

CONFIDENTIAL

RIS Activities in Canada - Recruitment of Personnel

1. The purpose of this paper is to illustrate, by means of the recent STAPLES case, the use made of social contacts by the RIS to recruit espionage agents.
2. James Stanley STAPLES, a married man and until recently a civilian employee of one of the armed services, was a person very fond of alcohol and continually in debt. He was a member of the Ottawa Civil Service Recreational Association and belonged to the same recreational club as Guennadi Fedorovich POPOV, Second Secretary at the Soviet Embassy. It was to be expected that the RIS would be interested in STAPLES.
3. Since it had been expected that the RIS would exploit Soviet social relations with Canadians, it came as no surprise to the RCMP to observe the "penetration" of recreational clubs by members of the Soviet Embassy. Several of the latter began to visit the Chess Club to which STAPLES belonged. It became obvious as early as November 1954 that he was under study and that his weaknesses were being noted and exploited by his Russian associates. Although the study was completed by Vladimir Pavlovich BOURDINE, First Secretary, Soviet Embassy, the actual recruitment was carried out by POPOV.
4. While STAPLES was thus being developed, he mentioned to another Club associate, a member of the RCMP, that his wife was perturbed by his association with the Russians. He was advised by the RCMP (through the Club member) to curtail his association with the Russians and agreed to do so. At the same time, STAPLES's employers were contacted by the RCMP and advised not only that they deny him his access to classified material but also that they warn him officially to break off relations with his Soviet associates. Both of these recommendations were carried out, STAPLES stating that he would do as requested.
5. From that time onwards very little association between STAPLES and the Russians was observed and what association there was seemed to be confined to Chess Club activities. Nine months later, however, STAPLES again contacted the RCMP Chess Club member, who had not seen him for many months, and told him that a few nights previously he had become intoxicated in POPOV's presence and had remembered the next morning that POPOV had given him fifty dollars with some vague suggestion that he should use a camera for copying documents.
6. Since STAPLES obviously either was not telling the whole truth or was seeking notoriety, it was decided to conduct a formal interrogation. At the interrogation and after several hours of evasive answers, STAPLES finally confessed that he had been supplying information and documents to POPOV prior to the time he had initially sought advice and been warned to discontinue his association with the Russians. Besides having passed information relating to his own Service, STAPLES had been given a list of Canadians on whom he was to report. STAPLES blamed his indebtedness and, especially, his addiction to alcoholic beverages for the action he had taken. Exactly what made him finally come forward to admit his activity is not clear but it is quite possible that POPOV was pressing him for more information than he could readily supply.
7. On July 12, 1956, the Soviet Ambassador was handed an aide-memoire by the Department of External Affairs requesting the recall of Guennadi Fedorovich POPOV. Mr. POPOV left Canada on August 12, 1956.

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8. This case shows that the RIS is not confining itself to the clandestine and conspiratorial methods of meeting agents so common in the past. In this particular instance the contacts were made at the Chess Club, the conspirators leaving together after the game, ostensibly for refreshments but in reality to exchange information. What, therefore, appeared to be a normal association was, in fact, an officer/agent meeting.

9. The RCMP has known for some time that the Russian social approach was intended primarily for intelligence exploitation. There is no doubt that the screening of Canadian Government employees has seriously interfered with the RIS recruitment and penetration program and, to circumvent this obstacle, it is apparent that the RIS is being forced to develop persons like STAPLES who, although screened and found free of known Communist activity, had certain exploitable weaknesses. It is therefore concluded:

(1) that security screening should include a study of the character weaknesses of the persons involved;

(2) that employers should constantly assess their employees' personal weaknesses with the RIS exploitation angle clearly in mind; and

(3) that selected persons attending any function frequented by Soviet-bloc officials should without fail submit social relations reports to the internal security service.

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