

Evgenia Lezina

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy:
guarding state secrets and political control of industrial enterprises
and institutions in the post-Stalin era¹

For the whole duration of the Soviet Union's existence, state security agencies issued career-affecting security clearances for people allowed to access secret works and documents. The vetting system was based on a loyalty principle, assisting to filter out political undesirables. Given the overarching secrecy in the USSR, access to confidential information was both a powerful incentive and a burden that influenced the existence of millions of Soviet employees.

It's noteworthy that the secret police had a double presence in Soviet industrial enterprises and institutions. On the one hand, it was active and ever-present there through operational agent activity or – as it was officially termed – counterintelligence servicing or protection of an object (*kontrrazvedyvatel'noe obsluzhivanie/obespechenie ob'yekta*).² Simultaneously, it served as a principal organizer and guardian of the secrecy regime, which included issuing security clearances. These two functions were closely interrelated because *ensuring the preservation of state and military secrets in the USSR's Armed Forces at especially important facilities for industry, transport, and communications, research institutes, design bureaus, and other facilities* ranked among the tasks of Soviet counterintelligence.³

This paper will address the two interlocking roles of the secret police and their development for a period of about thirty years, from the late 1950s to the late 1980s. It starts by outlining the major contours of the secrecy regime and its origins and then turns to the system's evolution in the post-Stalin era, when it held full sway. In this analysis, I will be largely relying on regulatory acts issued by the Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB), the USSR Council of Ministers, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). After presenting an overview of the evolution of the normative base, I will explore how the union-level regulations were implemented by the KGB's territorial bodies, inquiring into the implications and social effects of this two-fold presence of Soviet state security agencies in most of the country's workplaces. Finally, this study's emphasis will be on the personnel security screening procedure

1 This study was prepared as part of a research project funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

2 NIKITCHENKO, Vitaliy et al.: *Kontrrazvedyvatel'nyi slovar'*. Vysshaya Krasnoznamenaya shkola KGB pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR imeni Feliksa Dzerzhinskogo (hereafter only VKSh), Moscow 1972, pp. 143–144.

3 Ibid.

and its costs, meanings, and outcome.⁴ The concluding part will address the regime of secrecy's social effects and the burdens it placed on the Soviet system.

All-encompassing secrecy and the secret police

Secrecy in the USSR was not only a catchword, but rather a formative principle. In fact, the whole Soviet state's organization was aimed at isolating society from the outside world and at concealing truthful information about the state of affairs in the USSR from prying eyes. First and foremost, this was facilitated by a regime of virtually impenetrable state borders expressed in enormous constraints and tight control over the travel of Soviet citizens abroad, the enforcement of a special regime in border areas on the one hand, and in significant restrictions on foreign citizens' visits to the Soviet Union and on their movements within the country on the other. The movement of foreign visitors across the USSR was guided by special regulations and there existed a vast list of cities and regions totally closed for visits by foreigners.⁵ All these measures were administered and enforced by the secret police.

Alongside other agencies of the Soviet state, the latter was also in charge of propagating a cult of state and military secrets and of political vigilance (*politicheskaya bditel'nost*) among the country's population. Omnipresent posters, numerous films and television programs, frequent exhibitions and countless lectures conducted by state security officers in labour collectives across the country incessantly reminded Soviet citizens of their duty to be on a constant state of alert, ever conscious of the alleged vicious intrigues and machinations of the enemy's forces.⁶ The censorship of mass media, literature, statistical data, and of printed matter embraced another side of pervasive secrecy.⁷

-
- 4 Focusing on how the secret police organized and supervised the regime of secrecy and exerted political control over employees, I'll deliberately leave out other aspects of state security's activities aimed at protecting the Soviet economy (*zashita ekonomiki*) as well as its other functions in the economic sphere (such as the prevention of emergency situations, participation in production processes, the selection of cadres, etc.). Some of these roles were analysed in: HARRISON, Mark – ZAKSAUSKIENE, Inga: Counter-Intelligence in a Command Economy. *Economic History Review*, 2016, Vol. 69, No. 1, pp. 131–158; GRYBKKAUSKAS, Saulius: Deyatel'nost' KGB na promyshlennykh predpriyatiyakh Litvy v 1965–1985 gg. In: *Sotsial'naya istoriya. Yezhegodnik*, 2008. Aleteya, St. Petersburg, 2009, pp. 253–281. In a similar vein, the technical side of securing state secrets, manifested in countering foreign technical intelligence, etc., will be largely overlooked here.
- 5 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR (hereafter SM SSSR) No. 0279 ot 21. 7. 1966 "Ob obyavlenii resheniya SM SSSR No. 479-153 ot 16. 6. 1966 'O poryadke peredvizheniya inostrantsev po territorii SSSR'". *Lietuvos Ypatingasis Archyvas* (hereafter LYA), f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 111, p. 1–13.
- 6 See, for example, the translation of the 1986 article by the first deputy chairman of the KGB of the USSR: BOBKOV, Filipp: Political Vigilance – a Demand of the Times. *Soviet Law and Government*, 1987, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 66–79.
- 7 For more on censorship, see, for example, GORYAEVA, Tatiana: *Politicheskaya tsenzura v SSSR, 1917–1991*. ROSSPEN, Moscow 2009. For more on deliberate statistical data distortions for the purpose of concealing the populations of "secret towns" of the military-industrial complex, see TOLTS, Mark: Population Trends in the Russian Federation: Reflections on the Legacy of Soviet Censorship and Distortions of Demographic Statistics. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 2008, Vol. 49, No. 1, p. 87–98.

Evgenia Lezina

Perhaps its most significant aspect, however, was the closed nature of decision-making processes and the power monopoly exercised by the Communist Party. In fact, according to some data, up to 70% of normative acts in force in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s remained secret, and the need to handle them as well as tons of regular governing acts required a specially formed infrastructure.⁸

As already mentioned, the pivotal role in organizing and sustaining the secrecy regime (*rezhim sekretnosti*) or, as it was officially denoted, the *administrative-legal regime for the protection of state secrets* belonged to Soviet state security agencies.⁹ The Soviet secret police were, among other things, in charge of developing lists of classified information, instructions for ensuring the preservation of state secrets and the secrecy regime in institutions and enterprises of the USSR, and of directly supervising the regime-secrecy bodies, of which the Secret and later First departments were a part.

Lists of information comprising state secrets (*perechen'*) served as sources of secrecy and determined its content. These underlying guides for establishing the degree of secrecy for works and documents in the USSR were renewed six times during the Soviet era – in 1926, 1947, 1956, 1959, 1966, and 1980. While the first three lists were made public and were relatively concise, including largely military and economic information, as of 1959 all *perechen'* became classified and were substantially extended. Apart from military and economic data, the post-1959 lists included information regarding mobilization issues and reserves, transport and communications, science and technology, finances, foreign policy, foreign trade, and other data. Overall, the number of sections in lists of information comprising state secrets rose from 12 to 146, i.e., twelvefold, between 1926 and 1980 (Table 1).¹⁰ Based on the all-union *perechen'* departmental lists (*vedomstvennyye perechni*) and other lists of classified data were developed by ministries, state committees and other agencies of the Soviet state.

Table 1. Comparing lists of information comprising state secrets from 1926, 1947, 1956, 1959, and 1980

Lists of information comprising state secrets	1926	1947	1956	1959	1966 ¹¹	1980
No. of sections	12	14	17	79	–	146

8 KUDRYAVTSEV, Vladimir: *Pravovoe gosudarstvo: problemy i perspektivy. Sotsialisticheskaya zakonnost'*, 1988, No. 9 (647), p. 7; NIKULIN, Petr: *Konversiya sekretnosti: nerazumnaya nedostatochnost'. Kommunist*, 1990, No. 9, p. 70.

9 ROZANOV, Ivan – POPOV, Fyodor: *Administrativno-pravovoi rezhim okhrany gosudarstvennykh sekretov v SSSR. Uchebnoye posobiye*. VKSh, Moscow 1976; *Galuzeviy derzhavniy arkhiv Sluzhbi bezpeki Ukraini* (hereinafter referred to as GDA SBU), f. 13, spr. 696, p. 1–160. All translations from Russian are by the author.

10 1926: *Postanovlenie Soveta Narodnykh Komissarov SSSR ot 27. 4. 1926 "Ob utverzhenii perechnya svedeniy, yavlyayushikhya po svoemu sodержaniyu spetsial'no okhranyayemoi gosudarstvennoi tainoi"*. *Izvestia*, 13. 5. 1926, p. 5; 1947: *Ukaz SM SSSR No. 2009 ot 10. 6. 1947 "Ob ustanovlenii perechnya svedeniy, sostavlyayushikh gosudarstvennuyu tainu, razglasheniye kotorykh karaetsa po zakonu"*. *Izvestia*, 10. 6. 1947, p. 1; 1956: *Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 40 ot 5. 5. 1956 "Ob obyavlenii Ukaza SM SSSR No. 556 ot 28. 4. 1956 "Ob ustanovlenii perechnya svedeniy, sostavlyayushchikh gosudarstvennuyu tainu, razglasheniye kotorykh karayetsa po zakonu"*. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, ref. 107-sp, pp. 11ob.–12ob; 1959: *Ukaz SM SSSR No. 126-52 ot 9. 2. 1959 "Perechen' glavneishikh svedeniy,*

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

While the lists determined the content of secret data, the *Instruction for ensuring the preservation of state secrets and the secrecy regime in institutions and enterprises of the USSR* (hereinafter only referred to as the Instruction) regulated their processing. The Instruction itself was classified as a top-secret document. Having been reissued seven times during the Soviet era (in 1929, 1940, 1948, 1959, 1965, 1972, and 1987), the Instruction determined the tasks, duties, and rights of the regime-secrecy bodies (rezhimno-sekretnye organy, RSO). It also described the rules for organizing and protecting their premises, delineated the procedures for conducting secret record-keeping (sekretnoe deloproizvodstvo), regulated the access of employees to secret works and documents, governed accounting, the storage and handling of classified technical documentation, and many other issues.¹²

The pervasive secrecy thoroughly determined the nature of the omnipresent Soviet state's functioning. The circulation of classified information was allowed only through a network of specially established structures. Due to a huge volume of classified data and a ban on mixing secret documents with non-secret ones, special bodies handling secret information were present virtually everywhere. The Secret departments or units, which since 1965 became known as the First departments (perveye otdely), operated not only in ministries, Party bodies, defence enterprises, research institutes, and universities, but also in civil industries, including bread, milk, and meat production facilities, sewing and household-appliance factories, state owned farms, and other objects that were very ordinary and mundane. Although major secrets were concentrated on the defence facilities of the military-industrial complex (in fact, around 80% of the entire state industry actually worked for defence), the scope of secret information in the nonmilitary civilian economy was likewise enormous.¹³

sostavlyayushikh gosudarstvennuyu tainu". *GDA SBU*, f. 9, ref. 273-cp, pp. 72–83; 1980: Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 0055 ot 30. 3. 1981 "O meropriyatiyakh organov KGB v svyazi s utverzhdeniyem SM SSSR Perechnya glavneishikh svedeniy, sostavlyayushikh gosudarstvennuyu tainu, i Polozheniya o poryadke ustanovleniya stepeni sekretnosti kategoriy svedeniy i stepeni sekretnosti svedeniy, sodержashikh v rabotakh, dokumentakh i izdeliyakh". *LYA*, f. K-51, ap. 3, b. 22, pp. 90–120.

11 The 1966 list was unfortunately unavailable for research.

12 The 1940 Instruction was unfortunately unavailable for research. 1929: *Instruktsiya po sekretnomu deloproizvodstvu*, 1929. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 1-sp, pp. 221–253ob; 1948: *Instruktsiya po obespecheniyu sokhrannosti gosudarstvennoi tainy v uchrezhdeniyakh i na predpriyatiyakh SSSR*, utverzhdennaya Postanovleniem SM SSSR No. 535-204ss ot 1. 3. 1948. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 22-sp, pp. 12–51ob; 1959: *Instruktsiya po obespecheniyu sokhrannosti gosudarstvennoi tainy v uchrezhdeniyakh i na predpriyatiyakh SSSR*, utverzhdennaya Postanovleniem SM SSSR No. 126-52 ot 9. 2. 1959. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 271-sp, pp. 212–258; 1965: *Instruktsiya po obespecheniyu sokhrannosti gosudarstvennoi tainy i rezhima sekretnosti provodimykh rabot v uchrezhdeniyakh i na predpriyatiyakh SSSR*, utverzhdennaya Postanovleniem SM SSSR No. 555-213 ot 7. 7. 1965. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 308-sp, pp. 60–148; 1972: *Instruktsiya po obespecheniyu sokhraneniya gosudarstvennoi tainy i rezhima sekretnosti provodimykh rabot v uchrezhdeniyakh i na predpriyatiyakh SSSR* No. 00166-72, utverzhdennaya Postanovleniem SM SSSR No. 511-166 ot 11. 7. 1972. *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 117, pp. 42–161atv; 1987: *Instruktsiya po obespecheniyu rezhima sekretnosti v ministerstvakh, vedomstvakh, na predpriyatiyakh, v uchrezhdeniyakh i organizatsiyakh SSSR* No. 0126-87, utverzhdennaya Postanovleniem SM SSSR No. 556-126 ot 12. 5. 1987. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 74-sp, pp. 31–138ob, and *Formy k Instruktsii* No. 0126-87. *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 2184.

13 NIKULIN, Pyotr: KGB i gosudarstvennaya taina. In: *KGB: vchera, segodnya, zavtra. Sbornik*. Znak-SP – Gendal'f, Moscow 1993, p. 146.

Evgenia Lezina

The Secret or First departments carried out the reception, registration, reproduction, distribution, and storage of secret documents, and controlled the observance of rules for the handling of classified materials by employees. In fact, the latter could get hold of secret items only from the First departments' staff, which was entrusted with ensuring that state secrets and other sensitive information reached authorized hands only. Table 2 shows the development of the regime-secrecy bodies as reflected in the secrecy Instructions.

Table 2. Structure of the regime-secrecy bodies (RSO) as referred to in the secrecy Instructions of 1929, 1948, 1959, 1965, 1972 and 1987

	1929	1948	1959
RSO	Secret and secret-cryptographic bodies (departments, sections, branches, etc.) of institutions and organizations (§ 1)	Secret departments (sections) of institutions (enterprises) (§ 1)	Secret departments (sections) of institutions (§ 1)
	1965	1972	1987
RSO	Secret (regime) departments (sections), which in all institutions and enterprises are called First departments (sections); directorates, departments or groups of the regime (§ 3)	Independent directorates, departments, or groups of the regime, secret (first) departments or secret (first) units, which are referred to as regime-secrecy bodies (§ 13)	Regime-secrecy organs (RSO), including the units of the regime and the subdivisions of secret record-keeping at institutions and enterprises. Units of the regime: main directorates, directorates, departments, bureaus or groups of the regime. Subdivisions of secret record-keeping: Secret (First) departments or units. (§ 9, 10)

As a general rule, employees' access to classified information was possible only after obtaining a special security clearance (*dopusk*). Consequently, a large-scale system of personnel security checks was already established in the early years of Soviet rule. Generally, security clearances were issued to employees of the secret units themselves, to management and department heads of various institutions and enterprises, as well as to technical specialists occupying key posts, such as the heads of departments or laboratories or senior engineers. Alongside engineering and other technical staff, the personnel whose work was related to secret documentation and production, including laboratory assistants, typists, and workers, also had to undergo security clearance checks. All this entailed a pervasive system of mass verification which will be described later in this paper.

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

Documents and works could be classified as “of special importance” (*osoboi vazhnosti*), “top secret” (*sovershenno sekretnye*), and “secret” (*sekretnye*). There were three levels of security clearance corresponding to the different levels of secret classification (*grif sekretnosti*): Form No. 1 gave access to works and documents of “special importance”, form No. 2 to “top-secret” items, and form No. 3 to “secret” items (see Instructions 1959, § 31; 1965, § 29; 1972, § 43; 1987, § 30). Nomenclatures of employee positions that involved access to classified data and works with forms Nos. 1 and 2 were compiled by regime-secrecy bodies and approved by heads of institutions and enterprises in agreement with state security agencies (1959, § 22; 1965, § 28; 1972, § 57; 1987, § 28). In this way, both individual security clearances as well as the nomenclatures of employee positions were to be authorized by the secret police. Only form No. 4, which was introduced for the first time in 1965, did not require the KGB’s approval. This gradation implied that the closer it was to the decision-making hub, the more difficult it was to obtain an “admission ticket” in the form of security clearance.

It is noteworthy that, during the first decades of Soviet rule, the state security structures in charge of issuing *dopusk* and exercising controls over secret record-keeping on the one hand, and those performing operational agent activity at industrial enterprises and institutions on the other, were largely separated. If, at the earlier stage, security clearances were approved by accounting, statistics, and registration departments, issuing security clearances and control over secret record-keeping was carried out by counterintelligence directorates, admittedly since the mid-1940s and positively since the early 1950s.¹⁴

When the Committee for State Security under the Council of Ministers of the USSR was set up in March 1954, both operational support and securing secrets at industrial enterprises and institutions were first under the purview of its Fifth Directorate, which was in charge of industrial counterintelligence, and as of February 1960 – under the Second Chief (Counterintelligence) Directorate, into which the Fifth Directorate was integrated.¹⁵ Special checks in the Armed Forces were managed by the KGB’s Third Chief (Military Counterintelligence) Directorate.

In 1962 the then KGB Chairman Vladimir Semichastnyi (1961–1967) ordered that *giving people access to works and documents that are top secret and of special importance should be carried out directly by the operatives who conducted the operational support of industrial and transport facilities*.¹⁶ This meant that the officers who were assigned to certain industrial enterprises and ran agents, residents, and trusted persons there, also took charge of granting employees of these facilities access to secret information.¹⁷

14 *Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii* (hereafter RGANI), f. 5, op. 47, d. 402, p. 146. PETROV, Nikita – KOKURIN, Aleksandr (eds.): *Lubyanka. Organy VCHK-OGPU-NKVD-NKGB-MGB-MVD-KGB, 1917–1991*. Spravochnik. Mezhdunarodnyi fond “Demokratiya”, Moscow 2003, pp. 228–231.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 159.

16 Ukaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00269 ot 28. 4. 1962 “Ob obyavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB pri SM SSSR ot 29. 10. 1962 ‘O sostoyanii raboty na osobo vazhnykh ob’ektakh promyshlennosti i transporta i merakh po ikh dal’neishemu uluchsheniyu’”. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 295-sp, p. 122.

17 However, at a later stage, special groups within the counterintelligence directorate and departments were assigned to this work, as shown in: GRYBKAUSKAS, Saulius: *Deyatel’nost’ KGB na promyshlennykh predpriyatiyakh Litvy v 1965–1985 gg.*, p. 267.

Evgenia Lezina

In October 1982, “Directorate P” for Industrial Counterintelligence of the Second Chief Directorate was transformed into the Sixth Directorate for Economic Counterintelligence, which remained responsible for counterintelligence servicing as well as for the preservation of state secrets and issuing security clearances for employees at industrial enterprises and institutions until the end of Soviet rule.¹⁸

A preliminary comparison of six of the available secrecy instructions issued in 1929, 1948, 1959, 1965, 1972, and 1987 shows how their volume and the concomitant administrative apparatus maintaining the regime of secrecy had gradually expanded. In almost sixty years, the number of instructions’ pages grew eightfold, the number of sections grew fivefold, and the number of obligations for people given access to secret works and documents increased twofold. The same refers to bans on such persons (Table 3).

Table 3. Comparing the secrecy Instructions of 1929, 1948, 1959, 1965, 1972, and 1987

Secrecy Instructions	1929	1948	1959	1965	1972	1987
Parts	7	22	20	24	23	23
Sections	146	168	220	297	445	730
Pages	27	47	60	127	139	222
Pages with appendices (forms)	62	77	90	171	238	270
Obligations of people given access to secret works and documents	–	9	12	15	14	18
Bans on people given access to secret works and documents	–	10	10	15	16	18

The requirements for the bearers of secrets were increasingly toughened. For example, while there was a ban on Secret departments’ employees contacting foreign missions and diplomats in the 1929 regulations, as of 1948 people given access to secret works and documents were barred from *establishing and maintaining any contact with foreigners if this is not within the scope of their official duties* (1929, § 31; 1948, § 31(a); 1965, § 49(a); 1972, § 110(a); 1987, § 84(a)).

In general, in the post-war period marked by the Soviet expansion into Eastern and Central Europe and the beginning of the arms race, the secrecy regime was strongly reinforced in the context of the Soviet nuclear project’s development. In 1947, when the Soviet Union started preparations for its first nuclear test, which was conducted in 1949, a number of measures was undertaken to strengthen the preservation of state secrets.

18 PETROV, Nikita – KOKURIN, Aleksandr (eds.): *Lubyanka. Organy VCHK-OGPU-NKVD-NKGB-MGB-MVD-KGB, 1917–1991*, p. 173.

19 The decree criminalized the disclosure of secret information insofar as such acts could not be characterized as treason or espionage or did not by their nature entail a heavier punishment according to existing law. See Ukaz Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta (hereafter VS) SSSR ot 9. 6. 1947 “Ob otvetst-

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

In the first instance, a decree of 9 June 1947 imposed severe penalties for the unintentional or negligent disclosure of secret information, an offence that could be committed by any civil servant or public official.¹⁹ The list of classified information was also expanded and a new clause was introduced in it, stating that virtually any data could be recognized as secret based on a decision by the USSR Council of Ministers.²⁰ This was also followed up by a new secrecy Instruction issued in March 1948, as well as new *perechen'* released by the Main Directorate for Affairs of Literature and Publishing (Glavlit) in January 1949.²¹ After that, Glavlit repeatedly obliged the censorship bodies to resolutely strengthen the control of printed works, particularly literature on scientific, technical, and economic issues.²²

After the death of Stalin in 1953 the Soviet Party leadership initiated an ideological shift, officially announcing that the period of class struggle was over. It was concluded that, at the new contemporary stage, *the state, which arose as a dictatorship of the proletariat, has become a state of the entire people* (*obshenarodnoye gosudarstvo*).²³ This new normative ideological concept implied that *coercion was no longer to be applied to classes, but to individuals who violated the norms of socialist public order* (*normy sotsialisticheskogo obshezhitia*).²⁴ It also suggested the greater mobilization and wider involvement of the masses in social affairs. At the same time, the late 1950s and early 1960s were marked by the escalation of the Cold War, which brought about a discrepancy between the need to limit the repressiveness inherent in Stalin's reign of terror on the one hand, and to intensify controls over the population on the other. The need to exert a stronger grip over the system of securing state secrets and over citizens employed in defence industries was particularly exigent. In the next section, I will present an overview of the most significant administrative decisions undertaken by the Soviet authorities in relation to securing state secrets in the post-Stalin era.

-
- vennosti za razglasheniye gosudarstvennoi tainy i za utratu dokumentov, sodержashchikh gosudarstvennyu tainu". *Izvestia*, 10. 6. 1947, p. 1. See also HARRISON, Mark: *Secrecy, Fear, and Transaction Costs: The Business of Soviet Forced Labour in the Early Cold War*. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2013, Vol. 65, No. 6, p. 1116.
- 20 Postanovlenie SM SSSR No. 2009 ot 10. 6. 1947 "Ob ustanovlenii perechnya svedeniy, sostavlyayushchikh gosudarstvennyu tainu, razglasheniye kotorykh karayetsya po zakonu". *Izvestia*, 10. 6. 1947, p. 1.
- 21 *Perechen' svedeniy, zapreshchennykh k opublikovaniyu v otkrytoy pechati i po radio*. Glavlit, Moscow, 1949. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 20-sp. *Glavlit* was founded in 1922 to protect state secrets. See Polozhenie o Glavnom Upravlenii po delam literatury i izdatel'stva (Glavlit) ot 6. 6. 1922. *Svod uzakonenyi RSFSR*, No. 40, 1922, p. 461. According to Arlen Blium, from the very beginning, *Glavlit's* bodies became "a kind of branch of state security agencies" and functioned under their direct supervision. See BLIUM, Arlen: *Za kulisami "Ministerstva Pravdy": Tainaia istoriia sovetskoi tsenzury, 1917–1929*. Akademicheskii proekt, St. Petersburg 1994, p. 105.
- 22 See, for e.g.: Zirkulyar Glavlita No. 25 ot 19. 9. 1949. *Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii* (RGASPI), f. 17, op. 132, d. 485, p. 44.
- 23 The Third Program of the CPSU adopted during the 22nd Party Congress in 1961. In: HODNETT, Grey (ed.): *Resolutions and Decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*. Vol. 4. *The Khrushchev Years 1953–1964*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1974, p. 234.
- 24 RUMYANTSEV, Alexei (ed.): *Nauchnyi kommunizm: Slovar'*. Politizdat, Moscow 1983, p. 193.

Evgenia Lezina

The development of the secrecy regime from the late 1950s to the late 1980s 1. “The state of entire people” phase (late 1950s – late 1960s)

By the end of the 1950s, it had become largely clear to the KGB leadership that the time was ripe for change in the system of securing state secrets under their domain. The existing arrangement was found to be significantly overlaid (in terms of the scope of both mass verifications and the information deemed as state secrets) and hence highly ineffective. Thus, since the late 1950s and early 1960s, there had been recurrent calls within the KGB to focus on securing the most important state secrets on the one hand, and limiting the number of verifications on the other.

In conditions where the vast majority of our country’s working-class people grew up and were ideologically brought up under the Soviet regime, when the unprecedented moral and political unity of the Soviet people and the high political consciousness of citizens have been achieved, mass check-ups conducted to clarify compromising political data often turn into an empty formality, cause bewilderment among the verified, and often lead to the substitution of political vigilance for suspiciousness, stated a decision by the KGB Collegium On reducing the number of people checked by state security agencies when applying for classified information issued in May 1960.²⁵

However, the existing system was evidently not easy to alter, given that the mass verification of employees had been carried out for years with the primary aim of revealing politically incriminating data. During the first decades of Soviet rule, the chief marker of unreliability was for the most part an alien class origin. After Stalin’s death, many convicted individuals were rehabilitated and taken off various operational records (operativnyi uchet). However, according to Yuri Leontiev, the head of the First Department of Construction and Installation Directorate No. 8 of the USSR Ministry of Medium Machine Building, a sharp break with the former system of personnel scrutiny did not occur. *Instead of developing new forms and methods of verification, state security bodies currently conduct check-ups of these people guided by the principle as to whether they appear in any operational records left after the review of cases, wrote Leontiev in his 1962 note to the CPSU Central Committee. In his view, if such an approach was justified by historical conditions at earlier stages, this was no longer the case.²⁶*

The KGB directive, which was released simultaneously with the approval of the new secrecy Instruction in June 1959, required the KGB territorial bodies and the heads of institutions and enterprises to jointly review the nomenclatures of positions of employees to be given access to works and documents that were top secret and of special importance with the aim of limiting their number.²⁷

25 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00256 ot 13. 6. 1960 “Ob obyavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB SSSR ot 30. 5. 1960 ‘O sokrashenii kolichestva lits, proveryayemykh organami gosbezopasnosti pri oformlenii ikh na rabotu, svyazannuyu s sekretnymi svedeniyami’”. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 280-sp, pp. 61–62.

26 Zayavleniye i poynasnitel’naya zapiska nachal’nika pervogo otdela Stroitel’no-montazhnogo upravleniya No. 8 Ministerstva srednego mashinostroyeniya SSSR Yu. A. Leontieva v Otdel administrativnykh organov TsKa KPSS ot 7. 12. 1962. *RGANI*, f. 5, op. 47, d. 402, pp. 143–144.

27 Ukazanie Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 62ss ot 29. 6. 1959 “O meropriyatiyakh organov KGB

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

However, the ambiguity of the new approach was expressed in the fact that, along with a reduction in the number of checks, the same directive provided for the deeper vetting of people who were to be issued with security clearance forms Nos. 1 and 2, as well as those working at regime enterprises and their relatives. Since then, these groups would be checked on the operational files of archival and record-keeping (uchetno-arkhivnye) units of the KGB and its regional branches (UKGB) as well as of the First special departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Directorates of Internal Affairs (MVD-UVD) at their latest places of work and residence. If the applicants had been abroad, they were to be additionally verified using the operational records of the KGB First Chief (Foreign Intelligence) Directorate and its local units as well as the "PK" (Postal Interception) services of the KGB-UKGB bodies at their places of residence. The "PK" service also had to check relatives of the applicants if evidence existed that they had any links with people residing abroad. It was further stressed that final decisions should be based on *an objective assessment of the materials received, on the business and political characteristics of the verified, and the importance of an object at which he signs up*.²⁸ The twin challenge was to prevent the access of people who did not inspire political trust to regime facilities and, at the same time, to avoid unreasonable refusals.

Apart from attempting to limit the scope of verifications, the secret police had resolved to focus on securing the state's major secrets. In meeting this goal, the KGB endeavoured to intensify controls over defence industry facilities. Thus, in 1959, the official censorship of mail was introduced alongside the total tacit, unofficial surveillance of all correspondence emanating from persons working at and residing in areas surrounding special regime facilities (osoborezhimnye obyektu).²⁹

Additionally, the 1960 amendments to the 1959 Instruction required that KGB territorial bodies compile lists within two months of especially important facilities (perechni osobo vazhnykh obyektov). Everyone employed there including those with no access to secret works and documents were to obtain security clearances approved by the KGB.³⁰

In the second half of the 1960s the KGB Collegium issued several decisions regulating counterintelligence work at especially important objects of the defence industries.³¹ Essentially, they pointed at the shortcomings in operational agent activity, and

v svyazi s izdaniyem 'Instruktsii po obespecheniyu sokhrannosti gosudarstvennoi tainy v uchrezhdeniyakh i na predpriyatiyakh SSSR'. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 275-sp, pp. 5–6ob.

28 Ibid.

29 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00409 ot 19. 9. 1959 "O chastichnom vvedenii ofitsial'noi tsenzury pochtovoi korrespondentsii lits, rabotayushchikh i prozhivayushchikh v zonakh osoborezhimnykh obyektov". *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 273-sp, pp. 94–96.

30 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 0210 ot 29. 9. 1960 "Ob obyavlenii resheniya SM SSSR No. 994-412 ot 12. 9. 1960 'Ob izmenenii poryadka dopuska rabotnikov k osobo vazhnosti, sovershenno sekretnym i sekretnym rabotam i dokumentam". *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 277-sp, pp. 195–196ob.

31 According to the *Unified Dictionary of Chekist Terminology*, especially important and special regime facilities were regime objects of defence and national economic significance, where at least half of the output comprised state secrets or at least half of the employees were given access to information constituting a state secret. However, the lists (perechen') of facilities of these two types were approved differently. *The departmental list of*

Evgenia Lezina

in the selection, training, and use of agents at these objects.³² The 1966 decision, for instance, ordained among other solutions to *clearly determine the areas of concentration of the most important information, and specifically data which can be obtained by enemy intelligence only with the help of agents*. In doing so it was recommended to *actively use agents from among competent specialists as well as the opportunities provided by standing technical commissions* (postoyanno deistvuyushiye tekhnicheskiye komissii).³³

Since the beginning of the 1960s, the KGB had rekindled its efforts to limit the number of scientists travelling abroad and to establish “operational contacts” with prominent scholars and holders of especially important state secrets. In 1962, local KGB bodies were instructed to *take measures to check the suspicious communications of such persons through agents, trusted persons and other operational capabilities in order to suppress possible nefarious activities of foreign intelligence services through them*.³⁴ A similar call was reiterated in another order of 1963 which instructed local KGB bodies to *clearly identify the categories of major scientists and specialists who should be protected from possible intrigues by foreign intelligence services; to discern facts about the improper behaviour of some of them, which could lead to leaks of state secrets; to intensify the study of the environment surrounding these individuals, and to prevent holders of particularly important state secrets from actions that may lead to secrets being disclosed*.³⁵

especially important objects was approved by heads of departments, ministries, or state committees in agreement with the KGB. The list of special regime facilities, in its turn, was approved by the USSR Council of Ministers based on a proposal by interested ministries and departments and agreed upon with the State Planning Commission, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, and the KGB. See BOBKOV, Filipp (ed.): Yedinyi slovar' chekistkoi terminologii. Chast' 2. Kontrrazvedka. VKSh, Moscow 1988, pp. 206, 208. GDA SBU, f. 13, spr. 696.

- 32 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 0020 ot 23. 2. 1968 “Ob obyavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB pri SM SSSR ot 28. 12. 1967 ‘O sostoyanii i merakh uluchsheniya kontrrazvedyatel’noi raboty na osobo vazhnykh obyekтах oboronnykh otraslei promyshlennosti i po rozysku istochnikov utechki k protivniku sekretnykh dannykh v UKGB pri SM SSSR po Sverdlovskoi i Chelyabinskoi oblastyam”. The document is part of the “KGB Documents Online” collection.
- 33 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00126 ot 5. 9. 1966 “Ob obyavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB pri SM SSSR ot 30. 8. 1966 ‘O sostoyanii i merakh uluchsheniya kontrrazvedyatel’noi raboty na osobo vazhnykh obyekтах oboronnykh otraslei promyshlennosti i po rozysku istochnikov utechki k protivniku sekretnykh dannykh v Upravlenii KGB po Kuybyshevskoi oblasti”. GDA SBU, f. 9, spr. 134-sp, p. 178ob. For more on standing technical commissions first introduced in 1965, see ROZANOV, Ivan – POPOV, Fyodor: *Administrativno-pravovoi rezhim okhrany gosudarstvennykh sekretov v SSSR. Uchebnoye posobiye*, pp. 57–58.
- 34 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00269 ot 28. 4. 1962 “Ob obyavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB pri SM SSSR ot 29. 10. 1962 ‘O sostoyanii raboty na osobo vazhnykh obyekтах promyshlennosti i transporta i merakh po ikh dal’neishemu uluchsheniyu”. GDA SBU, f. 9, spr. 295-sp, pp. 114–123; Soveshanie nachal’nikov vtorykh upravleniy – otdelov – otdeleniy KGB – UKGB – OKGB soyuznykh i avtonomnykh respublik, kraev i oblastei. In: *Sbornik KGB SSSR, 1962, Nos. 15–16*, pp. 148–149. GDA SBU, f. 13, spr. 718.
- 35 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00203 ot 18. 10. 1963 “Ob obyavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB pri SM SSSR ot 11. 10. 1963 ‘O khode vypolneniya UKGB po Omskoi oblasti prikaza KGB pri SM SSSR No. 0075-ov ot 14. 3. 1963’”. GDA SBU, f. 9, spr. 300-sp, p. 68ob, 70; Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 0075-ov ot 14. 3. 1963 “O merakh po vypolneniyu postanovleniya TsKa KPSS i SM SSSR ‘Ob usilenii rezhima sekretnosti’”, pp. 7–9. See https://www.kgbdocuments.eu/assets/documents/2002e_18k.pdf (quoted version dated 30. 11. 2020).

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

Starting from 1963, the Soviet Union began to classify geographic maps on a wide scale, introducing false coordinates. It also embarked upon issuing geographic and educational maps and atlases intended for public sale with misplaced objects and other distortions.³⁶ As the Soviet Union's chief cartographer acknowledged in a 1988 interview, his service *deliberately falsified virtually all public maps of the country, misplacing rivers and streets, distorting boundaries and omitting geographical features*.³⁷ In this way, the ever-more stringent control over space was established, significantly reducing the spatial awareness of citizens who could no longer freely and conveniently navigate in their own country. To add to this, the storage and distribution of secret maps at Soviet enterprises and institutions also predictably ended up under the control of the secret police.³⁸

In October 1965, a new Instruction for the preservation of state secrets and the secrecy regime was released with its volume more than doubling compared to that of 1959. In addition to the secret departments or units, which from then on were called First departments or units, departments or units of the regime (*otdely rezhima*) were also introduced (1965, § 3). Whereas the former were primarily in charge of securing state secrets when working with secret data, the regime departments secured the protection of objects, their access control and internal regime, and also ensured the preservation of secrecy in the process of producing, storing, transporting, and testing secret products.³⁹ Both First departments and units of the regime formed the regime-secrecy bodies of enterprises and institutions. Despite their strong ties with the secret police, these bodies were formally independent structural subdivisions set up with the written permission of state security agencies, reporting directly to the head of the facility and his regime deputy.⁴⁰

Incidentally, the role of deputy heads in the regime was given particular prominence in the 1965 regulations. In fact, most enterprises, institutions, and organizations engaged in the development, engineering, and industrial production of special or secret products already had the post of deputy director in the regime (*zamestitel' direktora po rezhimu*) on their staff lists since 1963. The latter was a senior officer to the employees of the regime-secrecy bodies functioning at an enterprise or an institution: The First department, the department of the regime, the encryption department, in-house security, and fire protection services were under his command.⁴¹ The

36 Ibid.

37 KELLER, Bill: Soviet Aide Admits Maps Were Faked for 50 Years. *New York Times*, 3. 9. 1988, p. 1. See <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/09/03/world/soviet-aide-admits-maps-were-faked-for-50-years.html> (quoted version dated 30. 11. 2020).

38 See, for e.g., *Materialy po voprosam sokhraneniya gostainy v uchrezhdeniyakh i na predpriyatiyakh Litovskoi SSR*. Tom 1, 1988. *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 2194, p. 11–13.

39 ROZANOV, Ivan – POPOV, Fyodor: *Administrativno-pravovoi rezhim okhrany gosudarstvennykh sekretov v SSSR. Uchebnoye posobiye*, p. 55.

40 Ibid.

41 According to Rozanov and Popov, *the institute of deputy (assistants) directors (chiefs) of enterprises in the regime was first introduced in 1947 at nuclear facilities. In 1955, the USSR Council of Ministers extended it to enterprises manufacturing missile and reactive equipment, and in 1963 to all other defence facilities*. See ROZANOV, Ivan – POPOV, Fyodor: *Administrativno-pravovoi rezhim okhrany gosudarstvennykh sekretov v SSSR. Uchebnoye posobiye*, pp. 49–50, 52.

Evgenia Lezina

position of the deputy director in the regime was as a rule filled by KGB officers of the active reserve (ofitsery deistvuyushchego rezerva).⁴² This meant that, apart from their administrative duties, the deputies in the regime could be involved in operational agent activity at their workplaces, i.e. they could recruit their own agents and trusted people complementing the operatives in this role conducting counterintelligence support for the same facilities.⁴³

At the top of the regime-secrecy hierarchy were the regime directorates or departments of the defence ministries and agencies in charge of ensuring the protection of state secrets at enterprises, institutions, and organizations within their domain. The regime-secrecy bodies of ministries and agencies were likewise mostly staffed by KGB officers of the active reserve or reserve officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁴⁴

2. The détente phase (late 1960s – late 1970s)

The relaxation of tension in US-Soviet relations from the late 1960s to the late 1970s, known as the détente, was accompanied by a greater openness between the Soviet Union and the Western world.⁴⁵ Thus, since the late 1960s, when the Soviet KGB also got its new chef Yuri Andropov (1967–1982), state security agencies had been increasingly focusing on improving their control structures, particularly those ensuring surveillance over foreign visitors and any Soviet citizens' contacts with foreigners, including travels abroad and correspondence.

Hence, towards the end of 1968, an Instruction for the tacit control of mail and telegraph dispatches by the KGB was released.⁴⁶ A year later an order by the KGB Chairman once again addressed the issue of postal control at and around facilities of the USSR Ministries of Defence and Medium Machine Building in charge of the nuclear industry.⁴⁷ This time it provided for the selective tacit control of outgoing intra-union mail and for the total perustration of all correspondence sent by people working at and residing in the areas surrounding especially important facilities to recipients in capitalist and socialist countries.⁴⁸

42 The officers of the active reserve were KGB officers sent to work undercover in civilian agencies and institutions. The first Instruction governing this category of KGB officer was issued in 1958. See Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 0485 ot 24. 12. 1958 "Ob utverzhdenii Instruktsii po rabote s ofiterskim sostavom deistvuyushchego rezerva KGB, napravlennym v grazhdanskiye ministerstva i vedomstva". *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 104, pp. 52–55.

43 KOSOLAPOV, A.: Opyt i razmyshleniya ofitsera deistvuyushchego rezerva. In: *Sbornik KGB SSSR*, 1979, No. 80, p. 37. *GDA SBU*, f. 13, spr. 780.

44 ROZANOV, Ivan – POPOV, Fyodor: *Administrativno-pravovoi rezhim okhrany gosudarstvennykh sekretov v SSSR. Uchebnoye posobiye*, p. 41.

45 STEVENSON, Richard W.: *The Rise and Fall of Détente. Relaxations of Tension in US-Soviet Relations 1953–84*. Palgrave Macmillan, London 1985; BOWKER, Mike: Brezhnev and Superpower Relations. In: BACON, Edwin – SANDLE, Mark (eds.): *Brezhnev Reconsidered*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2002, pp. 90–109.

46 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00124 ot 25. 11. 1968 "Ob utverzhdenii Instruktsii po neglasnomu kontrolyu pochtovo-telegrafnykh otpravleniy organami KGB pri SM SSSR", utverzhdennoi Kollegiei KGB pri SM SSSR 18. 10. 1968. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, d. 318-sp, pp. 11–28.

47 Medium Machine Building of the USSR was the government ministry of the Soviet Union which supervised the Soviet nuclear industry, including the production of nuclear warheads.

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

In this context, securing state secrets was announced as one of the main tasks of KGB counterintelligence units in a joint resolution of the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers *On measures to strengthen the regime of secrecy*, adopted on 1 October 1970.⁴⁹ Based on this resolution, a whole range of security measures was developed and implemented in the next few years.

Also in October 1970, the KGB Collegium issued a decision regarding the travels of Soviet citizens abroad and approved the first comprehensive instruction that described the procedure for special checks of travelling persons. The Collegium's decision pointed out that, during the verification and operational study of candidates for trips abroad, special attention should be paid to persons with knowledge of state secrets as well as people on whom the KGB possessed some operational data (such as contacts with foreigners, international correspondence, initiative attempts to leave the country, repeated stays abroad, etc.) so that they could be studied more intently during their foreign trips.⁵⁰ The instruction ordained to determine a real awareness of the state secrets held by people travelling abroad and to limit the number of people who held secrets leaving the Soviet Union.⁵¹

Based on the results of a special check (*spetsial'naya proverka*) conducted by KGB operational sections or accounting-archival Tenth departments and the MVD First special departments, the responsible KGB officers were to draw up substantiated assessments regarding the possibility of a person's travel abroad and to communicate their *view on whether the person should be allowed to leave the country [...] to the foreign travel commissions of the city and oblast committees of the CPSU, the Central Committee of the Communist Parties of the Union Republics, and the Central Committee of the CPSU in the case of individuals being sent abroad on official business, and to the Interior Ministry agencies in the case of individuals going abroad on private business.*⁵²

In July 1971, a system of special courts and other judicial bodies acting on special regime facilities was instituted by a decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme So-

-
- 48 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00103 ot 18. 9. 1969 "Ob organizatsii raboty po predotvrasheniyu utechki gosudarstvennykh i voyennykh sekretov na osobo rezhimnykh obyektkh Ministerstva oborony SSSR i Ministerstva srednego mashinostroyeniya cherez pochtovye kanaly svyazi)". See https://www.kgbdocuments.eu/assets/documents/2002e_01k.pdf (quoted version dated 30. 11. 2020).
- 49 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 0015 ot 28. 1. 1971 "O meropriyatiyakh organov KGB po vypolneniyu postanovleniya TsKa KPSS i SM SSSR 'O merakh po usileniyu rezhima sekretnosti'". *LYA*, f. K-51, ap. 3, b. 7, pp. 1–13.
- 50 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00117 ot 7. 12. 1970 "Ob obyavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB pri SM SSSR ot 30. 10. 1970 'O merakh uluchsheniya kontrrazvedyvatel'noi raboty po vyavleniyu i presecheniyu podryvnoi deyatel'nosti imperialisticheskikh razvedok protiv sovetskikh grazhdan v period ikh kratkovremennogo prebyvaniya za granitsej'". *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 115, p. 56.
- 51 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00120 ot 7. 12. 1970 "Ob utverzhenii Instruksii po spetsial'noi proverke organami gosbezopasnosti lits, vyezshayushikh za granitsu, v'yezshayushikh v SSSR, khodataystvuyushikh o prieme v grazhdanstvo SSSR ili vykhode iz grazhdanstva". *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 323-sp, p. 99–99ob. This order was repealed with the issue of the eponymous order, No. 00130, on 13. 8. 1979.
- 52 *Ibid.*, pp. 99ob.–100; MITROKHIN, Vasili – KINGSTON, Jeff: *KGB Lexicon: The Soviet Intelligence Officers Handbook*. Routledge, Abingdon 2002, p. 185.

Evgenia Lezina

viet.⁵³ The decree also gave the special militia at top-secret facilities the right to issue official warnings (*predosterezhenie*) as an administrative measure. A similar right was given to the KGB in late 1972.⁵⁴

Additionally, new regulations on the admission of foreign delegations and individual foreigners and the rules for working with them were put into effect in 1972. After this, the heads of enterprises, institutions and organizations were obliged to *coordinate both the possibility of receiving foreigners and programs for their reception no later than five days before the scheduled date of their arrival with the local state security bodies.*⁵⁵ They also had to prepare lists of trustworthy people who could be allowed to work with foreigners and to revise these lists at least once a year, getting an approval from the KGB (1972, § 379, 384).⁵⁶

In July 1972, the Instruction for ensuring the preservation of state secrets and the secrecy regime was renewed once again (it was the third one to be released in the span of 13 years). It was the first Instruction to incorporate the above-mentioned rules for the admission of foreigners (1972, part 16).

The 1972 Instruction was also the first one to introduce more formalized grounds for the denial of *dopusk* to verified employees. In the previous 1965 regulations it was vaguely stated that access to secret works and documents could be granted only to people who had been *positively characterized on a political, official, and moral level*. It was further stressed back in 1965 that people who were *negatively characterized by the administration of an institution or enterprise, Party, trade union, Komsomol, or other public organization, as well as people whose access to such works and documents [wa]s deemed undesirable by state security bodies* should be denied access (1965, § 22).

Starting from 1972, applications for *dopusk* could be rejected in more clearly defined cases. Following the Instruction, access to works and documents that were secret, top-secret, and of special importance was supposed to be denied to people: *a) whose access to such works and documents is undesirable based on the conclusion reached by state security bodies; b) those allowing immoral acts, which may lead to the disclosure of classified information or the loss of secret documents or special items; c) persons convicted of especially dangerous state crimes, as well as those who remain in contact with close relatives convicted of*

53 Ukaz Prezidiuma VS SSSR ot 23. 7. 1971 "O spetsial'nykh sudakh, prokurature, advokature, notariate i organakh vnutrennikh del, deystvuyushikh na osoborezhimnykh obyektakh". Cited in ROZANOV, Ivan – POPOV, Fyodor: *Administrativno-pravovoi rezhim okhrany gosudarstvennykh sekretov v SSSR. Uchebnoye posobiye*, p. 154.

54 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 0150 ot 20. 3. 1973 "Ob obyavlenii Ukaza Prezidiuma VS SSSR No. 3707-VIII ot 25. 12. 1972 'O primenении organami gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti predosterezheniya v kachestve mery profilakticheskogo vozdeistviya i o vvedenii v deistviye Instruksii o poryadke primeneniya predosterezheniya'". *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 32-sp, pp. 50–55.

55 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00143 ot 1. 12. 1972 "Ob utverzhenii Polozheniya o poryadke osushchestvleniya svyazei ministerstv, vedomstv, predpriyatiy, uchrezhdeniy, organizatsiy SSSR i ikh predstavitelei s inostrannymi organizatsiyami, uchrezhdeniyami, firmami i ikh predstavitel'yami v oblasti nauchno-tekhnicheskogo i ekonomicheskogo sotrudnichestva". *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 28-sp, p. 140.

56 Instruksiya o poryadke priyema ministerstvami, vedomstvami, predpriyatiyami, uchrezhdeniyami i organizatsiyami SSSR zarubezhnykh delegatsiy, otdel'nykh inostrantsev po nauchno-tekhnicheskim i ekonomicheskim voprosam i pravilam raboty s nimi, soglasovannaya s KGB pri SM SSSR 23. 3. 1973. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 32-sp, p. 71ob.

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

such crimes; d) those having relatives in capitalist countries and staying in touch with them, as well as people who maintain contacts with foreigners that are not caused by official necessity; e) former emigrants, re-emigrants, and members of their families; f) citizens of foreign states or stateless persons, with the exception of those who were granted access by an established procedure; and g) those suffering from mental illnesses, who cannot be held responsible for their actions according to the conclusion of medical institutions. It was further explained that the possibility of access to secrets for employees falling into categories (c), (d), and (e) should be considered in each case, taking into account their personality and the data characterizing them (1972, § 56). Thus, it was theoretically made possible to grant access to people with incriminating data in exceptional cases.

In November 1976, a joint resolution of the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers *On measures to further improve the system of state secrets* was released. Based on this, the KGB Chairman issued an order in January 1977 underlining significant shortcomings that were still present with respect to securing state secrets. In particular, it was underscored that the degree of secrecy of documents and products was not routinely reviewed, and, therefore, *the volume of work, documentation, and information to be preserved is constantly growing, securing state secrets is getting increasingly complex and, furthermore, the scientific and technological progress of the country is damaged due to unnecessary restrictions on the exchange of information.*⁵⁷ It was therefore prescribed to renew the *List of the most important information constituting a state secret*, a guiding document for establishing the degree of secrecy of works and documents in the USSR. The one in force at the time had been approved more than ten years before, in 1966, and, as it was pointed out in Andropov's order, needed to be updated, taking into account new inventions in science, technology, and economics. The relevant departmental lists were likewise deemed incomplete and it was noted that necessary clarifications had not been made to them in a timely manner.⁵⁸

However, a new all-union perechen' was issued only four years later, in December 1980, and departmental lists on its basis followed suit in 1983.⁵⁹ Some of the lists available in the archives reveal a scope of publicly relevant information actually withheld in the USSR. Apart from information relating to defence and mobilization issues, other items were also classified, such as data on accidents, explosions, fires, and emergencies; summary data on fatal industrial injuries as a whole for a ministry; information on the procedure for coordinating the approval, transfer, and dismissal of ministerial employees on the CPSU Central Committee nomenklatura, as well as the positions approved by other Party committees; information on the latest achieve-

57 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 0012 ot 24. 1. 1977 "O meropriyatiyakh organov KGB po vpolneniyu postanovleniy Instantsiy 'O merakh po dal'neishemu sovershenstvovaniyu sistemy gosudarstvennykh sekretov'". *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 29-sp, pp. 1–6ob.

58 Ibid.

59 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 0055 ot 30. 3. 1981 "O meropriyatiyakh organov KGB v svyazi s utverzheniyem SM SSSR Perechnya glavneishikh svedeniy, sostavlyayushikh gosudarstvennyuyu tainu, i Polozheniya o poryadke ustanovleniya stepeni sekretnosti kategoriy svedeniy i stepeni sekretnosti svedeniy, sodержashikh v rabotakh, dokumentakh i izdeliyakh." *LYA*, f. K-51, ap. 3, b. 22, pp. 90–120.

Evgenia Lezina

ments of science and technology, and, certainly, all issues related to the secrecy regime (issuing security clearances, nomenclatures of employee positions, procedures for sending specialists abroad, etc.), including summary data on categories of information subject to classification by a ministry.⁶⁰

Amid an escalating confrontation with the West, the official calls for vigilance in the Soviet Union increased by the end of the decade leading to the adoption of the CPSU Central Committee's resolution *On measures to further increase the political vigilance of the Soviet people* in May 1977.⁶¹ This campaign marked the beginning of a new phase identifiable by a rekindled antagonism between the USSR and the Western world.

3. The “new Cold War” and perestroika periods

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the United States' response to it, including the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics, put an end to the détente and marked a period known as the second Cold War.⁶² This new state of affairs brought about new challenges for Soviet state security bodies.

The enemy, having confirmed for itself the fruitlessness of activities by individual antisocial elements, is now trying to influence wider groups of the population with the aim of creating so-called “hotbeds of social agitation” (ochagi sotsial'noi napryazhennosti) in order to ultimately achieve the “ideological erosion” of Soviet society, emphasized the KGB chief, Andropov, speaking at the National consultation meeting of the KGB leadership and members in May 1981.⁶³ Andropov also singled out *the enemy's subversive activities in the economic sphere* as a distinctive characteristic of the new operating environment.⁶⁴ Based on this premise, two new counterintelligence KGB directorates were set up – one for Transport Counterintelligence (Fourth Directorate) in 1981 and another for Economic Counterintelligence (Sixth Directorate) in 1982.⁶⁵

On 16 April 1982, the KGB Collegium adopted a decision that provided for the creation of the KGB's Sixth Directorate, through which the secret police strived to get deeper embedded in the Soviet economy. The decision, released in top-secret Chairman's order No. 00210, specified both the new challenges and tasks for counterintelligence units in their operational servicing of industrial objects.⁶⁶ This pro-

60 See, for example, *Perechen' svedeniy, podlezhashikh zasekrechivaniyu po Ministerstvu stroitel'stva SSSR*. Ministerstvo stroitel'stva SSSR, Moscow 1983, and *Perechen' svedeniy, podlezhashikh zasekrechivaniyu po Ministerstvu toplivnoi promyshlennosti RSFSR*. Ministerstvo toplivnoi promyshlennosti RSFSR, Moscow 1983. *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 2121.

61 *RGANI*, f. 5, op. 75, dela 219-225. Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 0073 ot 30. 6. 1977 “Ob ob'yavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB pri SM SSSR ot 21. 6. 1977 ‘O rabote v organakh i voiskakh KGB po vypolneniyu resheniya TSK KPSS O merakh po dal'neyshemu povysheniyu politicheskoi bdiatel'nosti soverskikh lyudei ot 23. 5. 1977’”. *LYA*, f. K-51, ap. 3, b. 15, pp. 182–186.

62 TOMPSON, William J.: *The Soviet Union under Brezhnev*. Pearson, Harlow UK 2003, p. 50.

63 PIROZHKO, Vladimir et al.: *Deyatel'nost' organov gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti SSSR na sovremennom etape. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*. VKSh, Moscow 1983, p. 38. *GDA SBU*, f. 13, spr. 678.

64 *Ibid.*

65 *Ibid.*, pp. 127–128.

66 To be more exact, it was rather a re-creation of the Economic Directorate (EKU) of VCheka-OGPU

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

gram document titled *On measures to strengthen counterintelligence work to protect the country's economy from the subversive activities of the enemy* sheds light on how the KGB leadership viewed the greatest threats to its country's economy and how it described the most hostile manifestations in the economic sphere at this new stage.⁶⁷ A basic premise is that, in the context of economic decline and the consequent aggravation of social conditions potentially capable of heightening tensions, the communist leaders chose to respond to these challenges by strengthening police measures and increasing the political police's role. Consequently, the new Economic Counterintelligence Directorate was explicitly tasked with political surveillance.

In the early 1980s, the administrative basis for the preservation of secrets was once again updated. In particular, the following directives were issued: *Regulations on the procedure for classifying especially important objects* (1982), *Regulations on officers of the KGB active reserve of counterintelligence units working under the guise of ministries, state committees, and departments of the USSR* (1983) and *Regulations on the procedure for travelling abroad by people with knowledge of state secrets* (1983).⁶⁸

The policies of perestroika and glasnost announced in 1985 by the general secretary of the CPSU, Mikhail Gorbachev, signified new challenges for state security bodies in general and their Sixth Directorate in particular. Among them was the need to deal with new practices and organizational forms brought about by perestroika, such as the appearance of joint ventures and increased cooperation with foreign companies, their representative offices, and staff.⁶⁹

In 1986, a new order came to replace No. 00210 of 1982. Although one would come to expect significant changes in the tactics and methods of KGB activities in the new circumstances, this was hardly the case. Both the title of the order was familiar and its content focused on the usual clichés: *the identification and suppression of attempts by individuals working at economic facilities to establish hostile relationships with the special*

-EKO GUGB NKVD, which existed in 1921–1936. See Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 00210 ot 16. 4. 1982 "Ob obyavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB pri SM SSSR ot 25. 10. 1982 'O merakh po usileniyu kontrrazvedyvatel'noi raboty po zashite ekonomiki strany ot podryvnoi deyatel'nosti protivnika". *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 72-sp, pp. 392–401.

67 Ibid.

68 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 0280 ot 13. 5. 1982 "Ob obyavlenii Prikaza General'nogo Prokurora SSSR No. 10c ot 25. 2. 1982 'O prokurorskom nadzore na rezhimnykh predpriyatiyakh, v uchrezhdeniyakh i organizatsiyakh". *LYA*, f. K-51, ap. 3 b. 25, pp. 256–258; Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 00191 ot 27. 9. 1982 "Ob obyavlenii Polozheniya o poryadke otneseniya ob'yektov k osobo rezhimnym". *GDA SBU*, f. 9, ref. 92-cp, pp. 137–139; Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 0620 ot 12. 10. 1982 "Ob utverzhenii Polozheniya ob ofitserakh deistvuyushchego rezerva KGB SSSR, rabotayushikh po linii kontrrazvedyvatel'nykh podrazdeleniy pod prikrytiyem ministerstv, goskomitetov i vedomstv SSSR". *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 140, pp. 210–216atv; Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 0366 ot 24. 6. 1988 "O merakh organov gosbezopasnosti v svyazi s izmeneniyami v poryadke vyyezda za granitsu lits, osvedomlennykh v gosudarstvennykh sekretakh". *LYA*, f. K-51, ap. 3 b. 54, p. 151, 154atv.

69 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 00224 ot 30. 12. 1985 "Ob obyavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB SSSR ot 17. 12. 1985 'O merakh po usileniyu bor'by s razvedyvatel'no-podryvnoi deyatel'nost'yu spetssluzhb protivnika, osushchestvlyayemoi s pozitsiy firm kapitalisticheskikh gosudarstv, ikh predstavitel'stv i spetsialistov". *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 157, pp. 99–106atv.

Evgenia Lezina

services of capitalist states in order to deliver secret information and commit other dangerous crimes; ensuring the safety of defence, economic, scientific, technical, and other state secrets, the continuous improvement of the secrecy regime, opening channels and the sources for leaks of classified information to the enemy; the timely detection and exposure of enemy agents at defence facilities; the prevention of damage to the Soviet state; the fight against actions stemming from the enemy's ideological sabotage, aimed at the scientific and technical intelligentsia, and the working class; the disclosure and suppression of anti-Soviet activities by hostile elements aimed at objects of the economy; the identification and prevention of negative processes in labour collectives, etc.⁷⁰ It was further ordained that the Sixth units of the KGB-UKGB should organize control over the observance of the secrecy regime and, if necessary, carry out official checks at enterprises and institutions, regardless of the line on which their counterintelligence support was performed.⁷¹

In September 1987, a new secrecy Instruction was issued to replace the 1972 one. Ironically the most "liberal" period produced the most voluminous document, which apparently reached bureaucratic perfection. For the first time, the Instruction included, among other provisions, regulations for travelling abroad by people with knowledge of state secrets (1987, part 17). More importantly, however, the role of the secret police was further enhanced, and the security clearance rules were intensified.

The KGB's role in exerting official control over the secrecy regime was strengthened for one thing. While the 1972 Instruction indicated that the KGB, if necessary, could give ministries and departments clarifications on the Instruction's application, in 1987 this norm was strengthened by the USSR Council of Ministers in its resolution specifying that *clarifications and recommendations of the KGB on the implementation of the Instruction are binding on all ministries, departments, and other agencies, regardless of their departmental affiliation.*⁷²

In the same manner, the Instruction expanded the rights of state security bodies in official control over the organization and maintenance of the secrecy regime in institutions and enterprises of the USSR. In fact, the KGB secured the right not only to organize, but also to coordinate supra-departmental control over the preservation of state secrets. At the same time, the range of issues related to securing the secrecy regime, as well as the scope of decisions that should be taken with the participation of and in agreement with the secret police, was fully preserved.⁷³

Furthermore, the new Instruction obliged enterprises and institutions across the country to get the KGB's approval not only with regard to the creation and liquidation of regime-secrecy bodies, as it was before, but their reorganization as well (1987, § 9). To some degree, the 1987 Instruction also extended and specified the

70 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 00125 ot 28. 7. 1986 "Ob obyavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB SSSR ot 24. 6. 1986 'Ob usilenii bor'by s podryvnoi deyatel'nost'yu protivnika, napravlennoi s sferu sovetsoi ekonomiki, sovershenstvovaniya kontrrazvedyvatel'noi raboty v oboronnykh otraslyakh promyshlennosti, na vazhnykh obyektakh narodnogo khozyaistva i nauki'". *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 166, pp. 37-47.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

72 Osobennosti novoi instruksii po obespecheniyu rezhima sekretnosti No. 0126-1987. *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 56, b. 24, p. 15.

73 *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

range of grounds for refusing access to secret information. In particular, it stipulated that people who had been convicted of serious crimes (including especially dangerous state crimes, robbery, banditry, intentional murder, riots, etc.) and recognized by the court as especially dangerous recidivists were to be refused clearances. Added to the denial-list were those whose close relatives had applied for permanent residence abroad. Additionally, access was to be denied to those having medical contraindications impeding work related to state secrets (1987, § 28).⁷⁴

The same restrictions, with the exception of medical contraindications, were retained in a special order issued in August 1988 and regulating the verification of citizens by the KGB. This order also clarified whom the state security bodies could refuse to issue with a dopusk. According to the newly announced rules, those who appeared on the operational records of the KGB or those who had been issued official warnings during preventive talks were unwanted.⁷⁵

In the following sections I will turn to a more practical side of the regime-secrecy measures outlined in the overview. I will start by addressing the functioning of the security clearance system and its consequences. I will also analyse the role of the regime-secrecy bodies in vetting employees. Afterwards I will comment on the priorities of counterintelligence support related to the secrecy regime as reflected in the KGB operational files and other documentary sources.

The functioning of the security clearances system and its implications

In the post-Stalin years, the secrecy regime arguably became important as a suitable form of comprehensive mass control over the population, replacing the mass violence and coercion used under Stalin's reign of terror. In fact, the Secret departments could no longer be involved in anti-wrecking, anti-sabotage, or other repressive campaigns at industrial enterprises, as was the case in the 1930s and 1940s.⁷⁶ In this sense, a new system of targeting potentially disloyal individuals came to replace the mass repression of unwanted groups or classes. However, the continued restriction of rights and freedoms in the USSR led to the criminalization of the ideological sphere. The extra-legal basis by which the political trustworthiness or the alleged danger of a particular candidate was assessed contextualized the transformation of the admission system into a kind of loyalty-control system in a dictatorship.

The nomenclatures of employee positions that required security clearances were approved by the heads of institutions and enterprises in agreement with the secret police (1959, § 22; 1965, § 28; 1972, § 57; 1987, § 28). The hiring of staff without se-

74 Ibid, p. 5.

75 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 00125 ot 24. 8. 1988 "Ob utverzhenii Instruksii po spetsial'noi proverke organami gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti sovetsskikh grazhdan, oformlyayemykh na dopusk k gosudarstvennym sekretam SSSR". *LYA*, f. K-51, ap. 3 b. 54, p. 289atv.

76 KRAVCHENKO, Victor: *I Chose Freedom. The Personal and Political Life of a Soviet Official*. Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick N. J. 1989, pp. 75–77; ANDREEVICH, E. A.: Structure and Functions of the Soviet Secret Police. In: WOLIN, Simon – SLUSSER, Robert M. (eds.): *The Soviet Secret Police*. Praeger, New York 1957, pp. 117–118.

Evgenia Lezina

curity clearance for these posts was prohibited. Violations of this rule were recorded during security checks conducted by the KGB on a regular basis. Only senior officials of the Party bodies, including secretaries and deputy secretaries of the Party committees, were exempt from verification (1987, § 37).

Generally, there was a whole network of positions, as a rule attractive in terms of career opportunities (as noted earlier, clearances were primarily issued for managers and highly skilled technical specialists). Applicants for these posts were required to pass a kind of loyalty test. And a considerable number of restrictions existed for people worthy of being granted security clearances.

On the ideological level, the dopusk system was clearly linked with political control. The ultimate goal of this system was to prohibit *people who did not inspire political trust* as well as *politically and morally unstable citizens* from working with state secrets.⁷⁷ In the official documents, the following negative qualities of people working with classified data were singled out: *antisocial behaviour (drunkenness, careerism, domestic intemperance, desire for enrichment), an indifferent attitude to the actions of co-workers, in some cases a hostile attitude to Soviet power.*⁷⁸

The chain of approvals for security clearances started with the Personnel department, which then referred the matter to the First department with an applicant's autobiography, a filled-in questionnaire, a list of immediate relatives, and a motivation letter (1959, § 22; 1965, § 34; 1972, § 63; 1987, § 48–51).⁷⁹ The First department, in its turn, applied to state security bodies for the security clearance's approval. It was strictly forbidden to inform employees of a KGB decision to deny dopusk (1959, § 22; 1965, § 22; 1972, § 56; 1987, § 29, § 47). Thus, the link between the clearance procedure and the special background checks conducted by the KGB should have remained secret and managers had to come up with reasons for refusing job seekers (yet, judging by memoirs and interviews with former Soviet employees, the link between the First departments and the KGB was generally no secret at all).

In 1965, deeper checks were introduced for verified persons whose biographical data and previous working record appeared suspicious. Suspicion could be aroused by things such as *a frequent change of work place and profession, transitioning often from one defence (regime) facility to another, a frequent change of residence, registration for work on a defence facility after a prolonged period of work in institutions and enterprises with a simplified system of hiring labour, correspondence with foreigners without any obvious need for it, instances of falsifying personal documents, etc.*⁸⁰

77 ROZANOV, Ivan – POPOV, Fyodor: *Administrativno-pravovoi rezhim okhrany gosudarstvennykh sekretov v SSSR. Uchebnoye posobiye*, p. 64.

78 Ibid, p. 17.

79 In 1959, a motivation letter was to be accompanied by the characteristic from the previous place of work. Generally, the procedure referred to people who were given access to secrets with security clearance forms Nos. 1 and 2. The names of persons to be granted access to secret works and documents on form No. 3 were organized in lists.

80 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB pri SM SSSR No. 00150 ot 1. 10. 1965 "O meropriyatiyakh organov KGB v svyazi s izdaniyem 'Instruktsii po obespecheniyu sokhrannosti gosudarstvennoy tainy i rezhima sekretnosti provodimykh rabot v uchrezhdeniyakh i na predpriyatiyakh SSSR'". *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 308-sp, p. 55.

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

Also since 1965, people who received security clearance forms Nos. 1 and 2 were checked against the operational records of security and law enforcement agencies for the previous five years at their places of their places of work and residence, and those who served in the army were additionally checked at their places of birth.⁸¹ If a candidate or his or her relatives ever went on business trips abroad or had relatives or acquaintances in capitalist countries, they were additionally checked on the operational records of the KGB First Chief Directorate. Clearance admission form No. 3 presupposed the same checks, but for a period of one year.⁸²

The verification of relatives actually implies that the principle of hostage-taking was being used, making family members dependent on each other's "political trustworthiness". Renewals of clearances were required in the event of changes in biographical data, including marriage. As of 1972, the reissuance of dopusk was also obligatory if any of the employee's close relatives went abroad or re-emigrated in the USSR (1959, § 27; 1965, § 41; 1972, § 79; 1987, § 62).

The "Counterintelligence Dictionary" of 1972 specified that, in addition to background checks of the operational records in KGB and MVD agencies, security clearance required *the collection of references from the subject's place of work and residence, the use of agents and other KGB personnel and resources*.⁸³ Every person who was given access to secrets, regardless of whether or not his or her dopusk was approved by the KGB, had to sign a pledge of secrecy.⁸⁴

The First departments' employees carried out a primary verification of information for security clearances and, accordingly, were obliged to inform the KGB of the data that deserved operative attention. In the theory and practice of counterintelligence work, the First departments were regarded as a kind of "internal intelligence", as they were in charge of *studying all aspects of activities of departments, institutions, and enterprises in order to identify and close possible ways of leaking information*.⁸⁵

Although First departments were generally neither headed nor staffed by KGB officers as was often assumed in the USSR, their links with the secret police were quite robust. The heads and deputy chiefs of the First departments were normally CPSU members. Their appointment as well as release from posts had to be coordinated with state security bodies and the relevant regime-secrecy bodies of ministries and agencies. According to the Instructions' regulating the secrecy regime at Soviet enterprises

81 Ibid., pp. 54ob.-55. See also Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 00135 ot 10. 11. 1972 "O meropriyatiyakh organov KGB v svyazi s utverzhdeniyem SM SSSR Instruksii po soblyudeniyu sokhraneniya gosudarstvennoi tainy i rezhima sekretnosti provodimykh rabot v uchrezhdeniyakh i na predpriyatiyakh SSSR". LYA, f. K-51, ap. 3, b. 8, pp. 45atv.-46atv; Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 00120 ot 2. 9. 1987 "Ob obyavlenii resheniya Kollegii KGB SSSR 'O merakh organov gosbezopasnosti po sovershenstvovaniyu zashity gossekretov, obespecheniyu rezhima sekretnosti v ministerstvakh i vedomstvakh'". GDA SBU, f. 9, ref. 31-sp, pp. 42-43ob.

82 Ibid.

83 MITROKHIN, Vasili - KINGSTON, Jeff: MITROKHIN, Vasili - KINGSTON, Jeff: *KGB Lexicon: The Soviet Intelligence Officers Handbook*, p. 381.

84 ROZANOV, Ivan - POPOV, Fyodor: *Administrativno-pravovoi rezhim okhrany gosudarstvennykh sekretov v SSSR. Uchebnoye posobiye*, p. 74.

85 NIKITCHENKO, Vitaliy et al.: *Kontrrazvedyvatel'nyi slovar'*, p. 84.

Evgenia Lezina

and institutions, the RSOs were to be staffed by *specialists capable of fulfilling the relevant tasks assigned to them by the Instruction in terms of their ideological, moral, and business qualities* (1972, § 22; 1987, § 19).

Additionally, the First departments often served as a base for the recruitment of agents, trusted people, and residents by the secret police. Even though in the early 1970s the practice of recruiting and planting agents mainly in the First departments and other places where classified materials were concentrated was criticized by the KGB leadership,⁸⁶ this habit safely survived.⁸⁷

According to many accounts, regime-secrecy bodies ran their own informers at any office, making it next to impossible to hide even the slightest violation of the secrecy regime from their all-searching eyes.⁸⁸ Additionally, these units were obliged to conduct explanatory work with people given access to secret works and documents to make them comply with the requirements of the secrecy regime and to increase their political vigilance.⁸⁹

Formally an integral part of the enterprises, organizations, and institutions in which they were set up, the First departments thus represented an auxiliary network of primary control in these mass agencies of the Soviet state, supplementing the secret police's own counterintelligence structures which performed operational agent activity in many of the same workplaces. Not surprisingly, these structures were perceived by many employees as genuine outposts of the secret police, often rousing a mixture of fear and aversion.

Despite severe restrictions, a certain percentage of personnel was issued clearances with the presence of incriminating or compromising data. Lithuania, in particular, faced a problem in finding enough "uncompromised" specialists to fill managerial and scientific-technical positions. For example, the information covering *Key elements of the operating environment for protecting secrets* prepared in April 1988 draws attention to the problem. It maintains that granting access to secrets in Lithuania, where around 8,000 people were issued dopusks annually, *is being complicated by the fact that 18,000 of the republic's [3.6 million] dwellers have previously served sentences for especially dangerous offences and other state crimes, more than 65,000 people have returned from special settlements, about 2,000 were legalized bandits, some of whom maintained their anti-Soviet*

86 The Head of the KGB Second Chief Directorate wrote in 1972: *There is no doubt in the need to have undercover sources in the Secret departments of the facilities. However, such agents perform mainly defensive functions. Agents working in places where state secrets are concentrated, as a rule, are withdrawn from communications with foreigners and do not go abroad, which excludes the possibility of their use in active counterintelligence measures. Consequently, it is necessary to be creative in arranging agents at facilities of operational service with the calculation of their possible use in the development of foreigners and individual Soviet citizens, as well as in other events.* See GRIGORENKO, Grigoriy: *Bor'ba s agenturnoi deyatelnost'yu protivnika v tsentre vnimaniya*. In: *Sbornik KGB SSSR*, 1972, No. 53, pp. 11–12. *GDA SBU*, f. 13, spr. 753.

87 See Plan agenturno-operativnykh meropriyatiy 6-go otdela UKGB USSR po L'vovskoi oblasti na 1987 god. *GDA SBU*, f. 71, op. 11, spr. 101, p. 3.

88 See, for e.g., MIRZAYANOV, Vil: *State Secrets: An Insider's Chronicle of the Russian Chemical Weapons Program*. Outskirts Press, Inc., Denver CO 2008, pp. 83–84.

89 ROZANOV, Ivan – POPOV, Fyodor: *Administrativno-pravovoi rezhim okhrany gosudarstvennykh sekretov v SSSR. Uchebnoye posobiye*, p. 44, 54.

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

views, more than 100 were former agents of American and German intelligence services, while 1,200 were returnees or re-emigrants.⁹⁰ As a result, out of 12,000 people who were granted access to secret works and documents with forms Nos. 1 and 2, about 600, i.e. 5%, were given access despite the existence of some incriminating data.⁹¹

Once an employee was issued a dopusk, he or she was not insured against the prospect of being stripped of this privilege. In fact, any violation of the secrecy regime as well as the appearance of grounds for the rejection of clearance (such as an application for exit visas by relatives, any unauthorized contact with foreigners, loss of a secret document, etc.) could lead to various sanctions ranging from preventive talks to demotions, dismissals from the job and, in the worst cases, criminal prosecutions.⁹²

Drawing on the Lithuanian KGB archival records, Saulius Grybkauskas came to the conclusion that the security clearance system formally introduced to maintain state secrets, was in reality *transformed into a large-scale system of social control which [...] was instrumental to the regime for inhibiting the social mobility and career prospects of potentially politically unreliable people and the scope of nationalist expressions.*⁹³ According to Grybkauskas, *the refusal of clearance gravely affected the careers of such persons. The indirect influence of the clearance system was that some employees were deterred from seeking further promotion. Additionally, those issued with clearances despite the existence of incriminating data faced the possibility of blackmail and threats, and in case of compromising evidence being found, they could lose their present positions and thus end up worse off.*⁹⁴

Although archival records of the union level containing aggregate statistical data on the number of regime-secrecy bodies and the amount of security clearances issued by the KGB have not yet been made available for research, according to the Sixth Directorate's Newsletter, the number of special checks countrywide reached up to 2.5 million people per year by the mid-1980s. Around one million employees on av-

90 *One third of the republic's inhabitants, the note continued, maintains written communication with their relatives and friends living in capitalist countries. Annually, up to 800 foreign scientists, businessmen, and specialists performing installation and commissioning works at industrial facilities, including those located in areas closed to foreigners, visit the republic. In their turn, about 2,000 citizens of the Lithuanian SSR travel to capitalist and developing countries through various channels.* See Liternoe delo No. 1072. Materialy po zashite sekretov, 1987–1988. LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 2122, p. 272. A relatively small number of security clearances in Lithuania can be explained by a limited military-related industrial potential of this republic. For comparison, in the Lviv region, in which several enterprises of strategic defense importance were located (such as Lviv Armor Vehicle Factory and Lviv State Aircraft Repair Plant) the local KGB issued 30–40,000 dopusks annually in the early 1980s. See GDA SBU, f. 71, op. 9, spr. 355, p. 212.

91 Liternoe delo No. 1072. Materialy po zashite sekretov, 1987–1988. LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 2122, p. 272.

92 In the event that a dopusk was denied, people working at enterprises not included in the list of especially important facilities could be transferred to units where no secret works were performed. At especially important enterprises, administrations tended to look for different motives for dismissing such people, although official grounds for such dismissals did not exist in Soviet legislation. See KOLOSOV, S. A.: 'Distiplinarnaya otvetstvennost' za narusheniye rezhima sekretnosti. In: *Trudy vysshei shkoly*, 1983, No. 28–29, pp. 384–393.

93 GRYBKKAUSKAS, Saulius: *State-Security Clearance as an Instrument of Social Control in the Industry of Soviet Lithuania, 1965 to 1985*, p. 10.

94 *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 10.

Evgenia Lezina

erage were checked on form No. 3 alone, until its approval by the KGB was largely cancelled in early 1988.⁹⁵

It is also noteworthy that the number of clearances issued at an enterprise or an institute was determined by its “regime status,” which mostly depended on whether or not it produced so-called special or secret products for the needs of the defence industries.⁹⁶ On the territory of Lithuania, there were no enterprises or institutions included in the lists of especially important or special regime facilities, but there were twelve industrial associations (proizvodstvennye obyedineniya) and research institutes of the ministries of defence industries which were categorized by departmental orders as regime enterprises (rezhimnye predpriyatiya).⁹⁷ However, there were variations even among these.

For instance, the Vilnius Scientific Research Institute of Electrography of the USSR Ministry of Radio Industry with 2,175 employees in 1987, got three times more clearance form Nos. 1 and 2 (11 and 180 respectively), than the “Nuklon” plant in Šiauliai (7 and 61 respectively) which, despite hiring more employees (an estimated 4,200 in the late 1980s), did not produce secret products.⁹⁸ The latter manufactured semiconductor microchips, over 50% of which were ordered by the USSR Ministry of Defence.⁹⁹ The Scientific Research Institute of Electrography, in its turn, was a regime enterprise, which was classified in Group 2 by the degree of secrecy of the products under its development.¹⁰⁰

The archival sources make it clear that the scope of the security clearance system at the Lithuanian regime enterprises was really large-scale. For instance, around 45% of employees (891 out of 1,997) working at the Vilnius Scientific Research Institute of Radio-Measurement Devices (VNIIRIP) and 23% of employees (1,006 out of 4,340) at the Vilnius Plant of Radio-Measurement Devices (VZRIPI)¹⁰¹ received security clearances approved by the Sixth Department of the Lithuanian KGB in 1987.¹⁰² On average, around one third (27%) of employees of the enterprises listed in Table 4 received security clearances approved by the state security bodies.

95 Nekotorye voprosy spetsproverki i kontrolya za obosnovannost'yu prinyimayemykh resheniy o dopuske sovetskikh grazhdan k gosudarstvennyim sekretam. In: *Informatsionnyi byulleten' 6-go Upravleniya KGB SSSR*, 1988, No. 2 (20), pp. 16–17. *LYA*, f. K-46, ap. 2, b. 102.

96 GRYBKASKAS, Saulius: *State-Security Clearance as an Instrument of Social Control in the Industry of Soviet Lithuania, 1965 to 1985*, p. 3.

97 Liternoe delo No. 1072. Materialy po zashite sekretov, 1987–1988. *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 2122, p. 223.

98 Akt proverki sostoyaniya rezhima sekretnosti, sekretnogo deloproizvodstva, vnutriobyektovogo i propusknogo rezhimov i okhrany zavoda “Nuklon”, 27. 3. 1986. *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 2121, p. 46.

99 Plan agenturno-operativnykh meropriyatiy po obespecheniyu kontrrazvedyvatel'noi raboty i rezhima sekretnosti na zavode “Nuklon”, 5. 4. 1974. *LYA*, f. K-41, ap. 1, b. 711, pp. 45–55.

100 Spravka ob operativnoi obstanovke v NII Elektrografii (p/ya G-4602) Ministerstva radiopromyshlennosti SSSR, 27. 7. 1987. *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 2091, p. 284, 292, 293, 302.

101 Both the institute and the plant were part of the Vilnius Production Association named after the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution.

102 Liternoe delo No. 47. Vil'nyusskiy zavod i NII radioizmeritel'nykh priborov. Vol. 1. *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 2082, p. 31.

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

Table 4. Security clearances at Lithuanian SSR regime facilities

Security clearances (in brackets number of employees)	“Nuklon” plant in Šiauliai (1,450 employees in 1974 and approx. 4,200 in the late 1980s)				Research Institute of Electrography (2,175 employees)
Year	1974	1981	1983	1986	1986
Total (in brackets – percentage of employ- ees with dopusk)	626 (43%)	1,149 (27%)	895 (21%)	1,253 (30%)	702 (32%)
Form No. 1	5	4	5	7	11
Form No. 2	71	55	77	61	180
Form No. 3	550	1,090	813	1,185	511

Security clearances (in brackets number of employees)	Šiauliai Television Plant (6,237 employees)			VZRIIP (4,340 employees)	VNIIRIP (1,997 employees)
Year	1981	1983	1986	1987	1987
Total (in brackets – percentage of employ- ees with dopusk)	861 (14%)	1,070 (17%)	1,196 (19%)	1,006 (23%)	891 (45%)
Form No. 1	18	20	22	9	4
Form No. 2	20	97	156	186	243
Form No. 3	823	953	1,018	811	644

The secrecy regime and political surveillance

The very presence of regime-secrecy bodies at Soviet institutions and enterprises served as a prerequisite and justification for KGB activities, not only in conducting special checks and issuing security clearances to employees, but also in their counter-intelligence servicing of these facilities, regulated by *plans for operational agent measures to preserve state secrets*.¹⁰³

The secret police’s penetration of the Soviet economy was pervasive. According to the available data, the number of national economic facilities (obyekty narodnogo khozyaistva) in Soviet Ukraine at which operational support was carried out reached 13,029 in 1981. Additionally, there were 4,405 enterprises, including 383 objects of defence industries and 3,451 industrial enterprises and organizations, where full-

103 Pis'mo zamestitelya predsedatelya KGB Litovskoi SSR V[alentina] Zvezdenkova No. 21/2024 ot 10. 8. 1984 “O plane meropriyatii po sokhraneniyu gosudarstvennykh sekretov”. LYA, f. K-1, ap. 49, b. 868, p. 161.

Evgenia Lezina

-scale undercover and counterintelligence service was performed.¹⁰⁴ The latter figure of 4,405 enterprises actually implied that the KGB carried out its thorough operational agent activity at around 60% of the Ukraine's industrial enterprises, the number of which totalled 7,600, according to the available 1986 data.¹⁰⁵

The archival records make it clear that the counterintelligence work carried out by the Second Chief Directorate (and from 1982 – the Sixth Directorate) included not only the supervision of compliance with security regulations, but routine political control as well. The KGB records at various levels repeatedly emphasized that violations of the secrecy regime should be viewed not as an official misdemeanour, but as an ideological state crime.¹⁰⁶ The emphasis was also on controlling political loyalty and on elevating political vigilance. For example, the Third Department of the Lithuanian Second KGB Directorate responsible for the regulation and oversight of the secrecy regime reported in March 1979 that operational staff built the work with agents *in such a way that no single action, no manifestation of any political significance would bypass our attention.*¹⁰⁷

The priorities of KGB counterintelligence activities at industrial enterprises linked to safeguarding state secrets can be illustrated by a speech delivered by the chief of the Vilnius city KGB Department in October 1985. According Colonel Neverauskas, *85% of the signals checked by the officers of the industrial group were related to the suppression of the enemy's ideological sabotage.*¹⁰⁸ Specific examples were given, such as the spread of anti-Soviet, nationalist, and other utterances; the production of anti-Soviet literature; relations with the church; engagement in video business (the underground distribution of videotapes, organizing movie viewings); *the fascination of some young people with phonograph records, symbols of Western production, through which the imposition of cruelty, violence, and sometimes open or disguised anti-Soviet propaganda took place.*¹⁰⁹ This implies that economic counterintelligence structures were more absorbed with combating “ideological sabotage”, complementing the notorious Fifth Directorate in this respect, rather than catching spies or preventing proactive or initiative espionage (initsiativnyi shpionazh) which they were primarily tasked to perform.

Likewise, the available statistics from the Ukrainian Sixth Directorate show that political surveillance alongside routine security checks occupied the lion's share of working time in the 25 regional Ukrainian KGB Directorates and five units of the

104 Godovye plany raboty Informatsionno-Analiticheskoi Sluzhby KGB Ukrainskoi SSR i otchety ob ikh vypolnenii. Tom 2, 1981–1983. *GDA SBU*, f. 32, op. 1, spr. 6, p. 126.

105 *Narodnoe khozyaistvo Ukrainskoi SSR 1987. Yubileinyi statisticheskii ezhegodnik k 70-letiyu Velikogo oktyabrya*. Tekhnika, Kiev 1987, p. 61. The total number of national economic facilities is unfortunately not available in the open sources.

106 See, for example, Ukazanie Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 76s ot 13. 10. 1983 “O merakh po dal'neishemu sovershenstvovaniyu operativno-rozysknoi raboty i predvaritel'nogo sledstviya po delam ob utrate dokumentov, soderzhashikh gosudarstvennuyu tainu”. *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 41-sp, p. 106.

107 Spravka o vypolnenii 3 otdelom 2 upravleniya ukazaniy Predsedatelya KGB SSSR po agenturnoi rabote, 20. 3. 1979. *LYA*, f. K-41, ap. 1, b. 755, p. 192.

108 NEVERAUSKAS, Vytautas: Vyyavlenie, preduprezhdenie i presechenie deistviy vrazhdebnykh elementov na obyektakh ekonomiki, 24. 10. 1985. *LYA*, f. K-18, ap. 1, b. 21, pp. 64–66.

109 Ibid.

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

Sixth Department which conducted operational support of 2,413 facilities across the republic in 1986 (a reduction from 3,201 facilities in 1985).¹¹⁰ In just five instances, *initiatives of Soviet employees to convey secrets to foreign special services* were allegedly suppressed.¹¹¹ In such an industrially developed and populous republic as Ukraine, its KGB managed to open just 10 operational check files (*delo operativnoi proverki*, DOP) and not a single operational cultivation file (*delo operativnoi razrabotki*, DOR) on *treason in the form of espionage* in 1986. Likewise, just one DOR and two DOPs on *the transfer of information constituting state secrets* were initiated. At the same time, the republican KGB bodies launched 285 DOPs and 13 DORs on *anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda* in 1986.¹¹²

Operational documents of the republican KGB bodies show that the practice of surveillance over *operational contingents* (as outlined in order No. 00210-1982) and even slightly broader groups persisted until the final years of Soviet rule. As it appears from the archival records covering operational agent activity at the Vilnius Plant and Scientific Research Institute of Radio-Measurement Devices in the late 1980s, the people who were under special scrutiny consisted of those who had been previously convicted of especially dangerous state crimes and those whose relatives had been convicted of state crimes, as well as those whose families had been in a special settlement. Individuals who made any contact with foreigners or had relatives residing in capitalist countries or bore plans to emigrate were also singled out. Additionally, those who had been previously denied access to top-secret and secret works and documents yet continued to work at enterprises in non-secret areas, or those who had been granted access to state secrets with incriminating materials were given special attention. Likewise, those who had ever made ideologically harmful judgments and nationalist-minded individuals were under special surveillance by the secret police.¹¹³

To a large extent, the presence of operational contingents served as a pretext for the intensification of counterintelligence activity and for the opening of letter-coded files (*liternye dela*) at industrial enterprises and institutions.¹¹⁴ While conducting the operational servicing of these facilities, the KGB counterintelligence units took ad-

110 In total, in 1986, 2,165 comprehensive checks of the secrecy regime were carried out (2,568 in 1985), 139 checks of the receptions of foreigners (149 in 1985), and 65 checks of unprotected microwave radio relay lines (48 in 1985). As a result, 762 violations in the functioning of the secrecy regime (1,025 in 1985) and 168 (200 in 1985) violations of rules for the use of microwave radio relay lines were detected and reported. Additionally, in 809 cases (996 in 1985) prerequisites for leaking secrets were prevented. See *Godovye plany raboty, materialy po proverkam ikh vypolneniya i otchety o rabote 6-go upravleniya KGB USSR, 1987. GDA SBU*, f. 31, op. 1, spr. 20, p. 9, 16.

111 *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

112 As follows from the same 1986 report, 2,822 people went to capitalist and developing countries on business trips, including 188 people informed of secrets. Among these travelling abroad, 413 were KGB agents (approx. 15%), 421 people (514 in 1985) were denied an exit visa: in 103 cases (139 in 1985) the rejection was due to awareness of secrets and in 318 instances (375 in 1985) due to the available compromising data. *Ibid.*, p. 14, 23.

113 See, for example, *Liternoe delo No. 47. Vil'nyusskiy zavod i NII radioizmeritel'nykh priborov*. Vol. 1. *LYA*, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 2082, pp. 54–55.

114 GRYBKAUSKAS, Saulius: *Deyatel'nost' KGB na promyshlennyykh predpriyatiyakh Litvy v 1965–1985 gg.*, p. 258.

Evgenia Lezina

vantage of agents, residents, trusted people, and supernumerary KGB operatives, as well as active reserve officers. According to archival records, counterintelligence service measures related to secrecy could include:

- Selective or full wiretapping of business telephone conversations and their recording with subsequent analysis.
- Studying secret-bearers' connections with the help of agents.
- Operational agent activity in and around high-security facilities.
- Controlling postal and telegraphic messages, both of employees with regime facilities and of the population living in the surrounding areas.
- Preventive measures such as rejections of clearances, individual preventive talks and meetings of labour collectives, publishing critical articles in newspapers; informing the Party organs, bodies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the prosecutor's office, the administration of regime facilities, etc.
- Measures of a regime character (mery rezhimnogo kharaktera): censoring publications, restricting freedom of movement for Soviet citizens and foreigners, censoring topographic maps, etc.

Conclusions: effects and burdens of the secrecy regime

In his book of memoirs, the chemist Vil Mirzayanov described in detail the difficulties that employees of the Moscow-based State Research Institute of Organic Chemistry and Technology (GosNIIOKhT), where he worked in 1958–1992, had to face due to the stiffness of the regime of secrecy. *I think*, concluded the author, *that this whole regime stemmed from the general concept of the KGB, according to which all people are considered potential traitors.*¹¹⁵

In any event, as this study has shown, the secrecy regime was an everyday reality for millions of Soviet employees. It would not be an exaggeration to state that virtually every citizen of the late USSR knew which forms of dopusks existed and was aware of the presence of First departments at most workplaces.

Functionally serving the preservation of state secrets, the secrecy regime in reality evolved into a system of pervasive control over millions of Soviet employees. Through issuing career-affecting security clearances the Soviet political police tested managers and technical specialists for “political trustworthiness”. The main idea behind this system of mass vetting based on numerous lists (including lists of employees' positions subject to security clearance for admission with forms Nos. 1 and 2, lists of people admitted with form No. 3, lists of people allowed to work with foreigners, etc.) was the exclusion of potentially disloyal individuals.

Through the far-reaching dopusk system the Soviet state in general and its secret police in particular made citizens dependent on the authorities in terms of their career prospects, opportunities to engage in scientific and experimental research, chances of gaining access to specialized literature, etc. The complexity and ambiguity of this system was that it turned closed enterprises and institutes into zones

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

of dependence, enhanced control, and the renunciation of rights on the one hand, and areas of certain privileges on the other. In fact, numerous restrictions in connection with the regime of secrecy was a price to pay for better sanatoriums and rest houses, relatively good supplies, and salary supplements granted for access to secret works and documents. As the sociologist Yuri Levada and his co-authors on the project “Common Soviet Man” specified, through the system of closed enterprises the population learned to *value hierarchy as a guarantee of privileges and to assimilate its functional meaning*.¹¹⁶

In preventing potentially disloyal individuals from getting to positions of influence at key industrial enterprises, research institutes, and government agencies, the secret police not only consolidated the Communist Party’s authority but strengthened its own position in the power hierarchy. For, as the retired KGB Colonel Pyotr Nikulin underlined in a 1993 public appearance, *information is power, access to this secret information is control, control is a clearance check*.¹¹⁷

Command over secrecy in the USSR not only gave the secret police influence over individual careers, but also over the well-being of the population as a whole. Formally entrusted with power to prevent information leaks concerning the Soviet Union’s defence potential, the KGB in reality all too often concealed the true conditions and the state of affairs in the country as a whole. Generally, the classified information could concern both the life and health of the people (as in the case of concealed data about the causes and consequences of technological disasters, the most egregious case being the Chernobyl accident) or hinder the development of tourism and the economy (as in the case of classifications and distortions of topographical maps, for instance).

The expansion of the scope of secrecy, which in practice was associated with extensions in the lists of classified information including all-union and departmental *perechen’*, inevitably led to the growth of a realm of secrecy and the involvement of ever-increasing groups in it. In this sense, the lists of secret information not only served as a basis for the classification of socially significant data, but also created a basis for victimization. As soon as some information became classified or secret data got into a particular place, the regime measures ensued right away.

During the late perestroika period, the KGB itself sometimes acknowledged, albeit not publicly by any means, the immense overstretching of the security-clearance system that it ran. For example, during internal monitoring conducted in February 1988, it turned out that recurrent calls since the late 1950s for limiting the number of people given access to secrets had not borne much fruit. As follows from the conclusions drawn by the USSR KGB Sixth Directorate regarding the awareness of experts travelling abroad, more than 70% of specialists with security clearance forms Nos. 1 and 2 did not actually come into contact with any information constituting state secrets.¹¹⁸

116 LEVADA, Yuri (ed.): *Sovetskiy prostoi chelovek: opyt sotsial’nogo portreta na rubezhe 1990-kh godov*. Mirovoi okean, Moscow 1993, p. 71.

117 NIKULIN, Pyotr: *KGB i gosudarstvennaya taina*, p. 146.

118 Liternoe delo No. 1072. Materialy po zashite sekretov, 1987–1988. LYA, f. K-1, ap. 46, b. 2122, pp. 148–149.

Evgenia Lezina

Moreover, during an audit of card files in the KGB Directorate for the Ulyanovsk Region in February 1988, it appeared that 26% of people granted access to secrets were not in fact associated with secret works and documents of any kind. (Consequently, 7,860 cards out of 30,000 were destroyed.)¹¹⁹

According to the 1988 Newsletter of the KGB's Sixth Directorate, a thorough analysis of existing data on special checks and the scope of work linked with issuing security clearances showed *poor efficiency, and most importantly, the uselessness of special vetting by the KGB for admission on form No. 3, as well as the possibility of obtaining a significant material gain* in the event that KGB approval of such clearances would be cancelled.¹²⁰ As a result, the approval by the KGB of security clearances' form No. 3 was mostly annulled in 1988.¹²¹

At a meeting held in August 1990 by the Committee of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on Science, Public Education, Culture, and Education and chaired by the Deputy of the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, academician Yuri Ryzhov it was announced that unjustified secrecy caused damage of 30–40 billion rubles per year, a sum comparable with the USSR state budget on education and health.¹²² According to the meeting's report published in *Sbornik KGB SSSR, the mismanagement of the information system in the Soviet Union, unjustified regime-secrecy restrictions, and a lack-of-information culture act as factors in weakening state power*.¹²³ Pursuant to other estimates, the losses caused by unreasonable, excessive secrecy might have reached 40–60 billion rubles (in 1990 prices).¹²⁴

In a rare public outbreak of departmental self-criticism (albeit encouraged in the context of the unfolding glasnost'), KGB Colonel Vladimir Rubanov wrote in *Kommunist* magazine in 1988: *Excessive centralization in solving all the country's problems produces, as a derivative phenomenon, a "cult of secrecy" as a necessary condition for the functioning and development of administrative and hierarchical structures for managing society. [...] In public practice, more and more deadlocks and clashes of regime measures with new political, economic, military and social realities are found*.¹²⁵

Nevertheless, despite critical voices, which eventually started being heard during the late perestroika period, only minor changes ensued. As it appears, econom-

119 Ukazanie Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 5s ot 10. 2. 1988 "Ob opyte raboty UKGB po Ulyanovskoi oblasti po privedeniyu informatsionnykh sistem i kartotek v sootvetstvie s trebovaniyami normativnykh aktov KGB". *GDA SBU*, f. 9, spr. 124-sp, pp. 122–123.

120 Nekotoryye voprosy spetsproverki i kontrolya za obosnovannost'yu prinimayemykh resheniy o dopuske sovetskikh grazhdan k gosudarstvennym sekretam. In: *Informatsionnyi byulleten' 6-go Upravleniya KGB SSSR*, 1988, No. 2 (20), pp. 16–17. *LYA*, f. K-46, ap. 2, b. 102.

121 Prikaz Predsedatelya KGB SSSR No. 036 ot 17. 1. 1988 "Ob obyavlenii resheniya SM SSSR No. 1419-354 ot 9. 12. 1987 'O vnesenii izmeneniy i dopolneniy v Instruksiyu po obespecheniyu rezhima sekretnosti v ministerstvakh, vedomstvakh, na predpriyatiyakh, v uchrezhdeniyakh i organizatsiyakh SSSR". *LYA*, f. K-51, ap. 3, b. 50, pp. 233–240.

122 O novom podkhode k obespecheniyu bezopasnosti strany. In: *Sbornik KGB SSSR*, 1990, No. 146–147, pp. 10–11. *LYA*, f. K-46, ap. 2, b. 55.

123 Ibid.

124 NIKULIN, Pyotr: *KGB i gosudarstvennaya taina*, p. 149.

125 RUBANOV, Vladimir: Ot "kul'ta sekretnosti" – k informatsionnoy kul'ture. *Kommunist*, 1988, No. 13, p. 26.

Soviet state security and the regime of secrecy

ic inefficiency, colossal costs, inconveniences for managers and technical staff alike, development gaps and backwardness in science and technology, which – according to some evaluations – the secrecy regime engendered, were obviously not too high a price to pay.¹²⁶ Being a key principle of the power organization in the Soviet Union, secrecy actually served a cornerstone of a closed non-transparent decision-making system vital for the preservation of the Soviet regime. A colossal infrastructure for its almost boundless secret record-keeping was nothing else but a necessary arrangement for maintaining the *status quo*.

The expansion of the system since the late 1950s was linked with the widening of social controls, which apparently were intensified proportionally to the degree of a given area's importance for both decision-making and public "safety" – the importance expressed in degrees of tolerance as well as the depth of the verification and tightening of loyalty rituals.

The regime of secrecy was thus a crucial means of managing a closed society and exerting a mass capillary control over its population. The presence of state security agencies in most enterprises, research institutions, and higher educational establishments, both through a system of secret structures or directly through counterintelligence servicing or an institute of active reserve officers, secured a position for the secret police in the state hierarchy. As a result, the KGB turned into a stronghold of secrecy, clothed with authority, possessing extensive rights and immense discretion in deciding what the secrecy regime infrastructure should be like, what should be regarded as state secrets, and what measures should be applied to the violators of secrecy regulations. And in this role the secret police managed to outlive the Soviet system itself.

126 See, for e.g., KAPITSA, Pyotr: "Nepomernoe i vrednoe sekretnichestvo". *Khimiya i zhizn*, 1989, No. 7, p. 8.