

The Nazi Spy Ring in America: Hitler's Agents, the FBI, and the Case That Stirred the Nation

Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones

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Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones's riveting historical study, *The Nazi Spy Ring in America*, concerns Germany's efforts to infiltrate America in the 1930s through espionage.

In the prewar period, espionage agents led by Admiral Canaris, the head of Germany's Abwehr, were directed to steal technology from the United States. Their pivotal activities involved a shipboard courier system, an agent who was a New York City doctor, and attempts to steal military secrets.

The major players on both sides are drawn alongside provisions of historical context. They include publicity-loving FBI super sleuth Leon Turrou, jealous FBI boss J. Edgar Hoover, Abwehr agents, and wannabe femme fatales, and their activities are compelling. Leon Turrou and his colleagues are seen working—sometimes in collaboration with MI5—to uncover and thwart the German spies.

The opening chapter profiles Abwehr agent Willie Lonkowski, codenamed "Sex," and his network of spies in the United States. These activities build toward an account of agent Jessie Jordan, a Scottish-German businesswoman who was enamored with detective novels, and who became a major handler of spy correspondence. Other spies of varying abilities appear, working on behalf of Germany and with ample money to recruit more agents. A detailed chronicle of spy interrogations led by Turrou results in meaty chapters full of espionage tradecraft and mishaps, while amateur spies traveling aboard passenger ships are trailed to great effect. All events lead to an exciting denouement featuring grand jury indictments and diplomatic consequences.

Clear, structured, and lively, the book and its intrigues are fascinating. Jeffreys-Jones humanizes all involved, revealing the motivations of spies and government investigators alike. *The Nazi Spy Ring* is an engaging account of interwar espionage that played out in newspapers across the world.

MONICA CARTER (September / October 2020)

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