

Witold Bagieński

## The Polish People's Republic and KGB Intelligence Cooperation After 1956

Security organs in the Polish People's Republic (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa, PRL), as in other countries of the communist bloc, were formed under the direct supervision and control of Soviet secret services. Their organizational principles were adopted as well as their methods of working. Even part of the specialist terminology used was formulated like a carbon copy from the Russian language. Since the whole national apparatus was governed by the communists and was closely dependent on, and subject to, the Soviet Union, it functioned directly in the interests of that superpower in many areas. The security organs of the Polish People's Republic were treated simply as one element in the security system serving the international interests of the communist bloc. The Soviets thus had great influence in setting long-range guidelines, operational directions, and the ongoing priorities of their activities. The aim of this study is to systematize basic information on the relations between the intelligence services of the People's Republic of Poland and the Soviet Union in the context of broader cooperation between the Polish Ministry of the Interior (MSW) and the KGB.

The beginnings of the intelligence service in the structure of the Polish security apparatus date back to January 1945. In the 1940s the name of the unit was changed several times. Initially, the service operated as the Intelligence Branch of the Public Security Ministry (PSM) (Wydział Wywiadu MBP – Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego), from March 1945 – the Second Special Branch of the PSM (Wydział II Specjalny MBP), from July 1945 – the Second Independent Branch of the PSM (Wydział II Samodzielny MBP), and from March 1946 – Branch II of the PSM (Wydział II MBP). Then, from June 1947 to the end of May 1950, civil intelligence was partly merged with the military intelligence agency. At that time, in July 1947, the intelligence service had been renamed Department VII of the PSM (Departament VII MBP). As a result of organizational modifications in the whole Security Service on the threshold of 1955, it was renamed Department I of the Public Security Affairs Committee (Departament I KdsBP – Komitet do spraw Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego), and subsequently Department I of the Ministry of the Interior (Departament I MSW – Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych) at the end of 1956. The intelligence unit retained that name until the end of July 1990, when it was dissolved.<sup>1</sup>

1 More on this topic in BAGIEŃSKI, Witold: *Wywiad cywilny Polski Ludowej w latach 1945–1961*, Vol. 1–2. IPN, Warsaw 2017.

From the beginning of the 1950s to the fall of communism, the most important foreign “partner” for Polish security organs was the National Security Committee under the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, more widely known as the KGB. The committee began its existence in the spring of 1954 and was the direct successor to the MGB, that is, the Ministry of National Security of the USSR and, in the longer perspective, its predecessors: Cheka (early Soviet secret police); the NKVD (the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs); and the NKGB (the People’s Commissariat for State Security). Under the KGB, the First Main Directorate was responsible for conducting foreign intelligence. However, Polish civil intelligence did not maintain contact with Soviet military intelligence – the GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate) – because those contacts were reserved for Polish military intelligence, that is, the Second Directorate of the General Staff of the Polish People’s Army (Zarząd II Sztabu Generalnego Wojska Polskiego).

### Soviet advisors to Polish intelligence before 1956

As in the case of other units of Polish security organs, Soviet officers functioned alongside the intelligence department. Officially, they were called advisors but were known more popularly as “sovietniks” (“sowietnicy”). The range of their activities included giving comprehensive help to Polish functionaries, both in organizational and operational matters. They also received and passed on information and cases, and even arrested people and agents. Soviet advisors took part in planning assignments for operational units and assisted in the implementation of such, for example, participating in the recruitment of agents. There were even occasions when they recommended new staff for work in intelligence. Naturally, they were also liaisons in all contacts with Moscow Central. In light of the unwritten rules reigning in the ministry, their identities were carefully covered up, as was any trace of interference in specific decisions and operations. It was only thanks to the declassification of documents from the communist era that we have been able to learn the identity and career paths of some of these officers. The first Soviet advisor to Polish intelligence in 1945 may have been Colonel Tichon Skhlarenko, chief specialist in Polish affairs for Soviet intelligence. From 1946 to 1950, the most important advisor in the intelligence department was Colonel Viktor Filatov and his aides, known only by their surnames, Dolotov and Shpilevoy. Apart from the aforementioned Skhlarenko, in the early 1950s, other Soviet functionaries working in the intelligence management of the Polish People’s Republic were officers known only by their surnames: Bruslov, Grynienko, Guskov, Kareshkov, Kirsanov, Misthyriakov, Mitiuk, Popov, Sokolov, and Titov, to name just a few.

The former MBP intelligence officer Marcel Reich-Ranicki expressed in his recollections the opinion that *advisors were not sent to Warsaw to assist us. Rather, their assignment was to seek information that could be of interest to Soviet intelligence.*<sup>2</sup> As mentioned

2 REICH-RANICKI, Marcel: *Moje życie*. Muza, Warsaw 2000, p. 202. All translations from Polish and Russian are by the author.

## Witold Bagieński

by another former functionary, Krzysztof Starzyński, advisors affiliated with intelligence had their own office, secretary and cryptographer and, *while none of the Polish staff had access there, advisors could freely enter the offices of every section and avail themselves of all documents.*<sup>3</sup> According to former intelligence officer Colonel Henryk Bosak, there were three to four advisors in the intelligence service up to 1954. *They knew every case in detail. It could be said at the time they knew almost everything; at the least they read every dispatch. After 1954 there were two advisors, who became “invisible”, in other words, they had undoubtedly received orders from Moscow to act discreetly. They always had their own office and secretary. They did not participate in our internal social life. They functioned as if they were a separate entity from us.*<sup>4</sup> Soviet officers monitored the performance of the operations department and had constant, unlimited access to materials acquired and compiled there. As acknowledged by Marian Chabros, the author of a PRL intelligence history from the 1970s, *practically all political and operational information was passed to them.*<sup>5</sup> In turn, another officer, Janusz Kochański, maintained that during the time of his service in intelligence central he repeatedly received orders from the advisors to discontinue promising cases and file them in the archives. It was obvious enough to him that in this way they would take over those cases and continue to handle them by themselves. There was no doubt in his mind that the advisors had the final vote in every key matter. He emphasized that, even though the ordinary officers of the MBP were unhappy with this, they were absolutely not allowed to have any discussion whatsoever on the topic.<sup>6</sup>

### KGB Liaison Group for the Polish Ministry of the Interior

In the autumn of 1956, events in Poland came to a political turning point, resulting in a considerable number of changes at the highest levels of the Communist Party. This situation influenced modifications to the system for how the Soviet advisors' apparatus functioned. The matter of dismissing Soviet officers and the eventual formation of a “contact office”, which was to maintain continual links with the KGB, had already been discussed during the proceedings of the Politburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR), which took place on 7 September 1956. Edward Ochab, then First Secretary of the PZPR Central Committee, was authorized to come to terms with the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Kommunistическая партия Советского Союза, KPSS) in this matter. On his way to Beijing two days later, he stopped off in Moscow to discuss the question with Soviet leader Nikita

3 STARZYŃSKI, Krzysztof: *Uśpiiony agent*. Prószyński i S-ka, Warsaw 1996, p. 52.

4 See a short interview with Henryk Bosak in KASZYŃSKI, Krzysztof – PODGÓRSKI Jacek: *Kryptonim „Polska”... czyli szpiedzy i agenci*. BGW, Warsaw 1996, pp. 53–54.

5 *Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej* (Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance, hereafter AIPN), 002559/1, Vol. 1, CHABROS, Marian: *Przyczynek do historii Departamentu I MSW*. MSW, Warsaw 1971, p. 364.

6 MR. X [KOCHAŃSKI, Janusz] – HENDERSON, Bruce E. – CYR, C. C.: *Double Eagle. The Autobiography of a Polish Spy Who Defected to the West*. Ballantine Books, New York 1983, pp. 110–112.

## The Polish People's Republic

Khrushchev. Introducing the position of the Warsaw authorities, he proposed calling in the plenipotentiary powers of the KGB in place of the current “advisors” structure in security organs. Khrushchev provisionally approved his proposal and then, on 4 October, the KPSS Presidium ratified it. A detailed solution to the matter was to be prepared by the deputy chief of the KGB, General Pyotr Ivashutin, and the deputy minister of foreign affairs, Andrey Gromyko. At the time of talks between the PZPR leadership and Nikita Khrushchev in the middle of October 1956, during the apogee of the prevailing political crisis in the Polish People's Republic, the Soviet leader confirmed his agreement to dismiss the advisors. Shortly afterwards, the Soviet Party Presidium sent an official letter regarding the matter to Władysław Gomułka, the new First Central Committee Secretary of the Party. Thanks to this decision, most of the Soviet officers were recalled to Moscow while a number of those remaining were transferred to the embassy of the USSR.<sup>7</sup>

Despite a general lack of documentation on the topic, there are premises showing that the departure of the Soviet advisors from intelligence headquarters took place in an atmosphere of conflict and mutual grievances. This crisis was quickly averted, and relations between Polish and Soviet services moved into a new phase. After a discussion in Warsaw between the leadership of the KGB and the Ministry of the Interior in Warsaw on 12 January 1957, General Pyotr Ivashutin signed a cooperation agreement with the Polish interior minister, Władysław Wicha (in office 1954–1964). In this document, both sides committed themselves to obtaining information concerning the operations of Western nations against communist bloc countries, penetrating enemy spy centres and special services as well as international “subversive” organizations, such as NATO, the Peasant International (an organization of representatives of peasant parties from Central and Eastern Europe), Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. An important area of cooperation was to be scientific-technical intelligence, aimed primarily at problems connected with weaponry, i.e. atomics and radar technology, as well as chemical and bacteriological weapons. Counterintelligence organs were to work closely in the fight against Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Lithuanian emigration. On the strength of this agreement the sides were committed to helping each other in specific operational matters, in recruitment, the redeployment of agents, and the “guidance” of people and populations, as well as the mutual exchange of any information that could be of interest to the other side.

7 DUDEK, Antoni – KOCHAŃSKI, Aleksander – PERSAK, Krzysztof (eds.): *Centrum władzy. Protokoły posiedzeń kierownictwa PZPR. Wybór z lat 1949–1970*. ISP PAN, Warsaw 2000, p. 184; PACZKOWSKI, Andrzej (ed.): *Tajne dokumenty Biura Politycznego PRL-ZSRR 1956–1970*. Aneks, London 1998, pp. 10–11; JABLONOWSKI, Marek – JANOWSKI, Włodzimierz – SKRZYPEK, Andrzej – WŁADYKA, Wiesław (eds.): *Dokumenty centralnych władz Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej marzec-listopad '56*. ASPRA-AJ, Warsaw 2009, pp. 372–373, 390; SKRZYPEK, Andrzej: *Mechanizmy autonomii. Stosunki polsko-radzieckie 1956–1965*. Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora, Warsaw 2005, p. 69, 84; FURSENKO, Aleksandr – NAFTALI, Timothy: *Tajna wojna Chruszczowa*. Bellona, Warsaw 2007, pp. 136–137; FURSENKO, Aleksandr (ed.): *Prezidium CK KPSS 1954–1964. Tom 2, Postanowleniya 1954–1958 (Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU 1954–1964. Vol. 2, Ordinances 1954–1958)*. Tenex, Moscow 2006, p. 433, 967.

## Witold Bagieński

With the aim of keeping communication up to date between agencies, it was agreed that a KGB Liaison Group would be appointed in Warsaw. It was basically a KGB embassy in Warsaw. A few operations officers worked in this post along with various units of the Soviet services, mainly intelligence and counterintelligence, as well as technical support and personnel. The director of this team had the right to maintain official contact with the Polish Minister of the Interior and his deputies. In accordance with the substance of the understanding, contact with lower-ranking personnel of the Security Service required the personal approval and mediation of the Liaison Group. The MSW directorate was committed to giving every service to the KGB staff in Warsaw, even providing them with headquarters, transport, and medical services. The Soviet services entered into similar agreements with other countries in the communist bloc.<sup>8</sup>

By agreement with Wicha, the interior minister, the KGB were soon given two villas for their use, in the centre of Warsaw, situated close to each other and within easy distance of the Soviet embassy. The Soviet functionaries very quickly adapted the buildings to their needs. In one villa, equipment was installed to allow direct radio contact with Moscow, and in the basement a prison cell was built. In order not to reveal the true purpose of the building, an informational plaque was placed outside, stating that the trade office of the Soviet embassy was located within. The small side street where the building was located was under strict guard and all people passing through it had their identity papers checked.<sup>9</sup>

The January 1957 agreement remained in force until the beginning of the 1970s. The minister of the interior, Franciszek Szlachcic (in office from February 1971 to December 1971) and the head of the KGB, Yuri Andropov, signed a new cooperation agreement between the MSW and the KGB on 27 November 1971.<sup>10</sup> On the strength of this document, the Liaison Group was elevated to the standing of a KGB Delegation in Warsaw. It was also called the KGB “Narew” Group.<sup>11</sup>

The first chief of the KGB Liaison Group was a former advisor to the Public Security Affairs Committee, Colonel Georgy Yevdokimenko. Later chiefs were: from 1959, Major General Mikhail Shyrkow; from 1962, Colonel Elisey Sinicyn; from 1968, Major General Yakov Skomorokhin; from 1973, Lieutenant General Vitaly Pavlov; from

8 AIPN, 0656/1, Porozumienie o współpracy pomiędzy organami bezpieczeństwa ZSRR i PRL (tłumaczenie z rosyjskiego) (Agreement on Cooperation Between the Security Authorities of the USSR and the PRL – translated from Russian/), 12. 1. 1957, p. 2–6 (for the original in Russian, see AIPN, 1585/2061, folder No. 1).

9 KASZYŃSKI, Krzysztof – PODGÓRSKI, Jacek: *Szpiedzy, czyli tajemnice polskiego wywiadu*. Ikar, Warsaw 1994, p. 61–63; PAWLIKOWICZ, Leszek: *Tajny front zimnej wojny. Uciekinierzy z polskich służb specjalnych 1956–1964*. Rytm, Warsaw 2004, p. 30.

10 AIPN, 02408/14, Porozumienie o współpracy organów bezpieczeństwa Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej i Związku Socjalistycznych Republik Radzieckich (Agreement on Cooperation Between the Security Authorities of the Polish People’s Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), 27. 11. 1971, pp. 1–6.

11 Ibid., 1585/2123, Współdziałanie z Przedstawicielstwem KBP w Warszawie (Cooperation with the KGB Representation in Warsaw), 1972 (not dated further), p. 51; NAWROCKI, Zbigniew (ed.): *Współpraca SB MSW PRL z KGB ZSRR w latach 1970–1990. Próba bilansu*. ABW, Warsaw 2013, pp. 34–38.

## The Polish People's Republic

1984, Major General Vasily Dozhdalev; from 1987, Major General Anatoly Kiereyev; and in 1990, Major General Vasily Galkin. Subsequent deputies of the KGB chief coordinated direct contact with Polish intelligence. Unfortunately, only a few of their names are known. At the beginning of the 1960s, Colonel Andrey Raina fulfilled the role, in the early 1970s it was Colonel Leonid Stolarov and at the beginning of the 1980s Major General Vasily Dozhdalev is mentioned.<sup>12</sup>

Over the years, the number of KGB functionaries operating in the Warsaw delegation gradually grew. In the early 1970s, approximately 15 people were on staff there, including support personnel.<sup>13</sup> At the end of the 1980s, that had grown to 22 people, of which as many as five were responsible for contact with Polish intelligence. At that time, they included Major General Vasily Galkin, as well as those under him: Colonel Vladimir Rybatchenkov, Colonel Valentin Kutcherov, Colonel Mikhail Fieoktistov, and Colonel Anatoly Lipatov. To demonstrate the disparity, two officers were required for contact with Interior Ministry Counterintelligence, but there was only a single officer assigned to the other units. Besides these delegates, another eight support and technical personnel were employed. Along with the accredited functionaries in the KGB Delegation, Soviet services also sent officers to their consulates in Gdansk, Krakow, Poznan, and Szczecin. KGB Special Departments and Branches also functioned in military units stationed on Polish territory, e.g. in Legnica and Świdnica in Lower Silesia. The officers operating here maintained working contact with Security Service field units.<sup>14</sup>

Formally, officers of the Liaison Group were under Department XI of the KGB First General Directorate, which from March 1954 was responsible for cooperation with the representatives of countries subject to the USSR. In November 1966, this unit became independent, set apart from the structure of the intelligence. The existing name was maintained. In July 1968, Department XI once again became a cell of the intelligence agency and remained there until the dissolution of the KGB in 1991.<sup>15</sup>

### Bilateral and multilateral meetings with KGB representatives

Commencing in January 1957, the leaders of the MSW and KGB directorates, department and office directors, as well as other department heads of both organizations met for a bilateral council, mainly in Moscow and Warsaw. This was organized with the idea of coordinating the direction of activities, working out actual areas of coop-

12 Predstavitel'stvo KGB pri MOB – MVD PNR (Representation of the KGB by the MBP – MSW of the Polish People's Republic) – see <http://shieldandsword.mozohin.ru/kgb5491/sovetsnik/poland.htm> (quoted version dated 25. 8. 2020).

13 PAWŁOW, Witalij: *Byłem rezydentem KGB w Polsce*. BGW, Warsaw 1994, p. 8.

14 NAWROCKI, Zbigniew (ed.): *Współpraca SB MSW PRL z KGB ZSRR w latach 1970–1990*, pp. 75–98.

15 BARRON, John: *KGB. The Secret Work of Soviet Secret Agents*. Reader's Digest Press, London, 1974, p. 112; BULHAK, Władysław – PACZKOWSKI, Andrzej: „Przyjaciele radzieccy”. *Współpraca wywiadów polskiego i sowieckiego, 1944–1990. Zeszyty Historyczne*, 2009, No. 167, p. 130; PAWLIKOWICZ, Leszek: *Aparat centralny I. Zarządu Głównego KGB jako instrument realizacji globalnej strategii Kremla 1954–1991*. Rytm, Warsaw 2013, pp. 265–267.

## Witold Bagieński

eration, and mutually exchanging expertise. Although this created the appearance of equality for each side, in practical terms it gave the Soviets control over their weaker partner in the pact, as well as with respect to discipline and planning activities.

Directorate representatives of Department I MSW participated in most of the main councils with the KGB. They met with the leadership of the KGB First General Directorate as well as in their own circle. At least from the early 1970s, the directors of respective units of both agencies held several meetings and discussions every year. Among other topics these meetings were dedicated to discussing cooperation in the area of political intelligence, fighting so-called ideological subversion, and the penetration of Western special services, church institutions, NATO, the European Economic Community (EEC), and emigration. Also holding meetings were directors of other informational units and those looking after areas such as operational methods, conducting agency activities from illegal positions, subterfuge, and disinformation, as well as the organization of so-called active operations. There were especially frequent contacts between the directorates of branches handling scientific-technical intelligence.

Through Soviet agency initiatives, the Polish security apparatus maintained contact with services from countries belonging to the Warsaw Pact as well as other nations belonging to the communist bloc. In many documents they are described as “fraternal services”. Until the end of the 1960s, bilateral discussions were the main form of contact between these services. The most important decisions were made during meetings at the ministerial level. As a rule, directors of the primary departments participated in them. It was an opportunity to discuss many topics from various areas of their interest. They shared information about key initiatives in operational undertakings, determined the principles and forms of exchanging information. And, on occasion, discussed joint ventures. Decisions made by them were reflected in the contents of agreements, which the ministry heads signed at the end of the deliberations. During subsequent meetings, appraisals were carried out regarding the implementation of approved decisions and plans were formulated for the upcoming period. The most intense contacts were maintained with Czechoslovakia and East Germany.<sup>16</sup>

From the beginning of the 1970s, conferences comprising the directors of Socialist countries’ intelligence services were the most important forum for meetings and discussions. This council was originally organized every two years and, subsequently, every four years. The meetings became an occasion for the mutual exchange of knowledge and expertise as well as many bilateral discussions. The first meeting took place on 7–11 December 1970 in Budapest. The second meeting was held on 23–27 October 1972 in Varna, Bulgaria. The third was in the Polish People’s Republic on 9–14 December 1974. It was organized in the newly opened Department I MSW villa in Magdalenka, on the outskirts of Warsaw.<sup>17</sup> The fourth meeting did not take place

16 AIPN, 1585/2123, Wzajemne stosunki i współpraca z odpowiednimi służbami w krajach socjalistycznych (Mutual Relations and Cooperation with Relevant Services in Socialist Countries), 8. 4. 1972, p. 31.

17 BUŁHAK, Władysław – PACZKOWSKI, Andrzej: „Przyjaciele radzieccy”, pp. 145–146.

## The Polish People's Republic

until four years later, on 17–21 April 1978 in Prague. The next occurred on 17–21 May 1982 in Moscow. The last of these meetings took place in Berlin on 17–21 May 1988. There were also multilateral working meetings dedicated to specific areas and directions of agency work.

### Cooperation: its objectives and how it worked in practice

As a result of changes that occurred from the end of 1956 to the beginning of 1957, Soviet officers tried to operate more discreetly on Polish territory and thus were not as visible as before. Although under the spirit of the agreement, contact between representatives was to be limited to the minister, his deputies, and those staff authorized (it sometimes included directors of particular departments and offices as well as other offices and independent section heads). It also came to the point where officers from KGB directorates started showing up in the central MSW headquarters. In Department I MSW documents dating from that time, the Soviet agency was usually characterized by the name “Soviet friends” (in Polish: “przyjaciele radzieccy”) and “PR” for short. The term “friends” was also used on occasion.<sup>18</sup>

Among archival documents of the Polish communist security apparatus, stored in the Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance, not much information can be found about contacts between the Ministry of the Interior and the KGB. Many key documents – those concerning councils and working meetings, for example – were destroyed at the end of the 1980s to hide the true character of the relationship between agencies. What should also be remembered is that the most important directives were given verbally for the sake of keeping up “proper” appearances. Depending on the situation and needs, direct orders could be passed on at the Party level as well – through one of the Central Committee secretaries, who was responsible for handling the Security Service, as well as through contacts with ministry leaders or specific departments. While these directives were passed down to the lower ranks, normally subordinates were not informed about their origin. It sometimes happened that Soviet functionaries directly approached branch heads or even some operational officers. The system was tight and the Soviets in one way or another obtained what they wanted without giving too much in return.

Polish civil intelligence cooperated with the First Main Directorate of the KGB in several different spheres. This did not, however, include the joint recruitment or management of secret collaborators. Because of the security in many areas, they tried to not get in each other's way. If information came to light indicating that a subject under observation might be an object of interest to allied agencies, they consulted together to establish subsequent measures. There were also situations in which the KGB, with the knowledge and agreement of Polish intelligence, appropriated some of their agents. An analysis of known cases shows that most of them involved col-

18 BOSAK, Henryk: *Oficer centrali. Z tajemnic polskiego wywiadu 1974–1976*. BGW, Warsaw 1996, p. 38; BULHAK, Władysław – PACZKOWSKI, Andrzej: „*Przyjaciele radzieccy*”, p. 140; NAWROCKI, Zbigniew (ed.): *Współpraca SB MSW PRL z KGB ZSRR w latach 1970–1990*, pp. 68–74.

## Witold Bagieński

laborators who were more useful to the KGB than the Polish Security Service. It seems that cases where Soviet services relinquished agents to Polish intelligence were completely rare.

Basic areas of common interest in the scope of political intelligence corresponded with the main directions of activity in the Department I. These included the political situation in the foremost Western countries, mainly the United States, West Germany, France, and the United Kingdom; internal politics and international relations were also of concern here. Due to this, the greatest deal of attention was paid to those particular foreign ministries as well as the analytical and advisory centres connected to them. The economic situation in selected countries and matters related to foreign trade was also closely observed. A good deal of attention was given to the workings of international organizations and institutions, especially NATO and the EEC. Information gathered by Polish Intelligence on the topic of the Vatican was of great interest to the KGB. From the viewpoint of Soviet services, special attention was given to any news regarding the politics of the Catholic Church in the east as well as her relationship with the Orthodox Church.

An important area of cooperation was the exchange of information regarding the organization and activity of Western special services and police forces as well as so-called centres of ideological subversion. Since the 1960s, information on China and Jewish organizations had been of great importance for Soviet intelligence. Both services completed each other's knowledge, sending detailed information about people under surveillance as well as larger data compilations and analyses. Apart from that, they kept each other informed of potential threats. At the beginning 1977, the KGB's First Main Directorate created the filing and computer record system called the System of Joint Records of Enemy Data (*Sistema obediennogo ucjota dannyh o protivnikie, SOUD*), for which information was gathered about citizens of Western nations who were considered to be dangerous to communist bloc countries. Data for the system was to be entered by security organs in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Mongolia, Poland, East Germany, and Hungary, and from 1984, Vietnam as well. The Ministry of the Interior joined SOUD in March 1978 in order to implement the Soviet services' directive and gave it a Polish name – PSED (*Połączony System Ewidencji Danych o Przeciwniku*). In light of orders from the interior minister, all operational units were obliged to hand over any information in their possession regarding people who were to be registered in this system. In 1978, Polish intelligence functionaries completed a review of their cases and sent the files of 769 of those in question to be registered in PSED. Even though in later years the number of registrations was much smaller, Department I turned over more cases than any other units operating in the whole MSW.<sup>19</sup>

19 NAWROCKI, Zbigniew (ed.): *Współpraca SB MSW PRL z KGB ZSRR w latach 1970-1990*, pp. 99–118; ZAJĄC, Ewa: *Polska w Połączonym Systemie Ewidencji Danych o Przeciwniku (PSED) – próba rekonstrukcji*. In: NOWAK, Andrzej (eds.): *Ofiary imperium. Imperia jako ofiary. 44 spojrzenia*. IPN, Warsaw 2010, pp. 543–556; PAWLIKOWICZ, Leszek: *Aparat centralny I. Zarządu Głównego KGB*, pp. 289–296.

## The Polish People's Republic

Scientific-technical intelligence was an area of close cooperation as well. This resulted in an attempt being made to catch up technologically and get around Western embargoes placed on the sale of new devices and machinery to communist countries. It often happened that the KGB went to the Department I with specific requests regarding this problem or the Department I offered the KGB a compilation of materials that they had procured. An interesting example here is the case of the Polish intelligence superspy Marian Zacharski, who was operating in Silicon Valley under the codename "Pay". He was able to obtain documentation regarding very up-to-date defence technology developed in the United States. It was so advanced that Polish industry was unable to make use of it. In this situation the information was made available to the Soviet Union.<sup>20</sup> There were also situations, when informed by the MSW that they had obtained some technology and were willing to share it, the KGB replied that they already possessed it and were not interested.

One element of intelligence cooperation was so-called active operations. The KGB used the capabilities and the intelligence infrastructures of communist bloc agencies to direct complex operations characterized by subterfuge and disinformation. Most of these depended on planting false information with the enemy aimed at provoking the desired reaction from this foe or getting it to desist from doing something. In some cases, it was about discrediting specific people or communities, perhaps with the help of fabricated documents or publications. To carry out subterfuge stratagems, the press and letter correspondence was used, as well as the official contacts of officers and agents with Western journalists, politicians, and diplomats. For example, Branch XII of Department I MSW, which participated in such activities, wrote in their 1988 report that the aim of their work during the previous year had been, among other things, to uncover operations by Western special services and certain politicians, to foment discord in areas of West Germany near France and Holland, and to slow the integration process between nations belonging to NATO and the EEC. Looking at these goals, it can be clearly seen that they were serving the interests of the Soviet Union far more than those of communist Poland.<sup>21</sup>

Rezidenturas were foreign missions from Department I MSW as well as smaller numbers of operation posts and operational links. In light of accepted principles regarding contact with KGB functionaries working in the given terrain, only a resident from Polish intelligence was authorized for such contact. The frequency had to be limited to the minimum necessary and had to be done under a veil of secrecy. According to leadership directives from Department I MSW, cooperation with "Soviet friends" was to be limited to specific areas while working abroad. These were: the exchange of information regarding a direct threat to a branch and its personnel, as well

20 BULHAK, Władysław - PLESKOT, Patryk: *Szpiedzy PRL-u*. Znak, Krakow 2014, pp. 415-436. See also ZACHARSKI, Marian: *Nazywam się Zacharski. Marian Zacharski. Wbrew regułom*. Zysk i S-ka, Poznan 2009.

21 *AIPN*, 0449/50, Vol. 5, Sprawozdanie z realizacji zadań operacyjnych Wydziału XII Departamentu I MSW w 1988 r. (Report on the Implementation of Operational Tasks by Branch XII Departamentu I MSW in 1988), 16. 12. 1988, p. 26.

## Witold Bagieński

as provocateurs. Verbal exchanges of information were also permitted on the intelligence situation and the general political conditions of the countries in question. All information of an operational character could be passed to Soviet services only with the full knowledge and intermediation of Warsaw Central. After each meeting with a KGB officer, the Polish resident was required to send notes back to the Department I and inform the Information Section about any data obtained during the conversation. In practice, however, officers did not always observe these principles.<sup>22</sup>

### Imbalance in the exchange of information

A primary field for cooperation with Soviet services was the exchange of information and intelligence materials. Within the Department I, the section responsible for this collaboration compiled intelligence information that was gathered by operational branches and officers abroad.<sup>23</sup> In this structure, a team of several people took care of the compiled materials sent by “friendly” services, did translations and had oversight of information from mutual exchanges. This small unit was called the “Liaison Group for Socialist Countries”. In the 1960s, it was named the “Information Exchange Unit with Fraternal Agencies” and later, the “Cooperation with Socialist Countries Section”. The unit also acted as an intermediary in passing information to the KGB through the Department I’s operational branches. They did not interfere with the contents, however, confining themselves to entering them into their records system. The only exception to this was material from the sphere of scientific-technical intelligence, whose units handled those issues.<sup>24</sup>

Because of the piecemeal character and paucity of the data, the scale of information exchanged with Soviet services is only partly known. The topics of these dispatches covered practically every area that was of interest to Polish intelligence.<sup>25</sup>

22 Ibid., 003171/5, Vol. 2, Instrukcja nr 4/W/86 dla „Disa” (Instruction No. 4/W/86 for station in Rome), 14. 4. 1986, p. 205.

23 From 1955 this was Branch IX, from 1958 Branch VIII, from 1961 Branch XI, from 1963 Branch X, and in the years 1977–1990 Branch XVII.

24 AIPN, 003175/394, Akta osobowe Jana Gołubowskiego (he was chief of this small unit – author’s note), Wniosek personalny (Personal files of Jan Gołubowski, Personal Application), 2. 12. 1970, p. 164; Ibid., Arkusz kwalifikacyjny okresowej oceny oficera (Qualification sheet for the officer’s periodic assessment), 20. 12. 1975, p. 176; AIPN, 02385/52, Vol. 1, SIWEK, Krzysztof (ed.): *Praca informacyjna w wywiadzie*. MSW, Warsaw 1984, p. 25; BUŁHAK, Władysław – PACZKOWSKI, Andrzej: „Przyjaciele radziecy”, pp. 140–141.

25 AIPN, 002559/1, Vol. 1, CHABROS, Marian: *Przyczynek do historii*, pp. 366–367; Ibid., 1585/2121, Ocena współdziałania Departamentu I MSW ze służbą wywiadowczą ZSRR (Assessment of the Cooperation of Department I of the Ministry of the Interior with the Intelligence Service of the USSR), 1971 (not dated further), p. 128; Ibid., 1585/2129, Notatka służbowa dot. współpracy wywiadowczej MSW PRL i KGB ZSRR (kwiecień 1971 – listopad 1973) (Note on Intelligence Cooperation Between the Ministry of the Interior of the Polish People’s Republic and the KGB of the USSR /April 1971 – November 1973/), 23. 11. 1973, p. 129; BUŁHAK, Władysław – PACZKOWSKI, Andrzej: „Przyjaciele radziecy”, pp. 141–143.

## The Polish People's Republic

## Materials exchanged between Department I of the Ministry of the Interior and the KGB

Date	Department I passed on to the KGB	Department I received from the KGB
1958	375	74
1959	306	127
1961	609	127
1969	679	699
1970	1,066	655
1. 1971 – 31. 3. 1971	894	236
4. 1971 – 1. 11. 1973*	4,110	1,814

\* Of the 5,924 items of information exchanged between April 1971 and November 1973, 4,903 alluded to political and economic matters (Department I passed on 3,481 of these, receiving 1,422 from the KGB). Intelligence materials of a scientific-technical nature made up 316 of these items – given 192, received 124 (The rest of them were probably of an operational nature and related to specific cases – author's note).

Although the exchange of information with Soviet services was supposed to be on an equal-sharing basis, it was hard to describe it as such in practice. Inasmuch as the KGB obtained a great deal of information that was of interest to them, equally they had no qualms about giving information that was of a second-class nature or simply useless to the Polish services (e.g. a compilation on the political situation in Third World countries. In the summer of 1980, Branch XVII, informational-analytical, of Department I MSW prepared a memorandum regarding the problem of the information-exchange disparity with the Soviet side. It was sent to the deputy minister of the interior, General Mirośław Milewski. It stated, *in the last while we have received a great deal of information from fraternal Soviet services, of which very little bears upon our sphere of interests; most of it is fragmentary in nature and often this is information already known from official sources. We are not, however, receiving information on the topic of global problems in international politics (mainly concerning issues of European and American foreign policy).*<sup>26</sup>

This problem of imbalance in the mutual exchange of intelligence information had existed from a much earlier time. What the collaboration with “Soviet friends” in this area actually looked like in reality directly after events in the autumn of 1956 can be seen in a rather frank memorandum written by the interior minister, Władysław Wicha, in January 1958, addressed to the highest Party authorities. In this document he recounted the visit of the MSW delegation to the 40th anniversary celebration of USSR security organs, which took place on 20 December 1957: *Upon arriving in Mos-*

26 AIPN, 0449/55, Vol. 2, Notatka dot. wymiany informacji między ministerstwami spraw zagranicznych ZSRR i Polski oraz naszymi służbami (Note on the Exchange of Information Between the Foreign Ministries of the USSR and Poland and Our Services), July 1980 (not dated further), pp. 226–228.

## Witold Bagieński

cow, the Polish delegation – like the others – was received by Comrade [Ivan] Sierov, leader of the National Security Committee. I took advantage of the opportunity to discuss with Com[rade] Sierov a number of matters regarding the cooperation of our security services with Soviet security organs. First of all, I put forward the objection that Soviet security organs gave us very little important information that interested us or could possibly interest us. With this I emphasized that, as far as we were concerned, we were sending everything that might be of interest and have value for them. I stressed that we, however, were receiving short dispatches not having nearly the weight that our material had, particularly some of the documents sent by our counterintelligence agency. I also pointed out that our Soviet companions had not sent us evaluations of all the material we had sent to them. For example, Department I sent them 48 documents and they only sent us 12 assessments. This hinders our ability to control and evaluate the work done by our security service branches.

Comrade Sierov answered those objections point-blank, saying that, indeed, the security organs of the USSR did not send us many important documents or much news and that was because in our intelligence department there was an unsatisfactory level of conspiracy and that a lot of Jews worked there, something which could not guarantee that information received would be kept secret. To my reaction, that Jews working in our security services were primarily old communists, people who were tried-and-tested, and that it wouldn't do to take such an attitude towards the collaboration between our agencies, Com. Sierov replied that, if need be, they would send some important material, but only for the eyes of the top MSW administration. From further discussion it could be seen that the authorities of the National Security Committee regard our security services with distrust.<sup>27</sup>

On the second day of the commemorations, the internal conclave took place at KGB headquarters. At the conclusion, Ivan Sierov gave a speech, in which he thanked the delegates present for their tributes and then presented evaluations of the efforts of specific security organs within the bloc. First place in this classification was given to the services of the USSR and China, second to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany, and third to Albania, Bulgaria, Poland and the remaining countries. Afterwards, during the dinner party, the conversation had the effect of a bucket of cold water on the MSW delegates. As Minister Wicha admitted: *Our Soviet comrades were particularly interested in the Polish delegation. They propounded in conversation the same reservations and charges that were put forward in a conversation I had with Comrade [Pyotr] Pospelov. Namely, that we have retreated too far before the church and clergy, that we have unnecessarily compromised on private enterprise, that we aren't consistent in our fight with the enemy, that in Poland there is unbridled anti-Soviet propaganda, that dissidents roam unpunished. Some of the directors responsible for security accused us of prattling on nonstop about our 150-year subjugation and that by doing so we were inciting nationalism. They also raised the charge that – by putting forth the issue of Polish autonomy and sovereignty – we were weakening the unity of the socialist camp. It should be mentioned that our compatriots from Czechoslovakia and East Germany shared in the reproaches and remarks of the Soviet comrades. [...]* The

27 Ibid., 1585/2063, Notatka z pobytu na uroczystościach 40-lecia organów bezpieczeństwa ZSRR (Note from a Visit to the Celebrations of the 40th Anniversary of the USSR's Security Authorities), 9. 1. 1958, pp. 20–21.

## The Polish People's Republic

tone of voice used by several of the delegates showed conspicuous servility. The delegates of the C[zechoslovak]S[ocialist]R[epublic] and the G[erman]D[emocratic]R[epublic] distinguished themselves here.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast to other intelligence services in the communist bloc, Polish intelligence did not send their functionaries to the Soviet Union for training after 1956. Before that, they had only participated in two such courses. The first of these took place at School No. 101, i.e. the KGB Higher School of Intelligence Studies, between January 1954 and January 1955. The second ran from May 1955 to May 1956. Twenty young, prospective functionaries participated in each of these courses, but most of them were not intelligence staff at the time. The plan was to employ them in the department after they successfully finished the course in Moscow.<sup>29</sup>

In the light of written memoirs and documents known today, there is no doubt that the KGB and the GRU (the Soviet foreign military-intelligence agency) ran a classic operation amongst their Polish “friends.” Though much information came to the KGB through official MSW channels, they still did a great deal to recruit agents from the Security Service’s functionaries. The most well-known example of this type of case is the history of an officer formerly of the Third (socio-political) Department, later from the cabinet of ministers, Lieutenant Marek Zieliński, who was detained in 1993 by the Department of National Defence on a charge of spying for Russia, and earlier, the Soviet Union. This dated back to as early as 1981.<sup>30</sup>

The following anecdote by Marian Zacharski, who was a high-ranking officer of the Intelligence Branch of the State Protection Office (Urząd Ochrony Państwa, UOP) in the 1990s and dealt with Russian issues, testifies that this problem of recruitment also concerned the intelligence department: *I know the case of a Department I officer very well – it was a classic attempt to recruit a young officer from the MSW (that is, intelligence central). During a duty visit to Legnica, the officer was enticed to an apartment, which was also a safe house, by a local person, well known to him. Two KGB officers were waiting for him there. They began a conversation, lasting several hours, which fits the classic recruitment method. The KGB proposed regular payoffs to our young officer as the basis for undertaking cooperation with them. They reinforced this with strong hints regarding his career in intelligence. The young officer came out of the meeting shaken and shocked. After his return to Central, he wrote a report, which he personally took to the head of his department, Mr M., who upon seeing the contents, put the report into the shredder right in front of the officer. He didn’t even go through the official channels to the director. The matter was conclusively terminated – with the department head.*<sup>31</sup> It is impossible to determine today how many similar recruitment attempts were made in the communist era in Poland that ended in success.

28 Ibid., pp. 22–23.

29 For more about courses for Polish intelligence officers in the Soviet Union, see BAGIEŃSKI, Witold: *Wywiad cywilny Polski Ludowej w latach 1945–1961*, Vol. 1. IPN, Warsaw 2017, pp. 625–630.

30 CHLASTA, Grzegorz: *Czterech. Brochwicz, Miodowicz, Niemczyk, Sienkiewicz*. Czarna Owca, Warsaw 2014, p. 68. More examples of the operational workings of Soviet services can be found in the publication NAWROCKI, Zbigniew (ed.): *Współpraca SB MSW PRL z KGB ZSRR w latach 1970–1990*.

31 ZACHARSKI, Marian: *Rosyjska ruletka*. Zysk i Ska, Poznan 2010, pp. 175–176.

## Witold Bagieński

Despite the changes that occurred from the end of 1956 to 1957, it is difficult to describe the mutual relations between agencies as real friendship. The Soviet Secret Services did not treat Polish security organs or those in other communist bloc countries as equal partners; they were more likely to be treated as a useful helper or simply as an errand boy. In the opinion of Ladislav Bittman, a Czechoslovak intelligence officer who defected to the West, the Soviets lost trust in Polish security organs after the events of the autumn of 1956 and were more distant in their dealings with them. The other intelligence services in the remaining communist bloc countries followed suit. Even though relations between the KGB and their Polish comrades stabilized during the 1960s, they were never very close, as was the case with other communist agencies. In Bittman's opinion, the political turbulence, above all the birth of Solidarity in Poland at the beginning of the 1980s, created a barrier of distrust with respect to comrades from the Polish People's Republic.<sup>32</sup>

Political changes in the second half of 1989 caused mutual cooperation with Soviet services to slowly wither. In the autumn of 1989, there were several working meetings with officers from various branches of KGB intelligence. In planning discussions for 1990, they avoided making serious declarations regarding the character of future relations. Subsequent events developed quickly, however. In October, the Department I refocused its responsibilities, as did other operational units of the Ministry of the Interior, backing away from the fight with the former opposition as well as with the Catholic Church. In December, they withdrew from participation in meetings planned earlier with the KGB and other communist services<sup>33</sup>.

At the end of January 1990, participants in the Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party accepted a resolution to end the Party's activity. In the following weeks, parliament then prepared and ratified a bill to reform special services. In these circumstances, it became obvious that the era of "friendly" relations with Soviet agencies was coming to an end. In mid-March 1990, Warsaw Central of the Department I sent a directive to officers working abroad, instructing them to discontinue further contact with Soviet functionaries. In these instructions they recommended that operatives be decidedly more careful in their contacts with the KGB as well as in the arena of official diplomatic activities.<sup>34</sup> Although the KGB had reduced their staff in the Warsaw office by nearly a third at the end of 1989, they had not yet decided on winding it up. The KGB Delegation in Warsaw functioned until the closure of the former Polish Ministry of the Interior in July 1990. However, several of the officers on staff there stayed in Poland, working under the auspices of the KGB residency, quartered in the Soviet embassy.

32 BITTMAN, Ladislav: *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation. An Insider's View*. Pergamon-Brassey's, Washington 1985, p. 31.

33 AIPN, 3486/80, Vol. 2, Pismo dyrektora Departamentu I MSW do dyrektora Gabinetu Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych (Letter from the Director of Department I of the Ministry of Interior to the Director of the Cabinet of the Minister of the Interior), 23. 12. 1989, p. 68.

34 Ibid., 3486/77, Kryptogram nr (Cryptogram No.) 00648-00653, 16. 3. 1990, p. 210.