

March 4, 1946

PRESS ANALYSIS SECTION

C.I.S. - CANADIAN EMBASSY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

CANADA'S 'SPY RING' STORY

(Feb. 28 - March 4, 1946)

NEWS TREATMENT

References to the spy scare were almost non-existent in news columns over the week-end. Only the Daily Worker and N.Y. Journal-American still evidenced interest. The former ran a Mel Colby story whose five-column heading revealed its main contents - "Canada spy scare masks drive on civil rights and labor". The Hearst paper carried a brief AP story on page two of Sunday's edition, predicting an important announcement today.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Scattered references continue to appear. The Daily Worker pursued its campaign with a cartoon showing high-hatted "imperialism" brandishing the fearsome bogey of an "anti-Soviet spy scare" on the end of a stick. Philadelphia Record, at the other extreme, cartooned Russia as the "bear who came to dinner complains about the food", and derided Moscow's angry retort to the spy investigation. From its conviction that this demonstrated undisputably that "dissolution of the Comintern in 1943 was a gigantic hoax" the Record drew courage to demand a swift clamping down on U.S. Communists as foreign agents.

From a more balanced viewpoint, the Washington Post presents the case as a sort of moral conflict between measures necessary for national security and the preservation of civil liberties. Hardly surprised that Russia would be after the atomic bomb secrets, the Post dismissed this revelation as unimportant. The "really disturbing implication" in the case, however, was the disclosure that Canadian officials in high places "were willing to disclose important state secrets to the agents of a foreign power". "For it is an implicit confession that the Canadian government is no longer sure of the loyalty of its most trusted civil servants." But even if the gravity of the case was such as the government's actions implied, the Post was not sure that the sacrifice of civil liberties was justified. "The question is not merely whether governments, when they profess to be no longer able to trust their own employees, should be given extraconstitutional powers of search, seizure, also imprisonment, but also whether we dare, even for the sake of keeping our secrets, trust any government with such powers."

Raymond Moley and Peter Edson both urged more effective counter-espionage as a practical measure, while Moley at least depended on international cooperation to eliminate gradually the necessity for secrecy and spying.

Meantime the attack on Gen. Groves, personally and because of his militaristic outlook on atomic energy control, spread to Marquis Childs, Major Eliot, as the fear gained ground that the MacMahon bill for civilian control was losing adherents.

-----