

SPY RING'S UNNECESSARY LABORS

Facts behind the Russian-spy story show that the Communist agents were wasting their time. Russia as an ally of the United States got the war information she needed simply by asking.

Special radio channels were set up to send information from the Pentagon to the Kremlin. American agents swapped tips with the Russian secret police. Goods for Russia got top priority.

Russia had access to most U. S. information in the war period.

This is the real story of how Russia got military secrets from the United States during the war. It is a story that has little to do with the spy ring that congressional committees are trying to prove existed during the war period. But it does throw light on the methods and purposes of the so-called spy ring.

Military information was going to Russia as a matter of routine, by official channels, on an organized basis, all during the period when United States Communists and their friends were supposed to be spying out bits of information to



IN U. S.: HARRY HOPKINS

send. Information of greatest military and industrial importance was given to the Russians by the highest American officials. Similar information went from Great Britain. At one time negotiations were begun, aimed at inviting spies of Russia's secret police, the NKVD, into Washington.

For the spy ring whose existence Congress is trying to prove was a wartime ring. And Russia was an ally of the United States at that time. Almost without exception, the information that self-confessed spies say they collected from agents inside the U. S. Government and passed along to Russia was material that Russia, as an ally, already had been given Washington.

SPY RING

For the spy ring whose existence Congress is trying to prove was a wartime ring. And Russia was an ally of the United States at that time. Almost without exception, the information that self-confessed spies say they collected from agents inside the U. S. Government and passed along to Russia was material that Russia, as an ally, already had been given through regular and official channels.

As an ally of U. S. in the war against Germany, Russia had free access to far more important information than the so-called spy ring claims to have handled. Special arrangements were made to get the information into Russian hands. And a new radio channel was opened to clear it directly from the Pentagon to Moscow.

One man who held a key spot in the American Government during the war years says the so-called spy ring apparently did not handle any information that the military attache of the Russian Embassy in Washington could not have gotten by riding over to the Pentagon headquarters of the Army.

In the effort to aid Russia, many of the barriers that usually stand between nations were broken down.

Top American secrets were handed to the Russian ally whenever it was felt that use of those secrets by Russia would aid in the common cause against Germany.

President Roosevelt and his aide, Harry Hopkins, discussed over-all war plans with Marshal Joseph Stalin. American Ambassador Averell Harriman and Maj. Gen. John R. Deane, head of the United States Military Mission to Russia, kept the Russian Foreign Office and the Red Army up to date on war plans.

Many months before D Day, General Deane told the Red Army staff the approximate date of the cross-Channel invasion of France. At the instruction of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, he gave the Russian officials the exact date two months in advance. He kept them informed of changes in the date.

The reason for this was that the Red Army had a role to play in the invasion plans. It was to keep the Germans from shifting troops from the Eastern Front into France to meet the invasion.

Three main categories of information were set up for the Russian ally. With a few exceptions, the Russians had full knowledge of what the United States was doing. That they did not have broader access to information was more the fault of Russia than of the United States. The Russians had many invitations to co-operate more fully with the United States and Great Britain, but they refused.

broader access to information was more the fault of Russia than of the United States. The Russians had many invitations to co-operate more fully with the United States and Great Britain, but they refused.

The top secret that was kept from the Russians was the atomic bomb. A few other weapons fell into the same category. Those were weapons that were not included in Lend-Lease shipments to Russia. Certain aspects of long-range

SPY RING

strategy also were kept secret from the Russians, but only because of fear that these secrets might leak through to Germany. The Russian security system was not too tight.

A **swap label** was attached to synthetic-rubber methods and a few other bits of industrial information. On these matters, the United States was willing to give the information to Russia, but demanded certain information in return.

No swaps were ever worked out. Medical, rubber and weather missions came back from Russia empty handed. Air Forces doctors got nothing. The Ordnance Department could not see Russian equipment or German equipment that had fallen into Russian hands. The Ground Forces were not allowed to observe Russian tactical methods. The Navy was barred from the Russian-captured German submarine base at Gydnia.

Even Government financial information and figures on gold reserves, which are public property in America, were withheld by Russia. Russian weather information was withheld from America for a long while, although it was needed by fliers.

But a broad field of American information was left wide open to the



GEN. DONOVAN OF OSS
... the NKVD co-operated

Russians. Most industrial processes fell within it. Thousands of Russians came to the United States to visit manufacturing plants, attend American schools and witness tests of aircraft and other equipment. Russians at Army field headquarters were allowed to see whatever they wished.

New inventions in electronics and other areas of research were made available to the Russians as soon as they had been used by American forces and the element of surprise exploited. General Deane in Moscow got a list, every month, of inventions he could tell the Russians about.

A special radio channel was set up between Moscow and the Pentagon. It permitted the Kremlin to keep in touch with the many Russian commissions and observers in the United States. And it enabled General Deane and Ambassa-

SPY RING

dor Harriman to maintain contact with Washington.

NKVD. The co-operation between the Office of Strategic Services, under Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan, and NKVD, the Russian secret-police agency, was especially close. General Donovan went to Moscow at Christmas of 1943. He talked with Lieut. Gen. P. M. Fitin and Maj. Gen. A. P. Ossipov, the two top officials of NKVD. He told them of the work of OSS and about many of its secret devices. He proposed that OSS and NKVD exchange information.

The original plan called for the establishment of an OSS mission in Moscow. It would get information from NKVD and send that information to Washington. In exchange, NKVD would send a mission of secret-police officials to Washington. They would keep in contact with OSS and relay the information back to the Kremlin. The Russians agreed to the plan. Arrangements were under way to put it into operation.

But, in mid-March of 1944, President Roosevelt ordered the negotiations postponed indefinitely. Both General Deane



THE KREMLIN

... the OSS swapped tips with
Russian secret police

and Mr. Harriman protested. They thought the plan would enable the United States to learn more about Russia. Mr. Roosevelt was firm. In the face of the approaching presidential campaign, Mr. Roosevelt foresaw criticism if he permitted the Russian secret police to establish a base inside the United States.

This plan collapsed. But OSS and NKVD exchanged information regularly, with General Deane acting as intermediary. One of the bits of information that OSS gave to NKVD was documentary proof that the Germans had succeeded in breaking some of the Russian codes.

Aid to Russia was the dominant theme in Washington during that period. United States war agencies were ordered to give top priority to Russian orders for material. This priority material went ahead of that for other allies, and even of that for America's own armed services.

Mr. Hopkins was urging this program with enthusiasm. Off in Russia, where he could see the other side of the situation, General Deane sometimes thought Mr. Hopkins was putting too much enthusiasm into his work. The General sometimes asked the Russians for reasons why they needed so much of various scarce materials. They refused to give reasons and told him if he did not approve their Lend-Lease requests the Russian purchasing commission in Washington would get the material anyway. And the purchasing commission did.

In Washington, enthusiasm for Russia was high. Many who disliked Communism felt that Russia was fighting

SPY RING

America's war when the Red Army stopped the Germans at long last after being pushed all the way across the Ukraine. And some friends of Russia in the Government felt that America was not doing enough for the Soviet cause.

It was during this period that the so-called spies claim to have been working in Washington, at a period when American friendship for Russia and American



co-operation with Russia probably was at an all-time peak.

The spy story grows out of testimony by three principal witnesses, Miss Elizabeth T. Bentley, Whittaker Chambers and Louis Budenz. Miss Bentley is a Vassar graduate who says she was a spy for the Communists during the war. Mr. Chambers is a magazine editor. Mr. Budenz is a former Communist who once was editor of the *Daily Worker*.

Miss Bentley says she collected information from men in Government who were Communists or friends of Communists. She says she passed the information along to Russians and other Communists. She says some Government employes were active workers in Communist spy rings, that others gave willing assistance. The men involved deny her story. Most of them are no longer in Government service.

Members of Congress are especially interested in the career of one man named by Miss Bentley. This man was suspended recently by the Commerce Department. During the war and afterward, he moved from job to job. He wound up in a \$10,000 post in the Commerce Department, in charge of export licenses, in spite of the fact that one witness testified that an Assistant Secretary of Commerce had warned that the man's loyalty was under question and that the evidence was serious.

Mr. Chambers says that he himself was a Communist from 1924 to 1937. He says the Communists were trying to infiltrate into Government departments during that period. He named a number of former Government employes, who, he said, were members of an underground group of Communists in Washington then. Some of the men rose later to positions of great responsibility. They since have left Government service.

Both Mr. Chambers and Miss Bentley had told their stories to the FBI and to a New York grand jury. But the grand jury did not indict the men they named. After the jury has heard the charges in secret session, two congressional committees called the witnesses to Washington

SPY RING



MISS BENTLEY BEFORE SENATE INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE

. . . Russia had free access to far more important information

and heard them in open session. This gave the stories to the newspapers, the radio and newsreels.

The spy-ring methods described by the witnesses resemble somewhat those that were employed by the Canadian spy ring that was broken in 1946.

In the Canadian case, several officials were found to have betrayed scientific information to Russia. The men were highly trained public servants. No pay was involved. Not all of them were Communists. And no one man was told that he was a part of a larger ring. Each worked as an individual in a discussion group.

Persons familiar with espionage methods say the operations described before the congressional committees smack of the amateur. In view of the open-door policy that existed within the United States with respect to information for Russia, these persons can see only two purposes that the work described by Miss Bentley could have served. Either it was a simple training operation for future activities; or, if it had a genuine tie with the Russian Government, the Soviet was trying to check some of the information it already was getting through official channels.

If it was a training maneuver, much of the groundwork for future operations will have to be laid again. New sources of information will have to be developed inside the Government. Most of the old ones are gone. And America is developing a counterespionage system of its own. Moreover, if it was an effort to check official information, it failed. The Russians got less information by spying than they could and did get for the asking.