general historical information on the outcome of WWII and the development of the Cold War. Below is a brief background that relates to the activities.

WWII ended in 1945. It was a confusing time for most countries, including Canada. After being so focused on war, Canada had to create its own vision of the post-war world. Although the US and Soviet Union were allies during WWII, they finished the war as suspicious adversaries, doubting each other's intentions. This period became known as the Cold War—an undeclared war between countries and alliances who fought mainly for knowledge, a dangerous mix of military and secret operations in search of the adversary's intentions and capabilities.

The US and Canada physically survived WWII relatively well compared to the UK and the Soviet Union. Over 400 000 Americans and almost 50 000 Canadians died in WWII. In comparison, the Soviet Union lost 25 million people—almost 14% of their total population. The US and Canadian economies grew stronger during the war, while the Soviet economy had been severely damaged. Canada emerged with the third largest navy and fourth largest air force by the end of the war. Political scientists refer to Canada at this time as a “middle power”—a militarily strong nation that had gained international influence and significance from its war sacrifices and its relative good economic health.

Both Canada and the US sent troops to war. The US became involved after a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese in 1941. To the Soviet Union, WWII was a battle for survival. In 1941, a surprise invasion by Germany shocked the Soviet Union. The memory of that, combined with the lack of allied ground troops in Europe for most of the war and the extensive losses and damages within the Soviet Union, led Soviet leaders to establish a defence from further attacks. Soviet leaders never wanted to be surprised again, and they doubted the intentions of the West.

The Soviet Union could not feel secure unless it could match the US in its ability to create and use the atomic bomb. The US was first to design and use nuclear weapons in the battle against Japan in August 1945. The US and its allies helped invent such weapons under the cover of the code name the Manhattan Project. At the same time, Soviet scientists were working to create a Soviet atomic bomb. Spies in the US who were part of the Manhattan Project provided clues to the Soviets about nuclear research development. This research obtained through espionage allowed the Soviet Union to save time and money in its own drive to create a bomb.

Canada contributed expertise and resources to the Manhattan Project. Having grown in stature during WWII, Canada now became a target for espionage. The Soviet Union placed people in Canada who could monitor events and provide information about the objectives of the West.

As the Cold War began, both the West and the East felt threatened, and sought information, often secretly, to either alleviate or confirm their fears about the intentions of the other side. These fears of the Cold War continued for more than forty years with both sides taking the chance that their actions might provoke a nuclear war.

Whether it wanted to or not, Canada would find itself caught up in the Cold War. The concept of a Soviet spy network was exposed when Igor Gouzenko defected in Ottawa on September 5, 1945. This was the first publically recognized evidence that the Cold War was underway in Canada and throughout the world.

As a middle power, Canada helped design and became an influential partner of the United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD). Canada built radar systems like the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line in the Arctic to detect and avert incoming Soviet bombers and nuclear missiles. In the 1950s, the country assisted the US by sending ground troops to fight in Korea.

Soon after WWII ended, Canada joined the UKUSA Agreement, an alliance of English-speaking nations consisting of the UK, US, Australia, and New Zealand. These countries banded together to share signals intelligence with each other, in particular any signals or radio transmissions that could be traced to the Soviet Union. Canada also debated whether or not to have and use nuclear weapons during the Cold War.

In other words, the Cold War was more than an abstract concept to Canada. As a middle power, Canada had to make independent decisions regarding which side to support on many issues, with both allies and adversaries seeking influence in Canada. However, the country had its own interests, and had to focus its scarce intelligence resources on what it perceived as important and essential. Just as Canada became a target of Soviet espionage, the nation also actively collected intelligence, took sides, and made itself a target for international espionage (e.g. Gouzenko).

## **Part A: The Cold War**

### **Teaching and Learning Strategies**

1. On the chalkboard, write out the terms “hot war” and “cold war.” Then define each term for the students.
  - Hot war—refers to armed conflicts between nations in which weapons and troops are used. Examples: any war using combat troops, weapons, and military forces on the ground or in the air, such as War of 1812, WWI, WWII.
  - Cold war—refers to unfriendly relations between nations, using alternative methods to fight undeclared battles. Examples: espionage, propaganda, intelligence gathering, economic and political pressures.

2. Mention to students where the term Cold War came from. Journalist George Orwell wrote an essay in October 1945 called “You and the Atomic Bomb” (British newspaper, *Tribune*) about living in a world with the threat of nuclear war. According to Orwell, nations would be experiencing a “peace that is no peace” and be in a “permanent state of ‘cold war’ ”with each other.
3. Tell students that they will research and gather information on the Cold War, and look at the role intelligence played in this war. Suggest that they pay attention to those countries that sought intelligence from Canada, and how both Canada and other countries used espionage to collect information.
4. Remind students to use a variety of print resources and websites to conduct their research. Suggest that they may complement their research by looking up Cold War information on the *Spies in the Shadows’ Espionage Timeline*, *The Secret Files*, and resources listed in the *Elements of Intelligence History* document.
5. Hand out **BLM 1 Cold War Research Questions** to students. Tell them to use these questions on the BLM as starting points to conduct their research. Encourage them to also look for additional information to add to their knowledge on the Cold War. Suggest they also examine and look up materials that explore the Cold War from more than one national perspective, such as the US, UK, Germany, and Soviet Union to name a few.
6. Divide students into groups. Provide each group with chart paper. Tell them that they will share the information they gathered on the Cold War with each other. One person in the group will record this information on chart paper in point form. Remind them to include their responses to BLM 1 as well as any other information that they feel is important to the topic.
7. Pass out **BLM 2 Cold War Causes and Effects Fishbone Organizer** to students. Place the fishbone organizer on an overhead projector. Tell students that a fishbone organizer is often used to sort out complex ideas and events.
8. With input from students, gradually fill-in the organizer with information to show the causes and effects of various countries’ actions after and during the Cold War. Point out how one country’s actions led directly to a counter-action. Encourage students to add this same information to their own organizers. Suggest they also make note of information that leaders didn’t know, and why. Provide feedback and clarification as necessary.
9. Then ask students the following questions:
  - a. Why was the atomic bomb such a key point in the power struggle between the Soviet Union and the US?
  - b. What was Canada’s relationship with the Soviet Union and the US by the end of WWII? In what ways did these relationships change after it became clear that the Cold War was underway? Explain.
  - c. What conclusions can students make about the use of espionage and intelligence during the Cold War?

## Extensions

10. As a media case study, suggest that students view films, such as *Dr. Strangelove* (1964, Stanley Kubrick) or *Thirteen Days* (2000, Roger Donaldson) to name a few. These films and others can be borrowed from libraries, rented from video stores, or possibly downloaded from legitimate websites. Students might work in pairs, in small groups, or as individuals to write a review or make an oral presentation to the class about one of the films. Suggest that they look at the problems and issues that these films raise concerning leadership as well as the accuracy level of intelligence during a time of crisis (even though some films may depict fictional events). Then have students share their review or presentation to the class. Clips from films might be used as part of the presentation.
11. Some students might prefer to read non-fiction books on intelligence and spy history. Suggest that they consider reading Chapters 12 and 13 from John Bryden's, *Best Kept Secret* (Key Porter Ltd., 1993), or Chapter 7 from Kurt Jensen's, *Cautious Beginnings* (UBC Press, 2008). As an independent study for small groups, invite students to read the suggested chapters and discuss their responses to the following questions:
  - a. At the end of WWII, why were Canadian military and political leaders debating Canada's future as an intelligence participant? What topics did they discuss?
  - b. How was Canada influenced by other countries' thoughts and opinions on intelligence gathering after WWII and during the Cold War?
  - c. What issues determined whether or not Canada would act on its own, or be part of an intelligence alliance? Why did Canadian leaders have different perspectives on this?
  - d. What elements of Canada's intelligence system remained during the Cold War? What changed?

Have groups come together and share their responses with each other. As part of their discussion, students might consider charting how various Cold War organizations evolved over time. Then invite students to create an oral presentation to the class. Suggest that they focus their presentation on how Canadian intelligence developed during the Cold War.

## Part B: The Gouzenko Defection

12. Refer students back to their fishbone organizers in Part A. Point out to them that they concluded that two superpowers emerged from WWII—the US and the Soviet Union.
13. Remind students that tensions and hostilities grew between these two superpowers and their allies from 1945-1947.

14. One of the sources of tension was the development of nuclear technology. Both countries along with help from their allies—and spies—were developing this technology. However, the US was the first country to manufacture and use atomic bombs during WWII (the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945).
15. Tell students that one of the early warning signals of growing hostilities among the superpowers was the defection of Igor Gouzenko, a young cipher clerk who worked at the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa, ON. On the evening of September 5, 1945, Gouzenko walked out of the embassy carrying documents that implicated the Soviet Union in espionage and spying.
16. Mention to students that the Gouzenko defection now placed Canada in the spotlight of the Cold War—an unfamiliar role for the country. Canada was unprepared and inexperienced in dealing with defectors.
17. In pairs, students will conduct research on the Gouzenko defection including the reason why he defected, what “secret” documents were smuggled, and what people, organizations, and countries were involved in his defection. Tell them to consider creating a chronological timeline to organize their information, including other defectors and accusations of spying outside of Canada. Encourage them to look for additional information using the *Spies in the Shadows Espionage Timeline*, *The Secret Files*, and resources listed in the *Elements of Intelligence History* document.
18. Hold a whole-class discussion on the Gouzenko defection. Initially, ask various pairs of students to share some of their research information with the class. Then encourage them to use their critical thinking and analyzing skills to respond to the following questions:
  - a. Why were Gouzenko’s claims of Soviet spying and intelligence gathering in Canada and other countries initially ignored? Explain.
  - b. What type of evidence did Gouzenko produce that specifically implicated the Soviet Union in spying and intelligence gathering in Canada, the US, and the UK? Why were the Soviets spying in these countries?
  - c. In his diaries, Prime Minister Mackenzie King wrote “we should be extremely careful...[to] link the government of Canada up with this matter in any manner which might cause Russia [the Soviet Union] to feel that we had performed an unfriendly act.” What reasons might King have had to act so cautiously?
  - d. Why did it take from September 1945 until February 1946 for King to inform his cabinet about the Gouzenko defection? How did his cabinet react to this revelation? Why was information of Gouzenko’s defection kept secret from the public until February 1946?
  - e. What was the outcome of Canada’s investigation into Gouzenko’s claims?
  - f. What assistance did the US and UK provide to Canada to help in their investigations of the Soviet spy ring?
  - g. How did the Soviet Union respond to Canada’s and other countries’ accusations after the defection had been revealed?

- h. Did the Gouzenko defection and investigation change the West's public opinion of the Soviet Union? If so, how did it change?
19. After the discussion, have students choose one of the following activities to complete.
- Write an essay on why the Gouzenko defection changed the way that Canada dealt with intelligence issues within its own boundaries as well as with its allies. Remind them to incorporate information from their timeline and discussion in their piece.
  - In the role of Gouzenko, suggest students write a series of diary entries in which they outline the reasons for defecting and the events that occurred after the defection. Suggest they use information from their research (both primary and secondary) to include in their entries. Add copies of photos and documents for authenticity. Students may wish to create a multi-media diary for this activity using the same criteria.
  - In the role of a reporter from the *Ottawa Journal*, write a newspaper article about the defection of Gouzenko and the people involved in the case one year after the event occurred. Encourage students to use some of their research information as well as material from the ***Spies in the Shadows Espionage Timeline, The Secret Files, and the Elements of Intelligence History*** document to write their article.
  - At the time that Gouzenko defected, news came mainly from print and radio broadcasting. Today we are bombarded with social media and a 24/7 news cycle. Remind students that Gouzenko defected in September 1945 and the public were informed in February 1946. Do students think this delay in releasing vital information would happen today considering the 24/7 news cycle and social media? Why or why not? Suggest students write a two-page op-ed piece or create a "speaker's corner" pod-cast in which they express their opinion.
  - Invite students to create a collage, an editorial cartoon, or poster in which they depict the uncertainty of the post-WWII era and the tensions that existed between the West and the Soviet Union. Photo copies of documents or photos may be used along with cut-out words that describe the crucial events of the time. Display it in the classroom.
  - Ask students if they view espionage as a positive or negative activity, or potentially a mixture of both. Suggest students think about some cultural influences, such as movies, books, and television shows to name a few that might have influenced their perceptions of espionage. What might be the hazards, costs, and consequences of secret information falling into the hands of people, companies, or governments to which it did not originally belong? Each action has consequences, whether or not the spies are caught. When are the consequences worth the effort, and when are they not? Provide students with enough time to sort out these dilemmas and come up with some sort of conclusion on the topic. Then suggest that students write a personal essay in which they express their opinion on the use of espionage.

## Extensions

20. In small groups, suggest that students read the following quote from writer Scott Anderson in “The Evolution of Canadian Intelligence Establishment, 1945-1950” (*Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 9, Issue 3, 1994):

“...[t]he decision to continue with the collection, analysis and exchange of foreign intelligence beyond the end of hostilities was... a significant departure from the policies pursued in the past. The experience gained in wartime, reinforced by the challenges to national security in the emerging international order, transformed the government’s perception of intelligence as a tool of statecraft.”

Relying on their knowledge of the Gouzenko case, encourage students to participate in an informal debate in which they defend or refute the idea that spying and intelligence gathering is a valuable and useful tool to uncover relevant security issues for Canada. They might wish to list their pros and cons on chart paper. Ask them to share their conclusions with another group.

21. As an independent study, suggest that students in a small group research and discuss the importance of Canada’s participation in multilateral organizations and alliances during the Cold War. Pass out **BLM 3 Canada’s Cold War International Alliances**. Have students conduct some research or use their previous research to fill-in the chart on the BLM. Then encourage them to discuss why it was necessary for Canada and other countries to form these alliances during the Cold War. Invite students to put together a PowerPoint or slide presentation on this topic and present it to the class.
22. Remind students of the War Measures Act, which was created in WWI and used again during WWII. In a small group or in pairs, invite students to look up and examine the War Measures Act. Then have them summarize how and why the War Measures Act was relevant to the Gouzenko investigation. Ask students to look at other Canadian historical events and security scares where peoples’ rights were limited or suspects were detained (**Hint:** The October Crisis in 1970, 9/11 Crisis, Air India Flight-182 bombing). Then have them write their conclusions in a short paper.
23. Tell students that the Gouzenko defection was the beginning of a process by the Canadian government to investigate and reorganize itself in order to meet the new challenges of the world after WWII. Tell students that they will examine how the Canadian government reorganized to meet these challenges. Suggest that they start their investigations by looking at the background and purpose of new post-war intelligence organizations, such as the Security Panel, the RCMP, the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, and the UKUSA Agreement. Then, in pairs, have them respond to the following questions:
- What did the debates, or lack of debates, about these organizations within the Canadian government indicate about Canadian tendencies after Gouzenko’s defection?



- b. Why did Canada want to become a member of these organizations?
- c. Why was it important for Canada to take part in these alliances?
  
- d. What were the consequences for Canada, if the country did not join such organizations after WWII?

Encourage students to share their responses with another pair. What conclusions can they make about Canada's involvement in post-war alliances?

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