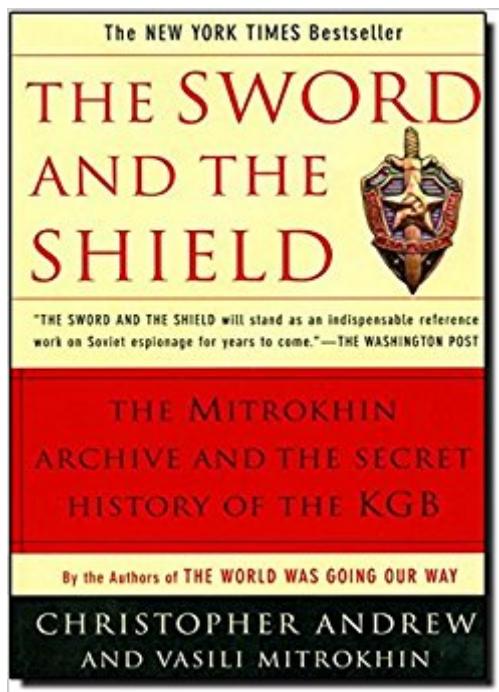


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The Sword And The Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive And The Secret History Of The KGB



Synopsis

The Sword and the Shield is based on one of the most extraordinary intelligence coups of recent times: a secret archive of top-level KGB documents smuggled out of the Soviet Union which the FBI has described, after close examination, as the "most complete and extensive intelligence ever received from any source." Its presence in the West represents a catastrophic hemorrhage of the KGB's secrets and reveals for the first time the full extent of its worldwide network. Vasili Mitrokhin, a secret dissident who worked in the KGB archive, smuggled out copies of its most highly classified files every day for twelve years. In 1992, a U.S. ally succeeded in exfiltrating the KGB officer and his entire archive out of Moscow. The archive covers the entire period from the Bolshevik Revolution to the 1980s and includes revelations concerning almost every country in the world. But the KGB's main target, of course, was the United States. Though there is top-secret material on almost every country in the world, the United States is at the top of the list. As well as containing many fascinating revelations, this is a major contribution to the secret history of the twentieth century. Among the topics and revelations explored are: The KGB's covert operations in the United States and throughout the West, some of which remain dangerous today. KGB files on Oswald and the JFK assassination that Boris Yeltsin almost certainly has no intention of showing President Clinton. The KGB's attempts to discredit civil rights leader in the 1960s, including its infiltration of the inner circle of a key leader. The KGB's use of radio intercept posts in New York and Washington, D.C., in the 1970s to intercept high-level U.S. government communications. The KGB's attempts to steal technological secrets from major U.S. aerospace and technology corporations. KGB covert operations against former President Ronald Reagan, which began five years before he became president. KGB spies who successfully posed as U.S. citizens under a series of ingenious disguises, including several who attained access to the upper echelons of New York society.

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Customer Reviews

In early 1992, a Russian man walked into the British embassy in a newly independent Baltic republic and asked to "speak to someone in authority." As he sipped his first cup of proper English tea, he handed over a small file of notes. Eight months later, the man, his family, and his enormous archive had been safely exfiltrated to Britain. When news that a KGB officer had defected with the names of hundreds of undercover agents leaked out in 1996, a spokesperson for the SVR (Russia's foreign intelligence service, heir of the KGB) said, "Hundreds of people! That just doesn't happen! Any defector could get the name of one, two, perhaps three agents--but not hundreds!" Vasili Nikitich Mitrokhin worked as chief archivist for the FCD, the foreign-intelligence arm of the KGB. Mitrokhin was responsible for checking and sealing approximately 300,000 files, allowing him unrestricted access to one of the world's most closely guarded archives. He had lost faith in the Soviet system over the years, and was especially disturbed by the KGB's systematic silencing of dissidents at home and abroad. Faced with tough choices--stay silent, resign, or undermine the system from within--Mitrokhin decided to compile a record of the foreign operations of the KGB. Every day for 12 years, he smuggled notes out of the archive. He started by hiding scraps of paper covered with minuscule handwriting in his shoes, but later wrote notes on ordinary office paper, which he took home in his pockets. He hid the notes under his mattress, and on weekends took them to his dacha, where he typed them and hid them in containers buried under the floor. When he escaped to Britain, his archive contained tens of thousands of pages of notes. In 1995, Mitrokhin, by then a British citizen, contacted Christopher Andrew (For the President's Eyes Only), head of the faculty of history at Cambridge University and one of the world's foremost historians of international intelligence. Andrew was allowed to examine the archive Mitrokhin created "to ensure that the truth was not forgotten, that posterity might some day come to know of it." The Sword and the Shield is the earthshaking result. The book details the KGB's foreign-intelligence operations, most notably those aimed at Great Britain and the "Main Adversary"--the United States. In the 700-page book, Andrew reveals operations aimed at discrediting high-profile Americans, from Martin Luther King to Ronald Reagan; secret arms caches still hidden--and boobytrapped--throughout the West; disinformation

efforts, including forging a letter from Lee Harvey Oswald in an attempt to implicate the CIA in the assassination of JFK; attempts to stir up racial tensions in the U.S. by sending hate mail and even bombs; and the existence of deep-cover agents in North America and Europe--some of whom were effectively "outed" when the book was published. Mitrokhin's detailed notes are well served by Andrew, who writes forcefully and clearly. *The Sword and the Shield* represents a remarkable intelligence coup--one that will have serious repercussions for years to come. As Andrew notes, "No one who spied for the Soviet Union at any period between the October Revolution and the eve of the Gorbachev era can now be confident that his or her secrets are still secure." --Sunny Delaney

"Anybody who was a Soviet agent from '85 or earlier can never sleep comfortable again." -- David Major, fomer FBI Counterintelligence Agent, ABC News"It's now obvious that all these accusations thrown at the KGB over the period of time have now found confirmation in real archive documents, and this is important. They are not rumors. They are not gossip, not feeble recollections of the past. They are based on classified top secrets of the KGB." -- Oleg Kalugin, former KGB General, ABC News"Stranger than fiction...Aficionados of espionage will be rummaging through this enormously detailed book for years." -- The New Republic"The Mitrokhin files, which the British considered reliable enough to share with the C.I.A. and F.B.I. have offered Western intelligence and law enforcement officials a treasure trove of historical information about K.G.B. operations around the world." -- The New York Times"The book is astounding...Every page brims with the plots for a dozen movies and Robert Ludlum thrillers. Thanks to what they have done, no history of the last half of the Cold War can be written the same again." -- Los Angeles Times Book Review"The material contains incredible detail on some major spy cases." -- Paul Redmond, former CIA Counter-intelligence Chief, ABC News"[D]eliciously erudite." -- William Safire, New York Times Sunday Magazine"[Mitrokhin] is really making a massive contribution to our understanding of Soviet activities going back a very long time, not only about espionage and intelligence collection, but also covert action." -- John Martin, former Justice Department prosecutor, ABC News

Bought this book in two months ago and still working on it. So be prepared to spend some time on the Mitrokhin Archives. This is a fascinating and DETAILED account of espionage tactics used by the Russians from 1917 to the present. I have been told that some of the exploits described in the book were used as source material and story ideas for the cable TV series "The Americans."The most amazing part of the archive details just how deeply penetrated the Roosevelt presidency was during World War II. Heck, the Soviets even had a Cabinet Secretary in their pocket and THREE

scientists on the Manhattan Project. Lots of detail from the Soviet perspective on Kim Philby, Anthony Blunt, The Rosenbergs, Christopher Boyce, Aldrich Ames, and other major spies who we have heard about over the years, but getting the picture from the Russian point of view was interesting.

The Sword and the Shield is at times gripping, at times dry, and at times humorous... but always interesting. Andrew wends his way through the history of Soviet spycraft in chronological order, from the days of the revolutionary Cheka to the (almost) modern day. Every step of the way is fascinating and eye-opening from a historical perspective, especially if you -- like me -- wrongly assumed that actual Soviet cloak-and-dagger espionage in the U.S. was limited and rare. But if The Sword and the Shield reveals that Soviet espionage on U.S. soil was much more common than most people believe, it also reveals that the reality is a lot less romantic and more prosaic than you might have imagined. Interesting characters and motivations are few and far between -- most of the spies we encounter work for money, youthful beliefs, or simply as a career. And while there are dead drops, seductions, secret meetings, and assassinations, most of the secret operations (even the really big ones) amount to patiently cultivating friendships and maybe asking for the occasional innocent-sounding favor. And therein lies both the strength and the weakness of Andrew's book. The constant conspiracies of the espionage trade eventually become repetitive, as repetitive as they must have to the hapless Soviet operatives tasked with chasing down imaginary American conspiracies for the hundredth time. If you want to know what Soviet espionage was really like, warts and all, this book is an eye-opening, fascinating, invaluable read. If you're looking for salacious details and thrilling developments, you might find yourself bailing out after a couple chapters.

The Sword and the Shield is quite the tome. It is a history of the KGB and NKVD, the Soviet Union's counterpart to the USA's CIA, taken straight from their own archives. Mitrokhin, the chief archivist for the KGB for decades, kept meticulous records on current KGB operations throughout the world and kept them hidden in his dacha. He then defected in the early 1990s to the West, taking all of these notes with him. This is the record of the KGB's operations in the U.S. and Western Europe from the 1930s through the 90s. I have read a couple of reviews that say do not make this your first read on the subject, and I would agree. It reads very much like a textbook and can be quite dry for people unfamiliar with the subject matter. It is not really meant for entertainment, but more serious research. This is a very good research source. That said, the information inside blows away any Hollywood spy movie. The section on Kim Philby and the Cambridge Five alone would make a

fantastic Hollywood movie with intrigue, sex, betrayal and danger. And it is all real. The important thing to note about this book is that it is from the KGB archives, not packaged for foreign audiences with propaganda galore. The result is a fascinating and shocking account of what the KGB and Soviet Union were up to in the 20th century. Among many of the revelations to me was that while Joe McCarthy was quite overzealous, he was not as crazy as history has painted him out to be in relation to the scope of intentional Communist penetration into American government and society. Quite a page-turner.

Interesting, the failed mentioning of Hoover Institution, which has all the KGB archives.

The sheer amount of information in this book is astonishing. It highlights and brings to life so many facts, dates, and names, and links them all together into a coherent volume which not only deepens an understanding of the Soviet machine but also adds to our understanding of current geopolitical issues and their true origins. If you have any interest in Soviet history, cold war history, or intelligence, this is a must read.

I would have rated this book as excellent if it was not for the fact that the author's obvious bias towards the British secret services (which should not come as any prize). This is demonstrated by the fact that the author states that ULTRA was the biggest intelligence success against the nazis (and perhaps in the history of warfare). This is debatable as it is known that in the years before world war ii, the USSR penetrated the military, diplomatic and political establishments of all major world powers, which has to rank as one of the greatest achievements in the history of espionage. Is this to say that the achievements of Richard Sorge, the Red Orchestra and the Lucy Spy Ring don't count? Mr. Andrews also downplays the role of the NKVD guerilla groups which is strange because they did contribute to the war effort (especially during Operation Bagration). Apart from this, the author does an excellent job of listing the details of KGB operations worldwide listing its achievements mainly in penetrating a huge number of western establishments and its failings mainly in the field of intelligence analysis. His work teaches us two important details of ideological, one party states: that they depend hugely on their intelligence apparatus to maintain domestic control and to promote their foreign interests and that their ideologies make for poor intelligence analysis. I highly recommend this book.

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