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An Analysis of Soviet Spy Networks in the United States
Throughout the Twentieth Century

By

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Chapter 1: Spies Before the War

The Soviet Union and the United States have always had a complicated relationship. When the Bolshevik Revolution of 1921 brought the communist party to power in Russia, the United States government did not recognize the new regime. The communist ideologies of the newly established state did not line up well with the democratic ideals of the United States. These new communist principles threatened the strength of the American system, as labor disputes and the Great Depression gave citizens reason to question capitalism's effectiveness. The fear of this system grew as the world progressed through the twentieth century when the Soviet Union shifted from ally to enemy in all but a few years.

Although the two countries may not have seen eye to eye, the American government was not particularly concerned with the issues of Soviet Russia after it was founded in December of 1922. Although World War I had shown that the United States could hold its own on the international stage, it still had yet to develop into the dominant world power that it would become after the Second World War. Despite the political tension that was felt from both countries, the two maintained an economic relationship. For instance, during the late 1920s the Soviet Union was "America's seventh-biggest customer and its largest foreign purchaser of industrial machinery."¹ After all, both countries were growing and trying to establish themselves as two of the most powerful nations in the world, and this economic tie helped both of them achieve this goal.

¹ Katherine Sibley, *Red Spies in America: Stolen Secrets and the Dawn of the Cold War*, (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 14.

Regardless of the economic relationship that was developing between the Soviet Union and the United States, there was still an obvious layer of distrust that both exhibited. As John F. Fox explains, Vladimir Lenin was very concerned about the status of Soviet intelligence in the United States in the early 1920s.² However, the American counterintelligence efforts in the 1920s and 1930s were very limited and basically inactive until the latter half of the thirties. Therefore, Soviet spy networks started to develop under the noses of U.S. officers. As Historians John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr explain in their book *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America* “Soviet success, in other words, was not due solely to KGB skill, but also benefited from American incompetence and indifference.”³ The Soviets spies usually consisted of Americans who were either sympathetic to the communist cause or who needed money. Soviet spying began in the late twenties and continued on throughout the majority of the twentieth century. However, the spies that gave information before World War II usually gave over information for ideological reasons.

The Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) was created after the Soviet Revolution and many of the Americans that spied for ideological reasons got their start within this organization. The Party went through many changes and compromises at the beginning of its inception. In 1920, the Party was divided between two parties, the CPUSA and the Communist Labor Party. Due to the infighting between these factions, the Communist International (Comintern) stepped in and forced the groups to merge.⁴

² John F. Fox, “What Spiders Did: US and Soviet Counterintelligence before the Cold War,” (Journal of Cold War Studies, Volume 11, Number 3: The MIT Press, 2009), 207.

³ John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr and Alexander Vassiliev, *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 484.

⁴ James G. Ryan, "Socialist Triumph as a Family Value: Earl Browder and Soviet Espionage," *American Communist History* 1, no. 2 (December 2002).

Despite the early struggles between factions of the Party, it continued to develop and created a strong illegal wing when Earl Browder became its General Secretary in 1932.

The Soviet spy networks that developed before the Second World War were not as extensive as they would be during the war years. However, they did collect some valuable information on machinery and about the American perspective on other countries.⁵ The AMTORG Trading Company covered for Soviet espionage, which allowed their American spies to collect valuable information on industry, such as details on Ford and other significant manufacturers of the time.⁶ AMTORG not only provided crucial intelligence back to the Soviet Union, but it also became a hub for new agents like Gaik Ovakimian, Harold Glasser, and Jacob Golos.

In addition, many other networks developed through the Communist Party of the United States, like the one Whittaker Chambers was involved in. However, this cycle eventually broke when Chambers confessed to being a Soviet spy to the FBI in the late 1930s. Another network was centered on Soviet agent, and GRU leader, Alfred Tilton, whose apparatus included important men like Nicolas Dozenberg and Earl Browder. A similar agent, named Ludwig Lore, also recruited various agents to work for branches of Soviet intelligence during the twenties and thirties. However, despite their years of service, and whether they were involved with the CPUSA or not, many of these Soviet spies died or were arrested during Stalin's purges of the late 1930s.⁷ Nevertheless, while there was a myriad of Soviet spies that tried to provide information back to the USSR

⁵ Haynes, Klehr, Vassiliev, 484. Fox, 209.

⁶ Henry L. Zelchenko, "Stealing America's Know-How: The Story of AMTORG" in *The American Mercury*, February 1952, 75-84.

⁷ Haynes, Klehr, Vassiliev, 198.

during this time period, the majority of significant Soviet espionage occurred during and after World War II.



One of the most significant early forms of Soviet espionage started with the AMTORG Trading Company. Ironically, this first major base for covert Soviet relations happened because the Soviet Union was not recognized by the United States and therefore did not have an embassy before 1933. Therefore, Amtorg became the hub for many Soviet operations and thousands of Russians entered America between 1924 and 1930 with the help of this company.⁸ In his piece “Stealing America’s Know-How: The Story of AMTORG,” Henry Zelchenko describes how he was enlisted and then worked for Amtorg. When Ivan A. Likhachov approached Zelchenko during the early 1930s, Zelchenko did not know of what use he could be to Likhachov.⁹ However, he quickly learned that Amtorg was trying to recruit as many suitable agents as they could to gain information on American industry, thus helping the Soviet Union catch up to America’s performance.¹⁰ Zelchenko explained Amtorg’s month-long processes of exploring and collecting data on different commercial industries through visits to their headquarters.¹¹ Amtorg targeted many US companies, like Buick and TOCCO, and eventually the Russians were able to see the reward.¹² As Zelchenko notes, “all the data that had been collected, studied and perfected by an American company through years of trial and error and at heavy cost the Russians were to obtain free, wrapped up in a neat package.”¹³

⁸ Sibley, 15.

⁹ Zelchenko, 76.

¹⁰ Zelchenko, 77.

¹¹ Zelchenko, 79.

¹² Zelchenko, 79.

¹³ Zelchenko, 80.

Nevertheless, obtaining this industrial knowledge was not the whole of Amtorg's purpose. Zelchenko concludes his paper by explaining the other functions that the company provided to both the Communist Party and the Soviet cause in general. Amtorg not only gave funds to the Party, but they also functioned as the main cover for spies from the Soviet government.¹⁴ In addition, Zelchenko finishes by explaining that the Soviet "industrial progress rests on imitation of foreign achievements. Without a ready and continuous influx of American and other foreign machines and technical knowledge, Soviet industry would quickly become sterile."¹⁵ During the 1930s the Soviet Union was in the midst of a major industrialization movement, which explains their focus on American industrial knowledge. Furthermore, this flow of information would certainly be helpful to the Soviet cause in years to come, as their espionage allowed them to build an atomic bomb in a much shorter time than they would have been able to without spying on the American efforts.

Amtorg was one of the primary vehicles for Soviet espionage in the early period before World War II. However, it did garner a lot of suspicion from various different American sources. For example, the New York Police Commissioner inquired about the real objectives of Amtorg. In 1930, Grover Whalen led an investigation because he believed the company was "harboring thirty undercover agents of the Communist International."¹⁶ Unfortunately, Amtorg escaped this questioning without ramifications and continued to bring in Soviet agents and collect information on American products.¹⁷

¹⁴ Zelchenko, 84.

¹⁵ Zelchenko, 84.

¹⁶ Sibley, 18.

¹⁷ Sibley, 18.

One of the most significant acts of espionage for Amtorg was not what they collected, but whom they covered for. In 1933, Gaik Ovakimian came to the United States under the cover of an Amtorg engineer, but was really the deputy head of the NKVD's (the Soviet Union's secret police) scientific-technical intelligence section.¹⁸ Ovakimian is immensely significant not only because of the information he brought in, but also because of the Americans that he recruited to be Soviet spies. For example, Ovakimian recruited Jacob Golos who would be in charge of some of the most important spies, such as the Rosenberg ring, during World War II.¹⁹ Furthermore, Ovakimian recruited "an impressive array of technical and industrial informants in the chemical industry," like Thomas Lessing Black, who began in the mid-1930s and was an important agent during the war years when he worked as a chemist.²⁰ Another important asset that Ovakimian recruited was Harold Glasser in the later part of the 1930s.

Glasser joined the Justice Department in 1935. He was very effective spy because he had access to "Justice Department files (including those of the FBI) but also to reports from the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department."²¹ Glasser's position allowed him to not only report on issues of foreign intelligence, but it also enabled him to warn the KGB when the FBI was going to investigate fellow spy Jacob Golos and his network, the World Tourists.²² This was especially important because the World Tourists were such a valuable faction of Soviet espionage. The World Tourists worked with both Amtorg and the CPUSA to help Soviet agents enter into the United States by providing

¹⁸ Haynes, Klehr, 151.

¹⁹ Haynes, Klehr, Vassiliev, 504.

²⁰ Haynes, Klehr, Vassiliev, 489; Haynes and Klehr, 277.

²¹ Haynes, Klehr, Vassiliev, 201.

²² Haynes, Klehr, Vassiliev, 203.

them with fake passports and deceitful travel information.²³ Golos was the primary owner of the organization, which made him a lot of money until he, as well as the World Tourists, were brought under investigation by the FBI in 1940.²⁴ Thankfully Glasser warned the Soviet system of this investigation and the organization was able to change its tune in time to only receive “a slap on the wrist.”²⁵ Despite his hard work, Glasser’s service was suspended in 1938 by the Soviet Union when his main contact, Armand Feldman, disappeared and presumably defected.²⁶ Unfortunately for both the Soviets and Glasser, their suspicions were correct. Feldman went to Canada to escape his former colleagues, but was too apprehensive about returning to the United States to testify.²⁷ Therefore, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police brought Feldman back to America in 1940 where he was forced to testify.²⁸ However, Feldman played down Glasser’s involvement and Glasser was able to escape the investigation only having lost his job.²⁹

Ovakimian was a successful station chief because he was able to recruit Americans who were sympathetic to the Soviet Union into working for Soviet intelligence. John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr explain how in 1936 Richard Briggs “approached Amtorg about obtaining a position in the Soviet Union and met Ovakimyan. Just like with Thomas Black, Ovakimyan soon converted the job seeker into an industrial spy [*sic*].”³⁰ Ovakimian was station chief until 1941 when the FBI arrested him after Feldman testified; however, at this point Ovakimian had been a very valuable asset to

²³ Haynes and Klehr, 95.

²⁴ Haynes and Klehr, 96.

²⁵ Haynes and Klehr, 96.

²⁶ Haynes, Klehr, Vassiliev, 203.

²⁷ Haynes, Klehr, Vassiliev, 205.

²⁸ Haynes, Klehr, Vassiliev, 205.

²⁹ Hayens, Klehr, Vassiliev, 205.

³⁰ Haynes, Klehr, Vassiliev, 378.

Soviet intelligence, allowing their covert network to grow into an effective machine that would function throughout World War II.



Amtorg and Gaik Ovakimian were two of the most important Soviet intelligence assets during the pre-war era. However, they were not the only ones. Another very significant Soviet agent during the twenties and thirties was Alfred Tilton (or Tilden). Tilton was head of the GRU, the Soviet military intelligence agency, for a time during the twenties. Tilton and his wife worked in the United States from 1927 to 1930, where they operated using “bootlegged passports” as they did not have any diplomatic support at this time (since the Soviet Union was still not recognized by the United States).³¹ Tilton not only procured these forms of false identification for himself, but he did so for other agents as well.³² While Tilton did provide some important information back to the Soviet government, like the lay out of the British warship *Royal Oak*, much of his more significant work came from his recruitment of valuable spies like Nicolas Dozenberg.³³

Before Tilton approached Dozenberg, he worked for the Communist newspaper *Voice of Labor* based in Chicago. He was a functionary for the CPUSA during the 1920s, but was unhappy about his level of pay and approached the Party for help.³⁴ Dozenberg met Tilton under the auspices of his false name, Joseph Paquett, where he received his first assignment.³⁵ This first assignment seemed quite reasonable to Dozenberg. As Theodore Draper explains in his book *American Communism and Soviet Russia*, “according to Dozenberg, his first assignment seemed innocent enough – to interview

³¹ Sibley, 20.

³² Sibley, 20.

³³ Sibley, 20.

³⁴ Draper, 211.

³⁵ Draper, 211.

people who could be sent to Soviet Russia for various purposes and to report on them to Tilton.”³⁶ He was paid an increased stipend for this work, but claimed he was unaware that this qualified as espionage.³⁷ Nevertheless, in late 1927 Nicolas Dozenberg disappeared and a new identity, “Nicolas L. Dallant,” was created. As Draper confirms, Dallant was probably the “first American Communist to make the transition to Soviet military intelligence. Tilton, however, was probably not the first Soviet intelligence agent in the United States.”³⁸ Dozenberg worked mostly in recruiting more agents and setting up their cover stories in the United States. When asked why he decided to engage in this type of work his response was complex, yet many other agents most likely felt the same way. Dozenberg explained that it was “partly convictions, and partly once you run into a game of that sort, well, it becomes so regular that you don’t pay any attention to it...”³⁹ So, while his participation as a spy was spurred by his need for money, it was maintained because of his sympathy for communism.

Nevertheless, Dozenberg’s involvement in Soviet espionage was not without consequence. The FBI arrested Dozenberg in September 1939 after Benjamin Gitlow provided his name in testimony to the House of Representatives’ Special Committee on Un-American Activities.⁴⁰ Gitlow was a former socialist who became an anti-communist at the end of the 1930s and provided information to HUAC as a result.⁴¹ Martin Dies, the head of HUAC, questioned Dozenberg in an attempt to gauge a better understanding of what Dozenberg did and whom else he was connected to. Dies asked Dozenberg about

³⁶ Draper, 211.

³⁷ Draper, 211.

³⁸ Draper, 211.

³⁹ Draper, 212.

⁴⁰ Draper, 212.

⁴¹ Draper, 212.

Tilton and other agents like Jay Lovestone and Earl Browder for whom he had provided false identification.⁴² Dozenberg confirmed that he worked with Tilton and that the two had set up a shipping company that would “serve the purpose of shipping whatever material the people here had gathered.”⁴³ Dozenberg confirmed his involvement with many different Soviet spies and helped Martin Dies understand Alfred Tilton’s network. Dozenberg went to prison for a year and a day because of his passport fraud and then returned to the Soviet Union.⁴⁴ While Dozenberg was able to make it out with only one year of prison, his primary contact was not as lucky. Alfred Tilton was recalled to Russia in 1930 and was arrested in 1937 during Stalin’s Great Terror. Tilton served fifteen years in the Gulag (Russian prison/concentration camps) where he died of starvation and other circumstances in 1942.⁴⁵ Tilton would not be the only Soviet agent to suffer this fate, as Stalin became increasingly paranoid about agents who had spent any time working overseas, especially in the West.

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The Communist Party of the United States fostered the recruitment and development of many Americans working as Soviet spies during the 1920s and especially the 1930s. The CPUSA had a troubled beginning as it worked to establish itself and set its goals. During late 1919 the Party functioned legally as it worked to gain more supporters who believed that a Revolution could happen in the United States as it had in the Soviet Union.⁴⁶ However, as time went on bombings and other threats forced the

⁴² Draper, 212.

⁴³ House of Representatives, Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities. Tuesday, May 21, 1940. Washington, D.C. 578.

⁴⁴ Draper, 213.

⁴⁵ Sibley, 21.

⁴⁶ Haynes and Klehr, 57.

Party to go underground.⁴⁷ Leadership was passed around for another couple of years until the Communist International (the Soviet organization that oversaw the Communist parties of the world) told them to return to the legal sphere and establish themselves as a legitimate Party.⁴⁸ Throughout the 1920s the CPUSA functioned legally, while it tried to develop its Secret wing. As Haynes and Klehr discuss in their book *Venona*, “during the 1920s the American party had an underground, but, distracted as it was by its vicious internal factional battles, its covert apparatus was not carefully maintained.”⁴⁹ The CPUSA’s undercover section would not function well until the 1930s when Josef Peters led the secret faction.

Josef Peters (whose real name was Alexander Stevens) was a Hungarian born communist who moved to the United States in 1924.⁵⁰ Peters joined the CPUSA when he arrived and was quickly became involved in the factional disputes of the Party. Peters was a follower of the very controversial Jay Lovestone who was a supporter of Nikolai Bukharin. Bukharin was at one point one of Stalin’s greatest allies; however, he was purged from Soviet leadership in 1929. This led to Lovestone’s, along with other minority faction’s, expulsion from the Party.⁵¹ However, after the CPUSA was “cleansed” of these smaller groups, it was able to grow because of its singular beliefs. In 1930, Peters was promoted to “organizational secretary of the New York Communist Party, the CPUSA’s largest regional unit.”⁵² Peters reported to Earl Browder, the CPUSA’s General Secretary, where they worked together to develop an effective

⁴⁷ Haynes and Klehr, 57.

⁴⁸ Haynes and Klehr, 58.

⁴⁹ Haynes and Klehr, 60.

⁵⁰ Haynes and Klehr, 61.

⁵¹ Haynes and Klehr, 61.

⁵² Haynes and Klehr, 61.

espionage unit within the Party. Peters was responsible for “detecting surveillance by hostile police, exposing infiltrators, and protecting special party assets, such as sensitive records, from seizure.”⁵³ Despite all of these significant duties, one of the most important jobs of Peters was to facilitate communication between the underground and different covert groups working within Washington.

When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the New Deal, he believed that it would help the American people recover from the Great Depression; however, it unwittingly also became a system through which Soviet espionage networks were developed. The Agricultural Adjustment Agency (AAA) was one of the programs that FDR created as a way to help rebuild the agricultural sector of States. While this did occur, it also provided some Soviet agents with a gateway into US information. These agents had to break with the Communist Party when they got involved in the government or else they would be discharged.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the Party maintained an important role in their espionage, as the CPUSA facilitated many of the relationships that agents had when working for these government agencies. For example, Harold Ware and his group of Soviet spies developed through the AAA and his work with the CPUSA.⁵⁵ J. Peters introduced Ware to Whittaker Chambers in 1934, whose network already included seventy-five other agents working within the government.⁵⁶ Some of the most notorious alleged spies of the Ware group were Alger Hiss, Lee Pressman, John Abt, Charles Kramer, Nathan Witt, Henry Collins, George Silverman, Donald Hiss, and Victor Perlo.⁵⁷ However, Harold Ware died in 1935 and Earl Browder took over his contacts. This group

⁵³ Haynes and Klehr, 61.

⁵⁴ Haynes and Klehr, 62.

⁵⁵ Haynes and Klehr, 62.

⁵⁶ Haynes and Klehr, 62.

⁵⁷ Haynes and Klehr, 62-63.

continued to collect information over the years, until one of their own came forward to the United States Government about their actions.

One of the most notorious Soviet spies of the era before World War II became famous of his own accord. In 1938, Whittaker Chambers defected from the communist cause and provided information to the American government on Soviet intelligence. In 1952, Chambers published his book *Witness* that told the story of his involvement both within the Communist Party and communist underground. On page 201, Chambers describes his induction into the CPUSA in 1925. He had decided that he wanted to join and was approached by what he called a “glassy-eyed communist” who questioned him briefly about why he wanted membership.⁵⁸ Chambers explained that he “believed that Communism was the answer to the social crisis and that [he] wanted to do something about it.”⁵⁹ After reading a couple of recommended communist writings, Chambers became an official party member. Chambers was active in the Communist Party and wrote for and edited for two popular communist papers titled *New Masses* and *The Daily Worker*. Chambers played an important role in the CPUSA, but was approached seven years later for a new opportunity in the same cause.

Chambers recalls the experience of being approached for his new job in his book *Witness*. Comrade Bedacht called Chambers in to have a meeting with him about what his new possible role would be. Chambers recollects his initial meeting with Bedacht as a little disconcerting:

“For some reason,” he said, as if he strongly disapproved of the whole business, “they want you to go into one of the party’s ‘special

⁵⁸ Chambers, 201.

⁵⁹ Chambers, 201.

institutions.”” Bedacht always used that expression in referring to any of the Communist underground apparatuses. But it was a term new to me.⁶⁰

Chambers acknowledged how hesitant Bedacht was to offer him this position, but Chambers himself was also nervous about this new offer and initially declined. Nevertheless, as Chambers further explains, he had no choice in the matter; if he decided to refuse the offer he would be expelled from the Party.⁶¹ Thus Chambers joined the Soviet underground in 1931 where he worked secretly for seven years until he turned himself in to the FBI.

Chambers was an important agent for the Soviets as he was not only involved in military, but also political espionage. Chambers was responsible for gaining access to and reporting back to the Soviet Union on companies like Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey and the Electric Boat Company in Connecticut.⁶² Chamber’s political espionage took place at the Agricultural Adjustment Agency, where he worked to gain information with other Soviet agents such as “Julian Wadleigh at the Department of Agriculture, Ward Pigman at the Bureau of Standards, Alger Hiss, then a liaison to the Senate’s Nye Committee, and Harry Dexter White at the Treasury Department.”⁶³ While Chambers was involved in Soviet espionage he functioned as a very valuable asset in their system. However, Chambers became anxious during the late half of the thirties when Stalin’s Great Terror began and ultimately decided to leave the Communist party and go into hiding with his family. Almost a decade later Chambers testified against other agents that he had previously worked with in the Soviet espionage system.

⁶⁰ Chambers, 275.

⁶¹ Chambers, 279.

⁶² Sibley, 32.

⁶³ Sibley, 33.

Chamber's testimony implicated the rest of the Ware group in spying for the Soviet Union. While many of these spies confirmed his allegations, Alger Hiss maintained his innocence. After Chambers accused Hiss of being in contact with him and thus committing espionage for the Soviet Union, Hiss sent a telegram to the House of Un-American Activities Committee stating:

"I DO NOT KNOW MR. CHAMBERS AND, SO FAR AS I AM AWARE, HAVE NEVER LAID EYES ON HIM. THERE IS NO BASIS FOR THE STATEMENTS ABOUT ME MADE TO YOUR COMMITTEE...I WOULD FURTHER APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY OF APPEARING BEFORE YOUR COMMITTEE..."⁶⁴

However, this only made Chambers continue to provide information on his relationship with Hiss and his wife. Hiss charged Chambers with a slander suit, but Chambers responded by providing HUAC with documents of correspondence between himself and Hiss.⁶⁵ Unfortunately for Hiss, Chambers evidence against him did not end there. Nicknamed "the pumpkin papers" by the media, Chambers brought HUAC investigators to his farm where he revealed his possession of film that incriminated Hiss with perjury inside of a hollowed out pumpkin.

Despite all of Chambers' evidence, Hiss was unable to be convicted of espionage because the statute of limitations for espionage was only five years and the evidence that was presented was ten years old.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Hiss was tried for perjuring himself in court and served forty-four months of a five-year sentence for his crimes.⁶⁷ Even though Hiss was not convicted for espionage, the publicity of his trial made him one of the first and most notorious Americans accused of spying for the Soviet Union.

⁶⁴ Doug Linder, "The Trials of Alger Hiss: A Commentary," 2003, <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/hiss/hissaccount.html>.

⁶⁵ Linder, "The Trials of Alger Hiss: A Commentary."

⁶⁶ Linder, "The Trials of Alger Hiss: A Commentary."

⁶⁷ Linder, "The Trials of Alger Hiss: A Commentary."



Joseph Stalin's leadership within the Soviet Union was extremely harsh. He molded the communist ideals of the Soviet Revolution into an autocratic society that he ruled. He battled the constant paranoia that those closest to him would try to overthrow his regime, and throughout his tenure in office he carried out many purges of Soviet government officials. Alfred Tilton was one of the spies that suffered the consequence of Stalin's delusions. As John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr explain in their book *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America*, "The terror Stalin unleashed in the USSR beginning in 1934 consumed much of the leadership and large portions of the rank-and-file of the Soviet Communist Party. The KGB was both its chief instrument and one of its major victims."⁶⁸

Juliet Stuart Poyntz was another one of the Soviet agents that suffered this unfortunate fate. Poyntz was a member of both the Daughters of the Revolution and was a founding member of the Communist Party of the United States.⁶⁹ Poyntz sought out secret intelligence work and in 1934 she stopped working for the CPUSA and started to work for the OGPU (the Soviet military secret police). Poyntz's fellow colleague and friend, Benjamin Gitlow, described what happened to Juliet in his 1948 book *The Whole of Their Lives*. Poyntz was an accomplished spy: she collected details about "scientific information in the United States in the fields of chemistry and physics, which the OGPU considered of great importance to the industrial and military strength of Russia."⁷⁰ Despite her success, Poyntz was not going to escape Stalin's purges. Gitlow described how Poyntz' good friend and former lover, Shachno Epstein, led her to her death out of

⁶⁸ Haynes, Klehr, Vassiliev, 490.

⁶⁹ Gitlow, 331.

⁷⁰ Gitlow, 332.

fear of what would happen to him if he chose not to.⁷¹ Rumors had started that Poyntz was writing about her experiences as a spy and might defect, so Stalin and his associates decided to take action.⁷²

Epstein and Poyntz went on a walk together through Central Park where she was grabbed and thrown into a car.⁷³ Gitlow retells how the Soviet agent had killed her in a disturbingly detailed fashion,

how they had driven her up through Westchester into Dutchess County to some woods not far from the Roosevelt estate – how the pleading, crying, frantic girl was killed and buried in a deep gully. The body was covered with lime and dirt. On top were placed dead leaves and branches, which the three killers trampled down with their feet. He ended his story: “Ah, she was too beautiful, comrades. Too bad we had to kill her.”⁷⁴

This terrifying story epitomizes the brutality with which Stalin conducted his purges. Unfortunately for himself, he destroyed many of the intelligence networks that he had developed before World War II. Not all of the agents were purged, but there would have to be a significant rebuilding of the espionage systems so that the Soviets could have coherent and effective information provided to them during and after the war.

The 1920s and 1930s was an era of careless American counterintelligence, which allowed for Soviet espionage efforts to expand. This paved the way for many spies, like Thomas Lessing Black and Harry Gold, to continue to work well into World War II after getting their start in espionage during the thirties. The 1930s were a time when the Soviet Union gained valuable information on industrial progress that was being made by the

⁷¹ Gitlow, 334.

⁷² Gitlow, 334.

⁷³ Gitlow, 335.

⁷⁴ Gitlow, 335.

United States, which in turn helped it develop its aircraft, electronics, and chemical know-how during Stalin's first Five-Year Plan.⁷⁵

Chapter 2: The Wartime Spies

World War II started in 1939 with the German invasion of Poland and for the next six years many countries were engulfed in heated battle. The United States joined the war effort in 1941 on the side of the Allies (England and the Soviet Union) in an effort to defeat Germany, Italy, and Japan. However, while the United States and the British were partners with the Soviet Union, they also did not always agree on everything. Throughout the war the Soviet Union had intelligence officers working within the United States and Britain collecting data on classified information. These spies gathered industrial, technological, and chemical knowledge that pushed their progress forward.

Nevertheless, some of the most important intelligence was stolen from a project that the American people did not even know of. The Manhattan Project was an initiative to create a bomb that could destroy a whole city at once. The construction of the bomb took place in the United States and was backed by its allies, Britain and Canada. However, ever since two of these bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, foreign affairs have never been the same. Nevertheless, without the full knowledge of the devastation that an atomic bomb could create, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union pined for the chance to develop a weapon like this first. Therefore, the Soviet Union employed scientists, Soviet agents, and members of the Communist Party to

⁷⁵ Sibley, 51.

covertly obtain intelligence of the bomb from the Manhattan Project, which allowed them to complete their bomb years earlier than they would have been able to previously.⁷⁶

Many of the agents that were gathering information from the United States were effective at remaining anonymous during their tenure working as a spy for the USSR. While some of the main spy rings were dissolved because agents chose to defect back to the United States, others were cracked open through the relentless work of those who deciphered the cables between Moscow and its New York Station. This initiative was named the Venona Project and it gave the United States counterintelligence network many clues as to what it was doing wrong. While the U.S. government was aware of what these cables said they did not release them to the public until 1995 (only a few years after the communist regime collapsed). It is through these cables that we are now able to see how the Soviet government infiltrated the work of these top secret U.S. agencies, which ultimately gave the USSR information that would shape how international affairs were conducted during the Cold War.

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One of the most important Soviet agents during World War II actually started his espionage work before the conflict erupted. Jacob Golos (briefly mentioned in Chapter 1) was a Ukrainian born immigrant to the United States, who became a naturalized citizen in 1915. From an early age Golos sympathized with leftist policies and joined the Communist Party of America in 1919.⁷⁷ In that same year Golos left the United States and went to Russia for four years, until he returned to the United States and started to

⁷⁶ David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-1956*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 370.

⁷⁷ John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 94.

work with the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA).⁷⁸ When he started working for the Party he wrote for the Russian-language journals *Novy Mir*, but it would not be long until he was promoted to chief administrator for the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Golos' most important work for the Soviet Union was still yet to come.

In June of 1927 Jacob Golos (codenamed 'Sound') became the chief official of the new travel agency, the World Tourists. The World Tourists worked with the CPUSA to help with the international travel of Soviet agents from the USSR to the United States (or vice versa) by providing falsified travel documents and identification.⁸⁰ However, like many other pre-war Soviet agents, Golos was almost purged during the late 1930s. He was asked to return back to the Soviet Union, but evaded their requests and actually ended up building up his networks instead.⁸¹ Golos expanded the World Tourists by creating "the U.S. Service and Shipping Corporation, a party- and Soviet-funded cover agency with the 'ostensible business purpose' of sending packages to Russia."⁸² Through this system, Golos ran some of the most important Soviet espionage networks of his time. For example, Golos ran notable spy networks like the Rosenberg Network, the Perlo Group, and the Silvermaster Network.⁸³ However, Golos gave up his control of the

⁷⁸ Haynes and Klehr, 94.

⁷⁹ Haynes and Klehr, 94.

⁸⁰ Haynes and Klehr, 95.

⁸¹ Katherine Sibley, *Red Spies in America: Stolen Secrets and the Dawn of the Cold War*, (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 75.

⁸² Sibley, 76.

⁸³ Haynes and Klehr, 116; John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr and Alexander Vassiliev, *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 506.

Rosenberg network to Soviet agent, Sergey Semonov, at the urging of his Soviet handlers, but would remain unwavering about his other networks.⁸⁴

Golos kept his affiliation with the CPUSA during his tenure working within Soviet espionage. This was a risky situation, as many agents broke ties with the Party so that they would not come under suspicion by American intelligence. Nevertheless, Golos was a very important source for the Soviets and it was partly because of his connections within the CPUSA that he was so successful. As Harvey Klehr explains in his book *Spies*,

From 1941 until 1945 Golos and the CPUSA provided the KGB with its most valuable political, diplomatic, military, and technical intelligence sources. The relationship was fraught with difficulties and tensions, and the KGB was always aware that its reliance on party-based networks might result in catastrophe. In the short, run the risk paid off, and the years from 1942 to 1945 were a golden age for the KGB. But later there was a price to be paid.⁸⁵

Although Golos gave the Soviet Union some of its most valuable spies, especially about the atomic bomb, he would not live to see his work completely pay off. Golos died in 1943, which left his networks in the hands of his courier Elizabeth Bentley.

Elizabeth Bentley was an American born communist who graduated from Vassar College and got her masters degree from Columbia University. She joined the CPUSA in 1935 and within a few years she would be working for the communist underground. Her first job was at the Italian Library of Information, but the information she had available to her was not of much interest to her sources.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, it was at this job that Bentley would first meet Golos. The two had a much more complicated relationship than just that

⁸⁴ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 504.

⁸⁵ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 504.

⁸⁶ Sibley, 98.

of informant and boss – the two were also involved romantically.⁸⁷ Bentley was promoted to Golos' assistant in 1939, in which she would act as a courier for his sources.⁸⁸ The relationship between the two explains why Bentley was so protective over Golos' networks after his death in 1943.

Bentley helped run both the Perlo Group and the Silvermaster network, and was extremely reluctant to hand over her contacts after Golos' death. Soviet agent Vasily Zarubin wanted to take over her spies and give control of them to Soviet agent Iskhak Akhmerov. However, Bentley proved to be determined and “continued to throw up obstacles” when Zarubin tried to set up meetings with the American agents in her networks.⁸⁹ Akhmerov believed that Bentley was losing a bit of control and was very eager for her to turn over her sources to Soviet leadership. In 1944, he reported on the contradictions in her personality and how her mood could change in an instant.⁹⁰ As her biographer explains, she was unstable after the passing of Golos and was “depressed, drinking excessively, and pursuing lovers of both sexes.”⁹¹ However, she eventually turned over the Silvermaster network in 1944. At that point she was given another handler, Anatoli Borisovich Gromov, who attempted to lure her back to the Soviet Union. Bentley was probably right in assuming that this trip to the Soviet Union would not end well, and she stayed in America. Bentley continued to receive pressure from her Soviet handlers to turn over her sources to their control, which is part of the reason that she ended up turning herself into the FBI in 1945.

⁸⁷ Sibley, 98.

⁸⁸ Sibley, 99.

⁸⁹ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 507.

⁹⁰ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 508.

⁹¹ Sibley, 117.

Bentley had become very anxious and suspicious in the years after Golos' death. Part of this was probably because of the fact that her Soviet handlers were trying to faze her out, as they had noticed the change in her personality. Furthermore, her networks were both extremely fragile and possibly volatile. All of her sources were old friends from the underground and had knowledge about each other's activities with espionage; so, if one was caught, they were all caught.⁹² Bentley's handlers were working hard to get her to hand over her sources, but she was "embittered, lonely, and a promiscuous alcoholic" who believed that the American government was coming for her.⁹³ However, Bentley could not have been more incorrect. While the FBI was investigating the World Tourists, they had never really heard of Elizabeth Bentley and were unsure if they should believe her story when she first approached them. Nevertheless, Bentley's story would actually check out with the Venona Project records once they were uncovered.

Elizabeth Bentley defected from the Soviet cause on August 23, 1945.⁹⁴ As a result of her defection, the Soviet Union had to recall its agents that had worked with Bentley: Anatoly Gorsky, Akhmerov (chief of the illegal station), and Vladimir Pravdin (chief of the New York Station).⁹⁵ While Bentley had provided the Soviet Union with a considerable amount of secret intelligence during her work as a spy, she would be equally as important to the United States in their counterintelligence efforts. Bentley's reasoning for turning herself in was because of her growing disillusionment with communism.⁹⁶ She was a young idealist when she joined the American communist movement and

⁹² Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 518.

⁹³ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 518.

⁹⁴ Sibley, 120.

⁹⁵ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 520.

⁹⁶ Sibley, 119.

believed that communism would end discrimination.⁹⁷ However, after Golos' death Bentley understood where she stood within the Soviet network and believed it was time to go "back to being a good American."⁹⁸

Bentley first went to the FBI office in New Haven, Connecticut to talk to an agent about her information. It took her about three separate meetings until on November 7, 1945 the FBI conducted an eight-hour long interrogation in which "Bentley signed a 31-page statement."⁹⁹ This investigation would go on for a few months, "resulting in a 107-page final report naming more than eighty individuals."¹⁰⁰ Despite Bentley's lack of hard evidence, much of what she said checked out with what former Soviet informant, Whittaker Chambers, said when he defected only a few months earlier in May of the same year. Bentley's defection was a large set back in Soviet espionage efforts. The Americans found out that the Soviets knew about the "German battle plans, official American assessments of the Soviet-German front, secret policy discussions on Lend-Lease trade, and currency issues, and even 'the approximate scheduled date of D-Day.'¹⁰¹ However, the American government could now monitor the networks that Bentley confessed to knowing about. Furthermore, her trial in 1948 created a wave of suspicion against any communist (or former communist) in the United States.

Elizabeth Bentley helped work with two important networks of spies before she defected in 1945. Both the systems involved government employees and significant information being passed to the Soviet Union. One of the groups that Elizabeth Bentley came in contact with during her tenure as a Soviet spy was that of Victor Perlo. Born of

⁹⁷ Sibley, 119.

⁹⁸ Sibley, 119.

⁹⁹ Sibley, 120.

¹⁰⁰ Sibley, 120.

¹⁰¹ Sibley, 120.

Russian immigrants, Perlo eventually attended Columbia and got a degree in Mathematics. By the late 1930s he was a prominent member of the communist underground and would be one of the main subjects in Elizabeth Bentley's testimony after her defection to the FBI. In addition, Victor Perlo was an original member of the Ware Group, which was the group that Whittaker Chambers was a part of and testified against after his defection. Nevertheless, Perlo was also a successful economist outside of his work with the Soviet Union. By 1943 Perlo was a senior economist at the War Production Board and in 1945 he transferred to the Division of Monetary Research at the Treasury Department.

Although Perlo was one of Bentley's main victims in her testimony, she did not work with his secret apparatus until 1943. Up until 1943 the Perlo Group consisted of "mid-level government officials" that reported to the CPUSA.¹⁰² Earl Browder put Golos and Bentley in contact with the group before Golos' death, but he was only able to meet with them once. Bentley took over Golos' contacts after his passing, so she continued to meet with the Perlo Group in the future. However, Bentley was only an intermediary for the Perlo group as they transferred from reporting to CPUSA agents to reporting directly to Soviet agents. During Bentley's first couple of meetings with the group, she got to meet all of the members. The Perlo Group consisted of John Abt, Perlo, Charles Kramer, Edward Fitzgerald, Harry Magdoff, Donald Wheeler, and Allan Rosenberg. Many of these sources worked within the War Production Board or the Office of Strategic Services.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 271.

¹⁰³ Sibley, 121.

Despite Bentley's involvement with the Perlo Group, she did not have much tangible evidence against them in her testimony. She never read the documents that the members passed along to her, so her concrete evidence was lacking. Nevertheless, she did recall a few facts. For example, "she remembered memoranda on aircraft production (from Perlo), OSS intelligence summaries and OSS copies of State Department cables (from Wheeler), and plans for the occupation of Germany (from Allan Rosenberg)."¹⁰⁴ Regardless of Bentley's lack of solid information, more evidence would come out about the Perlo Group at later times that revealed what they had provided to the Soviet Union. Venona cables confirmed much of what Bentley said and further indicted Perlo. For example, the Venona cables revealed that

Perlo supplied data on aircraft production and US shipments to various fronts and reports about development difficulties for a jet engine for America's first and very secret jet fighter, as well as information on clashes between US military and civilian policy-makers over allocation of economic resources.¹⁰⁵

Other members of the Perlo apparatus collected valuable information on the international dealings of other countries. For example, Harold Glasser reported on both Nazi and Finnish dealings with the U.S. and with the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶ The Perlo Group committed espionage throughout World War II, but it was not until 1947 that the FBI decided to take action against them. Despite the fact that the FBI was convinced of the Perlo group's guilt, the Bureau did not have enough solid evidence to convict them. Therefore, the FBI had the members of the Perlo apparatus fired or had their positions eliminated. This was all done quietly and none of the members were persecuted for their espionage. In spite of

¹⁰⁴ Haynes and Klehr, 123.

¹⁰⁵ Haynes and Klehr, 122.

¹⁰⁶ Haynes and Klehr, 127.

their lack of conviction, evidence was later revealed through the USSR's archives and the Venona records that prove this group of government employees was guilty of handing over secrets to the Soviet Union during war years.¹⁰⁷

The other espionage apparatus that the Golos-Bentley network worked with was that of Gregory Silvermaster. Silvermaster's network was much like the Perlo group, however it provided more important information back to the Soviet Union. Gregory Silvermaster and his wife Helen ran the network, with the assistance of their friend William Ullman. It was first operated through the Golos and Bentley partnership starting in 1941, but by 1944 it had fully transferred over to Soviet control. The Silvermaster network included many important government officials, like "William Taylor, George Silverman, Frank Coe, William Gold, Sonia Gold, Irving Kaplan, Norman Bursler, Lauchlin Currie, Anatole Volkov, and Harry Dexter White."¹⁰⁸

Gregory Silvermaster was an immigrant from the Soviet Union who had roots in the Communist Party. In 1919 he joined the Party in Seattle and continued to be outspoken about his views. Eventually he moved to California and met Earl Browder who brought him into working with the communist underground in 1934. Silvermaster was also a practiced government official, who had worked in a variety of departments, such as the Resettlement Administration, the Maritime Labor Board, the Farm Security Administration, and the Board of Economic Warfare. Ultimately Browder put Golos into contact with Silvermaster so that the two could expand covert work together in Washington.¹⁰⁹ Silvermaster's network reported to Golos and Bentley until 1944 when Silvermaster began reporting to Soviet agent Akhmerov. Silvermaster consistently came

¹⁰⁷ Haynes and Klehr, 129.

¹⁰⁸ Haynes and Klehr, 129.

¹⁰⁹ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 258.

under suspicion by curious government employees, but his connections within the government were strong enough that others within his secret network would bail him out if need be.

Silvermaster's importance to the Soviet cause cannot be understated. He not only collected information on his own, but he gathered secrets from his network that would prove very useful to the Soviet Union. The KGB not only awarded Silvermaster with a three thousand dollar bonus at the end of 1944, but they also awarded him with a medal because of his work for the USSR.¹¹⁰ Sixty-one Venona messages show that Silvermaster handed "over huge quantities of War Production Board data on weapons, aircraft, tank, artillery, and shipping production; Board of Economic Warfare documents on German industry and on American reserves of manpower, foodstuffs, and raw materials..." to name a shortened list of all he collected.¹¹¹ Silvermaster was one of the most crucial Soviet spies within the U.S. Government during the war period also because of the spies that worked for him.

Silvermaster's partner, William Ullman, was not only of great use to the U.S. government, but he was also a valuable asset to the Soviet government's underground. Ullman and the Silvermasters were not only business partners, but they were practically like family. Ullman met Gregory Silvermaster in 1935 when he started his job at the National Recovery Administration. However, by 1939 he was working under Harry Dexter White (another source in the Silvermaster network) in the Pentagon at the Treasury's Division of Monetary Research. His immediate supervisor was another Soviet source, Frank Coe, to whom he delivered "highly coveted aircraft production

¹¹⁰Haynes and Klehr, 135.

¹¹¹ Haynes and Klehr, 136-7.

statistics.”¹¹² Ullman was a resourceful spy, who not only delivered his own information, but also helped Silvermaster run his network. For example, while he lived with the Silvermasters he would photograph the copious amounts of documents that were to be transferred from sources to the USSR.

Another source within the Silvermaster network was George Silverman. He was part of the communist underground starting in the 1930s and although he did not have a highly placed job within the U.S. government, his value to the Soviet cause came through his people skills. Silverman knew Whittaker Chambers through his espionage. Chambers explained how Silverman’s main job was to keep one of the most important Soviet sources in the U.S. Government, Harry Dexter White, cooperative with the communist agenda.¹¹³ In addition, Silverman was the Civilian Chief of Analysis and Plans in the Office of the Assistant Chief of the Army Air Force Air Staff for Material and Service, where he would provide the KGB with “reports on American aircraft production and allocation and on training and provisioning of air crews.”¹¹⁴ Despite this connection, he was still most vital because of his connection to Harry White and Lauchlin Currie.

Harry Dexter White was one of the most important Soviet spies who was not involved in atomic espionage. Historians Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes describe White as the “most important member of the Silvermaster network and the most highly placed asset the Soviets possessed in the American government... as assistant secretary of the treasury.”¹¹⁵ White was a Lithuanian Jew whose family immigrated to the United States when he was young. He was a very intelligent and successful man, as he went to

¹¹² Sibley, 123.

¹¹³ Haynes and Klehr, 138.

¹¹⁴ Haynes and Klehr, 138.

¹¹⁵ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 258.

Stanford and then got his PhD from Harvard. In the 1930s he joined the Treasury and continued to rise steadily through the ranks. By 1941 he was Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury and by the end of the war he had become the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury. White had a profound impact on the U.S. economic perspective when he and John Maynard Keynes sculpted the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944. By 1946 he had risen to one of the most important position in the U.S. Government: Director of the IMF.¹¹⁶

White had an immeasurable impact on the American economic outlook during the war years. However, while White was working for the U.S. Government, he was simultaneously providing intelligence to the USSR. White began his contact with the Soviet Union in the middle of the 1930s when he reported to Whittaker Chambers and his GRU network. Chambers described his assistance to the cause “as more of a Soviet sympathizer than a disciplined CPUSA member, someone who cooperated with the party underground to the extent he wished but didn’t take orders.”¹¹⁷ This style was characteristic of White’s service to the Soviet Union. In the 1940s he began reporting to the KGB through Silvermaster, but maintained this manner of espionage. Majority of White’s usefulness came with his connections in the government. He not only used his resources within the government to help pro-communist policies pass, like when he was a senior adviser to the American delegation at the founding of the United Nations, but he helped Soviet sources, like “Frank Coe, Harold Glasser, Ludwig Ullmann, Victor Perlo,

¹¹⁶ Haynes and Klehr, 138-145.

¹¹⁷ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 259.

Sonia Gold, Gregory Silvermaster, George Silverman, Irving Kaplan, William Taylor, and Solomon Adler,” get positions of influence at government jobs.¹¹⁸

While White provided some valuable information to the Soviet cause, author R. Bruce Craig suggests that what White passed along never fully subverted U.S. policy.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, White vehemently testified against Elizabeth Bentley after she accused him of espionage by giving an extremely pro-American speech that subverted her argument to many people.¹²⁰ This largely cleared White of Bentley’s accusations in the eyes of the public. White’s friend and adviser at the end of the war also fought to clear White’s name in his book *Foreign Adventures of an Economist*. Ray Mikesell claimed that White did not fear communism and thus was not afraid to work with communist officials, but that he never engaged in covert operations.¹²¹ It is also a possibility that White was a blind source for the Soviets; meaning that while he did provide information to the Soviet Union, he did not realize that he was giving them valuable secrets.¹²² Despite all of this, historians Haynes and Klehr still argue that White was a participant in Soviet espionage, as his name comes up in more than two-dozen KGB cables. Nevertheless, White cut his contact with the KGB in 1945, after word of Bentley’s defection, and died only days after defending himself against her accusations in 1948.

Another one of the sources that operated through Gregory Silvermaster was another high-ranking U.S. official, Lauchlin Currie. Currie was a Harvard graduate who

¹¹⁸ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 260.

¹¹⁹ R. Bruce Craig, *Treasonable Doubt: The Harry Dexter White Spy Case*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2004), 259.

¹²⁰ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 261-262.

¹²¹ Mark Thoma, “An Insider’s View of the Bretton Woods Negotiations,” Cit., *Economist’s View*, September 14, 2006, Retrieved January 28, 2015; Svetlana Cheronnaya, “Alexander Vassiliev’s Notes and Harry Dexter White,” www.documentstalk.com.

¹²² Svetlana Cheronnaya, “Harry Dexter White and Lauchin Currie,” www.documentstalk.com.

began working for the U.S. government in 1934. Currie and White knew each other when they both worked in the Treasury's Division of Research and Statistics. By 1943 he was a "powerful figure in wartime Washington, both as a presidential aide and as an administrator of an agency."¹²³ Throughout his rise in power in Washington, Currie held ties to the communist underground. Whittaker Chambers claims that Currie held ties to the communists beginning in the 1930s. However, he explains that Currie was much like White in the way he conducted himself among these associates. He was extremely cautious and more or less cooperated with the cause by only providing a limited amount of information. As Whittaker Chambers explained, he "never went the full way."¹²⁴

Nevertheless, Currie still delivered important documents to his communist links. For example, an "August 1943 New York KGB cable reports to Moscow that Currie had given Silverman a memorandum on a political subject, otherwise unspecified, that was either from or for the State Department."¹²⁵ The FBI, specifically its director Edgar Hoover, was curious as to where Currie's allegiances actually laid. He brought the question to President Truman in 1945, but a deeper investigation did not happen. After Bentley's testimony there was a much deeper interest in whether or not Currie was a full out spy for the Soviet Union. Currie lost his citizenship within the United States as a result of these speculations, and moved to Colombia with his wife in 1950 as a consequence.

When analyzing the impact that both Currie and White had in terms of what they gave over to the Soviets, it is important to also understand the context of the time in which they were living. Julius Kobyakov, the deputy director of the KGB's American

¹²³ Haynes and Klehr, 145.

¹²⁴ Haynes and Klehr, 146.

¹²⁵ Haynes and Klehr, 146.

Division during the late 1980s, describes how the significance of what Currie and White did can be lost if not explained through their circumstances:

I understand that Currie or [Harry Dexter] White, who were branded as subversives in the McCarthy era and stigmatised again by the VENONA cables, would hardly be considered heroes by the present day American historical establishment. But if a professional opinion is called for, as to whether those people were Soviet agents, my answer is *no*. It is easy to badmouth the people who no longer can defend themselves, and to overlook the fact that they in their own way may have helped the anti-Hitler coalition to win the bloodiest war in history.¹²⁶

Currie and White believed that the information they were providing to their ally, the Soviet Union, would help defeat Hitler's Nazi regime. Their intentions may not have been to subvert their own government, but to actually help them work with their political allies in defeating their opponent. Nevertheless, no matter their true plan, it is still important to study the influence that these men had in relation to their roles with the U.S. government.

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The Golos-Bentley network was one of the most well developed spy rings within the U.S. government. If it had not been for Golos' death and Bentley's defection, the network would have probably continued to run smoothly. Nevertheless, their espionage was still second in importance to the work of those spies working within the atomic intelligence field. One of the most significant projects that was taken on by Americans during World War II was the development of an atomic bomb that could cripple whole cities within an instance. Starting in 1939, scientists from England had been working on

¹²⁶ Daniel Ford, "Lauchin Currie: A Spy at the Heart of the AVG?" Last modified July 2014, <http://www.warbirdforum.com/currie.htm>.

the possibility of “utilizing the atomic energy of uranium for military purposes.”¹²⁷ The report was brought to the United States government in September of 1941, with the proposal of a joint, but informal partnership in order to create the atomic bomb.¹²⁸ By the early 1940s the American effort to procure the bomb first had increased dramatically. Scientists from Britain came to the United States and collaborated at either the Los Alamos Laboratory in New Mexico or the Oak Ridge Facility in Tennessee. This urgency came from the American and British fear that German scientists would develop a similar bomb before they finished their own. Despite their fear, the Germans were actually fairly slow in the development of this technology and were incapable of producing an atomic bomb during wartime Germany.¹²⁹

While the United States and the British were pushing for the bomb on their own, the Soviet Union was being slowly informed of their allies’ efforts. Anatolii Gorskii informed the Soviets of the Maud Committee’s initial report on September 25, 1941.¹³⁰ As a result of the information that Gorskii reported to the USSR, “the Soviet government now knew that Britain had decided to build an atomic bomb, that British scientists estimated that it would take between two and five years to do this, and that Britain had decided to build a gaseous diffusion separation plant in North America.”¹³¹ Despite these findings, the Soviet Union did not begin to develop their bomb right away. By 1942, Lavrentiy Beria (Commissar General of State Security in the Soviet Union) had tried to

¹²⁷ “The Maud Report, 1941,” Accessed January 26, 2015, <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Docs/Begin/MAUD.shtml>.

¹²⁸ Holloway, 80.

¹²⁹ Holloway, 81.

¹³⁰ Holloway, 82.

¹³¹ Holloway, 82.

push Stalin to put more effort into their atomic project.¹³² Stalin agreed and in 1943 the Soviet atomic project was underway. Igor Kurchatov was appointed the head of the Soviet atomic program on March 10, 1943. David Holloway expertly explains the controversial beginnings of the Soviet bomb in his book *Stalin and the Bomb*. He describes how Stalin received a lot of information before 1943 about how there was no use in working on a nuclear project because the war would most likely be over before they could finish. However, despite these warnings, Stalin decided to go through with the project. As Holloway explains, “the project he started is best understood as a rather small hedge against future uncertainties.”¹³³

Although the Soviets decided to start their own nuclear program, they had to look elsewhere for inspiration on how to begin. Kurchatov contacted Gaik Ovakimian, deputy chief of the foreign department of the NKVD, with his goals for the project. Ovakimian then passed along this request to some of his agents abroad.¹³⁴ While there is no doubt that the Soviets would have completed the building of an atomic bomb on their own time, the information that intelligence officers abroad provided sped up the process by a couple of years. Two of the most important agents to work with the USSR were Harry Gold and scientist Klaus Fuchs.

Harry Gold was born in Switzerland in 1912, but was brought to the United States before he was even two years old. Gold was an accomplished spy by the time that he started working on the atomic project. Gold had been a spy since 1935 when he started working at the Pennsylvania Sugar Company. Thomas Lessing Black recruited him into

¹³² Holloway, 82.

¹³³ Holloway, 90.

¹³⁴ Holloway, 94.

this industrial espionage by appealing to the needs of the struggling Soviet people.¹³⁵ However, Gold had no hesitations with joining and immediately agreed by saying that “the chance to help strengthen the Soviet Union appeared as such a wonderful opportunity.”¹³⁶ In addition to his desire to help the Soviet people, he also was inclined to help the USSR because it was the first state to making anti-semitism illegal.¹³⁷ (While this is true, it is also quite ridiculous in retrospect, considering Stalin sent many Jews to die in the Gulag throughout his tenure in office.)

Gold collected and copied blueprints from the Sugar Company throughout his first couple of years engaging in espionage. However, this type of system could not hold up. The amount of information that Gold was bringing in was too much for him and Black to copy and get back to the Soviets. Thankfully, the two were able to use the resources provided by AMTORG (the Soviet spy ring that doubled as an American trading company) and their intake increased.¹³⁸ The amount of data that Gold was bringing in thoroughly impressed his Soviet handlers. Over time Gold would continue to rise in stature when working with Russian intelligence. Gold worked in industrial espionage for 9 years, but became so disillusioned with the whole process that he almost decided to cut ties with the work. He explains the tiresome aspects of his life in this excerpt:

[T]he planning for a meeting with a Soviet agent; the careful preparations for obtaining data from Penn Sugar, the writing of technical reports and the filching of blueprints for spying (and then returning them); the meeting[s]... in New York or Cincinnati or Rochester or Buffalo... the difficulties I had raising money for all these trips; the cajoling of

¹³⁵ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 38/39.

¹³⁶ Sibley, 111.

¹³⁷ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 39. Sibley, 112.

¹³⁸ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 41.

Brothman...and the outright blackmailing of Ben Smilg [the Dayton aircraft engineer who refused to deal with Gold]... [and] the many lies I had to tell at home.¹³⁹

Furthermore, Gold only accepted \$100 per month for all of what he did for the Soviets. This amount was intended to cover all his travel and food expenses, but was obviously not nearly enough. Nevertheless, Gold stuck with it because of his intense devotion to the cause. By 1942 Gold reported to Semyon Semonov and became thoroughly engaged once again because of the respect that he had for his new handler.

A year after Gold met Semonov he would be granted an even more important role in his work with Soviet intelligence. Semonov approached him with the idea in early January of 1944 and spoke to him in very cautious language. An excerpt from Harry Gold's biography, *The Invisible Harry Gold* by Allen M. Hornblum, describes the interaction between Semonov and Gold: "Sam [Semonov] then asked an unusual question: Did Harry "wish to accept the assignment?" In the past, Harry "had always been told what to do" and when to do it. And there was another thing: Sam said the assignment would be "extremely dangerous."¹⁴⁰ Semonov then introduced Gold to the idea of becoming the courier for Klaus Fuchs, a scientist working on creating one of the world's most dangerous weapons. Gold accepted without hesitation.¹⁴¹

Klaus Fuchs was possibly the most important spy for the Soviet Union. Fuchs grew up in Germany throughout the early part of the twentieth century. Fuchs, like his father, was an outspoken communist and opponent of Nazism. He believed that "fascism

¹³⁹ Sibley, 111.

¹⁴⁰ Sibley, 112.

¹⁴¹ Sibley, 113.

was the real enemy, and communism a moral parable of hope in an age of anxiety.”¹⁴² As political hostility began to grow in Germany, Fuchs got increasingly concerned about his safety. By 1933 he had left Germany because of these concerns. Eventually he made it to the University of Bristol where he worked towards getting his PhD in physics in 1936. Fuchs applied for naturalization in 1939, but when war broke out between England and Germany, he was labeled as an “enemy alien.”¹⁴³ He spent six months in jail until the confusion was finally resolved. In 1941 he finally received his full British citizenship.¹⁴⁴

1941 was a big year for Fuchs, as he joined the British atomic project during that year as well. Fuchs was typically very quiet about his political affiliation when he spoke with his scientific colleagues, but that did not stop him from continuing his work for the communist cause. He approached Jürgen Kuczynski (an old friend and GRU agent) to get him involved in some type of espionage. Kuczynski gave Fuchs his sister’s contact information and he met Ruth in 1942. Fuchs told her that he “would give her ‘classified and confidential... written data concerning atomic energy research.’”¹⁴⁵ Despite his clear willingness to commit espionage for the Soviets, he still took the British oath that committed him to the Official Secrets Act, which pledged him to keeping the secrets of the British government and its national security. He labeled this ability to balance both the British and the Soviets as a “controlled schizophrenia.”¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the fact that he took the oath of silence with the British allowed him to be transferred to the Los Alamos facility in America very easily.

¹⁴² Allen M. Hornblum, *The Invisible Harry Gold: The Man Who Gave the Soviets the Bomb*, (Hartford: Yale University Press, 2010), 118.

¹⁴³ Hornblum, 119.

¹⁴⁴ Hornblum, 120.

¹⁴⁵ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 122.

¹⁴⁶ Sibley, 164.

It was when Fuchs was transferred to the American project that Harry Gold came into contact with him. Fuchs was now to be reporting to the KGB instead of the GRU. Fuchs' new handler, Pavel Fitin, sent a letter that described Fuchs situation with the GRU and how to make contact with him once he reached America. Gold met with Fuchs for the first time in a China Town restaurant where they shared basic information. After the dinner, the two went on a lengthy walk in which they laid out how their future meetings would go and Fuchs gave Gold a basic understanding of the Manhattan Project.¹⁴⁷ Gold was extremely impressed with Fuchs and his professionalism (especially compared to his old source, Abraham Brothman) and the two would have a very successful relationship together.

When Fuchs first came to America with the fourteen other British scientists, he was sent to work on gaseous diffusion as an employee at the Kellogg Corporation. During this time Fuchs gave Gold thirteen significant scientific papers that outlined "the explosive properties of fissionable material and details about the plans for the Oak Ridge facility."¹⁴⁸ The Fuchs-Gold-Semonov network performed efficiently until 1944 when Semonov had to be sent back to the USSR. Growing surveillance put him at risk of revealing the whole program, so Anatoli Antonovich Yakovlev (Yatskov) replaced him that year. Gold was less than impressed with Semonov's replacement, but he would nonetheless be his contact for the next two years.¹⁴⁹

Fuchs knew about almost every part of the atomic plants in America. Manson Benedict of Kellogg believed that if Fuchs were to speak to the Soviets, that they could

¹⁴⁷ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 94 and 122.

¹⁴⁸ Sibley, 165.

¹⁴⁹ Sibley, 165.

complete their building of an atomic bomb years before they otherwise would have.¹⁵⁰

Fuchs reported on a myriad of topics that inevitably did speed up the process. For example, John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr list him as turning over...

[I]nformation about the organization of the US atomic project and work on uranium separation, both gaseous diffusion and an alternative method, electromagnetic separation, developed at the University of California Radiation Laboratory at Berkeley. Other KGB messages report that Fuchs delivered information on the progress of the project and more technical details about gaseous diffusion.¹⁵¹

Fuchs had a profound impact on the Soviet's progress in their atomic research. Alexander Feklisov believes he was by far the most important spy within the Manhattan Project and that the Soviet Union was able to create their three bombs as replicas of the American models because of the information he turned over.¹⁵² He worked at Los Alamos until the British and American atomic bomb projects parted ways once again in 1946. Fuchs spied until testimony by Elizabeth Bentley and Igor Gouzenko (Soviet spy within Canada who defected) implicated him in espionage. Venona decrypts that the U.S. turned over to the British Security Service, MI5, further compromised his position. In 1950 Fuchs confessed to acts of espionage and served nine years in prison as a result. He turned in his courier, Harry Gold, during the process. Gold served sixteen of his thirty-year sentence after he confessed to espionage.¹⁵³ Despite that they ended up getting caught, Fuchs and Gold were two of the most important Soviet agents during the race for the atomic bomb.

While Fuchs and Gold provided some of the most notable secrets back to the Soviet Union during the war, the USSR had many other agents working for them at the

¹⁵⁰ Sibley, 165.

¹⁵¹ Haynes and Klehr, 305.

¹⁵² Sibley, 168.

¹⁵³ Haynes and Klehr, 305.

same time. Another significant network within the Manhattan project was that of Theodore Hall, Saville Sax, Lona and Morris Cohen. Hall was recruited to work at Los Alamos only a year after he graduated from Harvard in 1944. Hall confided in one of his close friends from Harvard, Saville Sax, on a break during his first year working on the Manhattan Project that he believed the Soviet Union deserved to know the secrets of the program.¹⁵⁴ Hall wrote about his decision to give the USSR secrets of the bomb in a letter from 1995, just after he had been publically suspected of espionage. He writes:

My decision about contacting the Soviets was a gradual one, and it was entirely my own. It was entirely voluntary, not influenced by any other individual or by any organization such as the Communist Party or the Young Communist League. I was never “recruited” by anyone.... My political views had been shaped by the economic depression of the 1930s. With the New Deal Roosevelt had tried to restore prosperity, but this was only partly successful and it was not until the war that the depression really ended. What would happen when the war was over? ...But it seemed to me that an American monopoly [over atomic bomb intelligence] was dangerous and should be prevented.¹⁵⁵

Hall wrote this letter with hindsight and the knowledge of what was to come with the Cold War in the years that followed World War Two. At the time, he believed that an exchange of nuclear knowledge would level the playing field once the Allies had won the war. Unfortunately, he was a bit off in his predictions. Both the United States and the Soviet Union would access atomic weaponry by the end of the 1950s, which instead of balancing out the playing field made the competition between the two super powers grow. The ideological struggle between the two countries further complicated this relationship and the bomb gave them lobbying power against one another.

¹⁵⁴ Haynes and Klehr, 314.

¹⁵⁵ Joseph Albright and Marcia Kunstel, *Bombshell*, (New York: Random House, 1997), 89/90.

Nevertheless, Hall joined the espionage network in 1944 working under Sergey Kurnakov. Kurnakov was a KGB agent who double as a writer for the CPUSA newspaper, the *Daily Worker*.¹⁵⁶ Kurnakov proceeded with a bit of caution during his first meeting with Hall. While it was not unheard of, it was much more unlikely for a source to approach the KGB about providing them secrets. However, during their first meeting Hall brought Kurnakov a packet of documents that outlined “the progress of the research, and the roles of the chief scientists working on the bomb” that calmed many of Kurnakov’s fears.¹⁵⁷

Hall had only been on his two-week furlough from Los Alamos when he had met Kurnakov. Since there was not a sufficient amount of time for Hall to make contact with an official KGB courier, the network decided to use his old friend, Sax, as his primary messenger. Hall was given the cover name Mlad or Youngster, while Sax was referred to Star or Oldster; each of their names can be found in about eight KGB cables that were decoded during the Venona Projects.¹⁵⁸ When Hall worked at Los Alamos he was tasked with developing ways to use X-Rays to stimulate implosion in the atomic bomb.¹⁵⁹ Although he was not as important as the other Soviet source, Klaus Fuchs, he still passed along very valuable information to his handlers. For example, “Hall delivered reports on the implosion detonation system for the plutonium bomb and on the methods the Manhattan Project had developed to separate the needed uranium U-235 from the

¹⁵⁶ Haynes and Klehr, 315.

¹⁵⁷ Haynes and Klehr, 315.

¹⁵⁸ Haynes and Klehr, 316.

¹⁵⁹ Michael Dobbs, “Code Name ‘Mlad,’ Atomic Bomb Spy; Newly Declassified Soviet Cables Point to American Physicist at Los Alamos,” February, 1996, *The Washington Post*, Date Accessed, February 1, 2015.

unneded U-238.”¹⁶⁰ Hall continued to work at Los Alamos and deliver secrets to the USSR until the war ended.

Hall’s legacy is very convoluted. He maintained that he was never involved in espionage when he was first suspected in the 1950s. Hall and Sax’s names appeared in a deciphered KGB cable that brought their allegiance into doubt, but the two remained steadfast in their defense.¹⁶¹ When the Venona cables became public knowledge in 1995, Hall essentially admitted his guilt (in the letter quoted above). Hall moved to England in 1962 and worked on cancer research for the remainder of his life until he passed away in 1999.¹⁶²

During Theodore Hall’s tenure working for Soviet espionage, Saville Sax did not always operate as his courier. Lona Cohen sometimes stepped in and collected documents from Hall. Lona and her husband Morris both worked covertly for the Soviet intelligence networks. Morris joined the American communist movement in 1935 at the age of twenty-five. Shortly after joining he went to Spain with a group of young American communists and fought for the Communist headed International Brigades.¹⁶³ Morris clearly had a strong ideological tie towards communism, which was exhibited when he returned from abroad and began to work with the KGB through Semyon Semonov.¹⁶⁴

Morris was primarily a courier for Semonov, although he did recommend that his wife Lona also be brought into the service. During their early years of service the two delivered details on aircraft machine guns before they knew of the atomic bomb.¹⁶⁵ Lona

¹⁶⁰ Haynes and Klehr, 316.

¹⁶¹ Haynes and Klehr, 316.

¹⁶² Haynes and Klehr, 317.

¹⁶³ Haynes and Klehr, 319.

¹⁶⁴ Haynes Klehr, 319.

¹⁶⁵ Haynes and Klehr, 317.

also functioned as Theodore Hall's courier at certain times during 1945 in New Mexico.¹⁶⁶ One of the documents that Lona delivered from Hall is said to be one of the "first crude outlines of the atomic bomb."¹⁶⁷ The Cohens were a valuable asset to Soviet intelligence, but were forced to flee the United States in 1950 after Elizabeth Bentley's defection. The two functioned as spies within England, posing as bookstore owners but actually providing the Soviet Union with secrets on the British Navy.¹⁶⁸ The spy ring was cracked open in 1961 and the Cohens went to prison. However, what followed their arrest shows just how important they were to the Soviet Union. The USSR fought for their release and even traded the imprisonment of a British businessman for them to be freed.¹⁶⁹

While the Cohen's were a vital cog in the Soviet Union's espionage machine, one of the most important networks that functioned during World War II was that of the Rosenberg's. The Rosenberg network was not only one of the largest Soviet rings, but it has also become one of the most notorious. The Rosenberg's were convicted of spying on the United States and their trial became a national phenomenon that ended with their executions. Their network consisted of a myriad of agents within the U.S. government: Joel Barr, William Perl, Alfred Sarant, Morton Sobell, David Greenglass, and a sixth unknown; Michael and Ann Sidorovich worked as their couriers; Vivian Glassman, Ruth Greenglass, and Ethel Rosenberg provided assistance, if needed.¹⁷⁰

The network originated with Julius Rosenberg during the 1930s. Julius attended the City College of New York in the late 1930s, where he joined the Young Communist

¹⁶⁶ Haynes and Klehr, 320.

¹⁶⁷ Dobbs, 7.

¹⁶⁸ Dobbs, 9.

¹⁶⁹ Dobbs, 10.

¹⁷⁰ Haynes and Klehr, 303.

League. It was through these organizations that Julius was able to meet many of the people who would later function within his spy ring. After his graduation from CCNY in 1940 he started to work at the “War Department’s Signal Supply Office,” where he met and became close with Alfred Sarant and Joel Barr.¹⁷¹ Rosenberg’s other friends from the YCL were in similar positions across the nation. Rosenberg “quickly realized that their positions offered them access to America’s advanced radio, radar, sonar, and other military electronics technology and decided to seek out Soviet intelligence to deliver these secrets to the USSR.”¹⁷²

Finding a Soviet agent was a harder task than Rosenberg believed it would be. However, he was looking during the early 1940s, which was right after Stalin’s purge of his intelligence officers. Stalin’s paranoia had severely dismantled his networks abroad, but thankfully for Rosenberg, Jacob Golos had refused to return to the Soviet Union and remained an active agent. Rosenberg used his contacts within the Communist party, specifically Bernard Schuster, to finally reach out to Golos in 1942, where he was picked up as a source and given the codename Antennae, which would later change to Liberal.¹⁷³

During the early years of the 1940s, the Rosenberg network’s handlers changed a few times as a consequence of Stalin’s purges. For example, in 1942 Vasilii Zarubin came over from the Soviet Union and tried to re-organize the espionage networks functioning during the war. His re-organization eventually led to Jacob Golos (and then Elizabeth Bentley after his death) having to hand over their leadership of the Rosenberg

¹⁷¹ Sibley, 98/99.

¹⁷² Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 333.

¹⁷³ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 334.

Network. The two resisted, but by 1944 Semyon Semonov had control of the Rosenberg spy ring.¹⁷⁴

Julius Rosenberg's espionage career was notable for the secrets that he passed over to the Soviets; however, the majority of Rosenberg's value to the USSR actually came from his work in technical intelligence.¹⁷⁵ Rosenberg collected documents on "advanced radio, radar, sonar, and other military electronics technology" that he thought could be useful for the Soviet cause.¹⁷⁶ Semonov's initial report on the Rosenberg network explains how the data that the workers were turning in while they worked under Golos was of low quality and was barely useful. However, he further explains that once Golos relinquished the group and he took over, the agents began to "mature[d] and obtain[ed] a number of highly valuable materials."¹⁷⁷ Semonov described Rosenberg as an enthusiastic recruit, who provided the Soviet Union with copious amounts of intelligence over the years.¹⁷⁸ For example, after Rosenberg was let go from the Army Signal Corps in 1944 (for suspicions of being a communist), he provided details on the proximity fuse, a new and advanced product from the United States that allowed bombs or other types of warheads to explode when they got close enough to their target.¹⁷⁹ Rosenberg actually brought in a replicated version of the proximity fuse (a very risky choice), which shows how untrained he had been before Semonov took over his spy ring.

Nevertheless, Rosenberg was such a valuable asset to the Soviets not only for what he physically delivered to them, but because of whom he managed. One of

¹⁷⁴ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 337.

¹⁷⁵ Haynes and Klehr, 295.

¹⁷⁶ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 333.

¹⁷⁷ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 337.

¹⁷⁸ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 337.

¹⁷⁹ Haynes and Klehr, 303; Sibley, 104.

Rosenberg's most useful assets was actually his wife, Ethel. The two met when they were in high school and eventually got married in 1939 and had two boys.¹⁸⁰ However, the two had met much earlier, in 1932, where they got to know each other and developed their communist sympathies. Ethel was a very helpful support system to Julius during his years working in Soviet espionage and was actually the older sister of one of Julius' main sources, David Greenglass.¹⁸¹

David was seven years younger than his sister, which greatly influenced why his life took the path that it did. When David was twelve, Ethel met Julius and the two became very adamant that David join the communist cause. David became a passionate communist, which can be shown from the letter between him and his wife, Ruth in the 1940s. Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton's book *The Rosenberg File* includes many of the letters that were exchanged between the couple, one of which explains David's motive for handing over information to the Soviets:

Darling, I love you and no matter what happens in America politically. In the end it will be Europe and a large part of Asia that will turn Socialist and the American end of the world will of necessity follow in the same course. So, dear, we still look forward to a Socialist America and we shall have that world in our time.¹⁸²

Greenglass's beliefs proved very beneficial for the Rosenbergs, considering Greenglass would work for the Army at the Los Alamos nuclear plant starting in 1944.¹⁸³ When Julius realized that David was working on this secret project he enlisted the help of David's wife, Ruth, to convince him to hand over secrets on the bomb. At first, David

¹⁸⁰ "The Atom Spy Case," accessed January 27, 2015, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/famous-cases/the-atom-spy-case>.

¹⁸¹ Haynes and Klehr, 309.

¹⁸² Joyce Milton and Ronald Radosh, *The Rosenberg File*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 63.

¹⁸³ "The Atom Spy Case."

was reluctant to turn over any information, but the Rosenbergs tried to appeal to him by saying that the Russians were their allies and deserved to know this information.¹⁸⁴ This obviously struck a cord with David and he began to furnish them with secrets soon after. David not only provided Julius with valuable facts about the American atomic bomb, but he told him about the scientists working on the project, and the dynamics of their work place.¹⁸⁵ At one point, Greenglass even met with Harry Gold and provided him with “sketches of experiments... descriptive material regarding them... possible recruits for espionage.”¹⁸⁶ Greenglass received a monetary reward for the information he reported to Gold, but it was yet to be the most crucial piece of intelligence that he passed over. Greenglass confessed to turning over a detailed drawing and explanation of the same atomic bomb that was to be dropped on Hiroshima later that year.¹⁸⁷

Greenglass continued to provide information to the Rosenbergs until 1949. However, by this time the relationship between the two couples had been somewhat strained.¹⁸⁸ Greenglass did not heed his brother-in-laws warnings about the FBI, which would prove a big mistake. In June of 1950 Greenglass was arrested under suspicion of espionage.¹⁸⁹ David’s wife, Ruth, was also arrested for her involvement (albeit limited) in spying activities. Harry Gold testified against both the Rosenbergs and Greenglasses and described the times that he had met with them. David not only added to Gold’s testimony against the Rosenbergs, but also gave false testimony against his sister, Ethel, instead of

¹⁸⁴ “The Atom Spy Case.”

¹⁸⁵ “The Atom Spy Case.”

¹⁸⁶ “The Atom Spy Case.”

¹⁸⁷ “The Atom Spy Case.”

¹⁸⁸ Joyce and Radosh, 74.

¹⁸⁹ Haynes and Klehr, 299.

the implicating his wife in the crime.¹⁹⁰ However, the entire Rosenberg network did not go down when this testimony came out. There were still four other major players within the Rosenberg ring.

Alfred Sarant met Julius Rosenberg in 1940 when they were both working at the Army Signal Corps. While Rosenberg was let go because of his affiliation with communism, Sarant was fired because of his disruptive union work.¹⁹¹ Sarant then got a job at Western Electric working with radar. During this time he was living with his good friend and fellow technician and Soviet spy, Joel Barr. Unlike Sarant, Barr had been a classmate of Julius' at the City College of New York. Barr met Sarant while working at Western Electric and the two became inseparable as a result. The KGB even acknowledged them as a packaged deal and their Soviet handler, Feklisov, claimed them to be two of the most worthwhile spies within the Rosenberg apparatus.¹⁹² Sarant and Barr carried out their espionage in a unique way: photographs. They had a dark room in their apartment that they used to develop film and hand off to either the Rosenbergs or Harry Gold.¹⁹³ Sarant was able to give the Soviets “‘17 authentic drawings’ of Bell’s APQ-7, an airborne radar, in 1944” by taking photographs of them.¹⁹⁴

After the war ended both Barr and Sarant left their jobs at Western Electric and tried to open an engineering firm together. Unfortunately, the firm failed and the two friends went their separate ways. When Harry Gold and David Greenglass confessed Barr was living in Paris and he disappeared soon after he learned of their testimony. Sarant

¹⁹⁰ Robert D, McFadden, “David Greenglass, the Brother who Doomed Ethel Rosenberg, Dies at 92,” *The New York Times*, October 14, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/15/us/david-greenglass-spy-who-helped-seal-the-rosenbergs-doom-dies-at-92.html?_r=0.

¹⁹¹ Haynes and Klehr, 297.

¹⁹² Sibley, 101.

¹⁹³ Haynes and Klehr, 298.

¹⁹⁴ Haynes and Klehr, 298; Sibley, 100.

was less lucky. At the time of their confessions he was still living in the United States and was contacted by the government that he was under investigation and should halt all travel plans. Sarant, obviously understanding the outcome if he stayed in America, fled the United States for Mexico and was never seen again. Both Barr and Sarant left without even telling their families.¹⁹⁵ While the Rosenbergs remained steadfast in their innocence, the fact that their associates fled at the mention of a trial did not help their cause.

Although Barr and Sarant were able to escape unscathed from betraying the United States, another associate of theirs was not so lucky. Morton Sobell was a Russian-born immigrant to the United States and was a college friend of Julius Rosenberg. He shared Rosenberg's feelings towards communism and began to report to him after he left college. Sobell worked as an electrical engineer at "an instrument company in New York City, where he had access to secret data."¹⁹⁶ The company was Reeves Electronic and he reported on "U.S. government contracts for secret military research."¹⁹⁷ Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes explain how the fact that Sobell was able to work with such sensitive material shows just how negligent the U.S. government was with counterespionage as this point in history:

It is another illustration of the laxness of American internal security practices in the 1940s that Sobell, whom Naval Intelligence had marked as a supporter of the American Peace Mobilization, who had worked as a counselor at a Communist youth camp, and whose admiration for Stalin was hardly camouflaged, received a security clearance to work on American defense contracts as late as 1949.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Haynes and Klehr, 299.

¹⁹⁶ "The Atom Spy Case."

¹⁹⁷ Haynes and Klehr, 297.

¹⁹⁸ Haynes and Klehr, 297.

Therefore, despite all these red flags, the electronic company still chose to hire Sobell. However, when Sobell got word of Gold's testimony he picked up and left for Mexico City with his entire family in tow. Unluckily for him, Mexican officials brought him into custody in August of 1950. Sobell was put on trial for his espionage activities and was sentenced to thirty years behind bars (he only served nineteen). In 2001 Sobell released an autobiography that claimed his innocence, but seven years later revised his statement and admitted his, as well as the Rosenbergs, guilt.¹⁹⁹

Ironically, one of Soviet intelligence's highest generals did not believe that the Rosenberg network was as significant as the American government made it out to be. Pavel Sudoplatov claims that he was relatively unalarmed when he heard of their arrests because they had no significant role in atomic intelligence.²⁰⁰ Sudoplatov's opinion is important to be considered, but it is also valuable to understand when and why he was writing these thoughts. Sudoplatov's autobiography *Special Tasks* was released in the 1990s, many years after he was involved in Soviet affairs. He was the head of "Department S" during the 1940s, which was responsible for operating atomic intelligence efforts abroad.²⁰¹

Despite Sudoplatov's "inside look" into the secret world of Soviet intelligence networks, many of his claims have been disputed. Sudoplatov claimed that American atomic scientists such as Robert Oppenheimer, Enrico Fermi, and Leo Szilard all committed acts of espionage, which have been proven to be false.²⁰² Furthermore,

¹⁹⁹ Haynes, Klehr, and Vassiliev, 333.

²⁰⁰ Pavel Sudoplatov, Anatoli Sudoplatov, Jerrod L. Schecter, Leona P. Schecter, *Special Tasks: The Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness – A Soviet Spy Master*, (Little, Brown and Company: Boston, 1994), 213.

²⁰¹ Sudoplatov, 184.

²⁰² Sudoplatov, 192.

Sudoplatov recounted his experiences nearly fifty years after they occurred and provided little to no physical evidence for his claims. Nevertheless, it is important to understand the perspective of actors such as Sudoplatov because they give us insight into larger aspects of the conflict. For example, Sudoplatov's exaggerated retelling of the past tells us the type of legacy that he hoped to leave behind of the now defunct Soviet Union. Sudoplatov's goal was to show the power of the country that he dedicated his life to, but that eventually crumbled to pieces. This is important when considering the way that the American and Soviet tensions heightened when the fighting stopped in Europe and in Asia.

Nonetheless, what the Soviet spies provided to the USSR was of great significance during World War II. While the Soviet Union would have eventually created an atomic bomb on their own, their access to American intelligence allowed them to have this dangerous weapon only a few years after the war ended. This fact is extremely important. Those few years were extremely crucial as they gave both the United States and the Soviet Union an object of leverage against each other, thus increasing the friction between the two countries at the outset of the Cold War.

Chapter 3: Cold War Spies

The end of World War II allowed America to return to the normalcy of life before the bloody conflict. However, while the German and Japanese threats were gone, the United States had a new enemy. The Soviet Union and the United States had been allies throughout the war, yet when the conflict ended their relationship turned very tense. Part of this tension stemmed from the leaders of those countries. While Franklin Delano Roosevelt had a very amicable relationship with his counterpart, Joseph Stalin, his life did not last long enough to see the end of the war. FDR passed away in April of 1945, leaving his smart, but inexperienced Vice-President Harry Truman in charge. Only days after Roosevelt passed away, Truman was told of the existence of the Manhattan Project. This unfortunately put Truman in a very difficult spot. Not only would he have to control the domestic transition into a stable post-war world, but he would also need to decide whether or not to use this horrible weapon to end the war in the Pacific.

Post-World War II tensions only intensified as the Allies attempted to divide up the now defunct governments and their territories in Europe. This led to obvious conflicts between Britain, the US, and the Soviet Union, as the former two were very much against the spread of communism into new territories. Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt gathered for the Yalta Conference in February 1945, in which they discussed the breakdown of the European territories. Stalin had specific interests in the territories of Eastern Europe, but the Big Three agreed to allow for free elections in all of these new states. Unfortunately, Stalin did not follow through with his promises and within months of the agreement, Socialist Republic's were set up in all the states bordering the USSR. Almost a year later, Winston Churchill expressed his discontent with the Soviet Union's actions in his famous

“Iron Curtain” speech. The speech outlined the American and the British government’s intolerance towards the Soviet Union’s unlawful spread of power across Europe.²⁰³ This increased tension between the Soviet Union and the West lasted up until the collapse of the Soviet government in 1991.

The relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States was further strained during the post-war period because of the defections of Soviet spies to the American and Canadian governments. The defections of Elizabeth Bentley and Igor Gouzenko brought attention of the Soviet threat to North America in the second half of the 1940s. These defections increased the friction between the two countries and as a result of these defections, the American government had to rethink its counterespionage network, while the Soviet Union had to reconfigure its now defunct intelligence system. Both the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Agency (NSA) were established only a few years after the end of World War II to increase America’s ability to prevent breaches in intelligence. While the United States was creating new counterintelligence structures, Soviet intelligence was trying to rebuild their spy networks.



Spying has been a constant of international relations, but during the Cold War there was a significant shift in the reasons that people decided to spy. Right before and during World War II many of the Soviet spies passed secrets because their ideologies aligned better with the communist regime. The United States had just suffered a massive depression during the 1930s and was then propelled into another World War; thus

²⁰³ Winston Churchill, “Iron Curtain Speech,” Date Accessed February 27, 2015, <http://history1900s.about.com/od/churchillwinston/a/Iron-Curtain.htm>.

causing many people to question if democracy was the correct form of government. However, after World War II many Americans were confident in their leadership. This led many of those who spied during the Cold War to spy for monetary reasons rather than for ideology. Especially, considering the fact that by the 1960s many people believe that the Soviet Union was not going to withstand the test of time.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, a leaked 1956 speech to the Communist Party by Soviet leader, Nikita Krushchev, outlined all the ways in which he believed Stalin had failed. The speech was named the “Secret Speech” because all press was excluded from attending the event so that Krushchev could speak freely. Nevertheless, the speech leaked very quickly and the world became aware of Stalin’s anti-Semitism and his purges, which further dismantled the already disintegrating Communist Party of America.²⁰⁵ The motive for many of the Cold War spies shifted away from ideology and many spies now either participated because of their own personal crises or because of the monetary reward that they could receive. The espionage targeted almost every single U.S. defense agency, except for the Coast Guard.²⁰⁶ These spies handed over information that “could have shifted the balance in a war with the Soviet Union.”²⁰⁷ The espionage that occurred during the Cold War gave the Soviet Union some crucial information that allowed them to manage the U.S. threat.



Two of the first Soviet spies after World War II did not actually participate in covert networks because of monetary reasons. These two were some of the last spies who

²⁰⁴ John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr, *Early Cold War Spies: The Espionage Trials That Shaped American Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 230.

²⁰⁵ Haynes, Klehr, 230.

²⁰⁶ Michael J. Sulick, *Spying in America: Espionage From the Revolutionary War to the Dawn of the Cold War*, (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 267.

²⁰⁷ Sulick, 272.

opted for espionage because of their ideological views. Bernon F. Mitchell was from San Francisco and studied statistics at the California Institute of Technology until he joined the Navy.²⁰⁸ Mitchell met the Georgia native, William H. Martin, while he was in the Navy in 1950. The two continued to work together when they got jobs at the National Security Agency as mathematicians in 1957.²⁰⁹ The two men decided to defect to the Soviet Union in 1960 because of their anger towards the United States. The American Navy had been sending planes into Soviet airspace and causing them to get shot down, which greatly disturbed the pair.²¹⁰ The two started to think that maybe their beliefs aligned better with those of the Soviet Union, as they had both been unreligious as well.²¹¹ It was then that the two decided to defect.

Martin went to Urbana University in Ohio where he sought out communists to help him locate someone to provide information to.²¹² Shortly after this, the two escaped during their vacation from work to the Soviet Union. They not only left behind a note that described their motive, but they held a press conference in Moscow, in which they fielded questions.²¹³ The two explained more of their grievances with the United States, like the fact that they did not respect the privacy of their allies and that women were actually treated better in the Soviet Union because they were given more opportunities for education, and thus would make better mates.²¹⁴ Unfortunately for Mitchell and Martin, they got their opinions of the Soviet Union from propaganda magazines like *Soviet Life*

²⁰⁸ Sibley, 223.

²⁰⁹ Sibley, 223.

²¹⁰ James Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace: A Report on America's Most Secret Agency*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), 140.

²¹¹ Bamford, 140.

²¹² Bamford, 140.

²¹³ Bamford, 145.

²¹⁴ Bamford, 145.

and *USSR*.²¹⁵ Soon after they settled into their new lives in Russia, they realized that the magazines had fooled them.²¹⁶ Martin even tried to return to the United States, but was obviously denied entry into the country.²¹⁷ Martin died in Mexico at the young age of 56, while Mitchell remained in the Soviet Union until he passed away at 72 in 2001.²¹⁸

Despite the fact that the two men regretted their crime, they were still never to be welcome back into the United States. The two men had provided a “gold mine of cryptographic information” to the Soviet Union, as well as slandered the United States.²¹⁹ The United States did what it could to recover from their defection and defamation by labeling them as ‘sexual deviants’, but unfortunately the damage had been done. They were the worst security breach since Fuchs, and President Truman even said that he thought they should be shot.²²⁰

Although Mitchell and Martin provided important information to the Soviet Union, there were also other spies that provided a lot of crucial information from within the American National Security Agency. Jack Dunlap was a decorated Army Sergeant before he joined the NSA in 1958. Working for the government does not pay well and Dunlap was struggling to support his family on \$100 per month salary.²²¹ Dunlap reached out to Soviet handlers and began to hand over information in 1960. Dunlap was very flashy with his new source of wealth. He bought both Jaguars and Cadillacs and spent his

²¹⁵ Bamford, 194-5.

²¹⁶ Rick Anderson, “The Worst Internal Scandal in NSA History was Blamed on Cold War Defectors Homosexuality,” Last modified July 17, 2007, <http://www.seattleweekly.com/home/887442-129/story.html>.

²¹⁷ “The Worst Internal Scandal in NSA History was Blamed on Cold War Defectors Homosexuality”

²¹⁸ “The Worst Internal Scandal in NSA History was Blamed on Cold War Defectors Homosexuality”

²¹⁹ Sibley, 223.

²²⁰ Bamford, 143, 145.

²²¹ Bamford, 149.

time as a “womanizing, beer-drinking ‘family man’ with a wife and five children.”²²² He also spent time with his mistresses and at the yacht club, and while everyone else seemed to notice his new affluence, his employer remained unaware.²²³ Overall, Dunlap was a very effective spy. James Bamford in *The Puzzle Palace* describes all the information that he gave over to the Soviets from the NSA during a three-year period and the consequences that this had:

The damage to America’s SIGINT and COMSEC operations during those years cannot even be estimated, for no one except his KGB handlers will ever know exactly which documents were sold. One Pentagon official later commented that Dunlap’s treason was “thirty to forty times as serious as the Mitchell and Martin defections.”²²⁴

While Dunlap provided a myriad of information over to the Soviet Union, his work with espionage led him to his eventual demise. The NSA began to take precautions against spies within their agency and administered polygraph tests to all their employees. Dunlap’s examiner noted some concerns with his initial test and told him that he should come in to retake the test on the following Monday. Dunlap was extremely paranoid and had already tried to take his life before he was under suspicion, so this new development only intensified his efforts. Dunlap was successful and on July 23, 1963 he died from carbon monoxide poisoning.²²⁵ It was after his death that the FBI learned of his spying efforts.

The year that the FBI learned of Dunlap’s treachery was the same year that they unearthed another spy. John Butenko worked for the International Electronic Company, which was collaborating with the United States Air Force to “produce a command and

²²² Bamford, 146.

²²³ Bamford, 151.

²²⁴ Bamford, 152.

²²⁵ Bamford, 153.

control system for the Strategic Air Command.”²²⁶ At this post he was given access to many top-secret documents that he transferred over to the KGB between April and October 1963. Butenko had been meeting with Soviet national and AMTORG employee, Igor Ivanov, as well as employees from the Soviet Mission at the United Nations, Gleb A. Pavlov, Yuri A. Romashin and Vladimir I. Olenov.²²⁷ The FBI observed these meetings and eventually convicted Butenko and Ivanov of spying against the United States.²²⁸ Butenko was sentenced to a thirty-year sentence for his transgressions against the United States.²²⁹

Although the FBI was catching various spies at the beginning of the Cold War, that did not stop many more agents from continuing their efforts. For example, Christopher J. Boyce and his childhood friend, Andrew Daulton Lee, spied for the Soviet Union during 1975 and 1976. Boyce’s father had worked in the FBI when he was a child and helped him procure a job working for TRW Inc. His position put him in close contact with the communications between the company and the CIA, which he realized he could utilize for his own benefit.²³⁰ Lee acted as a courier for Boyce and the two delivered information on satellite systems and submarine routes to the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City.²³¹ The two received \$77,000 for their spying, which they claimed they did because Boyce had become disillusioned with the United States government. When asked about

²²⁶ “United States of America v. John William Butenko and Igor A. Ivanov,” *US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit*, date accessed February 20, 2015, <http://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F2/384/554/392676/>.

²²⁷ “United States of America v. John William Butenko and Igor A. Ivanov.”

²²⁸ “United States of America v. John William Butenko and Igor A. Ivanov.”

²²⁹ Sibley, 223.

²³⁰ Sibley, 227.

²³¹ Sibley, 227; Chuck Squatriglia, “US Spy Freed After 25 Years in Prison: Christopher Boyce Sold Secrets to Soviets,” Last modified March 15, 2003, <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/U-S-spy-freed-after-25-years-in-prison-2662800.php>.

why he decided to spy, Boyce explained that a lot of it had to do with his childhood. He described how growing up through Kennedy's assassination, the race riots, the Vietnam War (and seeing the U.S. use napalm) and then the Richard Nixon scandal, made him become very angry at the American government.²³² He even said that he thought that he could "use the KGB to bash the CIA."²³³ However, he does acknowledge that his motive was different from spies of the past. While World War II spies did so because they agreed with Soviet ideology, he explains, "Nobody these days is spying to help the Soviet Union or to further their ideology because their ideology is pretty much bankrupt."²³⁴ He spied because he was frustrated with the American government, especially with how the United States conducted foreign affairs (specifically with Australia).²³⁵ Nevertheless, he also acknowledges that with hindsight, he understands that he committed treason and was wrongful in doing so.²³⁶

However, Boyce and Lee's espionage did not last very long. Lee had a drug problem that not only made him act irrationally, but made him an annoyance to his Soviet handlers. In an attempt to contact his handlers, Lee tried to deliver a message to the Soviets at their Embassy in Mexico City by throwing a note over their fence, which got him arrested by the local police.²³⁷ He was mistakenly accused of murdering a Mexican police officer, but during the interrogation he confessed to his actual crime of espionage

²³² "Why Spy? (With Interview of real-life Falcon & Snowman's Chris Boyce)," Uploaded November 24, 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IFlp_8BGhw.

²³³ "Why Spy? (With Interview of real-life Falcon & Snowman's Chris Boyce)."

²³⁴ "Why Spy? (With Interview of real-life Falcon & Snowman's Chris Boyce)."

²³⁵ Squatriglia, "US Spy Freed After 25 Years in Prison: Christopher Boyce Sold Secrets to Soviets."

²³⁶ "Why Spy? (With Interview of real-life Falcon & Snowman's Chris Boyce)."

²³⁷ Squatriglia, "US Spy Freed After 25 Years in Prison: Christopher Boyce Sold Secrets to Soviets."

against the United States.²³⁸ In his confession he implicated his friend Boyce and the two were arrested by the United States government soon after.²³⁹ Lee was sentenced to life in prison, while Boyce only received forty years.²⁴⁰ However, Boyce eventually procured twenty-eight more years to his sentence after he escaped from his prison and spent two years robbing banks in the north western United States.²⁴¹

Many Cold War spies were not only motivated by their problems with U.S. policy, but also because of their own selfish greed. John Anthony Walker, Jr.'s claimed that his motive for handing over secrets to the Soviet Union went beyond just his need for money. In his memoir *My Life as a Spy* he explained how "he operated from a 'Don Quixote-like' attitude and wanted to end the Cold War by sharing America's plans with the Soviet Union. In doing so, he said, the Soviets would see that the United States had no intention of going to war."²⁴² This interpretation may have been a self-serving realization, as selling out your own country for money is a lot less appealing than selling out your country in an attempt to prevent World War III. Despite what his reasoning may have been for providing "top cryptographic secrets" to his Soviet handlers, he was guilty.²⁴³

Walker is a very interesting case of Soviet espionage because while he was retired he was able to continue his spying. In the beginning of his career he worked as a U.S.

²³⁸ Squatriglia, "US Spy Freed After 25 Years in Prison: Christopher Boyce Sold Secrets to Soviets."

²³⁹ Squatriglia, "US Spy Freed After 25 Years in Prison: Christopher Boyce Sold Secrets to Soviets."

²⁴⁰ Sibley, 228.

²⁴¹ Sibley, 228.

²⁴² Denise M. Watson, "Spy Ring Mastermind John Walker Dies in N.C. Prison," *The Virginia Pilot*, Last modified August 30, 2014, <http://hamptonroads.com/2014/08/spy-ring-mastermind-john-walker-dies-nc-prison>.

²⁴³ "The Year of the Spy," <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/famous-cases/the-year-of-the-spy>.

Navy Warrant Officer and communications specialist from 1967 to 1985.²⁴⁴ During that time he sold over one million documents worth of Naval dispatches to the Soviet Union. Walker enlisted his son, his brother and his good friend into his network so that he could continue to spy after he retired. The FBI has said that what Walker and his group provided to the USSR “could have been devastating to the U.S. had the nation gone to war with the Soviets.”²⁴⁵ This realization called his motive into question. While he claimed that he spied for the Soviets so that he could prevent war, it is clear that the information he provided could have been used by the Soviet Union to be successful in battle against the U.S. Therefore, his true motive could be clouded by his hopes to not sound like a greedy man.

Nevertheless, there were still many spies that provided information to the Soviets because of the monetary reward. Many people working for government agencies such as the NSA held low paying jobs that made living in places like Washington, D.C. and New York City difficult. Ronald William Pelton of the NSA is a good example. Pelton had worked as a communications specialist at the NSA, but began to sell secrets to the Soviet Embassy in D.C. after he retired.²⁴⁶ Pelton sold secrets from 1980 through 1985 until he was caught and sentenced to serve life in prison for his spying.²⁴⁷

Many people initially became spies because of the quick money that they could receive, yet claimed that it was not their greed that made them do it. For example, Earl Pitts claimed that he was “still a Patriot” even though he spied.²⁴⁸ He claimed that saying

²⁴⁴ “The Year of the Spy.”

²⁴⁵ “The Year of the Spy.”

²⁴⁶ “The Year of the Spy.”

²⁴⁷ “The United States of America vs. Ronald William Pelton,” *In the United States District Court for the District of Maryland*, December 20, 1985.

²⁴⁸ Evan Thomas, “Inside the Mind of a Spy,” Last Modified July 6, 1997, *Newsweek*.

that he spied for greed was too simple a reason. He explained that he did it because of a “rigorous childhood that gave him a streak of perfectionism and an enduring fear of failure” that he endured from his strict upbringing in Missouri.²⁴⁹ Pitts began to work for the FBI in New York City, but like many other government employees, was unable to afford the high cost of living on such a small paycheck.²⁵⁰ At one point he had to ask his father to borrow money, which he said was one of the most humiliating moments of his life.²⁵¹ It was because of these money issues and his fear of humiliation that he began to spy for the KGB.²⁵² He enjoyed his work for some time, but eventually became frustrated. While he handed over “lists of Russian diplomats whom the FBI suspected of spying for the Soviets...” he also “faked other documents,” like papers that he copied directly from *Newsweek*.²⁵³ Pitts worked as a spy from 1987 until 1992 when he became dormant. Over that time he earned himself an extra \$224,000 from the Soviet Union.²⁵⁴ However, in 1995 the FBI suspected him of previous espionage and set him up in a sting operation. It was through this sting that Pitts was sentenced to 27 years in prison for his crimes.²⁵⁵

Aldrich Ames is another example of a Soviet spy who was purely motivated by money. Ames started working at the CIA in the 1960s as a case officer that specialized in Russian affairs.²⁵⁶ His time working at the CIA was characterized by alcoholism, adultery

²⁴⁹ Thomas, “Inside the Mind of a Spy.”

²⁵⁰ Thomas, “Inside the Mind of a Spy.”

²⁵¹ Thomas, “Inside the Mind of a Spy.”

²⁵² Thomas, “Inside the Mind of a Spy.”

²⁵³ Thomas, “Inside the Mind of a Spy.”

²⁵⁴ Thomas, “Inside the Mind of a Spy.”

²⁵⁵ “Earl Pitts Sentenced to 27 Years: Another Example of Unequal Justice,” *CNN*, Last modified June 23, 1997, <http://www.jonathanpollard.org/1997/062397.htm>.

²⁵⁶ “Aldrich Hazen Ames,” <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/famous-cases/aldrich-hazen-ames>.

and unproductivity.²⁵⁷ Not only that, but Ames had a track record of being a careless agent and on one occasion he even left a briefcase full of classified documents on a train.²⁵⁸ Fortunately, the briefcase was recovered; however, Ames continued to have trouble abiding by the rules of the CIA. In the early 1980s he started a relationship with one of his foreign assets, which was against the CIA's code of conduct.²⁵⁹ This eventually led to a messy divorce with his first wife, in which he lost a lot of money. As has been examined with the spies who were already mentioned, surviving on a government paycheck in an expensive city is not the easiest task to complete. It was because of this situation that Ames concocted a plot to trick the Soviets.

Ames had been head of the counterintelligence branch of the CIA's Soviet division starting in September of 1983.²⁶⁰ This position gave Ames access to vital information that would prove very useful to the Soviet Union, specifically details on who and where the United States spies were that were operating abroad.²⁶¹ Ames' access to this information paired with his extreme debt created his formula for espionage. He believed that he could sell the KGB "useless information" that he could pass as valuable and receive a big pay out for it.²⁶² Ames was seemingly correct, as he received \$50,000 after he committed his first act of espionage.²⁶³

However, as Ames continued to work within the CIA, he realized that his delivery of this information could turn into something more. Not only had he already betrayed his

²⁵⁷ Loch K. Johnson and James J. Wirtz, *Intelligence and National Security*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 312-322.

²⁵⁸ Johnson and Wirtz, 312-322.

²⁵⁹ Johnson and Wirtz, 312-322.

²⁶⁰ Tim Weiner, *Betrayal: The Story of Aldrich Ames, an American Spy*, (New York: Random house, 1995), 13.

²⁶¹ Weiner, 20.

²⁶² Weiner, 34.

²⁶³ Weiner, 37-38.

country (a crime for which he would have to pay), but he also left himself vulnerable to being found out. With American spies abroad in the Soviet Union, he was defenseless if they heard that he had provided information to the Soviets. These circumstances led Ames to decide to fully commit to espionage and turn in “over six pounds of hundreds of pages of documents.”²⁶⁴ Ames told the Soviets the names of the secret American agents that were working in their government, which in turn led to many of their deaths.²⁶⁵ Ames has talked about this decision in the book *Betrayal* by Tim Weiner, David Johnston, and Neil A. Lewis by saying “in a sense, I was delivering myself along with them. I was saying: Over to you, KGB. You guys take care of me now. I’ve done this. I’ve demonstrated that I’m holding nothing back. You guys take care of me.”²⁶⁶

This decision provided Ames with more than enough money to repay his debts. Ames “handed over the names of virtually every CIA intelligence source in the Soviet Union, sending ten to their execution and many others to prison. For this he was eventually paid \$2.7 million by the KGB and promised another \$1.9 million, for a total of \$4.6 million.”²⁶⁷ Ames handed over some of America’s most important agents, like Dmitri Polyakov, who had provided information to the FBI of the Soviet Union’s foreign affairs with China and their role in the Gulf War.²⁶⁸ The information that Ames delivered to the KGB essentially dismantled the entire covert network that the United States had working within the Soviet Union.²⁶⁹ This information set the American government back

²⁶⁴ Weiner, 37-38.

²⁶⁵ Weiner, 37-38.

²⁶⁶ Weiner, 42.

²⁶⁷ David Wise, *Spy: The Inside Story of how the FBI’s Robert Hanssen Betrayed America*, (New York: Random House, 2002), 23.

²⁶⁸ Sibley, 23.

²⁶⁹ Johnson and Wirtz, 316-317

many steps in its attempt to develop a large and informative intelligence network within the Soviet Union.

Despite Ames' successful espionage, his noted carelessness still remained in many aspects of his life. He became extremely wealthy from his spying for the Soviet Union, but failed to hide it. Ames spent his money on lavish commodities like a Jaguar and a new house, which still went undetected by his supervisor.²⁷⁰ The way that Ames was spending his money was a clear sign of his espionage, as he would have never been able to afford these items on his usual government salary. Nevertheless, it took the FBI eight years until they came to the logical conclusion that the drunk and careless employee who lived a lavish lifestyle might be the spy.²⁷¹ The FBI conducted a ten-month investigation before they convicted Aldrich Ames to a life sentence because of his crimes.²⁷²

While the Ames case was one of the worst breeches in American intelligence, it was still second to that of Robert Hanssen. Hanssen's spying has become one of the most notorious scandals in Cold War espionage. Hanssen provided the Soviet Union with even more information than what Ames was able to provide to them. His story shocked the intelligence community and the rest of the United States.

Hanssen grew up in Illinois and spent years trying to figure out his true passion. He met his wife, Bonnie, while he studied dentistry, but he would not pursue a career in the medical field.²⁷³ Hanssen followed his father's footsteps and joined the Chicago

²⁷⁰ Sibley, 23.

²⁷¹ "Aldrich Hazen Ames."

²⁷² "Aldrich Hazen Ames."

²⁷³ Wise, 14.

Police Force until 1976 when he started to work at the FBI.²⁷⁴ During his time working for the police force, Hanssen attended “a secret counterintelligence school to learn how to install bugs and other high-tech surveillance equipment.”²⁷⁵ His interest in counterintelligence prompted his decision to join the FBI and prove to his father that he would not be a failure.²⁷⁶

Hanssen and his family moved to a small suburb outside of New York City when he started working as a special agent.²⁷⁷ The two were very religious followers of the Opus Dei sect of Christianity, so much so that many times Robert tried to push his religion on others.²⁷⁸ Hanssen and Bonnie had six children that he would try to support in their modest, yet still expensive home.²⁷⁹ During the FBI’s investigation into Hanssen in 2002, he confessed that it was because of this situation that he began his espionage. He is quoted in David Wise’s book *Spy* as saying, “I wanted to get a little money and to get out of it.... the pressure of supporting a growing family in New York City on an inadequate Bureau salary.”²⁸⁰ Furthermore, Hanssen’s religious affiliation also alludes to this conclusion. The Opus Dei sect of the Roman Catholic Church was a very conservative branch, which directly conflicts with the Soviet Union’s communist ideals of Atheism. Therefore, Hanssen’s spying was most likely purely for money, and not because of ideological similarities.

Hanssen began to spy for the Soviet Union in 1979 by contacting the AMTORG

²⁷⁴ Wise, 19.

²⁷⁵ Wise, 17-18.

²⁷⁶ Wise, 18.

²⁷⁷ Wise, 19.

²⁷⁸ “Robert Hanssen Spy Case,” *CSPAN*, February 20, 2007, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?196420-4/robert-hanssen-spy-case>.

²⁷⁹ Wise, 19-20.

²⁸⁰ Wise, 21.

Trading Company to get in touch with a GRU agent.²⁸¹ Over the years Hanssen would deliver information through at least twenty dead-drops that his Soviet handler, Cherkashin (the same handler as Aldrich Ames), would receive.²⁸² Robert Hanssen's affidavit explained all the information he turned over and its value:

Overall, Hanssen gave the KGB/SVR more than 6,000 pages of valuable documentary material, according to the affidavit. The affidavit alleges that Hanssen compromised numerous human sources of the U.S. Intelligence Community, dozens of classified U.S. Government documents, including "Top Secret" and "codeword" documents, and technical operations of extraordinary importance and value. It also alleges that Hanssen compromised FBI counterintelligence investigative techniques, sources, methods and operations, and disclosed to the KGB the FBI's secret investigation of Felix Bloch, a foreign service officer, for espionage.²⁸³

In addition to all the information that Hanssen provided to the Soviet Union, he also hurt the United States in a different way as well. In 1985, after the executions of American agents, Valery Martynov and Sergei Motorin, who were working in the KGB, the FBI was baffled at what went wrong.²⁸⁴ The FBI set up an investigation into possible moles within the government to figure out who could have turned over American assets. At the head of the team was Robert Hanssen. Hanssen thus humiliated the Bureau through his performance as a Soviet informant. It was through his position and training with the FBI that Hanssen was capable of living these two separate lives.²⁸⁵ Eric O'Neill, who was assigned to act as his field operative but was actually investigating his actions, believes that Hanssen was able to compartmentalize his two different lives very

²⁸¹ Wise, 21.

²⁸² **Spy, Find Page – around 8. And his Affidavit**

²⁸³ "Affidavit," <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/famous-cases/robert-hanssen>.

²⁸⁴ Wise, 3-4.

²⁸⁵ "Press Release: Robert Hanssen Espionage Case," <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/famous-cases/robert-hanssen>.

effectively.²⁸⁶ O’Neill conducted an interview with CSPAN after the release of the movie “Breach” in 2007, which was based on the investigation into Hanssen through the eyes of O’Neill. O’Neill explains how he believed that Hanssen did start to participate in espionage because of money problems, but how his ego eventually began to take over and he felt like ‘James Bond.’²⁸⁷ Another source, Joe Tierney (who was Hanssen’s superior at the FBI) said that he believed Hanssen had always considered giving information to the Soviet Union, but that the cost of living in New York “pushed him over the edge.”²⁸⁸

Whatever his motive, Hanssen conducted espionage for twenty-two important years between the United States and the Soviet Union. He began in a time of tense relations between the two countries, which made his betrayal all the more significant. Hanssen was eventually caught in the midst of a dead-drop in Foxstone Park, an act that he had carried out many times before.²⁸⁹ However, by this time Hanssen was not delivering information to the Soviet Union, he was delivering it to the Russian Federation. In 1991 Hanssen had decided to end his espionage, as it was obvious that the Soviet Union was about to collapse.²⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Hanssen could not stay away and he began to work with the newly formed Russian government in 1993.²⁹¹ Therefore, when the FBI finally caught Hanssen he was working for the Russian Federation. Hanssen’s tenure as a spy lasted for twenty-two years until he was sentenced to life in prison.²⁹² Part of Hanssen’s deal denied him the right to talk about his story to the press, but gave his

²⁸⁶ “Robert Hanssen Spy Case.”

²⁸⁷ “Robert Hanssen Spy Case,” minute 22.

²⁸⁸ Wise, 274.

²⁸⁹ Wise, 8.

²⁹⁰ Wise, 141.

²⁹¹ Wise, 159.

²⁹² “Affidavit. ”

family his pension.²⁹³ This punished Hanssen by prohibiting him from making any more money from his treachery, but did not hurt his family in the process. Nevertheless, Hanssen will remain one of the most detrimental and notorious spies of the Cold War.

²⁹³ “Robert Hanssen Spy Case,” minute 32.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Soviet spying throughout the twentieth century was a constant within the United States. Starting in the 1930s, the Soviet Union began to place/recruit agents abroad, so that they could get an inside look at the development of other countries. This espionage quickly gained more importance with the onset of World War II. Not only were the Soviets looking for information on military tactics, but they were also trying to use their spies to learn secrets on how to develop a nuclear weapon. While the spying that was done throughout World War II was extremely dangerous to American national security, the spying that took place during the Cold War was just as significant, yet in a different way. The secrets that spies like Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen turned over to the Soviet Union had a detrimental impact on the American counterintelligence system and put the lives of many American agents in danger. As the years passed their motives for spying also shifted. The spies from the years before and during World War II had a very different rationale for committing espionage than the spies who turned over secrets throughout The Cold War. Despite all of these facts, the Soviet Union was not the only country that committed espionage during the twentieth century.

Throughout the twentieth century, the United States also had its own agents working within the Soviet Union. For example, Oleg Penkovsky, a deputy in the Foreign Department of the State Committee for Coordination of Scientific Research (the Soviet organization that gathered foreign intelligence), had spent most of his life in service to the Soviet Union, but decided to defect to the United States in 1960.²⁹⁴ He began to

²⁹⁴ Peter Kross, "Oleg Penkovsky Provided Some of the Most Vital Intelligence of the Cold War-Until the Soviets Found Out," December 2003, *Military History*, Proquest.com, Date Accessed, March 3, 2015.

disagree with the ideology of his home country and believed that by helping the United States he would become a “soldier for freedom.”²⁹⁵ Penkovsky was an important asset to the United States because he provided America with information on the Russian intentions during the Cuban Missile Crisis, which helped John F. Kennedy avoid nuclear disaster with the USSR.²⁹⁶ However, like many other of the American agents working within the Soviet Union, he was executed after the KGB learned of his treachery.²⁹⁷ Specifically, Jack Dunlap told the Soviet Union of Penkovsky’s spying, which ultimately got him killed.²⁹⁸

Nevertheless, Penkovsky was not the only American spy working within the Soviet Union throughout this time period. During the twentieth century there were many spies who provided information to the United States, making the Soviet Union not the only guilty actor in international espionage. No matter the time or relationship between two countries, there will always be espionage occurring. It is a constant in international relations and with increasingly more technology, the stakes get higher. This is clearly represented through the progression of spying during the twentieth century.

The Soviet espionage that occurred during the 1930s was mainly focused on collecting information on American industrial knowledge. In addition, organizations like the AMTORG Trading Company were set up to help more Soviet agents get into the United States without detection. During the pre-war period, Soviet espionage was laying the groundwork for future espionage within the United States. Although the leaders were

²⁹⁵ Kross.

²⁹⁶ Kross.

²⁹⁷ Kross.

²⁹⁸ Kross.

not aware that a massive World War would break out within the next decade, their work helped them when it did occur.

Many of the Soviet spies during the pre-war period turned information over to the Soviet Union because of ideological reasons. The USSR had just been established and had a very unique and new form of politics. Many Americans were interested in communism because they believed that it could be more successful than the U.S. form of democracy and capitalism, which was failing in the midst of the Great Depression. Spies like Nicolas Dozenberg and Whittaker Chambers used their affiliation with the Communist Party of the United States of America to spy for the Soviet Union. Since the Soviet Union knew that the Americans in the CPUSA had an ideological affiliation with communism, they were more likely to trust them when they were asked to spy for the Soviet cause.

Many of the spies that provided secrets before World War II were very successful because of the laxity of the American government's counterintelligence system. Katherine Sibley's book *Red Spies in America* explains how the Soviet's were able to take advantage of the United States' underdeveloped counterintelligence system in the 1930s because of Franklin Roosevelt's policy of international openness. She describes how "Moscow was free then to conduct a wide-scale effort to gather American industrial information from factory inspection tours and a network of strategically placed agents and contacts of the NKVD."²⁹⁹ Therefore, it was not because of the negligent American counterintelligence network that many of the Soviet spies were caught, it was actually

²⁹⁹ Katherine Sibley, *Red Spies in America: Stolen Secrets and the Dawn of the Cold War*, (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 244.

because of agents like Whittaker Chambers, who turned themselves (and other spies) in years later when he defected back to the United States.

While the information that spies turned over to their Soviet counterparts was significant during the years before the war, its importance increased substantially during World War II. Although the United States and the Soviet Union were allies when the U.S. joined the war effort in 1941, the Soviets still had their spies operating within America. However, the stakes were significantly raised during the war period. Not only was there greater technological information for the United States to hide, but the Soviet spies also infiltrated increasingly more important positions within the American government. For example, spies were both some of the chief architects of the atomic project as well as the directors of the International Monetary Fund during World War II.

These wartime spies worked for the Soviet Union for similar reasons as the spies who provided information before the war broke out. The incentive to give information over to the Soviet Union came from their ideological commitment to Communism. For example, spies like Nathan Gregory Silvermaster, Victor Perlo, and Jacob Golos provided information to the USSR because of their affiliation with the CPUSA and their belief that communism would survive the test of time. Klaus Fuchs, a German refugee and one of the most important war time spies for the Soviet Union, turned over information to them because he believed that communism was the only way to end Nazism.³⁰⁰ Like many other atomic spies, he believed that the United States would not care if the Soviet Union did not survive the war.³⁰¹ Many of the atomic spies provided information to Russia because they believed in the idea of sharing scientific knowledge, especially with

³⁰⁰ Sibley, 163.

³⁰¹ Sibley, 163.

countries that were their allies. They did this in an attempt to not only get the bomb finished and functional before their enemies did, but so that one country (the United States) would not have all nuclear power when the project was completed.

It was also during World War II that the American government learned how to deal with espionage. When first confronted with the issue of espionage, the American leadership was much more concerned with maintaining an amicable relationship with the Soviet Union than prosecuting their spies. Spies like Abraham Glasser and Nicolas Dozenberg were never convicted for their spying, but were either punished by losing their jobs or were convicted of a lesser offense (like passport fraud for Dozenberg). During the years when the Soviet Union and the United States were allies, FDR was careful to not strain relations, but instead handled situations like this quietly.³⁰² However, with the onset of war, the American government stepped up its defenses against spying. The powers of the FBI were expanded while the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency were both created. By the end of the 1950s, the American counterintelligence system had been completely refocused and many more employees were now working in counter espionage.³⁰³ Furthermore, spy trials became a constant in America at the end of the 1950s, which drastically changed the American mindset. The Rosenbergs were treated much differently than their earlier counterparts, Glasser and Dozenberg. The Rosenbergs were given the death penalty when they would not confess to their crimes, which heightened American apprehension about the Soviet threat.

However, despite the increased awareness of the American counterintelligence system, there were still Soviet spies operating within the United States throughout the rest

³⁰² Sibley, 243.

³⁰³ Sibley, 246.

of the twentieth century. Many of these spies had very different reasons for handing over information to the Soviet Union than the spies of the past. The ideological argument for espionage ended with the beginning of the Cold War. In Michael J. Sulick's book *Spying in America*; he quotes the Department of Defense study on espionage by Americans between 1947-2001:

Americans most consistently have cited money as the dominant motive for espionage and over time money has increased in predominance among motives... Of individuals who professed a single motive for espionage, one-fourth of the civilians and three-fourths of the military claimed they had spied for money.³⁰⁴

This was clearly the case for the majority of the spies who worked for the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War. However, there was still a minority that claims that they gave information to the USSR for ideological reasons. For example, both Bernon F. Mitchell and William H. Martin gave secrets over to the Soviet Union because they believed life was better in the Soviet Union. However, their opinions were based on what they read in the Soviet propaganda magazines, like *Soviet Life* and *USSR*.³⁰⁵ The two believed that the Soviet Union was a much more just place than the United States and were shocked when they learned that they were ignorant of the truth.

Despite the misconceptions of these two spies, many of the other people who spied were in it because of money. Spies Jack Dunlap and Aldrich Ames were extremely flashy with the money that they received, which soon became one of the leading indicators that someone was involved in espionage.³⁰⁶ However, the era of Cold War espionage was not only defined by a different set of motives, but by an increased

³⁰⁴ Sibley, 266.

³⁰⁵ James Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace: A Report on America's Most Secret Agency*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), 194-5.

³⁰⁶ Sibley, 246.

importance of the information that was given over to the Soviet Union. While many of these spies still handed over secrets about American military capacity, some of the spies began to give details on Americans spying in the Soviet Union. Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen each sent as many as ten men to their deaths because of their own selfish greed.

The spying that occurred during both World War II and the Cold War far outranked the espionage of the 1920s and 1930s. The stealing of atomic secrets was an egregious crime against the United States and it heightened the tensions between the two countries once the war ended. Nevertheless, the secrets that were transferred during the Cold War were also very detrimental to the United States. Not only did this information lead to the deaths of some of the America's highest ranked spies within the Soviet Union, but it also dismantled the American Intelligence system at a time of high anxiety, especially with the Soviet Union.

This spying did not end when the Soviet Union collapsed. Spies like Harold James Nicholson began to work within the year after the USSR was no more. Nicholson also betrayed the United States because of similar reasons to the Cold War spies. Although the Cold War had technically ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the betrayal of information by Americans is still an important issue considering the United States influential presence in international politics. The spies of more recent years have been in it for reasons of money and ego, which is much different than the spies of the 1930s and 1940s. Throughout the twenty-first century there have also been SVR agents working within the United States: for example, spies like Anna Chapman, Yevgeny Buryakov, and Igor Sporyshev all spied for the Russian Federation, but were caught in

2010.³⁰⁷ If anything, these arrests are further proof that this cycle of espionage will continue on in future years.

The spying that occurred on America throughout the existence of the Soviet Union provides a good example of how complex international relations can be. Throughout the many relationships that the Soviet Union and the United States have had (through their economic and wartime allegiance to their standoff during the Cold War), spying on one another was always a must. However, depending on when the spy was collecting information the importance of what they collected changed. For example, what the spies gave to the Soviet Union before World War II was of much less importance than what the Cold War spies gave to the USSR because it was truly detrimental to the safety of American lives. While Soviet spying on the United States explains where much of the tension and fear came from during the Cold War, it also made the American counterintelligence system improve itself. Spying will always exist because it is the most effective way for a country to prepare against an unforeseen attack. Unfortunately, this fact is extremely clear after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The role of espionage continues to heighten as increased technology allows for countries to access even deeper into their enemies' defenses. No matter who the spy is or when they are active, they all understand that information is power.

³⁰⁷ Ellen Barry, "Illegals Spy Ring Famed in Lore of Russian Spying," June 29, 2010, *New York Times*, Date Accessed, March 4, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/30/world/europe/30sleepers.html?_r=0.

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