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STATINTL

Farewell to SMERSH

Alas, James Bond!

Alas, the Orient Express and the Simplon Tunnel!

Not so long ago these were symbols of the intrigue, the terror and the horror that marked the every-day life of the international spy. Now they lie in ruins, demolished by the disintegration gun of reality.

For no longer need the spy chew up and swallow the incriminating papers. No longer need he grit his teeth and in white-faced anguish endure the torture of the red hot needle pushed slowly under his nails.

No, friends, these are more humane times, and the fringe benefits which brighten the lives of ordinary mortals have come also, in some measure, to the workers in Mr. Bond's hated SMERSH and our own beloved CIA.

Today, when captured in flagrante delicto, the spy need only smile pleasantly, confess All, and wait patiently for Washington and Moscow to arrange for (as they did last week for the umpteenth time) an exchange of prisoners.

So farewell, James Bond. Peace be with you, Dimitrios. You have served us well through many a chilling adventure and we hope you will enjoy your new social security.

And we hope also that you and all the members of your brotherhood are nearing the age of Optional Retirement, for the thing that is happening is more than a mere change in the ground rules; we fear it will lead shortly to a total abolishment of your calling.

Many of the better college football coaches find that they save time and money by exchanging motion pictures of their teams in action, instead of sending out scouts to bring back fragments of information. Surely the wise and economy-minded statesmen in the Kremlin and the various residences of the family Kennedy will soon come to a similar conclusion. Surely they will reason that their opposite aims in the Cold War will best be served if they exchange, for example, Russian films of the Soviet industrial complex in the Urals for an American picture showing SAC's underground command post in action.

Today the spy has become a respected prisoner of war. Tomorrow he will vanish. No doubt society will be better for his going, but sometimes the nights will be more tedious, and escape from the world of Time magazine, the Associated Press and Huntley and Brinkley will be made much more difficult.