

The Washington

Merry-Go-Round

By Drew Pearson

The "secret document" situation is causing a lot of mirth inside the Office of Strategic Services. OSS is the outfit, sometimes called "Oh So Secret," organized by General "Wild Bill" Donovan, Assistant Attorney General under Coolidge and who has done some fine work in both wars, but who also has succeeded in collecting one of the fanciest group of dilettante diplomats. Wall Street bankers, and amateur detectives ever seen in Washington.

While the youngsters in uniform recruited by Donovan have done some of the most heroic work of the war, such as parachuting behind enemy lines, his "cloak and dagger" boys in Washington have had a marvelous time playing house detectives.

Not long ago this column illustrated the ultra-secret social operations of the OSS by publishing a "secret" telegram which merely reported on the social doing of a Donovan representative at the San Francisco Conference—with whom he dined, his efforts to rent an apartment, and his plans for visiting other cities on the West Coast.

Since then, there has been a large-scale man hunt in the OSS looking for leaks.

An extra person has been detailed to stand beside the mimeograph machine and tear up all extra, spoiled copies of messages. Copies of messages have been reduced to three, and are sent around with armed guards. Any extra copies above this are chopped up in a shredding machine into inch squares. Meanwhile, security officers swarm all over the place like hawks, and mysterious holes have appeared in the ceiling presumably to watch people working below.

Finally, the Paris office of OSS was thrown into consternation when a man suddenly appeared to inspect their operations. They couldn't stop him, however, because he had a permit to poke around the office from none other than the Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy.

OSS Merry-Go-Round

A Colonel Joseph Rodrigo of the U.S. Army was especially sent by President Truman to deliver to Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia some of the Emperor's jewels and documents recovered in Italy. Mussolini's boys carted them off to Italy when they looted the Emperor's palace in Addis Ababa, and so President Truman wanted to send them back by a personal messenger. But the OSS sent Col. Rodrigo only part way. They said privately they didn't want him down in Ethiopia. So the jewels were relayed to the Emperor by another man . . . Thirty cases of OSS documents were captured by the Japs in Burma and China, which the Japs have turned over to the Russians. From a Russian viewpoint, the documents are most interesting because they show a consistent anti-Russian policy being followed by OSS operators, plus plans for future work against the Russians . . . OSS top men are nearly all picked from the red-baiters . . . Marshal Tito has ordered all OSS men out of Yugoslavia. However, seven OSS men stayed

on at the American embassy anyway . . . The Russians have now barred all OSS men from Romania. One OSS agent has been left inside the American legation, however, and the OSS has been scrambling round to find places for others in Bucharest.

The Fight Over Files

Senator Harley Kilgore of West Virginia, recently returned from Europe, is recommending to President Truman that the files of the famous Nazi cartel, I. G. Farben, which developed synthetic gasoline and rubber patents and cooperated with U. S. business, be microfilmed.

These files, which may hold among the most precious of Nazi war secrets, have been kicked around Germany, and were even stored for a while in a warehouse with displaced persons who tore some of them up for bedding and toilet uses. Also the files have been the subject of a tug-of-war between jealous U. S. Agencies, including the Army, the OSS, the Justice Department, and the FEA.

Some of the files were found buried in the basements and back gardens of high I. G. Farben officials, who took them home as the war neared its end. Some were carted off by the Germans to escape bombing. Two box-cars filled with files were shipped off to Weimar. Most of the files are under the Army at Frankfurt, but some are under the OSS at Heidelberg.

Top-notch I. G. Farben officials are also considered important for establishing war guilt and ascertaining war secrets. They have been kept in prison ever since the Armistice, though several seemed confident that high United States and British businessmen would get them out. The name they most frequently mention as the friend who would rescue them is Lord McGowan, head of British Imperial Chemical, Ltd. Some also mentioned Lamot duPont. (Both duPont and Imperial Chemical had agreements with I. G. Farben before the war.)

Thomas H. McKittrick, head of the Bank of International Settlements, was also one who the I. G. Farben officials thought would help them; together with Leon Fraser, formerly with the Bank of International Settlements, who committed suicide under unusual circumstances last winter, I. G. Farben officials, incidentally, did not know that he was dead.

U. S. Tug-of-War

The tug-of-war between United States agencies over the I. G. Farben officials has been almost greater than over the documents. I. G. Farben executives were first captured by U. S. Military Intelligence, who had no prison facilities readily available, and turned them over to OSS at Versailles. But OSS, according to the Army, treated them like visiting guests and did not do a good job of cross-examination, so Military Intelligence (G-2) took them back.

Meanwhile Col. Bernie Bernstein of G-5 (Civil Affairs) has been rowing with G-2 over the I. G. Farben files and officials. Each wants jurisdiction. Mean-

while also, General Donovan, head of OSS, sent one of his representatives, together with Francis Mahoney of the Alien Property Custodian's office, to interview the prisoners. But the Army, already sore over OSS operations, wouldn't let Donovan's man see them.

General Donovan then sent a long telegram for delivery to Eisenhower's chief of staff, Gen. Bedell Smith, which said:

"I want you to know why we thought it important that the three Farben representatives not be prematurely interrogated by other than OSS men. We have prepared exhaustive questionnaires and background material for use in questioning. We have also obtained loan from Alien Property Custodian of Mr. Mahoney, who has spent several months of intensive study of I. G. Farben. . . .

"Piecemeal interrogation beforehand will place these people on their guard and prepare them for a line of questioning that should be instituted only when all guns are on the firing line. They may also be made antagonistic and secretive, particularly if earlier questioning bears on war crimes and other matters causing them to fear for their personal safety."

Thus spins "the merry-go-round" of war guilt in Europe. There is as much red tape and bureaucracy in occupied Germany as in Washington—possibly more.