

III - 67 - 9. "Army Lacks Spy Proof in Agnes Smedley Case" - The Saratogian -
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Army Lacks Spy Proof In Agnes Smedley Case

Washington (AP)—The Army, criticized for its recent report on a wartime Soviet spy ring in Japan, has admitted handling the matter badly.

In several respects, Col. George S. Eyster said yesterday, the form in which the report was issued was contrary to the Army's usual public relations policy. Eyster is deputy chief of the Army public information division.

For one thing, he said, the division, lacking proof, should never have let the report accuse Miss ~~Agnes Smedley~~ an American author, of being a Soviet spy. Miss Smedley has called the charge a "despicable lie" and an "attempted assassination of my character."

"It is definitely not the policy of the Army Department," Eyster told a reporter, "to pin any charge on anybody unless it has, actually on the hand, the definite proof."

Claims Damage

In New York, Miss Smedley said through her attorney, former U.S. assistant attorney general O. John Rogge, that she was grateful to the War Department for clearing her name and reputation. But she added she has suffered irrevocable anguish as well as monetary loss and damage.

One of the criticisms levelled at the report by various newspaper editorials and columnists was that it was not properly documented. It also was described as being sensationally written and likely to arouse suspicion and fear.

Eyster granted that the document's narrative style was unfortunate. As an official report it should have been strictly factual, he said, and should not have included "philosophical" observations.

The document pictured the Soviet spy ring, which eventually was broken up by the Japanese, as one of the most successful which ever operated anywhere. It looted vital military information, the report said, for swift relay to Moscow.

The report, drawn up by the intelligence section of Gen. MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo, was sent to the Pentagon in 1947 bearing a "secret" label. It finally was released by the Army—after certain slight deletions—as being "of interest to the public."