

THE LOYALTIES OF E. HERBERT NORMAN

"I trust in an exhaustive and fairminded study..."
Ambassador E. Herbert Norman, Cairo, April 4, 1957.

On December 14, 1989, I signed a sixty day contract with the Department of External Affairs to review all its files on Norman, and also all those containing memoranda, dispatches and telegrams authored by him. I undertook to follow "lines of pursuit which may help clarify Norman's allegiance to Canada ... and any relationship he may have had with the Soviet Union." The report, "suitable for public release," was "ideally to be highly unequivocal in putting to rest once and for all allegations about Norman." Apart from that, I was given no indication of External's preferred outcome, if any. My conclusion could be "guilty," "not guilty" or "not proven," depending on the evidence.

Access to the relevant External files was total and straightforward, and I'm confident that I have seen everything in them that is at all likely to bear on my assignment. Access to the RCMP files (now with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) proved complicated but was eventually authorized. A short parliamentary discussion between Members of Parliament David Kilgour and Patrick Boyer may have facilitated this outcome. The Department of National Defence made available interesting documents related to Norman's wartime intelligence activity. The Library of the University of British Columbia sent copies of 68 letters from Norman's spirited and revealing correspondence with his family. I also received a copy of the FBI's Norman file. Letters that I wrote to a dozen newspapers produced five responses - only one of them critical of Norman. I also received seven phone calls from four people. I strongly doubt that my central findings could be significantly altered by additional information. Any deficiencies in the report cannot be blamed on a shortage of either cooperation or sources. (more about sources in Appendix A.)

Conclusions

My most important conclusions are both confident and unequivocal.

1. Was Herbert Norman a spy? No. Not one iota of evidence suggests that he was.
2. Was Herbert Norman a Soviet "agent of influence"? Did he offer his own government, or any other, counsel calculated to promote actions favorable to any enemy, real or potential? Or supply misinformation that would have the same result? No. There is not the slightest evidence that he was an "agent of influence" and much to the contrary. After forty years of investigation, there is no smoking gun.