

# Russian Spies Alma Mater: brief history



By Vladimir Sergevnin, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor,

Director of the Center for Applied Criminal Justice, WIU

<http://www.wiu.edu/users/cacj/>

Editor of the Law Enforcement Executive Forum Journal,

[http://www.iletsbei.com/lee\\_forum/](http://www.iletsbei.com/lee_forum/)

# CHEKA/OGPU/NKVD/**KGB**/FSB

- **KGB (КГБ)** is the commonly used acronym for the Russian: Комитет государственной безопасности (Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti or **Committee for State Security**). It was the national security agency of the Soviet Union from 1917 until 1991, and was the premier internal security, intelligence, and secret police organization during that time.



- The KGB was formed in 1954, taking up the duties of a **series of state security** agencies that grew out of the Russian Revolution, including the
- Cheka (1917 to 1922)
- GPU/OGPU (1922 to 1934)
- NKVD (1934 to 1946)
- MGB (1946 to 1954)
- **KGB (1954 to 1991)**
- FSB (1991 – present)

# CheKa

- The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage,
- **December 20, 1917**

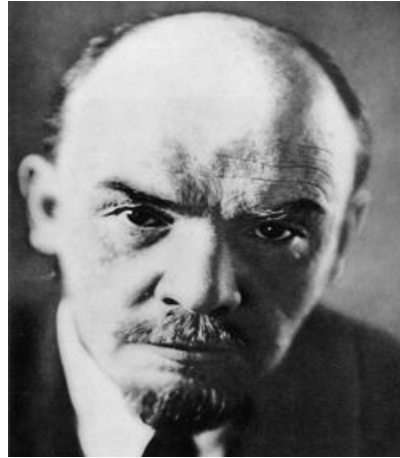


***“Iron Felix” – CheKa chief, 1917-1926***

- The Cheka was established to ensure the **Bolshevik regime's survival**, the Cheka suppressed counter-revolutionary activity with **domestic terror and international deception**.
- The scope of foreign intelligence operations prompted **Lenin to authorize** the Cheka's creation of the **INO (Innostranyi Otdel—Foreign-intelligence Department)**—the precursor to the First Chief Directorate (FCD) of the KGB.

# Lenin's assassination attempt

- **On August 30, 1918** Lenin spoke at a Moscow factory called "Hammer and Sickle". As Lenin left the building and before he entered his car, Kaplan called out to him. When Lenin turned towards her, she fired three shots with a Browning pistol



*Vladimir Lenin*



*Fanny Kaplan*

An official **decree for Red Terror** was issued only hours after the Kaplan shooting, calling for "a merciless mass **terror against all the enemies of the revolution**".

"Do not look in the file of incriminating evidence to see whether or not the accused rose up against the Soviets with arms or words. Ask him instead to which class he belongs, what is **his background, his education, his profession**. These are the questions that will determine the fate of the accused. That is the meaning and essence of the Red Terror." *Martin Latsis, chief of the Ukrainian Cheka, 1918*

# Red Terror

- **The mass repressions were conducted by the Cheka**
- Victims were skinned alive, scalped, **"crowned" with barbed wire**, impaled, crucified, hanged, stoned to death, tied to planks and **pushed slowly into furnaces** or tanks of boiling water, and **rolled around naked in internally nail-studded barrels**.
- Chekists poured water on naked prisoners in the winter-bound streets until they became **living ice statues**.
- Others beheaded their victims by twisting their necks until their heads could be torn off.
- The Cheka stationed in Kiev reportedly would attach an iron tube to the torso of a bound victim and **insert a rat into the other end** which was then closed off with wire netting. The tube was then held over a flame until the rat began gnawing through the victim's guts in an effort to escape.
- Investigation discovered corpses whose lungs, throats, and mouths had been packed with earth



# The Rise: Purges



*Josef Stalin*

From 1934 to 1938 Stalin conducted a series of purges—millions died in labour camps, executions or mass killings.

The instrument for this was the secret police – NKVD under first Yagoda (1934-36) and later Yezhov, the ‘poisoned dwarf’, (1937-38).

**December 1, 1934 – Decree against Terrorist Acts** – gave NKVD unlimited power to hunt down enemies of the state (on the same day as Kirov’s murder which triggered the Purges).



*Sergey Kirov*



# The Rise: Purges

A series of ‘show trials’ of prominent Communists and military leaders justified the purges – **Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov and Bukharin all admitted** to plotting against the Stalin, becoming ‘Trotskyite’ scapegoats for the USSR’s troubles.

On 24 May 1940: Trotsky survived a raid on his home by armed assassins led by GPU agent Iosif Grigulevich, Mexican painter David Siqueiros, and Vittorio Vidale.



*Leon Trotsky*



*Ramón Mercader*

August 20, 1940, Coyoacán, México city:

Trotsky, heavily wounded but still conscious, ordered guards to spare his attacker's life shouting "Do not kill him! This man has a story to tell."

After 20 years in jail in 1961, Mercader moved to the Soviet Union and was subsequently presented the Hero of the Soviet Union, the country's highest decoration, by the head of the KGB Alexander Shelepin.

# The Rise: Richard Sorge

## – Russian James Bond

- Richard Sorge (October 4, 1895 – November 7, 1944) was a German communist and spy who worked for the Soviet Union. He **worked as a journalist in both Germany and Japan**, where he was imprisoned for spying and eventually hanged. His GRU codename was "Ramsay" (Russian: Рамзай).



In October 1941, informed Kremlin that **Pearl Harbor would be attacked in sixty days**. Moscow had then informed him that this had been passed on to the US. This info was ignored.

The date of **20 June** had been given to Sorge by the deputy military attaché, Lieutenant-Colonel Erwin Scholl, at the German embassy in Tokyo.

Sorge advised the Red Army on September 14, 1941, that the **Japanese were not going to attack** the Soviet Union

***"Sorge was the man whom I regard as the most formidable spy in history."  
- Ian Fleming.***



# The Rise: "Atomic spies"

In December 1944, Beria's NKVD was assigned to supervise the Soviet atomic bomb project ("Task No. 1"), which built and tested a bomb by 29 August 1949.

"Atomic spies" are various people in the United States, Great Britain, and Canada who are thought to have illicitly given information about nuclear weapons production to the Soviet Union.



- **Julius and Ethel Rosenberg** and Ethel's brother **David Greenglass** and **Morris Cohen** – Americans - designers of the Soviet atomic bomb got piles of technical documentation straight from the secret laboratory in Los Alamos
- **Theodore Hall** - American, who had been a developer on the bombs dropped in Japan
- **Klaus Fuchs** was a German-born British physicist who was sent to America to work on the atomic project where he became one of the lead scientists. Klaus provided the Soviets with detailed information on the gas phase separation process.

# The Rise: Creation of the KGB

- Expecting to succeed Joseph Stalin as leader of the USSR, the ambitious head of the MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs), **Lavrentiy Beria, merged the MGB and the MVD** on Stalin's death in 1953.
- Anticipating a coup d'etat, the Presidium swiftly eliminated Beria with treasonous charges of "criminal anti-Party and anti-state activities" and executed him.
- **March 13, 1954. The MGB was renamed KGB**, detached from the MVD, and demoted from Cabinet to Committee level.



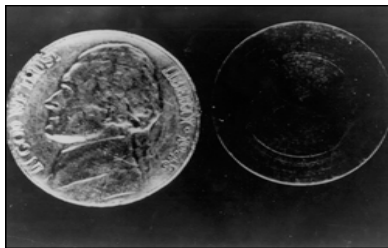
# Illegals: Rudolph Abel (Hollow Nickel Case)



- Vilyam "Willie" Genrikhovich Fisher was exchanged for captured
- American U-2 pilot Gary Powers



- Renewed emphasis on illegals in 1950s (spy ring run by Elizabeth Bentley, she turn herself in to the FBI in 1945)



# Fall: Defections from Soviet intelligence

- 1945: Igor Gouzenko, cipher clerk in Ottawa
- 5 major defections in early 1954 (Khokhlov, Deryabin, Rastvorov, and the Petrov)
- 1985 Oleg Gordievsky;
- **1992 Vasili Mitrokhin**



- **Oleg Kalugin**, is a former KGB general. He was a longtime head of KGB operations in the United States.
- According to Kalugin, he has never betrayed any Soviet agents except those who were already known to Western intelligence. He criticized intelligence defectors like Gordievsky as "traitors."
- In 1995 he accepted a teaching position in The Catholic University of America and has remained in the United States ever since.

# Moles: KGB Agent Aldrich Ames

- **Aldrich Ames (born May 26, 1941) is a former Central Intelligence Agency counter-intelligence officer** and analyst, who, in 1994, was convicted of spying for the Soviet Union and Russia. Until the revelation of the extent of Robert Hanssen's spying seven years later, Ames compromised more CIA assets than any known Soviet mole in American history.



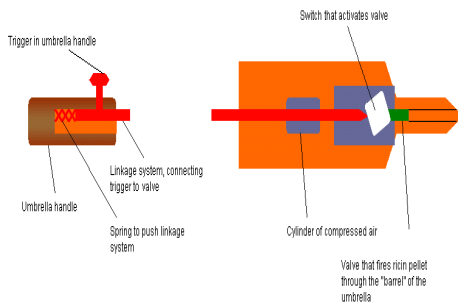
In April 1985, Ames provided information to the Soviets that he believed was "essentially valueless" but that would establish his credentials as a CIA insider. He also asked for \$50,000, which the Soviets quickly paid. Ames **received \$4.6 million from the Soviets** **Betrayed more than 10 CIA agents in Russia**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0Gcpu0zatk&feature=related>

# 'Wet affairs'

- Euphemism for sabotage, kidnapping, assassination
- **Bureau N 1 & N 2 of "active acts"** - targeted defectors and dissidents
- Assassination of **Georgi Markov** in London  
"Umbrella Murder" (died Sept. 11,

**Alexander Litvinenko** was a former officer of the Russian Federal Security Service, FSB and KGB, who fled from court prosecution in Russia and received political asylum in the United Kingdom. On 1 November 2006, Litvinenko suddenly fell ill. Earlier that day he had met two former KGB officers, Andrei Lugovoi and Dmitri Kovtun. Lugovoi is a former bodyguard of Russian ex-Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar (also reportedly poisoned in November 2006).



# The end of “Iron Felix” days?

*‘I think if we compare Hitler to Stalin, and the Gestapo to the KGB, the KGB was far more ruthless -- not because they killed far more people, but because they were indiscriminate in the selection of victims. The Nazis concentrated on Jews; the Soviet KGB under Stalin’s directions was an internationalist organization: it would kill anyone who would stand in the way of Stalin and his leadership.’*



**1991, “Iron Felix”  
monument**

*After Stalin’s death, the KGB underwent serious reforms, but not serious enough to declare it a legitimate organization abiding by the laws of the state... the Soviet system was a lawless system, and the KGB was a tool of lawlessness.’*

*Oleg Kalugin, retired head of KGB foreign counterintelligence*