

EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE IN THE COLD WAR PERIOD: THE SOVIET MODEL OF INTELLIGENCE STRUCTURES

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Abstract

An ideological clash between Soviet communism and American anti-communism was central to the Cold War conflict. American policymakers, such as George Kennan and John Forest Dulles, acknowledged that the Cold War was essentially a war of ideas; a war largely fought out on two fronts: intelligence and propaganda.

Since the late 1940s, in Eastern and Central Europe, institutionalized intelligence organizations resulted from direct subordination to a foreign state secret service, the Soviet one. After the World War II the Red Army and NKVD units were present at the organizing session of all intelligence services in Eastern and Central Europe (Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, East German, Hungarian, Polish, and Romanian). It was copied the Soviet security apparatus model, their structure and operational guidelines were based on verbatim translations from Russian documents. This paper aims to provide a short overview of intelligence structures evolutions in Eastern Europe during the Cold War, in order to highlight some important moments in the history of "institutional (in) dependence" on the Soviet Union for most of these structures.

Keywords: *Cold War, Intelligence, soviet model, Eastern and Central Europe.*

Introduction

In Eastern and Central Europe institutionalized intelligence structures resulted from direct subordination to a foreign state. Since late 1940's, Bulgarian, East German, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Polish, and Romanian intelligence structures had been subordinated to the Soviet intelligence service. This paper aims to provide a short overview on evolutions of intelligence organizations in Eastern Europe during the Cold War, in order to

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highlight some important moments in the history of “institutional (in) dependence on the Soviet Union” for these intelligence structures.

The Soviet Model of Intelligence

As Alexander Orlov stressed in 2007, in his paper “The Theory and Practice of Soviet Intelligence”, Soviet intelligence structure based its work “100% on secret sources and undercover agents”. Thus, the army intelligence main efforts were concentrated “on building and operating networks of secret informants” (Orlov, 2007).¹ In this respect, the same author highlights the *essence of the Soviet doctrine of intelligence*: “Important state secrets and especially clues to the intentions and plans of potential enemies cannot be found in libraries or encyclopaedias, but only where they are kept under lock and key. The task of intelligence services is to acquire the keys and deliver the secrets to their governments, thus providing them with the foreknowledge and orientation needed for the making of decisions.” (Orlov, 2007)

To understand the specific of the Soviet intelligence, in the following table, we propose a short evolution timeline of the Soviet intelligence structures.

Table 1: Soviet Secret Service Evolution Timeline (1917-1953)²

<i>Period</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Organization Name (English)</i>	<i>Important moments</i>
1917	NKVD	<i>People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs</i>	<i>1917 – New Bolshevik government formed NKVD</i>
1917 - 1922	<i>Cheka</i>	<i>“All Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage”</i>	<i>December 1917 – was established - The first Soviet Union security organization called Cheka later known as Vcheka</i>
1922 - 1923	GPU	<i>State Political Directorate</i>	<i>1922 abolition of the Vcheka, formed GPU</i>

¹ “The Main Intelligence Department of the Army did study some legitimately accessible sources, but only those dealing with military matters, such as foreign military and scientific journals, army and navy manuals, military textbooks, topographic explorations, and anything printed anywhere about the armed forces of the world”. See more at Orlov, 2007.

²Source: CIA Interim Report, June 1948, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp78-02546r000100130001-3>.

1923 - 1934	OGPU	<i>Unified State Political Directorate</i>	<i>1930 NKVD officially abolished</i>
1934 - 1943	NKVD	<i>People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs</i>	<i>1934 - NKVD reinstated as an all-union agency of executive power 1941 - NKGB was subordinated into NKVD</i>
1943 - 1946	NKGB	<i>People's Commissariat for State Security</i>	<i>1941 - decree 149 of the CPSU Politburo creating NKGB 1943 - a decree issued splitting the regular and political police into two agencies and resulted in a creation of the NKGB, which gradually transferred all security and law enforcement functions from the NKVD. March 1946 - NKGB renamed - MGB and NKVD renamed MVD</i>
1946 - 1954	MGB	<i>Ministry of State Security</i>	<i>March 15, 1946 - NKGB became MGB</i>
1946 - 1954	MVD	<i>Ministry of Internal Affairs</i>	<i>March 13, 1954 - the Ministry for State Security was transformed in the Committee for State Security or KGB (MVD and MGB amalgamated into one organization)</i>
1954 - 1991	KGB	<i>Committee for State Security</i>	<i>1991 Soviet-era ministry, merging three security bodies into one FSB with the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) and the majority of units of the Federal Protection Service (FSO), which oversees the protection of the country's top leaders</i>

In 1941, was created the People's Commissariat for State Security (NKGB), responsible for external espionage, counter-espionage, and guarding the leaders of the party and state. However, in 1946, for political and propaganda reasons, all Peoples' Commissariats were renamed ministries and NKGB became Ministry of State Security (MGB). Thus, internal security and foreign intelligence were joined in a single ministry, which integrated all the

intelligence functions formerly performed by both ministry and all the security functions of Ministry of Interior (MVD). MGB was the model for all intelligence organizations from satellite states (CIA Interim Report, June 1948).

First created in 1946, the MGB was responsible for internal and external intelligence activities, being a rival to the Interior Ministry, having taken away some of the functions of the latter. The MGB was liquidated on March 13, 1954, being transformed in the Committee for State Security or KGB (CIA Interim Report, June 1948).

Formal control: In theory, the MGB was responsible to the Council of Ministers, formerly the Council of Peoples' Commissars of the Soviet Union. In fact, the MGB was responsible only to Stalin and the Politburo.

Organization: The CIA report prove that, the main departments of Soviet intelligence structure included various departments: political, military, and economic intelligence; evaluation and requirements; and administration. MGB was organized in several main directorates: Directorate of Intelligence; Directorate of Counter-Intelligence; Secret Political Directorate and Directorate of the Commandant of the Moscow Kremlin. In many fields the MGB operates jointly and almost as a single agency with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) (CIA Interim Report, June 1948).

Functions: MGB was responsible for intelligence, counterintelligence and the protection of the government, being engaged in more lines of intelligence activity and related work.

The first line, the "diplomatic intelligence", which was considered the most important, was done in order "to keep the Soviet government informed of the secret deals between the governments of capitalistic countries and of the true intentions toward the Soviet Union" (Orlov, 2007).

The second line was: "to procure data on the military posture of Western and other countries, the quality and strength of their armies, navies, and air forces, their degree of mechanization, mobility, fire power, technological advancement, and modernization, and the productive capacity of the armament industries and the mobilization plans of the big powers" (Orlov, 2007).

The third line was called economic intelligence, which "was created for the purposes of exercising State control over Soviet export and import operations and of protecting Soviet foreign trade from the pressures and abuses of international cartels and other organizations of monopolistic capital" (Orlov, 2007).

The fourth line was: "misinforming and misleading the foreign governments concerning its own position and intentions" (Orlov, 2007).

The fifth line was the activity of infiltration into the foreign security agencies and intelligence services.

As Olov (2007) affirm: “The penetration of foreign *intelligence* services was done to find out whether they have succeeded in creating a spy network in Soviet Russia, and if so who these spies are, what secret information they have transmitted, and what lines of communication they use.”

The sixth line was: “to influence the decisions of foreign governments through secret agents occupying important positions within them” (Orlov, 2007).

The Soviet sphere of influence and the Soviet intelligence

After the World War II, The Red Army (SMERSH)³ and MGB units were present at the organizing session of all intelligence services in Eastern and Central Europe; during wartime, military intelligence becoming the principal activity of every branch of the Soviet Intelligence structures.

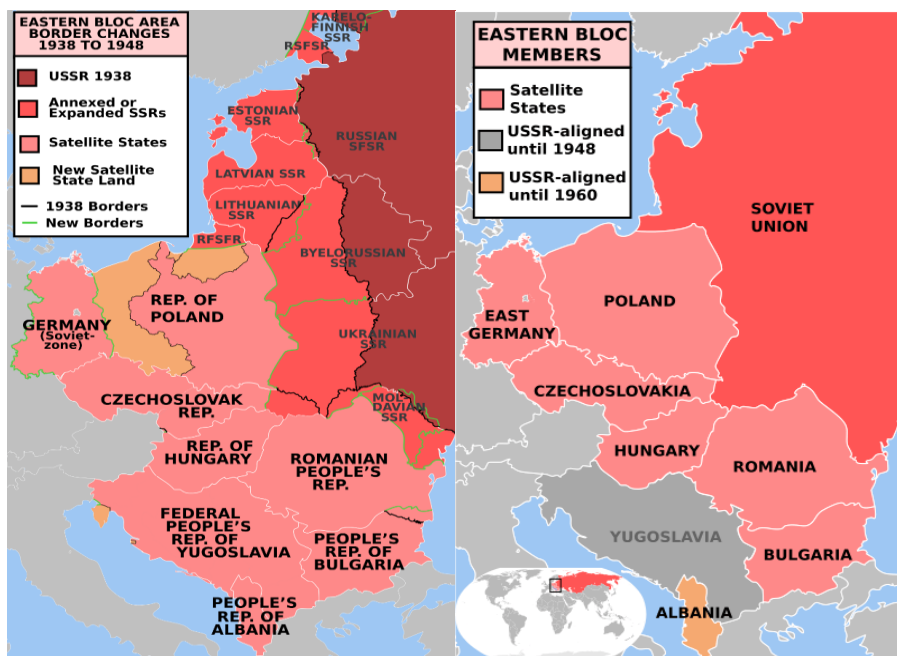


Figure 1: Map of Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern and Central Europe with border changes resulting from military operations of World War II and the Eastern Bloc⁴

³ Special units of the People's Directorate of Interior of USSR were called SMERSH.

⁴ Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_occupations_by_the_Soviet_Union.

As Alexander Orlov (2007) stressed: “While the *residenturas* abroad kept the government informed of the enemy's grand strategy and his capabilities and vulnerabilities, day-to-day tactical or combat intelligence was taken care of by the intelligence sections of the Soviet armed forces and by the special detachments of the MGB attached to all army units down to the regimental level.” Thus, the Soviet intelligence officers were omnipresent as “advisers” making sure that the fraternal services carried out Moscow’s orders. Moreover, it was copied the Soviet security apparatus model, their structure and operational guidelines “were based on verbatim translations from Russian documents”. As we can see in the following table, the state department/directorate/ministry – was the name took by the intelligence structures in Eastern and Central Europe, as the soviet model MGB.

Table 2: Historical intelligence organizations
in Eastern and Central Europe during the Cold War⁵

Country	Abbreviation State Security Agencies	Organisation Name English)	Organisation Name (Original)
<i>Hungary</i>	<i>AVH</i>	<i>State Protection Authority</i>	<i>Államvédelmi Hatóság (formally merged into the Ministry of the Interior in 1953, abolished in 1956)</i>
<i>Bulgaria</i>	<i>DS</i>	<i>(Committee for) State Security</i>	<i>(Komitet za) dържавна sigurnost</i>
<i>Soviet Union</i>	<i>KGB</i>	<i>Committee for State Security</i>	<i>Komitet gosudarstvennoï bezopasnosti</i>
<i>Poland (to 1954)</i>	<i>MBP</i>	<i>Ministry of Public Security</i>	<i>Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego</i>
<i>Poland (from 1954)</i>	<i>SB</i>	<i>Security Service</i>	<i>Śłużba Bezpieczeństwa</i>
<i>Romania</i>	<i>Securitate</i>	<i>Department of State Security</i>	<i>Departamentul Securității Statului</i>
<i>Albania</i>	<i>Sigurimi</i>	<i>Directorate of State Security</i>	<i>Drejtoria e Sigurimit të Shtetit</i>

⁵ Source: <http://www.coldwareasterneurope.com/Overview/Communist-States-Fact-File/Organisations>.

<i>East Germany</i>	<i>Stasi</i>	<i>Ministry for State Security</i>	<i>Ministerium für Staatssicherheit</i>
<i>Czechoslovakia</i>	<i>StB</i>	<i>State Security</i>	<i>Státní bezpečnost (Czech), Štátna bezpečnosť (Slovak)</i>
<i>Poland (to 1954)</i>	<i>UB</i>	<i>Office of Security</i>	<i>Urząd Bezpieczeństwa</i>
<i>Yugoslavia</i>	<i>UDBA</i>	<i>State Security Administration</i>	<i>Služba državne sigurnosti, Služba državne bezbednosti</i>

The East German case: Researchers agree that “the Soviets had a strong hand in the creation of the East German state security apparatus”. The East German intelligence activities were conducted by the Ministry of State Security (MfS) of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), in East Berlin. The Ministry was founded in February 1950, the main purpose being “to contribute to consolidating the new Communist regime imposed on the population in the Soviet controlled zone of Germany” (Vermaat, 1987, p. 46). The functions, duties, main directorates, departments and smaller departments or units of the MfS derived from its detailed structure and operational focus. Initially, the Ministry of State Security had only domestic functions, espionage operations abroad being conducted by the “Institute of Economic Research” formally residing under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the same time, the military intelligence operations were conducted by the Ministry of National Defence (MfNV). In 1956, for example, foreign intelligence operations were delegated to the “Chief Department of Intelligence” (HV A) within MfS (Vermaat, 1987, p. 47), which was considered the most successful spymaster of the Cold War. As Fischer stressed “the Soviet and East German secret services concentrate heavily on West Germany which was considered one of the most important targets in Europe; both Soviets and East Germans managing to penetrate the West German government apparatus, political parties and counter-intelligence service with great effect” (Fischer, 2014).

Institutional (in)dependence on the Soviet Union

During the Cold War period, the Soviet intelligence and its Warsaw Pact allies referred to each other as “brotherly or fraternal services”⁶. The

⁶ Formally known as the “Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance”, the Warsaw Pact was created on 14 May 1955, after the accession of West Germany to the Nord Atlantic Alliance.

fraternal services in their organization and bureaucratic culture were more Russian than national, efficiency and contribution to Soviet intelligence being more important than national interest. For example Vermaat (1987) affirm that “a Soviet-East German protocol from 1978 revealed that Soviet officers were issued passes that allowed them unrestricted access to MfS and HV A offices, files, and technical equipment”. Additionally to political and military intelligence, East European intelligence structures were tasked with collecting information on “nuclear weapons, nuclear energy, chemistry, electrical engineering, electronics, aviation, and conventional weapons” (Vermaat, 1987). These intelligence requirements were of overriding concern to Moscow. In this respect, only in the 1960’s the Kremlin started to allow its trustworthy satellites, as East Germany and Romania, to “get involved in international affairs”, under Soviet close supervision.

Moreover, as experts highlight, the Soviets and their Warsaw Pact allies have a long tradition of acquiring western technology by covert means. According to Orlov (2007), “Soviet technological advancements have only been made possible through meticulous and consistent intelligence gathering by the KGB and its sister services”. However, beginning with the 1960s, “acquisition of scientific and technical intelligence in the West became a paramount objective both for the fraternal services and even more so for the KGB” (Fischer, 2014). Engineers, scientists, and inventors working in the foreign laboratories of the big industrial concerns of the world was recruited by Soviet intelligence (Orlov, 2007). For example, the “HV A managed to penetrate a number of firms and research centres like Siemens, Blohm, IBM, Hoechst and the nuclear research Centre in Karlsruhe” (Vermaat, 1987, p. 57). Although, the Soviet dependence on Western research and know-how was still extensive. Therefore, Western technologies were still a major target for Soviet and Eastern bloc intelligence.

The East German secret service is heavily involved in this effort: “as early as in 1970, the HV A created an entire “Sector for Science and Technology” (SWT) comprising three “operational departments” dealing with nuclear technology, microelectronics and the construction of engines and vehicles” (Vermaat, 1987, p. 57).

In the Cold War, according to intelligence experts, “the majority of industrial and technological espionage serves military purposes”. Military intelligence also involves penetration of Western military establishments as NATO, Defence Ministry, US military headquarters in Germany, etc. (Vermaat, 1987, p. 58). According to Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordijewski (1992), Soviet residents until 1976 were informed that European Community was not object of Moscow’s interest. However, in late 70s the Central Committee of

CPSU recognized European Economic Commission as one of the „main object of intelligence penetration”, putting it on the same level as USA, NATO and China. Moreover, “each allied service had to obtain KGB permission before developing an anti-US operation, and then the operation had to be cleared in advance by the KGB and serve KGB interests” (Orlov, 2007).

The Romanian case: “The General Directorate for the Security of the People” (DGSP) was officially founded on August 30, 1948, by “Decree 221/30 of the Presidium of the Great National Assembly” (Hitchins, 2014, p. 232). It was created with the help of Soviet SMERSH, the soviet counter-intelligence unit from Red Army, but it was copied the Soviet security apparatus model, their structure and operational guidelines were based on *verbatim* translations from Russian documents (Ministry of Internal Affairs Decision for the Organization of Department of State Security, September 2, 1948).

Table 3: Internal organization of Soviet
and Romanian central intelligence apparatus⁷

THE SOVIET MODEL- MGB	ROMANIAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE SECURITY
•First Main Directorate - Foreign intelligence •Second Main Directorate - domestic counterintelligence and acted as an internal security and political police force •Third Main Directorate - military counterintelligence •Fourth Directorate – combat the anti-Soviet underground •Fifth Main Directorate - Main Secret Political Administration •Sixth Directorate - collect and process Signals Intelligence, or SIGINT •Seventh Directorate – Tehnic division •Division for the Protection of Leaders •Economic Administration	•First Directorate – intelligence •Second Directorate - counterintelligence or counter sabotage service •Third Special Directorate •Fourth Directorate - operative investigation •Fifth Directorate – secret political investigation •Sixth Directorate – the protection of leaders •Seventh Directorate - Tehnic division •Eight Directorate – Human resources •Ninth Directorate - The political education directorate •Economic Administration

⁷ Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_State_Security_Soviet_Union and http://www.cnsas.ro/documente/acte_normative/7346_003%20fila%20271-282.pdf.

As Rodica Gheorghe stressed in his thesis, “for the Cold War period, most scholars have discussed Romania’s intelligence strength in term of its ability to suppress domestic dissent and to silence the Diaspora, with the final goal of insuring the survival of the communist regime.” (Gheorghe, 2010, p. 14) However, according to the same author, “Romanian intelligence policy in the Cold War period also had an external dimension which raised concern in foreign intelligence agencies”, including in the Soviet one.

Romania’s “active diplomacy provided an official cover for his intelligence services to penetrate the Western and the Third World” (Gheorghe, 2010, p.6). Even if, in the first years of the Cold War the “Soviet intelligence established a strong foothold in Romania, – for instance the relationship between the Romanian Foreign Intelligence Directorate and the KGB was in the beginning stronger than between DIE and the Romanian government – Romania had made significant strides toward getting out from under Moscow’s thumb in the 1960s” (Gheorghe, 2010). As Larry Watts (2007) straight in his paper, “this break ended the participation of Romanian intelligence officers in joint operations with the KGB”. Moreover, repeated purges eliminated the Soviet counterintelligence capabilities within the Romanian Service. Bucharest even “went so far as to create departments that specialized in anti-KGB counterespionage, underscoring the difficult relationship with Moscow” (Larry Watts, 2007).

Conclusion

The Eastern and Central European intelligence structures were creations of Soviet intelligence. In all Soviet Bloc countries, Soviet advisors and specialists deployed at individual ministries were the key instrument of Sovietisation of the Communist regimes. Their influence was frequently stronger than the word of ministers and other functionaries. The first advisors sent by the Ministry of State Security of the USSR (MGB) to Soviet Bloc countries came to oversee show trials and introduced various forms of repression into the security apparatus’s methods. Thanks to a growing number of advisors and specialists, the intelligence structures became fully subordinate to MGB HQ in Moscow. In that way they helped create an international security apparatus run from Moscow that was able to operate independently throughout the Soviet Bloc. As Larry Watts stated in his article, the end of the Cold War raised problems for intelligence reform, after 89, the transition tent to favour the “destruction of intelligence apparatuses” (Watts, 2007), not their reform. The former Eastern Bloc intelligence structures have dissolved along with their Communist ruled states.

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