

SUSPECTED BY BOTH SIDES

WHITE RUSSIAN QUITS CHINA



Mr. E. N. Pankoff, White Russian aviation engineer, who reached Sydney by the Nankin yesterday, after escaping from Tsingtao (China), where both Japanese and Chinese authorities had suspected him of espionage.

SYDNEY, Saturday.

Suspected by both Chinese and Japanese as being a spy, Mr. E. N. Pankoff, a White Russian who reached Sydney

Russian who reached Sydney yesterday by the Nankin, fled from Tsingtao at less than 24 hours' notice.

Hearing that the Japanese military were about to arrest him, he joined a steamer for Shanghai in his wife's name and eluded capture.

During the Great War, Pankoff was naval aviator in the Black Sea, but in 1918 fled from the Bolsheviks to China.

"For 15 years I was with the Air Force of the Chinese Central Government and built 12 'planes for them,' he said.

Because some of the White Russians were friendly with the Japanese and looked to them to defeat the Bolsheviks, he fell under suspicion when Japan launched her attack on North China.

"The Chinese began to retreat and, without notice, they left me at Tsingtao, in Shantung Province," he went on. "I knew that they suspected me, but I remained there and the Japanese came in.

"The Japanese also suspected me and viewed my every movement with misgivings. They thought that I was a spy left behind by the Chinese Air Force.

Suspicious Increased

"I received several requests to call on the Japanese authorities, but did not obey them.

"In the meantime I had to earn a living, so I began trading in cars, making trips down to Shanghai. I discovered that these trips heightened Japanese suspicions. They believed that I was passing on information to the Chinese."

Hearing that he was to be arrested and unable to book on a steamer because the Japanese scrutinised all passenger-lists, he got his wife to book a passage in her own name aboard a Japanese steamer, and he went aboard ostensibly to see her off.

"A quarter of an hour before departure my wife slipped off the ship and mingled with the crowd on the wharf," he said. "The ship sailed and apparently nobody suspected that I was aboard.

"I went below and found that as 'Mrs. Pankoff' I had been placed in a cabin with three women. That was awkward, but I was able to change my cabin."

His wife and two sons later followed

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His wife and two sons, later followed him to Shanghai, and are waiting there to join him in Australia.
He will continue in the Nankin to Melbourne, where he has a friend who was a Russian naval lieutenant.
