

Why the CIA Spied on Bella

Rep. Bella Abzug (D.-N.Y.) made all three networks and the front pages of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *Baltimore Sun* last week as she castigated CIA Director William Colby for the agency's collection of information on her activities.

"Super-snoops," fumed Mrs. Abzug, who hopes to ride the publicity into the U.S. Senate next year. "Rotten... clearly illegal... outrageous and repugnant." What fueled Bella's ire was Colby's admission that she was one of four members of Congress to appear in CIA files. One of the others is dead and the other two were not identified.

Colby turned over to Mrs. Abzug a copy of her file—actually a collection of several references about her that had been scattered throughout the agency's departments. The file disclosed that on two occasions, in 1953 and 1962, the agency opened mail dispatched by Mrs. Abzug to the Soviet Union in her capacity as an attorney representing a client seeking "family tree" information for an estate case. Colby said that during the 1950s and 1960s, mail to Soviet representatives was routinely monitored, a practice that he ordered ended in 1973.

Also in the CIA files was a reference to Mrs. Abzug's representation of a hostile witness before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in 1953; her participation in a New York anti-war rally; the names of American lawyers on the mailing list of the Soviet-controlled World Peace Council; the minutes of a meeting of the Vietnam Mobilization Committee, a group shown to have been Trotskyite-dominated.

A CIA counterintelligence file also disclosed details on Mrs. Abzug's meeting in 1972 with Vietcong representatives in Paris. Colby said it was "perfectly proper" for the agency to carry out surveillance of individuals working with such foreign groups as the Vietcong.

Unfortunately, the press reports centered on Bella's tirade against CIA "snooping"—and not at all on the reasons her activities were described in CIA files. The fact of the matter is that Bella is no starry-eyed liberal who happened to endorse "unpopular" causes. She has been a consistent, pro-Communist radical since her days in college.

As far back as 1939—during the popular-front days of the Hitler-Stalin pact—she was urging the U.S. to stay out of the war in Europe, a position which changed following Hitler's invasion of Russia. On March 15, 1941, the liberal *New York Post* wrote that Mrs. Abzug, then Miss Bella Savitsky, had "generally followed the Communist party line."

Following graduation from Columbia law school, Mrs. Abzug became a wheelhorse in the National Lawyers Guild, cited by a congressional committee as "the foremost legal bulwark of the Communist party."

In 1948, for instance, she was an official NLG representative in Prague at the Third Congress of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, also a Communist front. At that gathering, Mrs. Abzug co-sponsored a resolution denouncing "persecutions directed against the leaders of the American Communist party by the government of the U.S.A."

At the same time, Mrs. Abzug was active in other party-controlled operations, including the National Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions and the Civil Rights Congress.

She remained a Lawyers Guild leader, then played a key role in Women Strike for Peace, the anti-war group that has been heavily infiltrated by Communists. As a Washington lobbyist, she represented WSP before Congress, and was promptly bitten herself by the political bug.

In the spring of 1970, she upset liberal Rep. Leonard Farbstein for re-nomination, then went on to November victory in a solidly Democratic district. Her margin was considerably slimmer than expected, however, as many liberals and even Socialists deserted her candidacy.

Thus, even the New York Socialist party disowned her for her "general unwillingness to be outspokenly critical of Communist actions threatening peace and freedom in the world."

They noted that during a convention of the New Democratic Coalition she had opposed offering U.S. sanctuary to anti-Communists in the event of a Red victory in Vietnam. Such people, she said, deserve the "punishment that awaits them." She had also angered the party by her support at the 1967 New Politics Conference in Chicago of the Black Caucus resolutions which, among other things, condemned Israel as an "imperialist aggressor."

In her three terms in Washington, Mrs. Abzug has been perhaps Congress' most radical member. Throughout the "Mayday" disruptions of 1971, Mrs. Abzug was aiding and abetting the self-styled revolutionaries who had announced plans to paralyze the Nation's Capital.

When Washington police arrested thousands for stopping traffic, hurling rocks and engaging in hit-and-run attacks, Mrs. Abzug was up in arms. She ignored the violence of the demonstrators, paid no heed to their chanted obscenities and saw nothing wrong with the Vietcong flags that flew in the Capitol breeze. Instead, she lauded the assembled radicals as "peace-loving" victims of government repression.

In 1973, she introduced amnesty legislation that went far beyond forgiving the ordinary draft-dodger. The Abzug bill called for complete and automatic amnesty for anyone refusing "registration, evading

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