
The Polish People's Republic and KGB Intelligence Cooperation after 1956

Witold Bagieński

Throughout the communist period in Poland, security organs were under the influence and supervision of the Soviet Union. At the beginning of 1957, it was agreed that the KGB Liaison Group would be established in Warsaw. Its role was to coordinate cooperation between security authorities. Despite the change in the situation after 1956, the KGB continued to influence the direction of the Polish Security Service. One of the most important fields of cooperation was intelligence. Department I of the Interior Ministry cooperated with the First Main Directorate of the KGB in many fields. The basis for cooperation was the exchange of information and some of the documents obtained, which were mainly about political and economic issues. Scientific and technical intelligence was also an important field of cooperation. The security authorities of the Polish People's Republic were not treated by the KGB as an equal partner. Very often they were obliged to give more than they received in return. From the mid-1950s onwards, on the KGB's initiative, cyclical conferences were convened for the intelligence services of Eastern Bloc countries. Contacts with the KGB ceased in the 1990s.

Keywords: Polish People's Republic, Soviet Union, Polish-Soviet Intelligence cooperation, KGB, Polish Security service

The mass deportation from Bessarabia/Moldavian SSR in mid-June 1941. Enhancing security, a social engineering operation, or something else?

Igor Cașu

This article draws on the files of the Soviet political police in Chișinău as well as Western and post-Soviet scholarship on Stalinist deportations from the western borderlands in the wake of the German attack on the USSR on 22 June 1941. There are two main and contrasting interpretations of the motives behind the mass resettlements in this period. The first one stipulates that it was mainly security reasons which determined the timing and the target of the mass deportations. The other one states that ethnic cleansing was the aim of mass deportations before the Barbarossa operation. I argue that, at first glance, both interpretations seem mutually exclusive, but in reality, they are complementary. Among the deportees from Soviet Moldavia in mid-June 1941, as well as from other newly annexed territories, according to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, were social elements deemed ideologically dangerous. At the same time, the official Stalinist view since the 1930s claimed that these social categories, in particular, would raise serious security threats in the event of a foreign invasion by sympathizing and siding with the external enemy.

Keywords: Soviet Union, Moldavia, Soviet annexation of Bessarabia, Mass deportations, NKVD, Stalinism

Communist State Security's role in the persecution of "the old communists" in Slovenia

Aleš Gabrič

Immediately after the end of World War II, State Security bodies in Yugoslavia (and Slovenia) focused on the persecution of people who had collaborated with the occupiers during the war. However, State Security soon started monitoring the actions of those who were seen as potential opponents of the regime. This contribution describes the fates of three leftist intellectuals and members of the Communist Party, who had still enjoyed the privileges of the new authorities for a few years after the war but eventually became critical of the ruling communist elite due to their disagreement with its politics. Two of them were imprisoned and interrogated by State Security and sent to concentration/labour camps. They were put on the list of "Cominform supporters" although they had been arrested before the correspondence between the Soviet and Yugoslav leaderships was published.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Communist party of Yugoslavia, Yugoslav State security service, Communist intellectuals, Tito-Stalin Split 1948, Dragotin Gustinčič, Lovro Kuhar (Prežihov Voranc), Vinko Möderndorfer

The post-Stalinist mode of Chekism: communist secret police forces and regime change after mass terror

Jens Gieseke

The occasion of the centenary of establishing the Soviet secret police known as the "Cheka" encourages a closer examination of the "Soviet-type" of the secret police in terms of their long-term development. Secret police forces were evidently of constitutive importance to the communist regimes. At the same time, their role was subject to considerable change and variation concerning their role in the fabric of the communist power apparatuses, their methods, and the groups in society against which they were directed. In the first part of this study, four to five phases of the Soviet secret police development and their "brother organs" in the Eastern Bloc are outlined as a working hypothesis. In the second part, continuity and change will be exemplified by the transition to the third, "post-Stalinist" phase, focusing on the cases of the Soviet Committee for State Security (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti, KGB) and the East German Ministry of State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, MfS) in terms of their role within the fabric of power relations, their self-images and public representations, and their practices of violent persecution and preventive surveillance.

Keywords: Soviet Union, German Democratic Republic, Cheka, Chekism, KGB, Stasi, Post-Stalinism, Eastern Bloc countries, Security services

Between Spain and Russia: The long shadow of the Soviet Cheka and its use in propaganda in Spain in the 1920s and 1930s as well as during the Spanish Civil War

Fernando Jiménez Herrera

During the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), a concept gained great relevance on the rebel side: the term “Cheka”. This concept was used repeatedly by Franco’s propaganda to define the popular committees that emerged in the Republican rearguard. Throughout this text, the different meanings of the concept are analysed, as is the meaning given to it by the media, mainly the press, to compare both the Spanish revolutionary committees and the Russian Cheka. After studying the Soviet institution in its context – the Russian Civil War – and a compilation of the main news about it during the 1920s and 1930s in Spain (although it was no longer known as Cheka, the concept remained in the press), this essay will proceed to analyse the revolutionary processes of 1936 and the organs that promoted them: the committees. The Francoists established parallels between the Cheka and the committees based on the use of violence. They maintained that the Spanish committees emulated the actions of the Commission, and taking it as an example, they launched the revolution. However, the present investigation attempts to dismantle such a hypothesis. The revolutionary violence of 1936 had nothing to do with the Cheka or its agents in Spain during the civil war. It was a popular reaction to an unexpected situation: the loss of power by the state. The committees exercised the “justice of the people” in the face of mistrust towards the judicial apparatus – classifying it as bourgeois – and under their own guidelines. They were neither guided by a foreign institution nor attempted to emulate one. The 1936 violence in Spain had its own dynamics, as did the violence in Russia between 1917 and 1923. While the committees emerged as an alternative to the state, the Cheka was born under its protection. The governments favoured the Commission, granted it prerogatives as well as extensive legislation and budgets. The committees, on the other hand, had successive governments fight them to regain the monopoly of lost power. They were two different structures, which only had the use of violence in common. So why did they call them “Chekas”? This is the question that guides the following investigation.

Keywords: Spanish Civil War, Spanish Revolutionary committees, Revolutionary violence in Spain in 1936, Francoist propaganda, Cheka, Soviet Union

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy: guarding state secrets and political control of industrial enterprises and institutions in the post-Stalin era

Evgenia Lezina

Having been entrusted with securing secrets in the early years of Soviet rule, the secret police remained the chief guardian of state secrets and the main driving force behind the regime of secrecy in the USSR until its collapse in 1991. This paper explores the development of the secrecy regime in the Soviet Union from the late 1950s until the late 1980s, focusing on the relevant functions, methods, and practices of regime-secrecy bodies during this period. It also addresses a double function of state security agencies at industrial enterprises and institutions as a secret police conducting counterintelligence servicing and performing surveillance over employees on the one hand, and acting as a guardian and organizer of the secrecy regime on the other. Additionally, it examines the role and implications of the personnel security screening system, which was a part of securing state secrets. This study is largely based on archival sources from the collections of the Lithuanian Special Archives in Vilnius, the archives of the State Security Service of Ukraine in Kyiv, and the Communist Party archives in Moscow.

Keywords: Soviet Union, Lithuania, Ukraine, USSR from the 1950s to 1980s, KGB, Secrecy regime, State security agencies in industry, Surveillance, Counterintelligence

Czechoslovak security advisers in Mali in the years 1960–1964 (study and selected documents)

Michal Miklovič

The work of Czechoslovak security advisers in Mali in the years 1960–1964 was part of the rivalry between the East and West over political influence in newly established African states. Czechoslovak security advisers proposed and helped introduce a new system of organization for Malian security. They arranged and, together with lecturers invited from Czechoslovakia, conducted short-term courses in Mali on counterintelligence, intelligence techniques and technology, eavesdropping, ciphering, criminology, cynology, pyrotechnics, and protecting government officials. Malian security officers also completed months-long state-security courses in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak advisers also consulted on the operational activity of Malian security and participated in intelligence activities for Czechoslovak intelligence.

Keywords: Czechoslovakia, Mali, Decolonization, Africa in 1960s, Eastern bloc advisers in Developing countries, Eastern bloc military aid in the “Third world”, European Socialist countries and the Global South

From the Budapest Dance Palace to the autopsy table: The Lapusnyik Case, or the defection and death of a secret agent at the beginning of the Kádár era

Mária Palasik

In the summer of 1962, the political police had an extraordinary case in Hungary. Béla Lapusnyik, a police sergeant with the Interior Ministry, committed the crime of illegally crossing the border to Austria during the night of 8 May. His act was regarded as treason and generated a series of actions at the ministry. Leaders feared that Lapusnyik could give information to Austrian intelligence, counterintelligence, and even military counterintelligence. This could lead to dangerous consequences for the Hungarian secret agencies. Everybody was certain that Lapusnyik would indeed give sensitive information to Austrian state security, although, ultimately, he could not, as he died under suspicious circumstances in a Vienna hospital. Today, it is certain that Lapusnyik was killed at the behest of the KGB. We do not know who the killer was, but it is already known that Lapusnyik was murdered using a particular liquid poison, called DMS (dimethyl sulphate), which was designed to evaporate from the body's system by the time of his death. This would explain why Austrian autopsy experts were unable to establish poisoning as the cause of death. The poison was created in a special Soviet laboratory. Under the bureaucracy of the Hungarian Interior Ministry, the everyday life of the political police was well-documented. The investigation of this case shows how the framework of State Security could provide great opportunities for a young man and yet radically corrupt his personality. This study concentrates on the investigation of Hungarian State Security services. As background, the author also introduces Béla Lapusnyik, his life, family origin, career, and other details about his illegal border crossing. In conclusion, it summarizes the known facts about how a healthy young man could die as a prisoner of the Austrian state police (Staatspolizei, STAPO).

Keywords: Hungary in the 1960s, Hungarian State security services, Austrian State security service – STAPO, Eastern bloc defectors, KGB, Assassinations of defectors, Béla Lapusnyik Case

The struggle of Hungarian Christian Democrats for a democratic Hungary, 1944–1957

Éva Petrás

After interwar antecedents, the Democratic People's Party (DPP), or Demokrata Néppárt (DNP) in Hungarian, was established as a modern Christian democratic party at the end of 1944 in Hungary. The DPP took part in both parliamentary elections of 1945 and 1947, gaining 61 seats in 1947. After the communists' seizure of power

in 1948, it was not only the political representation of Christian democracy that was in danger but also the personal existence of its representatives. Party leader István Barankovics and 11 DPP MPs were forced to emigrate in 1949, and the operation of the Party was suspended. Communist State Security played an active role first in the surveillance of Christian democrats and then in their persecution after 1948. What awaited those who remained in Hungary was a final exclusion from public life, various forms of retaliation, show trials, imprisonment, internment, police supervision, persecution, and constant surveillance by State Security. The regime may seem to have reached its objective in the case of Christian democracy, i.e., its elimination, but this was actually far from the truth. The participation of Christian democrats in opposition movements on the one hand, and the international activity of émigré Christian democrats on the other, was significant in promoting Hungary's turn towards democracy.

Keywords: Hungary in the 1940s and 1950s, Hungarian Christian democrats, Hungarian State security service, Prosecution of opposition in Hungary in 1950s, Hungarian opposition to the Communist party rule, Hungarian anti-communist émigrés

Tito-Stalin conflict and the Yugoslav Secret Police (UDBA) in 1948–1956

Martin Previšić

The paper deals with the Yugoslav secret police (Uprava državne bezbednosti, UDBA) during the Tito-Stalin split. From its beginnings, the Yugoslav secret police organization was one of the pillars of the newly established communist rule in Yugoslavia. Among other things, it played a crucial role in the fight against World War II's remaining enemies. In addition, the UDBA had an essential role in the "class struggle" and sovietization of Yugoslavia. With the Tito-Stalin split in 1948, the UDBA served as the principal force for quelling Stalin supporters (ibeovci) and running and establishing a prison and labour camp system used for the incarceration of ibeovci. Labour camps, run by the UDBA, become notorious since systematic beatings and torture were used as the primary method in so-called "political re-education" of Stalin supporters. As many as 15,700 were imprisoned in one of the many labour camps (Goli Otok was the biggest). After the end of the Tito-Stalin split, the UDBA's power grew even more until it was reorganized in 1966.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Tito-Stalin Split 1948, Yugoslav Cominformists, Yugoslav State security service, Yugoslav repression against Cominformists, Goli otok, Prison camps

Relations between Soviet security organs and the Estonian Communist Party in 1940–1953. A case of mass deportations in March 1949

Aigi Rahi-Tamm – Meelis Saueauk

The March deportation in 1949, carried out as Operation *Priboi* in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, was the largest post-war deportation operation in the Soviet Union. Like the Great Terror, such major operations allow for an analysis of the mutual relations between Party authorities and Soviet State Security structures. This study aims to focus on these relations. An analysis of the March deportation clearly reveals the leading role of the security apparatus, including their relations with Party organs, in such extremely important operations concerning the sovietization of Estonia. The Estonian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (ECP/B/) Central Committee Bureau later approved the deportation in its decision. Thus, the Party authorities are jointly responsible for the planning, implementation, and consequences of the March deportation and the policy of violence as a whole. Regardless of whether the ECP(B)'s leading position was factual or fictitious, its leadership assumed the duty of directing the security organs in a serious manner and demonstrated initiative in this regard. The security organs almost completely ignored the Party as an institution, and this only started to change gradually in the final months of the Stalinist period.

Keywords: Soviet Union, Baltic Soviet Republics, Estonia, Mass deportations, NKVD, Communist party – State security service relations