## American Traitors: A Study in Motives

They may be mercenary, fanatic, ideological; it is these last that are a perplexing problem.

## By GERTRUDE SAMUELS

WW HY do some people become traitors? What turns some native-born Americans, as well as naturalized citizens, into Benedict Arnolds and Quislings? What motivates them to betray their country and themselves?

For some time, questions like these have been troubling many people with the usual complement of loyalties and love of country. They have watched wartime treasonable activities recently catching up with the traitors who have been brought home, tried in Federal courts and sentenced for aiding Germany. Others have been sentenced or await trial for service to Japan. Still others, confessed couriers of vital information for Soviet Russia, have more recently swelled the number of native-born Americans involved, and they have implicated several others. Of ninetythree individuals convicted of espionage since war, twenty-seven were native-born the Americans. With new cases under study by the Government, many wonder whether the cloud is really no bigger than a man's hand. In the group working for foreign powers

are these: <u>Seditionists</u>—Those who interfere with or attempt to influence the loyalty of the armed services, usually by the written or spoken word, counseling disloyalty.

Traitors-Those accused of "straight treason," the bearing of arms or "giving aid and comfort to the enemy."

comfort to the enemy." Espionage Agents—Who attempt to obtain vital information about the country's national defense with the intent to pass it on to unauthorized persons or for the benefit of a foreign power.

All these people are alike in being essentially traitorous, but they vary in characteristics and motives.

TYPERTS and laymen prosecuting these spies and traitors or studying their histories --the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Congressmen, psychiatrists, sociologists—point to basic "personnel" distinctions among the groups.

First are the professional traitors, disloyal for money. Paid adventurers, these are usually the least reliable from a foreign power's point of view, because they are often tempted by better offers; or, in the case of spies, because their questionable character involves the hiring of more spies to spy on the spies.

Second are naturalized citizens, unimpressed by the oath of allegiance, whose loyalty to the lands of their birth leads them into treasonable acts.

Third are the crackpots—"a minor irritation"—with no visible motive, who perhaps see themselves as international Mata Haris, or cloak-and-dagger types mixing luxuriously with the demimonde.

Fourth—and in the light of recent developments, now the most important—are the "idealists" or ideological traitors, the educated, sophisticated thinkers, mostly disillusioned with the philosophy of the democratic West, to whom neither money nor "father-

GERTRUDE SAMUELS, Times Magazine staff writer, for this article examined testimony of selfconfessed spies, interviewed experts in psychiatry and FBI and other Federal Government officials. land" are factors, and who would probably recoil from any suggestion that they considered themselves "glamorous."

Most of the cases since World War II fall into the first three classifications. And FBI case histories offer clues as to why they became traitors. The largest factors were fanaticism and cash rewards. The significance of the behavior patterns is that they hold as true for the enemy aliens as for the American-born.

Those who belonged to the major Nazi spy rings, for example, were chiefly naturalized Americans who were Germans at heart, the FBI noted, and whose intense hatreds— "against Jews, Japs, Negroes and other 'inferior' peoples"—outweighed any loyalty for this country. Some, like Max Stephan, who had harbored a Nazi flier (Stephan was the only traitor sentenced to be hanged, in 1943; the sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment) also had criminal records. Many were paid for their information.

A MONG cases where the factor of fanaticism was present were those of Robert Best and Douglas Chandler, first native-born Americans to be indicted as traitors, who were sentenced to life imprisonment. Apart from fanaticism, they were also paid Nazi propagandists who wrote their own material for German broadcasts. Laura Houghtaling Ingalls, the speed flier, was another convicted in the District of Columbia in 1942 for acting as a paid agent of Germany, and admitted accepting money from a German diplomat.

Tiny and demure Velvalee Dickinson (of eight.aliases), who received a ten-year sentence in 1944, sold out to the Japanese, using dolls to transmit coded information. And Axis Sally (Mildred Gillars), who in March was sentenced to a ten-to-thirty-year term, said she went to work for the Berlin radio in 1940 because she was jobless and "the wolves were getting closer every day."

Delusions of grandeur often accompanied the fanaticism in these cases. When Laura Ingalls was asked why she was interested in espionage work, she answered: "I have a strong imagination. I saw myself as a sort of international spy." And Robert Best, whose counsel pleaded that he was a "fanatic, a crusader, doing what he thought best for his country." proudly told the judge on being sentenced: "At this moment I would exchange places with no person anywhere, even if I could."

T is the fourth group of ideological spies --those who have confessed or are alleged to have filched information for Soviet Russia --who present the greatest current challenge to the criminal and psychological analysts.

"The chief difference between the Nazi-Fascist sympathizers and the ideological group," one Congressman declared, "is that the former are never moved by any sense of idealism or decency. Theirs is a quest, primarily, for money and power. Not that this isn't sometimes true for the ideological spies—but they are not the major factors. In other words, the former are not motivated by any decent motives as are those who act for the Communists." The characteristic thing (Continued on Page 63)

THREE AMERICAN TURNCOATS



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(Continued from Page 17) about the ideological spies is that their motives are inextricably linked with internationalism and what they believe to be "social justice."

In this group have been the Whittaker Chambers and the Elizabeth Bentleys, confessed couriers of vital information to Soviet agents in the United States, who have repented and have been advisers to the



Laura Ingalis.

FBI on the nature of their previous espionage.

In their testimony they have linked various public servants with the Soviet spy rings. And though searching inquiry has not yet substantiated their charges, many believe that where there has been a fire, the smoldering probably continues; that there are probably Communists in government or holding responsible positions in industry who are, or have been, passing information to a foreign power. The recent indictment on espionage charges of a gifted young Barnard graduate, Judith Coplon, linking her with a Russian employe of the U. N., has deepened this conviction.

ploye of the U. N., has deepened this conviction. To understand why the gifted, the intellectual and the "decent" become spies one has to understand the philosophy that motivates them.

THE reasons are "beyond FBI jurisdiction"; FBI tasks begin at the point that a violation of a Federal law is assigned to them; they gather evidence, prove the violation, determine who the culprits are and catch them. There is "no time or even jurisdiction to find out why the sples do it," a spokesman declared. In the same sense, Department of Justice spokesmen

In the same sense, Department of Justice spokesmen say that theirs likewise is not to reason why but to concentrate on what has been committed.

Few judges are bothered by motivations. For example, the judge, on sentencing Best, observed: "When a man intends to betray his country, his motive is immaterial." The Congressional Committee on Un-American Activities has attempted to show motivations; but the record produces little on that score.

For those who do not know any spies, the best clues to the motivations are in the sober and detailed report of the Royal Commission of Canada. In 1946 this commission investigated the disclosure of "secret and confidential information" by native-born Canadians caught "in the net" of a Soviet spy ring. Of the twenty accused, including Government officials, scientists, engineers, a former captain in the Canadian Army and a member of Parliament, ten were convicted and are serving terms; seven were acquitted; one was fined, and two others who had disappeared were recently arrested in New York. From this report, from the testimony of confessed spies and from the criminologists who have firsthand knowledge of the cases, this is a composite picture of the ideological spy:

He (or she) is a Communist, or a person with strongly pro-Communist sympathies. He has an impeccable background and reputation, and is not known as a Communist. He is emotionally and physically stable, since espionage is a gruelling life where instability could mean a crack-up. He has "useful" qualifications—a blue-ribbon college degree, technical knowledge, an extechnical knowledge, an expert's handling of statistics, etc. He is widely respected and is strongly idealistic.

He hasn't become an espionage agent overnight. Though the party has tens of thousands of adherents, few are asked to do espionage work because of the special capacities that are essential. He has perhaps since the early Thirties been experiencing a "psychological development" a sense of outrage with social injustices, a feeling of frustration and disappointment with what he feels is ineptitude in the liberal parties. Through philosophical study groups he has been encouraged to develop a sense of loyalty "not directly to a foreign state, but to what he con-



Velvalee Dickinson.

ceives to be an international ideal."

Intellectually and emotionally, communism fills the void. The man comes to identify "loyalty" with loyalty to Communist movements wherever they are in the world, and he is convinced that he must "square his ideals" by adhering to that loyalty alone. He does not like espionage. He would rather be on the picket lines or writing recent

He does not like espionage. He would rather be on the picket lines or writing propaganda to further his causes. But, "psychologically developed" to the point where he believes he is helping to build (Continued on Following Page) (Continued from Preceding Page; a better world, he sees the "practical" application of his ideals--the act of espionage-simply as routine.

He would feel corrupt and a "traitor" if he accepted money for handing over information to a Soviet agent; so though small sums are sometimes accepted for expenses, he requires no bribes.

Finally, he does not feel that he has a dual personality. He may have some pangs of "conscience" but these are overcome by the conviction that he is acting with the highest motives. Thus Whittaker Chambers, a CP member 1924-37, testifying before the Congressional committee:

Congressman Hebert: You knew you were being disloyal to the American Government?

Mr. Chambers: Yes.

Congressman Hebert: You preferred to be disloyal to gain the end that you thought you would make a better world? Mr. Chambers: That is

Mr. Chambers: That is right.

ISS BENTLEY throws further light on this attitude. Born into a comfortable, middle-class family and reared in small towns, Miss Bentley was educated at Bennington, Vassar, and Columbia, taught at wealthy Foxcroft in Virginia, had gone on a fellowship to Italy in 1933, where she learned Italian "and all about fascism at first hand." She was a CP member 1935-44. Interviewed in a Catholic home in the Bronx where she now lives, Miss Bentley, a tall, pale, alert woman, speaking rapidly with self-assurance, said:

"I didn't like espionage, for the reason that most Americans hate undercover work. Yet I felt I had to do it. You become certain that the best thing that can happen to the world and to your own country is to have communism everywhere.

"It isn't because you don't feel American. On the contrary, you call and feel yourself to be American, and the proof is that I took a name of one of my revolutionary ancestors, calling myself Elizabeth Sherman.

"You think of yourself," she went on "as a pioneer and come to believe that when you get world communism you get world peace. And that by helping communism in other countries in their struggles, you're helping your own country to find the solution. "How did I feel the first time I handed information to Jacob Golos [her 'superior' who died in 1943]? I had no special feeling, really. Except perhaps the thought that, well, it's become a tougher job; this is much more dangerous. Subconsciously you're thinking you're carrying a torch. All you're doing is handing it on to someone else. There's very little wrestling with conscience, because by this time conscience doesn't enter in it. You're convinced a long time before that you're working for something that's big. You don't have to use judgment about what you're doing."

WHY did she reform? "I didn't get out because I feared anything or because my conscience bothered me. Because up to that time I believed that communism was a good thing. Then, in 1944, I discovered that this wasn't true, after Mr. Golos died and I was thrown into direct contact with Russians. My conscience began to bother me and I knew I had to fight it and figure out whether I had been wrong."

In her testimony before the Committee on Un-American Activities, Miss Bentley supplied this description of her behavior:

"There came the period of trying to see what could be done there, and then I finally realized that I was one person fighting a vast machine. There was nothing I could do. I could either walk out and forget it had happened, or I could go to the agency that was handling counter-espionage, the FBI, and it took me quite a while to make the decision, and I finally walked in there."

It was, as one Department of Justice spokesman put it. "a realization of, and a revulsion to, having been used."

In studying motivations, the psychiatrists and sociologists go one step further, refusing to lay all the blame on an ideology. A man's country, they theorize, is also the symbol of his parent—either his father or mother. And an individual who has experienced feelings of insecurity or rejection as a child develops neuroses which, over a long period of time, weaken many kinds of loyalties.

Espionage for the intellectual, they say, can be psychoanalyzed as an unconscious act (Continued on Page 66) (Continued from Page 64) also against a parent. The deep-seated, unconscious feelings against parents are then more easily transferred to the country. Because of all the disappointments and dissatisfactions, the "conscience" is underdeveloped, and often "sick judgment" results.

Thus Dr. David Abrahamson, the Norwegian psychiatrist and author who has studied the careers of Quisling and Laval, formulates this human equation:

C=T+S-R.

Crime equals the criminal Tendencies ("which we all have to some degree") plus the given Situation — but minus the mental Resistance which normal people develop over the years.

"With the intellectuals involved here," said Dr. Abrahamson, "there quite possibly was an emotional poverty. They were so filled with hostility that to find outlets for their inner drives, such as ambitions or love, they 'went outside society,' turning outside the law. The early home life is a factor to be added to all other explanations."

WHAT can society do to prevent espionage and treason? The Attorney General has asked tighter laws to cope with "the treacherous operations of those who would weaken our country internally." Bills have been introduced in Congress to tighten the espionage law in attempts to stop the alleged traffic in stolen documents.

But many in Congress, like Republican House Leader Joseph Martin, have cautioned against these moves. For while treason is a political crime, the country by tradition has always taken the view that a free people is more secure by allowing little latitude to the Government in punishing political offenses.

What many do seek is an objective multilateral survey by anthropologists, social psychiatrists. psychologists. historians, possibly under Government sponsorship — of the causes and patterns of socially destructive behavior, particu-larly as applied to international affairs. When that re-port is ready, able publicists and educators should translate it into action-the former to make it intelligent to the people; the latter to drive its conclusions home.

As one sociologist summed it up: "The greatness of America and the democratic world lies in their ability to cope with their disloyal persons, and not be shaken by them."