

SPIES IN CANADA

THE CASE OF IGOR GOUZENKO

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RECENT SPY SCANDALS IN THE U.S. and Europe have awakened us to the problems and dangers of espionage, but international espionage is not something which happens only in the United States or in Europe.

IN FACT, ONLY FORTY YEARS ago, Canada found herself at the centre of an international spy scandal which some have considered as one of the major causes of the Cold War between the West and the Soviet Union -a term which we are all too familiar with today as we contemplate the destructive potential of the great nuclear arsenals both sides that have managed to accumulate since World War II.

THE STORY THAT FOLLOWS IS the story of one man, Igor Gouzenko, and of how he set Allied intelligence services on their ears... and how he exposed the Soviet Union's true intentions towards the West. It is also the story of another man, Canadian Prime Minister, MacKenzie King, and of his reaction to Gouzenko's revelations.It is by no means complete, yet it will hopefully make a few more of us aware of international events, which, although they occured a long time ago, still affect us today.

ON THE NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 5, 1945, one month after the Atom Bomb had ended the Second World War, a young and very frightened cipher clerk named Igor Gouzenko defected from the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa, taking with him as he left nearly one hundred documents which proved without doubt that the Soviet Union was engaging in espionage against Canada, the United States, and Britain, its war time allies.

WITHIN HOURS OF GOUZENKO'S DEFECTION, allied intelligence services were made aware of his revelations, yet they were frightened if not intimidated by what he had to say. Even then Prime Minister, MacKenzie King symbolized the feeling of deception that had permeated across all borders--a feeling made worse by the fact that the Soviet had been their war time allies. How could all this be true- and so soon after the war had ended?

IN HIS DIARY OF SEPTEMBER 6, '45, one day after Gouzenko defected, MacKenzie wrote "Robertson (then Permanent Under-Secretary of External Affairs) said to me that a most terrible thing has happened. It was like a bomb on top of everything and one could not say how serious it might be or to what it might lead... a man had turned up at the Office of the Minister of Justice. He said he was threatened with deportation. He went on to say that he had in his possession documents that he had taken from the Embassy and was prepared to give them to the (Canadian) government. They would be seen to disclose that Russia had her spies and secret service in Canada and in the US and was practising a species of espionage... At any rate, *HE SAID THAT HE HAD ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO PROVE THAT INSTEAD OF BEING FRIENDS, THE RUSSIANS WERE REALLY OUR ENEMIES...*"

WHAT A GRIEVOUS SURPRISE WAS to face the RCMP and others who became involved in the "Gouzenko affair".

BY THE END OF SEPTEMBER, it was clear to Western leaders that they had made a grave and vital mistake in trusting Stalin and his embassy staff in the West. With the evidence supplied by Gouzenko, it was easy to see that the USSR had made great gains in the secret world of Western science and technology, A-Bomb research, as well as policy developments as they occured.

THERE WAS NO ESCAPING THE gravity of the situation for the truth was laid out in front of them all to see. As well, Gouzenko's revelations about the "other" role of the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa had far reaching ramifications for all Western nations; for Gouzenko outlined the principle functions of the embassy in his expos9- one of them being the discovery of information useful to the Soviet Union. What intensified this realization was that Canada and her partners, the US and Britain had something to steal--- Atomic secrets!

THEREFORE, BY THE TIME GOUZENKO arrived on the scene with one hundred carefully selected- and incriminating-documents, there was much to reveal. For a long time the Soviets had been secretly spying on the research going on in Canada, and all the time sending back decoded messages to home. When Gouzenko strolled in with copies of only a few of them, he provided the first serious evidence of Soviet atomic espionage to MacKenzie King, and then to the American President and the British Prime Minister.

WHAT HE HAD IN HIS possession were documents that indicated up to twenty Soviet spies were working in Canada. One, code-named "Elli" was working at the High Commission; another "Fred", was a member of the House of Commons; and still another was an official of the Bank of Canada- all working together in an effort to garnish Atomic Secrets for the USSR.

IT WAS A SHOCKING AND confusing time for MacKenzie King, who wrote extensively in his diary about this fateful twist in events. He was most distressed when another Soviet Mole was discovered: Allan Nunn May, a scientist who had been working with British and American scientists in Montreal on A-Bomb research, was, according to King, "almost second in the knowledge pertaining to the A-Bomb..." and he knew practically everything that had been done in Canada and the US in atomic weapons research.

KING WROTE ON SEPTEMBER 10: "... it will look as if the Russians had in mind no delay in asserting their power further. One of the most serious of all the documents found revealed that they had been asking their men in the secret service here to give them a report on the strength of the America armed forces.The extent of demobilization (from Europe) . . . also the strength as regards to other of the defense service."

NOBODY WANTED TO BELIEVE WHAT Gouzenko had to say, for several reasons--one of them being that the United States was beginning to demobilize its troops after a patriotic cry to "Bring the Boys back home," and another being that the Allies had a desperate need to placate Stalin and his troops who had descended upon Eastern Europe like an "iron curtain". In the aftermath of World War II, Gouzenko's revelations served to make worse an already disintegrating relationship between Stalin and the West despite public demonstrations of unity, and they set the stage for the beginning of a Cold War that we are still in the midst of today.