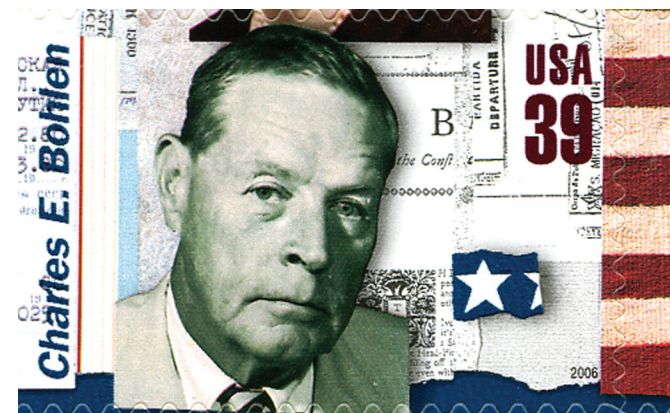


Charles E. Bohlen

Diplomat (1904 – 1974)



Courtesy of AVIS BOHLEN



Charles “Chip” Bohlen was one of America’s top experts on the Soviet Union during a long and distinguished diplomatic career. A Harvard graduate, he entered the Foreign Service in 1929 and became part of the first group to be trained in Russian. He was assigned to the first American Embassy to the Soviet Union in 1934, where he and GEORGE KENNAN, the other preeminent Kremlinologist of this era, became close collaborators and friends. During a second tour in Moscow (1938-1940), Bohlen was, through a contact in the German Embassy, privy to the details of the secret negotiations that led to the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939.

Transferred to the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo in 1940, Bohlen was interned with the rest of the Embassy for six months after Pearl Harbor, returning to the U.S. only in mid-1942. For the next seven years, he worked on Soviet issues in one capacity or another in the Department of State. As liaison to the White House, he worked closely with Harry Hopkins and interpreted for President FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT at both the Tehran (1943) and Yalta Conferences (1945), as well as for President Harry Truman at the Potsdam Conference (1945).

Bohlen served as DWIGHT EISENHOWER’s ambassador to the Soviet Union (1953-1957), a controversial appointment heavily criticized by Joseph McCarthy and right-wing Republicans because of his role at Yalta. After Moscow he became Ambassador to the Philippines (1957-1959) and, after a stint as Soviet adviser to John Kennedy, Ambassador to France (1962-1968). He retired from the Foreign Service in 1969 and died of cancer in 1974.

Bohlen’s daughter, AVIS BOHLEN, named after her mother, was a distinguished diplomat in her own right serving successively as deputy chief of mission in Paris under Ambassador PAMELA HARRIMAN, U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria, and Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control. Another daughter, Celestine, became a journalist and was a Moscow-based reporter for *The New York Times*.