

The Shelepin Report and Changes in Organization

THE ADOPTION OF THE NEW BLOC POLICY and disinformation strategy entailed organizational changes in the Soviet Union and throughout the bloc. In the Soviet Union, as elsewhere, it was the Central Committee of the party that reorganized the intelligence and security services, the foreign ministry, and other sections of the party and government apparatus and the mass organizations so as to be able to implement the new policy. Several highly significant alterations were made to the Central Committee's own apparatus in and after 1958. A new Department of Foreign Policy was set up to supervise all government departments concerned with foreign affairs and to coordinate Soviet foreign policy with that of the other communist states. It was under Khrushchev's direct control.

A new practice was adopted in relation to the appointment of ambassadors to other communist countries. Prominent party officials, normally members of the Central Committee, were chosen to ensure that there was proper coordination of policy between parties as well as governments.

Another new department of the Central Committee, the Department of Active Operations, was introduced. Its function was to coordinate the bloc disinformation program and conduct special political and disinformation operations in support of policy. It began by holding secret briefings of senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Committee of Information, and the security and intelligence services. The news agency Novosti was set up to serve the interests of this new department.

An important change was the transfer to the Central Committee apparatus of the Committee of Information, which had hitherto been subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One of its new functions was to prepare long-range studies and analyses for the Central Committee. Another was to establish contacts with foreign statesmen and other leading figures, either in their home countries or during their visits to the Soviet Union, and use them to influence Western governments. Its head was Georgiy Zhukov, a former agent of the Soviet intelligence service, who had many contacts among Western politicians, journalists, and cultural figures. He was himself an able journalist.

Perhaps the most significant changes of all were the appointments of Mironov and Shelepin. Mironov had been head of the Leningrad branch of the KGB. While in that post he had studied operation Trust, in which the Leningrad OGPU had played an active part. He was a friend of Brezhnev and had easy access to him. Shelepin was a friend of Mironov. It was Mironov who first drew Shelepin's attention to the role of the OGPU in the NEP period.

In 1958 Mironov and Shelepin discussed with Khrushchev and Brezhnev the idea of transforming the KGB from the typical secret political police force that it was into a flexible, sophisticated political weapon capable of playing an effective role in support of policy, as the OGPU had done during the NEP.

They were rewarded for this suggestion with posts in the Central Committee apparatus. Shelepin was made head of the Department of Party Organs and, later, chairman of the KGB; Mironov was made head of the Administrative Organs Department.

In the autumn of 1958 Mironov's and Shelepin's suggestion was discussed, in the context of the performance of the KGB and its head, General Serov, by the Presidium of the Central Committee. Serov had delivered a report to the Presidium on the work of the KGB at home and abroad, and it became the focus for sharp criticism. The leading critic was Shelepin. The KGB under Serov, he said, had become a very effective police organization that, with its widespread net of informers and agents throughout the country, had successfully detected and controlled opposition elements among the population as well as agents of Western intelligence services. It had failed, however, to influence the views of the population in favor of the regime or to prevent the growth of undesirable

political trends either at home or among anticommunists abroad. He praised the recent successes of the KGB in penetrating the secrets of Western governments, but said that its role was too passive and limited in that it had done nothing to help the strategic, political, economic, and ideological struggle with the capitalist powers.

Shelepin continued that the main reason for the unsatisfactory situation in the KGB was that it had departed from the traditions and style of the OGPU, its predecessor under Lenin. The OGPU, although inexperienced, had made a greater contribution to implementing policy than any of its successors. As examples of what he meant, he referred to the Eurasian and Change of Signposts movements and the Trust. Unlike the OGPU, the KGB had degenerated into a passive, repressive organization. Its methods were self-defeating because they served only to harden opposition and damage the prestige of the regime. The KGB had failed to collaborate with the security services of the other bloc countries on political matters.

Shelepin commended Mironov's ideas and said that the KGB should be concerned with positive, creative political activity under the direction of the party leadership. A new, more important role should be given to disinformation. The Soviet Union, in common with the other communist countries, had vital internal and external intelligence assets that had been lying dormant, especially in the persons of the KGB agents among the Soviet intelligentsia.

The Presidium decided to examine the new role of the KGB at the Twenty-first-Party Congress, which was due to be held in January-February 1959. The Soviet press confirmed in general terms that this examination had taken place.

Under Mironov the Administrative Organs Department became very important. Its function was to supervise and coordinate the work of departments concerned with internal order, like the KGB, the Ministry of the Interior, the prosecutor's office, the Ministry of Justice, and the law courts. Mironov was chosen in order that he should imbue these institutions with the style and methods of Dzerzhinskiy, the OGPU's chairman in the 1920s.

Shelepin was appointed chairman of the KGB in December 1958. In May 1959 a conference of senior KGB officers was held in Moscow. It was attended by Kirichenko, representing the Presidium;

the ministers of internal affairs and defense; members of the Central Committee; and some two thousand KGB officers.

Shelepin reported to the conference on the new political tasks of the KGB.¹ Some of the more specific points in his report were as follows:

The "main enemies" of the Soviet Union were the United States, Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, and all countries of NATO and other Western-supported military alliances. (It was the first time that West Germany, Japan, and the smaller countries had been so named in KGB documents.)

The security and intelligence services of the whole bloc were to be mobilized to influence international relations in directions required by the new long-range policy and, in effect, to destabilize the "main enemies" and weaken the alliances between them.

The efforts of the KGB agents in the Soviet intelligentsia were to be redirected outward against foreigners with a view to enlisting their help in the achievement of policy objectives.

The newly established disinformation department was to work closely with all other relevant departments in the party and government apparatus throughout the country. To this end, all ministries of the Soviet Union and all first secretaries of republican and provincial party organizations were to be acquainted with the new political tasks of the KGB to enable them to give support and help when needed.

Joint political operations were to be undertaken with the security and intelligence services of all communist countries.

The report ended with the assurance that the Presidium had approved the new tasks of the KGB, attached great importance to their fulfillment, and was confident that the KGB staff would do its best to put the directive into practice.

After the conference, a number of organizational changes were made in the KGB. The counterintelligence directorate was enlarged. Its three main tasks were: to influence, pass disinformation to, and recruit as agents members of the embassies of the capitalist

and Third World countries in Moscow, as well as visiting journalists, businessmen, scientists, and academics; to carry out prophylactic political operations to neutralize and then use internal political opposition, especially from nationalistic, intellectual, and religious groups; and to carry out joint political operations with the security services of the other communist countries.

Department D

When Shelepin created the new disinformation department, Department D, in January 1959, he ensured that its work would be coordinated with the other disinformation services of the party and government machine: that is, the Central Committee, the Committee of Information, the disinformation department in the Soviet Military Intelligence Service, and the two new "activist methods" departments in the KGB (one serving Shelepin himself and the other serving the counterintelligence directorate).

From the beginning Department D was subordinate to the Central Committee apparatus, which defined its requirements and objectives. It differed from the other disinformation services in that it used its own means and special channels available only to the KGB to disseminate disinformation. These channels are: secret agents at home and abroad; agents of influence abroad; penetrations of Western embassies and governments; technical and other secret means of provoking appropriate incidents or situations in support of policy—for example, border incidents, protest demonstrations, and so forth.

Department D was given access to the executive branches of government and to departments of the Central Committee to enable it to prepare and carry out operations that required the approval or support of the party leadership or the government machine. Its closest contacts with the Central Committee were Mironov's Administrative Organs Department, Ponomarev's International Department, the Department of Foreign Policy, and the Department of Active Operations; and with the Soviet government through the State Committee of Science and Technology and the planning organs. There was particularly close cooperation between the new department and the disinformation department of the Military In-

telligence Service.

There were two experienced candidates for the post of head of the new department: Colonel Fedoseyev, head of the foreign intelligence faculty of the KGB Institute, who was a specialist both on internal KGB operations and on the use of émigré channels to penetrate American intelligence; and Colonel Agayants, head of the political intelligence faculty in the High Intelligence School and a specialist on the Middle East (Iran in particular) and Western Europe (France in particular). Shelepin chose Agayants.

The new department consisted at the outset of fifty to sixty experienced intelligence and counterintelligence officers. Under Colonel Agayants was Colonel Grigorenko, a specialist in counterintelligence work at home and emigration operations abroad. He had been adviser to the Hungarian security service from 1953 to 1955, and then had worked in the counterintelligence directorate in headquarters as head of the department responsible for the surveillance of immigrants and repatriates. The department was abolished when Grigorenko moved to Department D.

In the department were experts on NATO, the United States, Germany, France, Japan, and other countries; on the US intelligence services; on US, European, Asian, African, and Latin American labor; and on rocketry, aviation, and other specialized subjects. There was a specialist on Israel, Colonel Kelin, who as an officer in the security service had worked for twenty years against the Jews in Moscow. Colonel Sitnikov was the department's specialist on Germany, Austria, and NATO. Colonel Kostenko (who in the 1960s appeared in England under diplomatic cover) was its specialist on aviation. Indeed, the composition of the department made it clear that it had both political and military objectives.

A disinformation section of some twenty officers was also set up in the KGB apparatus in East Germany under Litovkin, a specialist on penetration of the West German intelligence service.