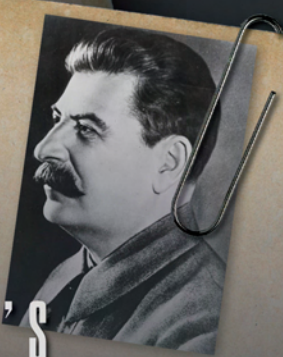
A NEW HISTORY OF THE KGB

THE BIRTH OF THE SOVIET SECRET POLICE



LENIN AND HISTORY'S GREATEST HEIST 1917-1927

BORIS VOLODARSKY

Praise for *Stalin's Agent*:

'A titanic effort … I would venture to suggest that not a few historians of note will have to review their opinions in light of this book.'
Professor Ángel Viñas, Complutense University of Madrid

'The book's combination of exhaustive research and riveting detail make it a turning point in the historiography of the Spanish Civil War as well as providing a fascinating insight into the failures of both the CIA and the KGB.'
Professor Paul Preston, London School of Economics and Political Science

'*Stalin's Agent* is a major contribution to the history of Soviet intelligence and foreign policy in its most paranoid phase.'
Professor Christopher Andrew, Official Historian of the Security Service MI5, *Literary Review*

'Russian intelligence operations are a seam of 20th century European history that can no longer be ignored … Volodarsky enhances our understanding. His is not the last word – we'll never get there – but it is a significant and valuable addition.'
Alan Judd, writer, former personal assistant to the chief of SIS, *The Spectator*

'Volodarsky debunks the many self-constructed myths of "Stalin's agent". He does not stint of detail: this book is 800-plus pages long, with 190 pages of endnotes, 56 pages of bibliography, seven pages of abbreviations and acronyms, two forewords, three appendices, a brief history of the KGB and an introduction. The result is a mammoth.'
Andre van Loon, *The Australian*

'Meticulously researched and based on a variety of archival records from Russian, European and American depositories, Volodarsky's book is focused on major and minor details of the inter-war Soviet spy games: dates, names, and events … Volodarsky is all over Soviet espionage history: from secret police operations against Ukrainian nationalists in the 1930s to Leopold Trepper's anti-Nazi underground Red Capella during the Second World War in the 1940s. Had I the opportunity to retitle his erudite study, instead of using the "life and death" publishers' cliché, I would have called it "Stalin's Agent: Alexander Orlov and

the World of Early Soviet Espionage". This would better convey the format of this informative encyclopedia-type book, which is the most comprehensive text so far on the topic of Soviet espionage in the inter-war period.'

Professor Andrei Znamenski, *Review in History*

'*Stalin's Agent* is a must read for anyone seriously interested in the history of modern espionage, the Soviet aspect especially, and the history of the Spanish Civil War. It is likely to stand as a basic reference work for many years to come.'

Professor Richard B. Spence,
Slavonic and East European Review

'My purpose is to congratulate you on your Orlov book which I finished for the second time yesterday – and it is on the second reading that it is really possible to appreciate the truly enormous amount of research behind the book, and enjoy the precision in your writing. It is an excellent work of a rare quality in a difficult genre.'

Alf R. Jacobsen, The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), letter to the author

The Birth of the Soviet Secret Police

A NEW HISTORY OF THE KGB

The Birth of the Soviet Secret Police

Lenin and History's Greatest Heist, 1917–1927

Boris Volodarsky

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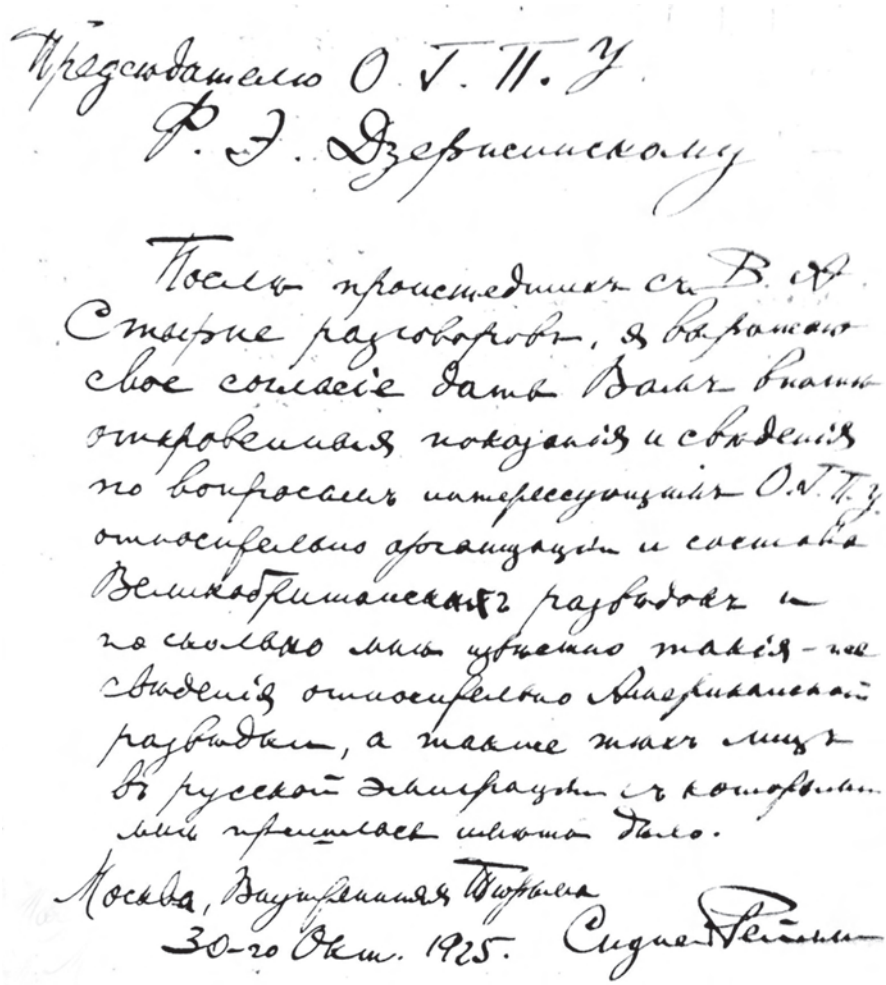

Председателю О. Г. П. У.
Ф. Э. Дзержинскому

После происшедших со мной старых разговоров, я выражаю свое согласие дать Вам вполне откровенные показания и сведения по вопросам интересующим О. Г. П. У. относительно организации и состава Великобританской разведки и по возможности мне известно также сведения относительно Американской разведки, а также лиц в русской эмиграции с которыми мне приходилось иметь дело.

Москва, Внутренняя Тюрьма
30-го Окт. 1925. Сидней Рейли

A letter, allegedly by Sidney Reilly, 'the ace of spies', from the internal Lubyanka prison dated 30 October 1925 and addressed to the OGPU chairman Felix Dzerzhinsky. In this letter or note, originally written in Russian, Reilly gives his explicit agreement to disclose information about British and American secret services, their structure and staff, as well as about his contacts among the Russian émigré community.

They [our distant descendants in the twenty-first century] will come to the Pantheon of the revolution, they will rise, bowing their heads before the grey, majestic, wonderful walls of the Kremlin, and will look long upon the marble of funeral slabs, at the bronze death masks and bas-reliefs which, with time, will decorate the sepulchral bays.

Izvestia, 20 July 1936, marking the tenth anniversary of the death of Felix Dzerzhinsky

The problems of 'telling truth to power' haven't changed fundamentally over the last few thousand years. Because of the pressure to tell authoritarian regimes only what they wish to hear, they always have been and always will be second-rate when it comes to the understanding of intelligence.

Christopher Andrew

Despotic leaders do not rule alone.

From publishers' promo to Anne Applebaum, *Twilight of Democracy* (1921)

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The Evolution of the KGB 1917–2017

November 1917 **NKVD**

Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennikh del (NKVD), People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs superseded the Interior Ministry of the previous regime right after the Bolshevik revolution of October 1917. It was initially tasked with conducting regular police work and overseeing prisons. It was disbanded in 1930 with its functions transferred to other government departments.

December 1917 **Cheka and VeCheka**

Chrezvychainaya Komissiya (Cheka), Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, and from 1918 now VeCheka – All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution, Profiteering and Corruption.

February 1922 **GPU and OGPU**

Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie (GPU), State Political Directorate, part of the *Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del* (NKVD), People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, and from November 1923 *Ob'edinennoe Glavnoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie* (OGPU), Joint State Political Directorate under direct control of the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom).

July 1934 **NKVD**

On 10 July the NKVD of the USSR was established as the country's police and security force.

July 1934 **GUGB**

Glavnoe Upravlenie Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti (GUGB), Chief Directorate for State Security, now part of the NKVD.

February 1941–July 1941 **NKGB**

Narodnyi Komissariat Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti (NKGB), People's Commissariat for State Security. During this period the GUGB was briefly transformed into a separate ministry (Commissariat), then was placed again under the NKVD, and finally from 14 April 1943 became the NKGB again.

March 1946 **MGB**
On 18 March 1946 all People's Commissariats were renamed Ministries and accordingly the NKGB became *Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti* (MGB).

May 1947–November 1951 **KI**
Komitet Informatsyi (KI), Committee of Information. Both political intelligence (MGB) and military intelligence (GRU) were united in one service; in the summer of 1948 all military personnel were returned to the General Staff of the Red Army; branches dealing with the new Eastern Bloc countries and the émigrés were returned to the MGB in late 1948; the KI was dismantled in 1951.

March 1953 **MVD**
Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del (MVD), Ministry for Internal Affairs. On 5 March 1953 the Ministry for State Security (MGB) became part of the enlarged MVD.

March 1954–November 1991 **KGB**
Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti (KGB), Committee for State Security of the USSR Council of Ministers.

After the August 1991 Coup **MSB**, **TsSR** and **KOGG**
After the collapse of the coup d'état attempt (19–22 August), all Communist Party activities on Soviet territory were terminated and banned, and the Committee for State Security of the USSR (KGB USSR) was dismantled and ceased to exist. Its first successor agencies were *Mezhrespublikanskaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti* (MSB), the Inter-Republican Security Service; *Tsentralnaya Sluzhba Razvedki* (TsSR), Central Intelligence Service; and *Komitet po Okhrane Gosudarstvennoi Granitsy* (KOGG), State Border Protection Commiteee. The Specialist Protection Branch of the former KGB, the Government Protection Service, formerly known as 9th Directorate, became part of the Presidential Administration while the former KGB's 8th Chief Directorate (Code & Cipher), 16th Directorate (ELINT) and Government Communication Service were combined into the Government Communication Committee reporting to the President.

November 1991 **FSK**
The *Federalnaya Sluzhba Kontrrazvedki* (FSK) was a direct predecessor of the FSB and one of the successor agencies of the KGB. It existed from 1991 to 1995.

December 1991–March 2003 **FAPSI**

The *Federalnoe Agentstvo Pravitelstvennoi Svyazi i Informatsyi* (FAPSI), Federal Agency of Government Communication and Information, created by merging several specialist services of the former KGB, was responsible for providing signals intelligence (SIGINT) and secure protection of the government communications. In March 2003 the agency became one of the services of the FSB with some of its elements incorporated into the FSO in August 2004.

December 1991 **SVR**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the first 'Law on Foreign Intelligence' was adopted in August 1992, replacing the Central Intelligence Service with the *Sluzhba Vneshnei Razvedki* (SVR) which, in turn, became a successor of the First Chief Directorate (PGU) of the KGB. The SVR is the foreign intelligence service tasked mainly with the covert overseas collection of secret intelligence. A new law 'On Foreign Intelligence' was signed by President Boris Yeltsin on 10 January 1996. The SVR director is appointed by and accountable to the President. Since 2012 President Putin can personally issue any secret order to the SVR without consulting the State Duma (the lower house) and the Federation Council (the upper house) of the Federal Assembly of Russia. Since June 1972 the SVR headquarters has been in Yasenevo, a Moscow district which is also the site of two campuses of the British International School.

November 1993 **SBP**

The *Sluzhba Bezopasnosti Presidenta* (SBP) was created after the collapse of the Soviet Union as a Specialist Protection Command of the first Russian president Boris Yeltsin, part of the FSO. Since May 2000 it has been constantly expanding to become one of the world's most expert and well-armed protection services with the staff of about 3,000 officers. The Service has its own analytical department with the staff seconded from all branches of the Russian national intelligence machinery.

December 1993 **PS**

The *Pogranichnaya Sluzhba* (PS) was a Russian border guard service whose history dates back to 1571. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union the Russian Border Force was established as a separate government agency.

January 1994 **GUSP**

Glavnoe upravlenie spetsialnykh programme presdient RF (GUSP), the Chief Directorate for Special Programmes. It is a paramilitary government

organisation, a successor of the combined 15th Chief Directorate (wartime government command centres) and Mobilisation Department of the former KGB, and former 5th department of the Russian Cabinet Office. Since its formation and until the time of writing, the agency's chiefs have been former high-ranking security service officers. Its head office is located in Moscow at number 2 Staraya Ploschad (Old Square), while the Presidential Administration occupies number 4, which since the 1920s housed the CPSU Central Committee.

April 1995 **FSB**

The *Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti* (FSB) is the Russian domestic counter-intelligence and security agency also responsible for protecting Russian economic interests and counter-terrorism and espionage within the Russian Federation. It is directed by the President, headed by the FSB director and bound by the law 'On the Federal Security Service' of 1995 with its powers expanded in July 2010 by President Dmitry Medvedev. According to the same law the FSK was reorganised into the FSB. Since 1999 the FSB has also been tasked with intelligence-gathering on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Its head office is located in the former KGB building on Lubyanka Square in downtown Moscow. Today the FSB incorporates the previously independent Border Guard Service and a major part of the abolished Federal Agency of Government Communication and Information (FAPSI).

May 1996 **FSO**

After several failed and successful assassination attempts on the members of the Russian royal family, the Okhrana was formed in the Russian Empire in 1881 to defend the monarchy. 'Okhrana' literally means 'protection'. The Okhrana was identified by the Bolsheviks with Tsarist repression and after the October Revolution of 1917 was replaced by the bodyguard section of the Cheka. The Federal Protection Service was formed in May 1996 replacing the Chief Protection Directorate which traced its origin to the 9th Chief Directorate of the KGB.

March 1997 **Zaslon**

Special operations unit *Zaslon* (Shield) was formed within the SVR on 23 March 1997 by a secret presidential decree. It is the elite squadron of individually selected operatives tasked with supporting SVR operations. The unit ranges in size from 280 to 300 personnel commanded by a colonel who reports to the SVR director. The squadron has a wide range of responsibilities similar to those of the British Special Air Service (SAS) but unlike the SAS, which is a Special Forces unit of the British Army, Zaslon is part of the SVR's

own security department. Similar to the SAS, the unit undertakes a number of roles including covert reconnaissance, direct action, close protection and hostage rescue. Much of the information regarding *Zaslon* is highly classified and is not commented on by the government.

March 2003 **PS**

On 11 March 2003 the Russian president Vladimir Putin changed the independent status of the Russian Border Force, transforming it into the Border Guard Service within the FSB. In July 2014 Ukraine filed a criminal case against the head of the Border Guard Service of the FSB accusing him of financing 'illegal military groups in Eastern Ukraine'.

April 2016 **Rosgvardiya**

The National Guard of Russia (Rosgvardiya) is a group of Special Forces and an independent law-enforcement agency accountable only to the president. The National Guard numbers about 340,000 personnel and is separate from the Russian Armed Forces although its units are formed from the élite Special Forces of the police and the army. The first director of the National Guard was and at the time of writing remains General of the Army Victor Zolotov, who has served as Putin's personal bodyguard for two decades.

February 2020 **SBRF**

Soviet Bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsyi (SBRF), the Security Council of Russia, was formed in April 1991 together with the new post of the President of the Russian Federation. Like the US National Security Council, the Security Council of Russia is the principal forum used by the President, who is also the supreme commander-in-chief of the armed forces, for consideration of national security, military, and foreign policy matters with senior government and state officials. Since its inception under new regulations decreed by President Putin on 16 January 2020, the SBRF includes twelve permanent members. The SBRF is chaired by the President. Its statutory attendees are the Deputy Chairman (a new post especially established for Dmitry Medvedev), the Head of the Presidential Administration, chairpersons of both chambers of the Federal Assembly, Minister of Defence, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Internal Affairs, Director of the FSB, Director of the SVR, Director of the National Guard, and Secretary of the Security Council. The SBRF meets at the Moscow Kremlin's Senate building.

Functions

The functions of the Russian security apparatus, unlike those of the Soviet and then Russian foreign intelligence service, remained (and will certainly continue to remain) relatively constant at least throughout the period 1826–2026. In July 1826 the Russian Emperor Nicholas I (Nikolai Pavlovich) founded the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty's Chancery. The Third Section ran a huge network of spies, collaborators and informers with the help of the Corps of Gendarmerie, a law enforcement and state security force. The Emperor placed a Baltic German cavalry general, Alexander Graf von Benckendorff, in charge of both. These were mighty organisations for the secret supervision of the whole Russian Empire, in fear of which, contemporaries report, not only private citizens but all other government departments trembled. The Third Section was disbanded in 1880 to be replaced by the Police Department and the Okhrana. Under different names, the system remained the same during communist rule until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In the period between 1917 and 1991 members of the Russian secret political police described themselves as the Chekists, demonstrating that they were the heirs of Lenin's Cheka with 'clean hands, warm heart and cool head'. After 2000 this tradition was renewed to a certain extent. For reasons further described in this book, in the past few years the term *razvedchik*, which at the same time means 'prospector', 'scout' and 'secret service agent', became more popular.

The acronym KGB is often used to denote the internal security and foreign intelligence services of the USSR during the Cold War, which is basically correct although officially the KGB existed only from 1954 to 1991.

Headquarters

After the October Revolution (the exact date is not recorded), the imposing building of the All-Russia Insurance Company on Lubyanka Square in downtown Moscow was requisitioned to house the Cheka. In those days, positioned at the south-eastern part of the square was a fountain with a horse-carriage stand nearby. In 1958 the fountain was replaced by a statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky, the founder of the Cheka.

For 55 years this building housed both the Foreign Intelligence Service (First Chief Directorate, PGU) and the Security Service (Second Chief Directorate), both parts of the KGB, alongside other directorates, departments and services. It was generally known as the Centre especially among officers of the PGU. In June 1972 the foreign intelligence directorate moved to

Yasenevo, now part of Moscow, with a new Church of Intercession opened in 2015. The SVR compound, known internally as 'Les' ('Forest'), initially consisted of the main building and several auxiliary facilities plus bungalows for visitors and a better one for the chief. The Service doesn't give public tours of its headquarters buildings, but in December 2018 an exception was made for Nailah (Nailya) Asker-zade and a cameraman who were allowed to shoot a documentary there with the Service director playing the host. The film is available on YouTube.

In 1991 the first (and only) democratically-elected Mayor of Moscow, Gavriil Popov, ordered the dismantling of the 11-ton statue of The Iron Felix. On the night of 22 August, the statue in front of the KGB building was toppled and removed to the cheers of a crowd of about 10,000 people, hours after Michael Gorbachev resigned as the General Secretary of the CPSU.

Unlike those who locked themselves in the building helplessly watching the scene, many thought it was the beginning of a new era. Without doubt it was. But one junior colleague of those officers in the Lubyanka building, now the President of the new Russia, speaking to the nation in his annual address on 29 April 2005, used these words to describe his country's fate over the past 14 years: 'The collapse of the Soviet Union was the biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the century,' Putin said. 'For the Russian people, it became a real drama.' After another 15-plus years of his rule, 'new' Russia turned into a true monster much worse than its old communist predecessor.

Felix Dzerzhinsky is still around, now in the Muzeon sculpture park alongside many other former Soviet monuments. A short time ago, polling conducted by the Russian Levada Centre revealed that 51 per cent of Moscow residents support restoring the statue to its former location.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFP	Agence France-Press
Amtorg	American-Soviet Trading Corporation, first Soviet trade company established in New York
Arcos	All-Russian Co-operative Society, Anglo-Russian trade organisation
BKP	B'lgarska Komunisticheska Partiya ('Bulgarian Communist Party')
BRD	Bundesrepublik Deutschland ('Federal Republic of Germany'), West Germany
BVT	Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz und Terrorismusbe kämpfung ('Federal Office For the Protection of the Consitution'), Austrian security agency until 2021
CEDA	Confederación Nacional de Derechas Autónomas ('Confederation of the Autunomous Right'), Spain
Centre	HQ of the KGB, their predecessors and their successor SVR, previously Lubyanka, now Yasenevo a.k.a. Les ('Forest')
Cheka	Chrezvychainaya Komissiya ('Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-revolution and Sabotage')
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency, the Agency, USA
CNT	Confederación Nacional del Trabajo ('National Confederation of Labour'), Spain
Comintern	Communist International, also known as the Third International (1919–43)
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPUSA	Communist Party of the USA
CRIMINT	Criminal Intelligence
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik ('German Democratic Republic'), East Germany
DEDIDE	Departamento Especial de Información del Estado, one of several Spanish Republican intelligence services
DGS	Dirección General de Seguridad ('Directorate General of Security'), Spain

DGSE	Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure ('General Directorate for External Security'), foreign intelligence agency, France
DGSI	Direction Générale de la Sécurité Intérieure ('General Directorate for Internal Security'), French security agency responsible for counter-espionage, counter-terrorism, countering cybercrime and any other homeland security threats
DI	Defence Intelligence, military intelligence, part of the Ministry of Defence (since 2009), UK
DIS	Defence Intelligence Staff (1964–2009), successor of military intelligence (DMI), Air Intelligence (AI) and Naval Intelligence (NID), UK
DLB	dead letter box
DRG	Diversionno-razvedyvatelnaya gruppa ('sabotage and reconnaissance group'), USSR/RF
DSN	Direktion Staatsschutz und Nachrichtendienst ('Directorate for State Protection and Intelligence Service'), since 2021 – part of the General Directorate for Public Security of the Interior Ministry and successor to the BVT, Austria
DST	Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire ('Directorate of Territorial Surveillance'), French counter-intelligence and security service (1944–2008)
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International – the governing authority of the Comintern between the World Congresses
ECHELON	Worldwide SIGINT collection and analysis programme operated by the NSA assisted by appropriate government agencies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK
ELINT	'Electronic intelligence', covert intelligence gathering by electronic means
EM	Estado Mayor ('General Staff'), Spain
FAI	Federación Anarquista Ibérica ('Iberian Anarchist Federation')
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Bureau, USA
FCD	First Chief Directorate (see PGU), KGB's foreign intelligence branch
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, UK
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK (from 1968 to September 2020). It merged with the Department for International Development to create FCDO

FI	Fourth International, revolutionary socialist organisation of Trotskyists
FO	Foreign Office, UK
FSB	Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti ('Federal Security Service'), RF
FSO	Federalnaya Sluzhba Okhrany ('Federal Protection Service'), RF
FVEY	The Five Eyes alliance is an intelligence-sharing agreement between Great Britain and the USA with Australia, Canada and New Zealand
GC&CS	Government Code and Cipher School, UK (until 1946)
GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters, UK
GPU	Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie ('State Political Directorate'), USSR
GRU	Glavnoe Razvedupravlenie, Soviet and Russian Military Intelligence
GUGB	Glavnoe Upravlenie Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti ('Chief Directorate of State Security'), USSR
GULAG	Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei ('Chief Directorate of Corrective Labour Camps')
GUPVO	Glavnoe Upravlenie Pogranichnoi i Vnutrennei Okhrany ('Chief Directorate of the Border Guards and Internal Troops')
HUMINT	Human intelligence (obtained from human sources)
ILS	International Lenin School, Moscow (1926–91)
INO	Inostrannyi Otdel ('Foreign Intelligence Department'), Cheka-OGPU, 1920–34
INS	Immigration and Naturalisation Service, USA
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee, UK
Kempeitai	Military Police Corps, Japanese intelligence and counter-intelligence service
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti ('Committee for State Security'), USSR
KI	Komitet Informatsyi ('Committee of Information'), Soviet foreign intelligence agency
KIM	Kommunisticheskii International Molodiozhy ('Communist International of Youth')
KJVD	Kommunistischer Jugend Verband Deutschlands ('The Young Communist League of Germany')
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands ('Communist Party of Germany')

KPÖ	Kommunistische Partei Österreichs ('Austrian Communist Party')
KRO	Kontr-razvedyvatelnyi otdel ('Counter-intelligence department'), OGPU, until 1930
KSČ	Komunistická strana Československa, Czech and Slovak Communist Party
KUNMZ	Kommunistichesky Universitet Natsionalnykh Menshinstv Zapada ('The Communist University of the National Minorities of the West')
MGB	Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti ('Ministry of State Security'), USSR
MI5	British security service
MI6	Alternative designation for SIS, British foreign intelligence service
MI1c	Secret Intelligence Service, predecessor of MI6
MID	Military Intelligence Division, until March 1942 under the General Staff of the US Army
MBP	Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego, the Ministry of Public Security of Poland
MOPR	Mezhdunarodnaya Organisatsyia Pomoschi Rabochim ('International Workers Aid Organisation'), better known as International Red Aid, Comintern/USSR
MOTsR	Monarkhicheskaya Organisatsyia Tsentralnoi Rossii ('Monarchist Organisation of Central Russia')
MVD	Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del ('Ministry of Internal Affairs'), USSR
NCSC	National Cyber Security Centre, UK, established in 2016 as part of the GCHQ, located in London
NKGB	Narodnyi Komissariat Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti ('People's Commissariat for State Security'), Soviet Russia
NKID	Narodnyi Komissariat Inostrannykh Del ('People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs'), Soviet Russia
NKVD	Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del ('People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs'), Soviet Russia
NKVT	Narodnyi Komissariat Vneshnei Torgovli (People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade'), Soviet Russia
NSA	National Security Agency, USA
ÖGB	Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund ('Austrian Trade-Union Federation')
OGPU	Ob'edinennoe Glavnoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie ('Unified Main Political Directorate'), Soviet intelligence and security service, successor of the VcheKa

OKDVA	Osobaya Krasnoznamyonnaya Dalnevostochnaya Armiya ('Special Red-Banner Far Eastern Army'), Soviet Russia
Okhrana	Tsarist security service, Russian Empire, 1881–1917
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, Supreme Command of the German Armed Forces
OKW/Chi	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht Chiffrierabteilung, Signal Intelligence Branch of the Supreme Command of the German Armed Forces
OMS	Otdel Mezhdunarodnykh Svyazei ('International Liaison Department'), the intelligence branch of the Comintern
OMSBON	Otdelnyi Motostrelkovyi Batalion Osobogo Naznacheniya ('Special Motorised Battalion'), NKVD
OSINT	Open-source intelligence, information collected from publicly-available sources
OSS	Office of Strategic Services, USA
OUN	Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists
OVRA	Organizzazione per la Vigilanza e la Repressione dell'Antifascismo ('Organisation for Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism'), Italy
PCE	Partido Comunista de España ('Spanish Communist Party')
PCF	Parti Communiste Français ('French Communist Party')
PCM	Partido Comunista Mexicano ('Mexican Communist Party')
POUM	Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista ('Workers' Party of Marxist Unification'), Spain
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español ('Spanish Socialist Workers' Party')
PSUC	Partit Socialista Unifacat de Catalunya
RAF	Royal Air Force, UK
RF	Russian Federation
RKKA	Raboche-Krestyanskaya Krasnaya Armiya ('The Workers-Peasants Red Army'), Soviet Russia
RSDLP	Russian Special Democratic Labour Party, a socialist political party founded in March 1898 in Minsk, then part of the Russian Empire
RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt, the Chief Directorate of Security of Nazi Germany
ROVS	Rossiisky Obschevoiskovoi Soyuz ('Russian Combined Services Union')
RU	Razvedupr, Soviet military intelligence, later GRU
RUSI	The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, a British think tank founded in 1831. At

	the time of writing RUSI was chaired by William Hague, Baron Hague of Richmond, who used to serve as Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (2010–14), with Vice Chairman Sir John Scarlett, former chairman of the Cabinet Office Joint Intelligence Committee (2001–04) and Chief of SIS (2004–09)
SAJ	Sozialistische Arbeiter-Jugend ('Socialist Workers Youth'), Austria, Germany
SB	Służba Bezpieczeństwa, Polish security and intelligence service
SBU	Sluzhba Bezpeky Ukrayiny, the Security Service of Ukraine
SCD	Second Chief Directorate, KGB's internal security branch
SDECE	Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage ('External Documentation and Counter-Espionage Service'), French foreign intelligence service, 1944–82
Second International	Organisation of socialist and labour parties (1889–1916)
SGON	Spetsyalnaya Gruppa Osobogo Naznacheniya ('Special Group for Special Purposes'), NKVD
SIGINT	Signals intelligence (derived from interception and analysis of signals)
SIM	Servicio de Información Militar, Spanish Republican military counter-intelligence service
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service, UK
SNK	Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov, Council of People's Commissars, Soviet Russia
SOCMINT	Social Media Intelligence
SOE	Special Operations Executive, UK
SPEKO	Spetsyalnyi kriptograficheskii otdel OGPU, Special Cryptographic Department
Spetsnaz	Special Forces, USSR/RF
SR	Socialist Revolutionary
SS	Sluzhba Svyazi ('Communication Service'), predecessor of the OMS
SS	Schutzstaffel, paramilitary organisation in Nazi Germany (1925–45)
SSOD	Soyuz Sovetskikh Obshchestv Druzhby i Kulturnoi Svyazi s Zarubezhnymi Stranami ('Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries'), KGB front

S&T	Scientific & Technical Intelligence
StaPo	Staatspolizei, Austrian security police (until 2002)
Stasi	Common name for MfS, Ministerium für Staatssicherheit ('Ministry for State Security'), DDR
StB	Státní bezpečnost, Czechoslovak security and intelligence service
SVR	Sluzhba Vneshnei Razvedki ('Foreign Intelligence Service of Russia'), also known by its Russian acronym as PGU
TUC	Trade Union Congress, UK
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores ('General Union of Workers'), Spain
UKUSA	Originally the UK-USA agreement for joint signal intercept networks between the GCHQ and NSA at the beginning of the Cold War, it has developed into a multilateral agreement for cooperation in signals intelligence between the Five Eyes (FVEY)
ULTRA	Wartime signals intelligence obtained by breaking high-level encrypted enemy radio and teleprinter communications, GC&CS/UK
UME	Unión Militar Española ('Spanish Military Union')
UNIT 8200	Israeli equivalent of the British GCHQ and American NSA – a signals intelligence unit, part of Israeli Military Intelligence (Aman), that also controls cryptography and cryptanalysis. According to some experts, it is probably the foremost technical intelligence agency in the world
UPA	Ukraińska Powstańcza Armia ('The Ukrainian Insurgent Army')
VChKa	All-Russian Cheka, the immediate successor of the Cheka and predecessor of the GPU-OGPU
VOKS	Vsesoyuznoe Obschestvo Kulturnoi Svyazi (s zagranitsei), All-Union Society for Cultural Relations (with foreign countries), NKVD front
WOSTWAG	West-East-European Trade Exchange Joint Stock Society, legitimate trade organisation and Soviet military intelligence front with head office in Paris and branches in Berlin, New York, Ulan Bator, Guangzhou and Tientsin (Tianjin)
Z Organisation	Top-secret, semi-autonomous intelligence organisation within SIS, set up and headed by Lieutenant Colonel Claude Dansey, 1936–45

Transliteration of Russian Names

The author and the editors followed the method of transliteration of Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian names used by the Joint Technical Language Service (JTLS), part of the British GCHQ, which is based on British Standard. British Standard 2979 (1958) is the main system of the Oxford University Press – see Anne Waddingham, *New Hart's Rules: The Oxford Style Guide* (OUP, 2014). In cases where a specific English version of names of well-known individuals and historical figures has become firmly established, we have in most cases retained that version, for example: Vasili (instead of Vasiliy or Vasily, see Vasili Mitrokhin), *Izvestia* (instead of *Izvestiya*), or Beria (instead of Beriya). At the same time, we have used Lugovoy (instead of 'Lugovoi') and Iosif (instead of 'Joseph') Stalin.

Preface

by Alan Judd

Boris Volodarsky's three earlier books, *Stalin's Agent*, *The KGB's Poison Factory* and *Assassins*, are rightly valued for their meticulous and revealing research into some of the murkiest waters of intelligence history. *Stalin's Agent*, indeed, is uniquely revealing of Russian intelligence activities in the 1930s, especially in the Spanish Civil War. Now, in this volume, the first of a planned six, Volodarsky takes a deep dive into parts of the ocean where no light has ever penetrated. True, many writers have written about the history of the KGB (a term used here as shorthand for Russia's security and intelligence apparatus from 1917) but few if any have combined the perspectives of a former practitioner with that of a Western academic. The result is probably as detailed a mapping of that hidden seabed as we are likely to get, short of the mass transfer of Russian archives to the British Library.

This volume takes the story from the revolution of October 1917 and the formation of the Cheka to Stalin's eviction of Trotsky from the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and from the Party itself, in November 1927. Volodarsky sensibly takes us back to the nineteenth-century origins of the Okhrana, secret police and protection service to successive Tsars, in order to compare and contrast with the Soviet Cheka that followed it. Comparisons are in order because some of the individuals and methods were simply carried over, but the contrasts are more striking. The Okhrana was probably the smallest of Tsarist government agencies, never numbering more than about 1,100 staff and 600 reporting agents. The Cheka, however, was baptised with Lenin's credo to establish 'a special system of organised violence' in order to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat; mass surveillance and terror were not Stalin's inventions but were there from the start. Anyone contemplating President Putin's multi-layered security and intelligence apparatus now – the widely-known FSB, SVR and GRU, along with the lesser-known Presidential Security Service (about 3000), the Federal Protection Service (about 20,000 Kremlin troops) and the National Guard (340,000) – might recall what Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein ominously said of the IRA: 'They haven't gone away, you know.'

In charting the reactions of British governments in particular and Western governments in general to the Soviet Union in the 1920s, Volodarsky makes a plausible case for his judgment that there was significant over-reaction to the perceived threat from exported communist revolution, culminating in the infamous ARCOS raid on the Soviet Trade Delegation in London in 1927. He argues that early Comintern and Cheka operations overseas were more amateurish than their targets appreciated and that aspirations and intentions were often mistaken for achievements. Along the way he points out burrows and neglected byways where it would be tempting to spend more time – the remarkable similarity of phrasing, for instance, between Lenin's definition of subversion and that enshrined in Britain's Security Service Act of 1989, or the role of the Okhrana in propagating the anti-Semitic libel *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, or the likelihood or otherwise that Lenin died not of a stroke but of syphilis.

It would be an understatement to say that Volodarsky makes good use of his manifold sources, Russian and Western. Any student of this subject – or the period in general – will find in this volume valuable pointers to further research. He makes particularly good use of Christopher Andrew's work with Vasili Mitrokhin, a KGB archivist who defected to Britain with a treasure trove of notes from KGB files described by the FBI as 'the most complete and extensive intelligence ever received from any source'. *The Mitrokhin Archive*, along with the informed commentary of this volume, gives us the most complete picture of those early Chekist days we are likely to see for a very long time, if ever. If any contemporary Russian intelligence officers take an interest in their own history, they'll learn more here than they are permitted to know at home.

Foreword and Acknowledgements

Before the collapse of the Soviet empire, which, let us recall it again, the Russian President Vladimir Putin called 'the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century' at the end of his first term in office, the KGB had seemed to outsiders a deeply mysterious and fearful organisation. All Soviet governments, from Lenin to Gorbachev, intended it to be so. The first attempt to tell its 'inside story' to the Western world, to present a more or less comprehensive picture of its foreign operations, dates back to 1990.

The main problem confronting all historians who had tried to research the history of the KGB – including journalists and writers like Julian Semenov, Genrikh Borovik or Evgeny Vorobiov, especially hired to produce hagiographic portraits of its intelligence heroes – had been the total inaccessibility of the KGB archives. The efforts of Western scholars to interpret specific historical subjects related to the activities of Russian Intelligence Services (RIS) or to describe various RIS operations or personalities were based, with only a few exceptions, on books by Soviet defectors (usually ghostwritten) and memoirs of former British and sometimes other intelligence officers and agents. The first attempts to write some historical accounts of the KGB predecessors became obsolete even before they were published. The breakthrough came in 1986 when Professor Christopher Andrew of Cambridge University met a recent Soviet defector of whom he had never heard previously. Or so he says.

The circumstances of their first meeting remain unknown but Professor Andrew had always insisted that although this top-level defector – it was Oleg Gordievsky – actively collaborated with both MI6 and MI5, no one ever suggested that together they should write a book about the KGB. Their joint effort, the first ever history of the KGB 'from Lenin to Gorbachev', came out four years later on New Year's Eve 1990.

Of course, to get involved in such a project Oleg required encouragement and approval. His unique position as a former acting head of the KGB station in London and more, as a long-term British agent and accordingly a prime British intelligence asset within the KGB, secured him access to the very top of the British intelligence community. Gordievsky's first address was Sir Arthur Antony Duff, Director General of the Security Service whose office

was at the 6th floor of a ten-storey building at 140 Gower Street also housing K and B Branches.

By the time the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, decided to offer Sir Antony this post, he had been known to her as a war hero, ex-ambassador, former chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee and Intelligence Coordinator in the Cabinet Office. In less than a month, on 20 February 1985, he would also be 65 – over the Service retirement age. Nevertheless, she decided he would be the best choice at least for a short period like two or two-and-a-half years.

Antony Duff remained in this post until January 1988 when he was succeeded by Patrick Walker (later Sir). During his time at the helm of the British Security Service, Sir Antony made at least two contributions to the history of the KGB: he supervised the successful running in London and the later exfiltration from Russia of Oleg Gordievsky, the most famous British double agent in the KGB. And, after Gordievsky's debriefing and resettlement were completed, a productive collaboration between the Soviet defector and the British professor resulted in the first-ever academic history of the Soviet secret service, which until the dissolution of the Soviet Union was combining under one roof a variety of services that are now independent agencies and organisations.

Gordievsky's long and intensive debriefing had not yet been finished when Christopher Andrew's important book, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community*, was published in October 1985. In it, in what Professor Andrew modestly calls 'an uncharacteristic moment of clairvoyance', he writes that after a famous double agent Oleg Penkovsky, who provided secret information from the GRU (Soviet military intelligence), there should be another, even more successful agent-in-place, this time in the KGB. The formalities over, the foundation was laid for a productive collaboration between a high-ranking KGB officer and a British academic. With Gordievsky's advice and knowledge and a little help from the Service and FCO historians, the first public history of the KGB in English was published.

It was a huge success and all of its 800 pages were quickly translated into Russian (not to mention other languages) and the book came out in Moscow unabridged in 1992. It was a symbolic year because in February Stella Rimington, then DDG, who had worked in all three branches of the Security Service and before her appointment visited Moscow to make the first, as she thought, friendly contact between the British secret services and the KGB, became Director General of MI5.

As it happens, the publication in Moscow of *KGB: The Inside Story* by Andrew and Gordievsky coincided with yet another important event in the

history of this organisation which was initially planned as the sword and shield of the Bolshevik revolution. In 1992 the British SIS exfiltrated from Russia another defector whose presence in the West had remained secret for seven years. His name was Vasili Mitrokhin.

For almost 30 years Mitrokhin worked in the foreign intelligence archives of the KGB, and in 1972 supervised their move to the new headquarters in Yasenevo near Moscow. As a senior archivist, he had unrestricted access to the most secret documents and had a chance to copy, or make notes, from the files that hardly anyone had an opportunity to see or work with. The best that was available even for the highest-ranking KGB or party officials were brief summaries of selected cases. What became known as the Mitrokhin Archive, which extends from the Bolshevik revolution to the 1980s, was described as 'the most complete and extensive intelligence ever received from any source'. This may be an exaggeration, but not too far off.

With Mitrokhin, everything was played by the book. In October 1995 Andrew was invited to the SIS head office at Vauxhall Cross where probably none other than 'C', Sir David Spedding, himself briefed him on what he describes as one of the most remarkable intelligence coups of the late twentieth century. 'When I first saw Mitrokhin's archive a few weeks after the briefing,' Professor Andrew recalls, 'both its scope and secrecy took my breath away.'

Unsurprisingly, by the time Andrew's two volumes of *The Mitrokhin Archive* came out, his first KGB history published nine years earlier had become outdated. The book, which is still hailed in Russia as 'the most comprehensive history of the KGB from Lenin to Gorbachev', now seems obsolete, containing some erroneous claims, false facts and misleading statements. However, although a careful analysis of new sources available three decades after its publication (including copies made by Mitrokhin and the documents uncovered by the Russian society Memorial plus research undertaken by other authors) would show that while some details and names in the Andrew and Gordievsky KGB history are confused and tangled, it still has value and should not be dismissed outright. Suffice it to say that almost everything that Soviet and Russian intelligence officers and historians know about their own service comes from this book.

* * *

Like much else in the study of intelligence, the history of Soviet and Russian secret services, their internal and foreign operations and their influence on Russian policy-making require regular reassessment. Partly, it is because from time to time previously classified or even never heard of documents somehow find their way out of the archives into the public domain. In such cases, and

this concerns all government records, one should be very careful in making conclusions because even primary sources and especially secret documents usually contain factual errors not to mention the occasional clanger, bias, misinterpretation or an intentional untruth of those who produce them. As a result, the interpretation of some secret doings can quickly coagulate in false patterns.

Sometimes, writers deprived of access to fresh facts and original documents tend to copy what others have written, though that may be largely guesswork, misinformation and speculation. It is like writing the history of the Dark Ages when few events were documented and most of the witnesses illiterate or incapable of or prevented from knowing, much less describing, the historical events or figures of their time. Any such surviving fragmentary detail gains value because no other is recorded, even though it may stem from ignorance or partisanship and by repetition it gains credibility and becomes history.[1] This is accidental deception, self-deception or delusion when someone is deceived but there was no intention to deceive.

Another story is purposeful deception. One example is the biography of the Soviet NKVD deserter who became known as 'General Alexander Orlov'. His heroic life was artfully fabricated by the KGB and presented to the world in a book written by the Soviet KGB Colonel Oleg Tsarev in collaboration with the British writer John Costello. This book, called *Deadly Illusions* (1993) and hailed as 'the first book from the KGB archives' with various subtitles like 'The KGB secrets the British government doesn't want you to read' (the UK edition) or 'The KGB Dossier Reveals Stalin's Master Spy' (the American edition), might be best of all described as 'The KGB secrets the KGB does want you to read', an expression coined by Donald Cameron Watt.

Contemporary historians tend to forget that Tsarev was a KGB operative working in London under the cover of a journalist and expelled from Britain in the early 1980s. He was then employed by the Press and Public Relations office of the KGB in Moscow. Costello was a British journalist and writer, who was neither able to speak nor read Russian but was willing to accept documents given to him by the KGB archivists at face value, expecting fame and fortune to follow. As one reviewer noted, 'the book is a joint work of a clever KGB hardliner and John Costello, about whose historical abilities perhaps the less I say the better'. Nevertheless, it became an international bestseller and is still being quoted as an indisputable source by many intelligence writers although it had long been exposed as a fake history, a KGB deception.

Another example is a no less famous book *The Crown Jewels*, published in the United Kingdom in 1998 by HarperCollins and in the United States

a year later by Yale University Press. This is Tsarev's second book based on the precis from the KGB files and written in collaboration with a Western author, in this case Nigel West. D.C. Watt labelled the book 'spy faction' and Sheila Kerr contributed a long review to an academic journal entitled 'Oleg Tsarev's Synthetic KGB Gems' (for whatever reason forgetting to mention the British co-author).

In the interwar period, the earlier part of which (1917–27) is the main subject of this volume, there were several important defections of OGPU, Red Army and CPSU officials. Perhaps the most important and valuable of them was Georges Agabekov, a young man who at the peak of his Cheka-GPU/OGPU career used to serve as head of its Eastern Section. With his command of three languages, Armenian, Turkish and Farsi, Agabekov previously operated undercover in several republics of Central Asia, Afghanistan, Persia and the Near East, and was well informed about Soviet agent networks there as well as about the organisational structure and personnel of the OGPU, which combined the functions of Soviet political police and overseas intelligence agency. However, Agabekov was almost completely ignored by British secret services although he was eager to share his knowledge and published two excellent books about Soviet intelligence operations and agents in several countries. Seven years after his defection Agabekov, who had settled in Belgium, was murdered by Soviet agents.

Another Soviet intelligence agent, Walter Krivitsky, who defected in France in 1927, was also completely ignored by both the British and French secret services. Only after the Byelorussian-born American journalist and writer Isaac Don Levine presented Krivitsky to the world as a 'general and former chief of Soviet Military Intelligence in Western Europe' did he attract attention of MI5. On behalf of the defector, Don Levine wrote several articles published in the *Saturday Evening Post* and a book *In Stalin's Secret Service* (UK title – *I was Stalin's Agent*) that came out in November 1939. Krivitsky was not even able to read it, let alone correct factual errors and inventions scattered in the manuscript, because his English was very poor. Nevertheless, early in 1940 Krivitsky was secretly brought to the UK to testify. The first female officer of the Security Service, Jane Sissmore (after marriage known as Kathleen Archer), its main Soviet expert, interviewed Krivitsky at length at the Langham Hotel in Portland Place. 'Her interrogation of the Russian defector Walter Krivitsky,' according to the authorised history of MI5, 'was a model of its kind – the first really professional debriefing of a Soviet intelligence officer on either side of the Atlantic.'[2]

Giving due credit to Mrs Archer's skills, with the exception of one case 'Krivitsky's information on Soviet agents still operating in Britain was too muddled to make identification possible'.[3] That as a result of extensive

debriefing not a single other Soviet agent was identified had been perfectly in line with the Service's policy of the day because as recently as January 1939, Vernon Kell, the DG, confidently declared that '[Russian] activity in England is non-existent, in terms of both intelligence and political subversion'.[4] By that time many Soviet spies (moles like Kim Philby and his Cambridge friends) had already penetrated all levels of the British political, economic and scientific establishments.

Seven decades later it turned out that another name mentioned by Krivitsky proved too sensitive to include in the report on his debriefing. Jane Archer, who drew up the report, assured her superiors that she had left out all references to a current SIS agent.

During an interview Krivitsky recalled that while working for SIS in the Netherlands, one Bill Hooper asked Han Pieck, a Soviet agent-recruiter in the Hague, to find him work with Soviet intelligence. William John 'Bill' Hooper, a British subject born in Rotterdam, had been listed as a secretary to the British Passport Control Office (PCO, a SIS front) there since at least December 1928 or earlier, having later moved with this office, headed by Ernest Dalton, to The Hague. His younger brother, Herbert 'Jack' Hooper, had been a member of the PCO staff from 1933 to 1937. Bill Hooper met Pieck in early 1935, and already on 30 January submitted a report on communism in Holland and Pieck. Hooper's statement to that effect had been duly written down and filed in October 1939.[5] As a result, Valentine Vivian, head of SIS Section V, as well as his successor had every reason to believe Hooper was acting in the Service's interests and were thus anxious that he should not be incriminated in Archer's report.

In August 1945, the new Director-General of MI5, Sir David Petrie, informed the Chief of MI6: 'With the exception of one incident involving rather serious indiscretions with a woman and a general tendency to high expense claims, I have had no trouble with Hooper and have no reason to suspect that he has been acting other than in the interests of this country. His work, which has been carefully supervised, has in fact been extremely good.'[6]

Hooper's MI5 file PF 48890/V1-4 was declassified and released to the National Archives in November 2017 (KV 2/4346-4349). Christopher Andrew commented that Hooper was the only MI5 and SIS officer who had also worked for both Soviet and German intelligence. Recent research suggests that Bill Hooper had actually been able to pull the wool over everybody's eyes, including the Dutch security service, the BVD.[7] Hooper's name and pre-war adventures, usually with numerous factual errors, are mentioned in many books like Ladislas Farago's *The Game of the Foxes* (1971) or Nigel West's *MI6: British Secret Intelligence Service Operations 1909-45* (1983 and 2019), although already in 1986 the Dutch maritime historian

Karel Bezemer wrote that 'from September 1939 he [Hooper] was re-employed [by SIS] and succeeded in being recruited as a paid agent by both the German and Soviet-Russian secret services, but forwarded important information to the British'.[8] When Hooper was recruited as an MI5 agent in 1941, Felix Cowgill, head of SIS Section V – counter-intelligence – 'said that, above everything, he [Cowgill] is certain that he [Hooper] is absolutely loyal'.[9] With this, Hooper's name is not even mentioned in the traditional back-of-the-book index of the official history of MI6.

When the authorised history of MI5 was published, it had not yet been definitely proved that almost everything that Krivitsky said to Mrs Archer was either hearsay or an invention, although both his MI5 and FBI files have long been declassified and available for public use. His biographer, Gary Kern, has also published Krivitsky's *MI5 Debriefing and Other Documents on Soviet Intelligence* (2014) as a separate book. Therefore, Christopher Andrew states, somewhat misleadingly, that 'despite Krivitsky's inability to provide clear leads during his debriefing to any current Soviet agents or intelligence personnel in Britain, he none the less transformed the Security Service's understanding of the nature and extent of Soviet intelligence operations'.[10] No wonder articles like 'Still Perplexed About Krivitsky' (Earl M. Hyde Jr) continue to appear in peer-reviewed academic journals.

* * *

Just like the history of the British Security Service, the first century of the KGB (with its multiple predecessors and successors) falls into six periods which reflect its changing priorities both in and outside of the former USSR and what remained of it after August 1991. Remarkably, the new Russian foreign intelligence service, the SVR, also decided to publish its history 'from the ancient times to 2005', Putin's second term as president. By accident or design, they have also packed it in six books probably because in numerology the number six represents service, both divine and human. Putin is a former KGB officer and the SVR was formerly the First Chief Directorate of the KGB, which after the collapse of the Soviet Union became a separate organisation. Its first director, Yevgeny Primakov (1991–96), headed the editorial board of this semi-official collection of essays praising Soviet spies and their agents. Although its authors, many of whom are former and serving intelligence officers, claim that their stories are based on the KGB documents, they are highly unreliable if not profoundly misleading.

This volume covers the first decade from the Bolshevik revolution of October 1917 and the formation of the Cheka, the Soviet political police, to the time Stalin was able to concentrate all political power in his own hands

by first removing Trotsky, his main opponent, from the Central Committee and then expelling him from the Communist Party altogether in November 1927. For seven decades the KGB in its various incarnations acted as the sword and shield first of the Bolshevik revolution and then the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Initially, it set out to defend the revolution and exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat over all other classes by forcefully supressing the 'exploiters and various bourgeois elements', which also meant the intelligentsia. Other important tasks were to identify and destroy counter-revolution within and outside, and secure the diplomatic recognition of the country. Following the civil war, other tasks facing the Soviet leadership were the post-war reconstruction of agriculture, industry and economy where the Cheka and its successors, the GPU and OGPU, had the lead role in counter-subversion and counter-espionage. This has always been understood as 'activities threatening the safety or well-being of the first socialist state and intended to undermine or overthrow the Soviet government by political, industrial or violent means'.[11] Today's FSB, which draws a direct line of descent from the Cheka, GPU, NKVD and the KGB's Second Chief Directorate still operating from the old Lubyanka headquarters, has an incomparably wider remit.

The resistance to the sovietisation in Central Asia and other places, massive peasant rebellions plus a perceived threat of another foreign intervention contributed to the continued militarisation of Soviet society leading to fierce debates on how to reorganise the Red Army after the civil war. The unconventional nature of this war created new criteria for military merit. Several of prominent Bolshevik and Red Army leaders, like Stalin and Kliment Voroshilov, emphasised revolutionary ideology and guerrilla warfare over professionalism and training. The main argument was that if Marxism had completely reconsidered the concept of war, revolutionary experience and ideological rectitude would far outweigh experience of the former Tsar's General Staff.

With all this a matter of debates at the 10th Party Congress (8–16 March 1921), the devastated Soviet economy could only support a small army of 562,000 men. Here, on the thorny issue of military discipline and party democracy, David Stone writes, 'various opposition groups urged a relatively independent and bottom-up network of Communists within the military, both as a means of checking any counter-revolutionary efforts by military specialists and combating the Bolshevik party's own tendencies to ossification and authoritarianism … The practical solution was a strong and tightly controlled Political Directorate.'[12] Known in Russian as PUR, Political Directorate of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Repubic (RVSR), it was established in May 1919 but was soon subordinated to

both the RVSR and the party leadership. Already in January 1921, within the newly created Secret-Operational Directorate (SOU) of the VCheka, functions of the Special Department (OO) were expanded to include 16th section headed by Yakov Agranov and responsible for counter-intelligence and security in the Red Army, and 17th section headed by Nikolai Kalinin for counter-espionage work among former Tsarist officers now serving in the Red Army. Thus, parallel to the Communist Party control of the armed forces through political commissars, the VCheka special departments (OOs) were established within all large military units to counter subversion, detect and thwart enemy espionage as well as monitor and combat political dissent.

Before official trade and diplomatic relations were established with the capitalist powers, the Cheka was neither able nor interested to send its officers abroad except on short missions. These missions were usually related to the activities of anti-Bolshevik White Guard organisations conspiring with and supported by Western intelligence services. After permanent Soviet representations were established in foreign countries, the Cheka's foreign department, the INO, started sending its most trusted and capable operatives either as 'illegals' or, more often, under diplomatic cover as members of the Soviet diplomatic missions. Their task was not what traditionally is understood as 'espionage', that is 'the process of obtaining information that is not normally publicly available, using human sources (agents) or technical means'. The aim of the illegals was to penetrate the White Guard organisations planning political or terrorist actions against the newly established USSR or its representatives. Those operating under legal cover concentrated all their efforts on learning the Western governments' and their secret services' plans directed against their country because of the war scare that swept the Soviet Union in late 1926 and 1927. 'The available data,' according to John Sontag, 'suggests both that in 1926 the Soviet government was genuinely concerned that the Western powers were planning forcible territorial changes in Eastern Europe and that subsequent events in 1927 intensified Moscow's fear.'[13] The whole work of the Cheka and INO was concentrated on either confirming or refuting those fears.

What in Britain, France and other countries became known as communist propaganda, subversion, sedition and even Soviet espionage was in reality the amateurish but enthusiastic work of the Comintern and its agents. The Comintern, of course, was under the full control of the CPSU leadership and its agents were often combining the tasks given to them by the OMS (the International Liaison Department of the ECCI) with the secret work for the INO and (G)RU. In their turn, officers and agents of the Cheka and (G)RU posted abroad often acted as the Comintern's OMS representatives which resulted in confusion and misunderstanding by Western security services

who based their assessments of the adversary's actions and intentions on the activities of their own secret intelligence services. Such errors of judgement and false beliefs (delusions) were typical of British secret services (SIS, MI5 and Special Branch) in the interwar period. This misunderstanding, combined with the lack of reliable material and sometimes simple negligence, has been fully reflected in the works of many intelligence historians in both Great Britain and the USA. The task of a historian today will be to change established patterns thanks to the unprecedented before availability of primary and secondary sources.

* * *

It is always a great challenge to write a history of a secret service and it had been my dream for at least three decades to produce a new history of the KGB correcting many errors and misconceptions of previously published volumes. I have done my best to find and study all published and unpublished material in English, Russian, German and French pertinent to the topic. My private archive and 'files' include my personal interviews with Soviet defectors, Russian, British and American former and serving intelligence officers and sometimes their families and children. There are letters, emails and manuscripts, photos, copies of unclassified documents in addition to a selected impressive library of books and other secondary sources in many languages that I rely on in my research.

I thank everybody who helped me, but first of all my wife Valentina who has always been the first reader and critic of all my works. I am also extremely grateful to my late friend Pete – Dr Tennent H. Bagley, a former high-ranking CIA officer and scholar who had opened to me, albeit for only a few years, a complex world of American intelligence.

Cambridge Professor Christopher Andrew has been at the forefront of the study of intelligence for over 50 years. During this time, he has produced a series of landmark works that have transformed our knowledge and understanding of the role of intelligence, as correctly noted by Mark Phythian in an exclusive interview with Chris in July 2016 for *Intelligence and National Security*, the leading academic journal that Andrew had co-founded. Besides his most significant contribution to the development of intelligence studies, Professor Andrew's great achievement is his discovery of a 'missing dimension' of international history, an area of academic inquiry dealing with the role the intelligence plays in political decision making. But probably Andrew's greatest achievement so far is his magisterial work *The Secret World: A History of Intelligence* (2018), which is a kind of an intelligence Bible no one else would be able to write.

My history teacher, best adviser and academic supervisor is Professor Sir Paul Preston of the London School of Economics and Political Science. Paul is a unique historian, helpful friend and a great man whose books even dealing with such cruel and violent subjects as the Spanish Holocaust, civil war and betrayal are full of his genuine interest in the people he is writing about. A native-level Spanish speaker, Professor Preston is the leading world expert on the history of Spain, especially contemporary history. During his long academic career, Sir Paul has become not only an outstanding British historian, Fellow of the British Academy, but also a prominent and influential Spanish historian. Beyond his own published works, Paul's commitment to mentoring subsequent generations of academics helps to ensure a steady stream of important history books.

I am very grateful to William A. Tyrer, a Hollywood filmmaker and producer who in the course of his research also became a historian of the interwar Soviet operations in Europe and America. Having worked with the papers of Vasili Mitrokhin at the Churchill College Archive Centre in Cambridge, he was able to locate and share with me important archival material and documents pertaining to this book project.

The editorial, production and marketing team of my British publisher, Frontline Books, an imprint of Pen & Sword, deserve my special thanks. I must make particular mention of Martin Mace, the publisher and himself a military historian and author who has been involved in writing and publishing military history for more than two decades. I thank Martin for his courage and trust because it was his decision to commission the writing of a new history of the KGB from a single author. I am immensely grateful to Lisa Hooson with whom I have had fruitful collaboration over many years, as well as to John Grehan, Stephen Chumbley, Jon Wilkinson, Olivia Camozzi-Jones and many others who enthusiastically worked on this first volume and thanks to whose efforts this book has been born.

There are many other people – historians, academics, researchers, librarians and archivists – to all of whom I must express my profound gratitude, and I can't afford not to mention the names of Mark Dunton, Principal Records Specialist – Contemporary, The National Archives in Kew, Richmond, Surrey; Ingrid Tanzberger of the Austrian National Library and a small group of professional men and women in Moscow, London and Washington whose names unfortunately cannot be named here.

Albeit planned to be in six volumes, my brief history of the KGB, the name this sinister organisation – both Soviet secret political police, counter-intelligence and foreign intelligence service – had during the most interesting period of the Cold War (from March 1954 until it was officially dissolved on 3 December 1991), cannot pretend to give a full account of a

true monster born by Lenin's fevered brain. Another monster was the Soviet state itself. With a history spanning over 100 years this is a difficult task for one person, especially what concerns its past two decades under Russian President Vladimir Putin when the KGB split into many agencies giving birth to new monsters like, for example, Rosgvardiya or Presidential Security Service (SBP), together about 350,000 secret agents who serve as Mr Putin's Praetorian Guard. My mission is to give scholars, researchers, journalists and students of intelligence better understanding of its organisational structure, personnel, secret operations, mentality and motivations that constitute a 'missing dimension' of international history otherwise little known, totally unknown or not properly understood. This is not so much to change history, but to make it a bit more precise.

Boris B. Volodarsky,
Vienna-London, December 2022

Introduction: From the Okhrana to the National Guard

Alexander II, the Emperor of Russia who was also the King of Poland and the Grand Duke of Finland, better known in Russia simply as the Tsar, created the first special security department after an assassination attempt in 1866. It was a small organisation located at Number 16 on Fontanka Quay in St Petersburg, then the capital of the Russian Empire. Nothing happened after another failed attempt in 1879 but following the third one, in August 1880, the Tsar created the Department of State Police within the Ministry of the Interior and transferred part of the Special Corps of Gendarmes and the Third Section of the Imperial Chancellery to the new body. This department had a unit known as the Special Section which dealt with political crimes and sensitive investigations. This Special Section, or *Osoby Otdel* (OO) in Russian, formally commanded the Okhrana, which is the short form of *Okhrannoe Otdelenie*, the division which became better known by its diminutive Okhranka with a subtle, sneering expression of contempt. Its official full name was the Department for Protecting Public Security and Order.

Created to combat political terrorism and left-wing political activity, the Okhrana operated in the whole territory of the Russian Empire that included Poland, Finland and large parts of Transcaucasia but contrary to the claims of many Soviet and satellite publications it was probably the smallest government agency. According to Aleksei Vassilyev, its last chief, the Okhrana never had more than a thousand men.[1] Its head office in St Petersburg had fewer than 200 employees and the Moscow branch was even smaller. It also had two overseas agencies or centres known as Zagranichnaya Agentura. The first and most important was in Paris, opened in June 1883, which also oversaw the less important Berlin, London, Geneva and Warsaw stations. The second was in Bucharest. Together the Paris and Bucharest offices ran all intelligence and counter-intelligence operations worldwide.

The Okhrana's first official representative in Paris was a secret agent of the police department by the name of Petr Vasilievich Korvin-Krukovsky (who had served with the rank of titular councillor in the Ministry of the

Interior).[2] To those not taken into his confidence, he was known as a reporter, playwright and translator. After marrying a French actress, Korvin-Krukovsky lived and worked in Paris representing the ultra-nationalist Sacred Squad, a short-lived Russian underground monarchist organisation. It was formed immediately following the assassination of the Russian Emperor Alexander II in March 1881 to counter revolutionary terrorism. Two years later, after the dissolution of the Squad, Petr Korvin-Krukovsky was appointed the first chief of the Zagranichnaya Agentura. Accused of unprofessionalism, negligence and embezzling money from the secret funds, he was dismissed in March 1884. His successor, Petr Rachkovsky, a former prosecutor sent to Paris on a special secret mission in January 1884, replaced him, taking over the Paris Centre on 20 May. For a while Korvin-Krukovsky continued to work for him as an auxiliary agent later moving to Angers in western France where he died in 1899.

Rachkovsky was given two rooms in a side wing of the Hôtel d'Estrées, the residence of the Russian Ambassador Baron Arthur von Mohrenheim at 79 rue de Grenelle, with a separate entrance. He employed two people as his assistants and they remained his only permanent staff for eight years. Rachkovsky, or, as he had been known in Parisian high society, Monsieur Pierre, was a colourful personality about whom a lot has been written,[3] but perhaps one of the most interesting discoveries back in 1999 was documentary evidence found in the Russian archives showing that the notorious anti-Semitic forgery known as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was the work of one of Rachkovsky's agents in Paris, of which there had been suspicions all along.

Matvei Golovinsky, the opportunistic scion of an aristocratic family and a former law student, joined the Holy Brotherhood, an anti-Semitic secret society which used forgery as a tool against the revolutionaries, publishing phoney newspapers and political tracts. His active role there got him a job in the government press department where Golovinsky acted as a spin doctor, placing articles in compliant newspapers and paying fees to journalists with ingrained 'habits of obedience'. Uncovered and publicly denounced as an informer, he moved to Paris and got in touch with Rachkovsky who used him to plant *The Protocols* in the French press. They were later sent as the genuine stuff to General Peter Orzhevsky, Commander of the Special Corps of Gendarmes and Deputy Minister of the Interior, beginning their inglorious journey around the world despite having been exposed as a 'base forgery' and a 'recrudescence of medieval bigotry and stupidity'. And despite the definitive scholarly debunking of *The Protocols* already in the early 1920s, it became perhaps the most influential forgery of the twentieth century.

During his 18 years at the helm of the Paris Centre of the Okhrana, Rachkovsky actively used against the revolutionary émigrés all fundamental

counter-intelligence methods that the KGB later employed and all its successors in modern Russia continue to use.[4] Like the Okhrana within the Russian Empire, its centres and outposts abroad practised 'external surveillance' by hiring local plainclothes detectives, paying maîtres d'hôtel, concierges and cab drivers, and getting access to the local security services' files. Two other favourite methods were penetration by recruiting informers or sending penetration agents, and the use of agent provocateurs. The definition comes from French meaning 'inciting', somebody who provokes, persuades or encourages others to act in a violent or unlawful way. Among well-known examples is the blowing up of the printing shop in Geneva used by the Russian terrorist anti-government organisation Narodnaya Volya (People's Will), which the Rachkovsky agents succeeded looking like the work of disaffected revolutionaries. Another provocation was the unmasking of a bomb-making conspiracy by Russian émigrés in Paris.

The agent provocateur who played the leading role in this operation was known among the conspirators as Abraham Landezen, born in the Pinsk province of White Russia as Avraam-Aron Heckelmann. A student in St Petersburg, he was arrested for taking part in Narodnaya Volya underground political activities and recruited as a police informer. In 1890 Landezen was one of the organisers of the factory for the production of improvised explosive devices in Paris. When the bombs were ready and hidden in the premises rented by the plotters, on Rachkovsky's instructions Landezen informed the Sûreté and twenty-seven members of the organisation were arrested. Among others, he was also sentenced by a Paris tribunal to five years imprisonment as a terrorist, but managed to escape abroad. In 1893 he was baptised in the St Elizabeth's Russian Orthodox Church in Wiesbaden and became Arkady Mikhailovich Heckelmann, changing his family name to Harting and his place of birth to St Petersburg three years later.

Arkady Mikhailovich Harting (spelt Garting in Russian) made a dizzying career ascent from moonlighting as a confidential police informant, known as a seksot in Russian, to becoming a royal guard accompanying Nikolai Aleksandrovich Romanov to Coburg in Germany where the future Tsar Nicholas II proposed to Princess Alix of Hesse-Darmstadt. Later, in charge of the royal protection detail, Harting travelled with the Tsar and his family to Europe and Scandinavia, also visiting England and France. Starting from December 1900, he headed the Berlin station and then, in August 1905, was transferred to assume control of the Paris Centre of the Okhrana. Four years later, thanks to the information provided by an Okhrana defector, he was uncovered by Russian revolutionaries. On Thursday, 1 July 1909, Vladimir Burtsev wrote to the French Minister of Justice Aristide Briand (who would soon succeed Clemenceau as prime minister):

> I have the honour to inform you of the following. In 1890 a certain Landezen, real name Gekkel'man, was sentenced *in absentia* by a French Court to five years in prison for his role as organiser of a dynamite plot. At that time I had been acquainted with Landezen for a year. I now wish to inform you that the individual calling himself Garting, aka Petrovsky, Beire etc. who is currently living in Paris, who is personally acquainted with M. Hamard, Head of the Sûreté, with M. Ruichard [*sic*] and with many other high-ranking officials, and who currently holds the post of Head of the Russian secret police in Paris is, in reality, none other than said Landezen, of which fact I can supply proof. I therefore ask that you issue an order for the arrest of the said Landezen-Garting-Petrovsky-Beire. I am at your service and willing and ready to supply evidence.[5]

The story broke for the first time a week later on the front pages of *L'Humanité*, at the time the paper of the SFIO (Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière), a political party founded by Jean Jaurès, a French socialist leader. The scandal quickly reached Russia and was reported, as it was said, 'in some detail and with a certain degree of balance'. The London *Times* also decided to react, describing Burtsev as 'the revolutionary writer who is daily filling the columns of the sensational press' and stressing that 'whatever antecedents of this mysterious personage [Harting] may have been, he rendered good service in the office to which he was appointed by the police authorities'.[6]

Nevertheless, the effect of this exposure resonated through Europe. In France, the National Assembly voted unanimously to stop such criminal activities and to expel all foreign police representatives. In Britain, the issue was raised in the House of Commons by a Labour MP, who demanded that the Liberal government put an end to the unwholesome practices of secret policemen. In Paris, Burtsev received wide acclaim and in their version of the story *Le Journal* described him as the 'Sherlock Holmes de la revolution russe' – a sobriquet which would stick to him for the rest of his life.[7]

While the scandal was unfolding, Harting was in Brussels preparing for the Tsar's state visit to France, thus evading arrest. He was hurriedly recalled to Russia, narrowly missing the opportunity to be awarded the Legion of Honour to which he had been admitted.[8] Promoted to Actual (Deistvitelny) State Councillor, a civil rank equal to those of Major General in the Army or Rear Admiral in the Navy, in 1913, during the First World War he served as head of Russian counter-intelligence in France and Belgium. Together with his wife, a very wealthy Belgian woman from Liège, after the war Harting returned to Brussels where he permanently settled, suddenly becoming a banker. What happened to him later is unknown.

When back in 1900 the Prussian Secret Police (Geheimpolizei) was initially approached about developing permanent liaison with the Okhrana, they hesitated until it was officially announced that the Berlin station would be headed by Harting, a person close to the Tsar. And indeed, as one historian notes, they never regretted it because, after having settled down at the number 4 on Friedrichstrasse opposite a nice park, Harting never forgot that a little extra inducement might result in a more conscientious approach to his needs on the part of his German colleagues. This tactic never failed and a well-bribed German police commissioner did his best to keep tabs on the Russian anarchists and revolutionaries. Altogether, Harting maintained in Germany some half-dozen penetration agents, his best man being Jacob Zhitomirsky who, as a student at Berlin University collaborated with the local police before he was picked up by the Okhrana in 1902. Zhitomirsky (party alias 'Otsov', Okhrana aliases 'André and 'Daudet') was able to get into the confidence of the Leninist revolutionary party group, where he was active until 1907, when the German authorities expelled them and he moved to France reporting to Harting. In May, Zhitomirsky, by that time a close associate of Lenin, attended the 5th Party Congress in London. When he was finally uncovered by Burtsev as a police infiltrator, Zhitomirsky managed to escape to South America.

One of Harting's major contributions to counter-intelligence was the introduction of a personal filing system on all revolutionaries and political suspects and a reference catalogue for operational planning, verification of data and intelligence reporting. And it was in Belgium after Harting's marriage, the CIA report states, that the Okhrana developed the most comprehensive exchange of information with the Belgian Sûreté Générale that lasted until the outbreak of war in 1914. According to the CIA estimates, by the end of 1908, the Okhrana Paris Centre had over forty men and women placed in Russian revolutionary organisations abroad.[9] Harting's penetration operations became a classic that would be studied in detail in the KGB High School.

However, by far the greatest success was achieved in Russia with the recruitment of Roman Malinovsky as a seksot. In June 1912, Stepan Beletsky, director of the Interior Ministry's Department of Police, flatly ordered that every union of workers in the country must have a secret police informant. Malinovsky, a Russified Pole, would become his most prized possession. He had a criminal record, having served a prison term for burglary. Upon his release Malinovsky joined the workers' movement and became the founder and later secretary of the St Petersburg Metal Workers' Union. To protect his connection with the St Petersburg police, he was arrested on a specious pretext and 'exiled' to Moscow, where his personal case officer was the chief of the Okhrana Pavel Zavarzin.

The Okhrana instructed Malinovsky to join Lenin's Bolsheviks and he was soon elected to the Moscow party committee and then nominated as a candidate for election to the State Duma. In January 1912 with Lenin's support he joined the Central Committee at the Prague Party Conference and in autumn was elected to the Duma. After the Prague conference Lenin decided to take over the popular newspaper *Pravda* making it the party's official and legal mouthpiece and moving its editorial board from Vienna, where it had been edited by Trotsky, to St Petersburg. When the first issue under Lenin's leadership was published on 22 April (New Style: 5 May) 1912, one of its editors was an Okhrana agent Miron Chernomazov while Malinovsky was involved, albeit briefly, in the business side of the paper's operation.[10]

With his election to the State Duma and especially after he became a member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party, the historians of the Petersburg Okhranka write, 'Beletsky had assumed personal control of Malinovsky and met him in the private dining-rooms of the most expensive restaurants', reviewing his agent's speeches, the drafts of some of which had been written by Lenin. For two years Malinovsky had remained the principal spokesman for the Leninist group in Russia, also leading the Bolshevik faction in the Duma.[11] On 4 May 1914, still a fully-fledged agent, Malinovsky suddenly resigned and left Russia with a 6,000-rouble annual pension (the average salary of a worker was about 300 roubles a year). After the Bolshevik revolution he suddenly returned to Russia and after a brief trial was executed by firing squad in November 1918.

The Paris Centre did not limit itself to collection of information on revolutionary suspects. It also pioneered a wide variety of what the KGB later called 'active measures',[12] a system of distribution of false or misleading information as well as black propaganda, better known today as covert psychological operations or psychological warfare, designed to influence foreign governments and public opinion both in its own country and abroad. Rachkovsky routinely paid French journalists like Gaston Calmette from *Le Figaro*, Charles Maurras, an organiser and principal philosopher of Action Française, and even Jules Hansen, an international mediator, lobbyist, writer and journalist of Danish descent, for pro-Russian articles and reviews. In the first decades of the twenty-first century this developed into the Kremlin's persistent attempts to use its secret services in covert operations 'to influence the world by unseen means – the hidden hand'.[13] This is exactly what Christopher Andrew and other leading intelligence historians describe as the 'missing dimension' to most studies of international relations and diplomacy.

The chiefs of Zagranichnaya Agentura were also active in foreign policy matters. Rachkovsky was a committed advocate of an alliance with France,