

Security Service Nabs Soviet Spies

by G. J. I. Saunders, RCMP Gazette Staff

Introduction

However much we may lament international tension, however much we may decry the abuse of a trust which one country extends to another, however highly we may value the ideal of global harmony — well, we still love a good spy story. We all do. The tricks and tosses of intrigue appeal to a romantic suspicion that the affairs of men, and indeed of the cosmos, are not governed entirely by the geometric logic of bilateral trade agreements or public treaty, but also by clandestine meetings, faceless beings, disguises, secret codes, underground networks, dark fates.

Canadians will agree with the Federal Government that such espionage cannot be tolerated. It may be fascinating to read about, but the spies must be expelled, their Government rebuked and notice of Canada's indignation publicly displayed. Logic and a civilized view of the matter prevail — as they must.

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the year-long affair is that the RCMP succeeded in getting their men without, apparently, breaking a single Canadian or international law.

They opened no private mail, burned down no barns, broke into no offices without warrants; instead, they relied upon sound detective work, legitimate investigative craft.

The Government may present the affair as evidence of the RCMP's skill and dedication (and so it is). But the affair also provides clear evidence that effective police work and respect for the law are readily compatible, as well as essential.

Editorial, Globe & Mail, Feb. 11, 1978

Canadian Government officials summoned Soviet Ambassador Alexandr Yakovlev to state Ottawa's displeasure over spy activities, exactly one day after he had received a note demanding compensation for Canadian recovery costs incurred in the North West Territories, involving radioactive COSMOS 954 satellite parts.

On February 9, 1978, Ottawa lunched on headlines that read: Mounties Smash Soviet Spy Ring. Of 64 officially resident Soviet embassy members in Ottawa, eleven had been expelled, and two others on leave were refused re-entry.

The Minister of External Affairs' announcement created a furor unequalled in Canada's capital since the Gouzenko case hit the streets.

"At noon today, on my instructions, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs requested the Ambassador of the Soviet Union to withdraw eleven Soviet nationals from Canada for engaging in inadmissible activities in violation of the Official Secrets Act and of course of their status in Canada.

"Two other Soviet nationals who were involved have already departed Canada but will not be permitted to return. A strong protest has been conveyed to the Soviet authorities about these activities.

"The Soviet ambassador was informed that the Canadian government had irrefutable evidence that all 13 persons had been involved in an attempt to recruit a member of the RCMP in order to penetrate the RCMP Security Service.

"Nine of the Soviet nationals still in Canada are employees of the Soviet em-