

# Reds Spread Spy Net from Mexico

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(Special to the New York Mirror)

MEXICO CITY, Sept. 10—This is the actual operating center for all Communist activities in the Americas, particularly for espionage against the United States.

From the block-square, walled and heavily guarded Russian Embassy—where not a single Mexican national is employed—the Soviets today are directing their battle of subversion, organization and propaganda in the Americas.

AT THE HEART of the campaign is an unceasing flow of Communist and Soviet books, pamphlets and other printed material, the distribution of which is financed in part by U.S. taxpayers through mail subsidies.

If works this way: Tons of Red propaganda materials arrive in Mexico each month in bulk. Additional tons are turned out by seven Soviet-financed printing plants here. At the Soviet Embassy, this material is split up and redirected to various Latin American countries. More than 90 percent is routed through New Orleans.

VARIOUS SEA and air carriers—receiving millions of dollars annually in mail subsidies—carry the material to Central and South American countries. The shipments are tagged "in transit" and cannot be opened in the U. S. under present regulations. House of Representatives subcommittee has collected several hundred examples of this postal abuse but, as yet, has come up with no workable plan to put a stop to it.

Mexico isn't particularly interested in stirring up anti-gringo feeling here. The realistic Russians want to keep things quiet, concentrating political activities in other countries while using Mexico as a base.

Mexico also is used as a stable, unmolested espionage headquarters, from where agents from Russia can check in and out on their way to and from the United States.

LIKE NEUTRAL Sweden and Switzerland in World Wars I and II, Mexico is unusually tolerant of what other governments do from diplomatic bases inside its borders.

"Mexico today is probably the biggest spy center in the world," says a leading European spy chief operating here. "The internal security system is practically non-

existent. They couldn't catch a fly in a sugar bowl, even if they tried."

Mexico has been the principal Soviet espionage headquarters in the Western Hemisphere since shortly after World War II, when—in the wake of the Canadian spy scandals—the Reds were forced to move from Montreal.

THE RUSSIANS have 123 Soviet citizens—most of them spy-trained—on their Embassy staff in Mexico City, plus 11 Spanish Communists trained in Moscow. The spy ring for Latin America is headed by Konstantin Tikhomirov, whose title is "commercial counselor." Russia's Ambassador, roly-poly Vladimir Bazilkin, is a minor figure in the espionage-propaganda picture.

The Soviet Embassy in Washington—due largely to tight surveillance—is no longer a major spy station. Red agents operating in the U.S. now report directly to bosses in Mexico City.

New agents arriving from Moscow first check in at Mexico City for orders. They can cross the 2,013-mile, lightly guarded border at ease, disguised as tourists, businessmen, students. The extent of this cross-border traffic is indicated by a recent report of the U. S. Border Patrol, which says:

"BETWEEN 95 and 100 past and present members of the Communist Party cross from Juarez, Mexico, into El Paso daily."

"The big courier traffic is by seemingly respectable travelers

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who never go within a mile of known Soviet contacts," says a top U. S. Intelligence official. "We have documented proof that several large and 'respectable' business firms in Mexico are financed by the Soviets. Their purpose is to furnish legitimate excuses for executives and technicians to travel openly between Mexico and the U. S."

Propaganda-wise, aside from shipments of material from here, the Russians in Mexico City direct and control some 250 or more Communist publications in Latin America. Soviet-bloc and Chinese Communist propaganda beamed at Latin America now totals about 85 hours weekly in Spanish and Portuguese and 21 hours in Polish and other languages, according to Gen. C. P. Cabell, USAF, Deputy Director of the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency.

THE SOVIET Embassy also has well-oiled machinery for getting occasional defectors out of the U. S. and safe behind the Iron Curtain.

How smoothly this underground railroad work was demonstrated all too well in the case of Bernon F. Mitchell, 31, and William H. Martin, 29, the American code clerks who turned up in Moscow after disappearing while on vacation from their jobs in the ultra-secret National Security Agency.

On June 25, after telling their superiors they were headed for the West Coast, the two men flew via Eastern Air Lines to Mexico City. They checked into a double room at the Vireyes Hotel that night, moving the following day to a small hotel, the New Yorker. On July 1, armed with false passports and false names, they flew to Havana, where they took a ship.

Dr. Maurice Halperin, known as "The Professor", is another example. A former professor at Boston University, now a Latin American specialist in the Soviet Academy of Sciences, he made news from Moscow recently by applying for a visa on his U. S. passport.

A WARTIME CHIEF of the Latin American division of the

U. S. Office of Strategic Services Halperin was accused of supplying Soviet agents with secret documents. In 1954, in the wake of the McCarthy Committee hearings, Halperin and his family along with some 100 or so other American Communist families moved to Mexico where, according to top Western intelligence agents, "The Professor" began working directly for the Soviet spy apparatus.

One of his top assignments say these sources, was to set up the flight of Alfred and Martha Dodd Stern from the U. S. after they had been indicted as spies. The Sterns, using only tourist papers, came to Mexico, picked up Paraguayan passports obtained by Halperin, and went on to Russia—everything being plotted and controlled from Mexico City.

(Tomorrow: Article Two will tell how Red spy activities, directed from Mexico City, are concentrated along the U. S. border close to America's top missile and atomic centers.)