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The Venona Secrets: The Definitive Exposé of Soviet Espionage in America (Cold War Classics)

By Herbert Romerstein, Eric Breindel

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The Venona Secrets presents one of the last great, untold stories of World War II and the Cold War. In 1995, secret Soviet cable traffic from the 1940s that the United States intercepted and eventually decrypted finally became available to American historians. Now, after spending more than five years researching all the available evidence, espionage experts Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel reveal the full, shocking story of the days when Soviet spies ran their fingers through America's atomic-age secrets.

Included in *The Venona Secrets* are the details of the spying activities that reached from Harry Hopkins in Franklin Roosevelt's White House to Alger Hiss in the State Department to Harry Dexter White in the Treasury. More than that, *The Venona Secrets* exposes: information that links Albert Einstein to Soviet intelligence and conclusive evidence showing that J. Robert Oppenheimer gave Moscow our atomic secrets How Soviet espionage reached its height when the United States and the Soviet Union were supposedly allies in World War II The previously unsuspected vast network of Soviet spies in America How the Venona documents confirm the controversial revelations made in the 1940s by former Soviet agents Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley.

The role of the American Communist Party in supporting and directing Soviet agents How Stalin's paranoia had him target Jews (code-named Rats) and Trotskyites even after Trotsky's death How the Soviets penetrated America's own intelligence services *The Venona Secrets* is a masterful compendium of spy versus spy that puts the Venona transcripts in context with secret FBI reports, congressional investigations, and documents recently uncovered in the former Soviet archives. Romerstein and Breindel cast a spotlight on one of the most shadowy episodes in recent American history a past when treason infected Washington and Soviet agents were shielded, either wittingly or unwittingly, by our very own government officials.

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- Sales Rank: #412637 in Books
- Published on: 2014-12-08
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x 5.25" w x 1.75" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 608 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Some historians and journalists are starting to regard the cold-war-era American Communist Party as nothing more than a quaint club of polite if misguided ideologues. In *The Venona Secrets*, Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel intend to create a new impression of treacherous Americans "who willfully gave their primary allegiance to a foreign power, the USSR.... For Communists, true patriotism meant helping to make the world a better place by advancing the interests of the Soviet Union in any way possible." By using the now-celebrated Venona documents--top-secret Soviet cables sent between Moscow and Washington, D.C., in the 1940s--Romerstein and Breindel tell a frightening story of how deeply spies penetrated the U.S. government. There was the famous case of Alger Hiss, whose guilt as a Soviet spy is now beyond doubt thanks to Venona. Less well known, but still important, were the roles of Harry Hopkins in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's White House and Harry Dexter White in the Treasury Department.

Romerstein, a veteran cold warrior, and Breindel, the former editorial-page editor of *The New York Post* (he died before the book's publication, at the age of 42), are not the first to discuss the Venona papers in depth--readers of *The Haunted Wood*, by Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev, and *Whittaker Chambers*, by Sam Tanenhaus, will know much of the story. Yet this may its most aggressive telling. Romerstein and Breindel include necessary chapters on the Hiss-Chambers dispute, the Elizabeth Bentley spy ring, and the charges against Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. They are particularly forceful in arguing that journalist I.F. Stone and atomic scientist Robert Oppenheimer were Soviet spies. Another target--and a provocative one--is Albert Einstein, whom they describe as "tainted" by his indirect ties to Soviet intelligence. *The Venona Secrets* will make heads turn, and it will show that the debates over the cold war and its meaning can be as hot now as they were then. --John J. Miller

Review

"*The Venona Secrets* . . . is the most authoritative account yet of the hidden mysteries unveiled by the decoding of thousands of secret diplomatic messages between the Soviet Union and its operatives here. . . . It offers the unmatched expertise of Herb Romerstein, a walking encyclopedia of the history of Communism and counterintelligence."

—Eric Fettmann, *New York Post*

"*The Venona Secrets* contains much. . . that will shock those too young to remember these ancient battles. And for those of us who do remember, it is comforting evidence that the truth, however belatedly, has a way of coming out."

—William Rusher, syndicated columnist

"*The Venona Secrets* is a breathtaking exposé."

—Robert Novak, *The Weekly Standard*

"Masterful research and interpretation of once-secret federal documents by authors Herbert Romerstein and Eric Breindel..."

—Bill Hoffmann, *New York Post*

From the Inside Flap

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