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Gouzenko's gift to the Free World

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Forty years ago this month, a short and stocky young Red Army lieutenant left the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa to return to the apartment he shared with a wife and infant son. The one-time architectural student had been drafted into the GRU, the Soviet military spy agency, which had trained him to encrypt espionage correspondence. (The GRU is paralleled by the KGB, which at that time was known as the NKVD.) By 1945, the cipher clerk had worked for two years at the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa.

On the night of Sept. 5, 1945, the 25-year-old Soviet officer, Igor Gouzenko, carried with him 109 documents that he had lifted from a filing cabinet in the secret recesses of the embassy. For some time he had been accumulating documents which incriminated more than a score of Canadians in Soviet espionage. He had left these papers in the file cabinets with their corners crimped so that he could select them out of the files in a hurry when he was ready to make the final break and ask for political asylum.

After a lot of needless hassle with police, newspapers, and government that night and the next day, he was finally able to bring those documents to the attention of then Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King. On June 27, 1946, a Canadian Royal Commission that had studied these once-secret documents for nine months, wrote:

"In our opinion, Gouzenko, by what he has done, has rendered great public service to the people of this country, and thereby has placed Canada in his debt."

This little-remembered episode in postwar history was recalled last week by the announcement that the KGB station chief in London, Oleg Gordievski, 46, had defected from the Soviet secret service. The London news story reported that some 25 Soviet diplomats and non-diplomats, presumably identified by their one-time commanding officer, were being expelled from Britain. The Soviet retaliatory action a few

days later was little more than Mikhail Gorbachev's expression of contempt for Britain's action.

However important the present British coup in closing a Soviet intelligence pipeline, and even more important subsequent exposés, it was the Gouzenko affair 40 years ago which, as an event in world history, was of tremendous significance in

heightening the political consciousness of the Western democracies about the threat of communism. Because of the admirable, even heroic, Red Army exploits during the war, Western public opinion ignored warnings that Stalin and his inner core of Marxist-Leninists had no intention of installing democracy in Central Europe or, for that matter, anywhere else.

Foreign-policy realists had predicted to no avail that Stalin would use every possible means to impose Soviet totalitarianism on his neighbors first, and then, if successful, on the rest of the world. Stalin had opened the Cold War. Democracy was now the enemy.

What the Gouzenko dossier revealed was that Stalin had successfully organized — in Canada, the United States, and Britain — bands of traitors in the heart of the decision-making process of the three democracies. Mr. Gouzenko helped locate nine spy rings in the United States, in New York, Washington, and Los Angeles, and other subversives in Britain and Canada. The Canadian Royal Commission report, which contained copies of the Soviet documents, described these rings as a "fifth column."

Mr. Gouzenko's information led to Alger Hiss, Harry Dexter White, the Rosenbergs, the Philby penetration of British counterintelligence, Klaus Fuchs, and the atom spies. Mr. Gouzenko told of a telegram he had deciphered a few months before his defection, one sent to all Soviet secret agents, which said that uncovering American and British technical experience in the construction of the atomic bomb was Stalin's No. 1 espionage project. It must be remembered that this was a time when a former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, Joseph Davies, had stated publicly that Soviet espionage to obtain the atomic bomb secret was justified.

Because of Mr. Gouzenko, 20 Canadians were tried for espionage-related crimes. Half were convicted, including a member of the Canadian Parliament, who later returned to his native, but now-Communist, Poland, where he died years later. As Peter Worthington, a close friend of Mr. Gouzenko for 15 years and a tough-minded Canadian editor, has written in his just published autobiography, *Looking for Trouble*:

"Undeniably, Gouzenko provided the most significant postwar espionage breakthrough; his disclosures resulted in the West's attitude toward Soviet benevolence being changed forever. The wartime Grand Alliance of the U.S.S.R. and the West was finally dead and buried by Gouzenko's revelations of perfidy."

Yet even with these revelations, says Mr. Worthington, "it is ironic that no country in the Free ... World has a record as

for failing to catch and prosecute Soviet spies. And no country is as regularly used by the Kremlin as an espionage center or as a cover for its spies. ... Canada doesn't want to catch spies and traitors, either because it thinks that doing so might be seen as an unfriendly act and annoy the Kremlin to the point where it might refuse to purchase our wheat — or because our system is thoroughly infiltrated with secret Soviet sympathizers."

Mr. Worthington is leveling this charge not only at the previous Tru-

deau government but equally at the so-called conservative government under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

British investigative journalist Chapman Pincher, in his book *Their Trade Is Treachery*, has written that "public knowledge about Gouzenko's original revelations has been severely limited by a series of suspicious events." Crucial documents dealing with these events have disappeared from Canadian government archives. One of some 50 volumes of diaries kept by Prime Minister Mackenzie King has disappeared, the volume which dealt with Mr. Gouzenko's interrogation by British MI5.

According to Mr. Pincher, the confidential papers of the Report of the Royal Canadian Commission that investigated the Gouzenko charges

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