

Foreign Visitors in the Late Soviet Union, the KGB and the Limits of Surveillance

Sometime in August 1972, the Jewish-American visitor Samuel Dash stood at the offices of the subway construction project in Kharkiv, and fought hard to keep his pants on. Dash, a law professor who recently issued a public rebuttal to the British account of the Bloody Sunday Massacre in Belfast (and soon to become famous as lead counsel for Senate Watergate Committee), was a man on a mission. As he recounted in a 2003 oral history interview, while teaching a summer class in Puerto Rico, he was asked by an “emissary from the Israeli government” to “do an errand on behalf of Israel and the Refuseniks:” to go to the Soviet Union as a tourist, make contact with prominent Jewish activists there and draw public attention to the emigration struggle of Soviet Jewry. Dash did just this, carrying around a little “book” with the names and numbers of the activists he was to meet. After a series of unsuccessful attempts to extract his book from Dash’s hotel rooms, the KGB devised a plan: pressuring him to visit the construction site of the Kharkiv subway, where, over his protests, the site manager forced him to strip and put on protective gear for a tour of the tunnels. This gave KGB agents time to ruffle through his pants in search of the notebook- a plan that was foiled because Dash prudently removed the notebook from his wallet and stuffed it into his underwear.¹

If Dash’s account reads like a farce, it was also, from the point of view of the Soviet authorities who authorized this sartorial heist, a deadly serious representation of the dilemmas created by the opening-up of the Soviet Union to foreign travel since the mid-1950s. During the 1920s and 1930s, foreign travelers to the Soviet Union never numbered more than about 40,000 per year, and generally

¹ This version of the story is based on “Professor Samuel Dash,” *Oral History Project of the District of Columbia District Court Historical Society* (Washington DC: The District of Columbia District Court Historical Society, 2003), accessed online at: http://dcchs.org/SamuelDash/samueldash_complete.pdf, accessed 5/15/2005. An earlier version of the story is contained in a report by Dash to the National Conference on Soviet Jewry: Samuel Dash, “‘Operation Contact’ in the Soviet Union, 9/2/1972,” National Conference for Soviet Jewry Records, The Soviet Jewry Movement Archives [NCSJ-TSJM], Box 38, Folder 9.

consisted of tightly-controlled group of ideologically friendly or simply curious foreigners.² In the immediate postwar period, the Soviet Union, ruined by war and harboring deep fear of ideological contamination coming from abroad, was, for all intents and purposes, closed to entry to travelers, with the exception of small numbers of Western diplomats and journalists, who were as a general rule totally sealed from Soviet society.³ After Stalin's death, the Soviet Union, more trusting of the "political maturity" of the Soviet population, seeking to burnish its image to the outside world, to establish cultural and especially scientific-technological exchanges with the West, and to chase the tourist dollar, threw the doors of the Soviet Union open, bringing the number of outside visitors to the Soviet Union from virtually zero in the late 1940s to about a million visitors per year in the early 1960s, to two million a year around the time of Dash's Soviet jaunt, to 4 million a year in the mid-1980s.⁴ Thus, for the first time, Soviet authorities had to deal with the dilemmas of outsiders not bound by the rules of Soviet life and of often private and political agendas diametrically opposed to the interests of the Soviet state. For a system that for decades strove to weave an all-encompassing web of surveillance that would bind the Soviet population into a cohesive, unanimous *kollektiv*,⁵ the new foreign presence and the myriad interactions between Soviet people and foreigners it produced posed a significant challenge. In this paper, I trace how the Soviet security apparatus strove to contain the effect of foreign presence in Soviet life- and why its efforts came short in historically significant ways.

² On prewar travel, see Michael David Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to Soviet Russia, 1921-1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China and Cuba, 1928-1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

³ "Otchet za 1948-oi god," Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii [GARF], f. 9612, op.2, d. 142, l. 18. On the isolation of Western diplomats and journalists, see, for example, Richard Hilton, *Military Attache to Russia* (London: and Carter, 1949), Dina Fainberg, "Notes from the Rotten West, Reports from the Backward East: Soviet and American Reporters in the Cold War, 1945-1985," (PhD Dissertation, Rutgers University, 2012), ch. 3.

⁴ Statisticheskii Komitet SNG, *Inostrannyi Turizm: Statisticheskii Sbornik* (Moscow: Finansyovyi Enzhiniring 1992).

⁵ On surveillance as practice of power in the Soviet Union, see Peter Holquist, "Surveillance and Alpha and Omega of Our Work: Bolshevik Surveillance in its Pan-European Context," *Journal of Modern History* 69, no. 3(1997), 415-450, Amir Weiner and Agi Rahi-Tamm, "Getting to Know You: The Soviet Surveillance System, 1939-1957," *Kritika* 13, no.1(2012), 5-45. On the Soviet inculcation of the *kollektiv* see Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

Soviet Security Services Eye the Foreigners, or Paranoids have Enemies Too

To understand the prism through which the Soviet security services examined the security threat of unrestricted foreign travel, one must be aware of two key facts. First, Soviet security services, and the wider Soviet culture, were shaped by a profound suspicion of foreign machinations inculcated during the Stalin years.⁶ Second, as it pertains to the Soviet perception that foreign powers used foreign travel for purposes of subversion and espionage, this suspicion was to some extent, true. While this paper focuses on the former aspect of the problem, a note should be made that, from the vantage point of Soviet authorities, both state and non-state Western actors did exploit travel to the Soviet Union to promote their Cold War interests. The United States, for example, did not only use exchange to, as historian Walter Hixson puts it “part the Iron Curtain,”⁷ to introduce Soviet people to the splendors of the American way of life, but also used new openings to gather information about Soviet society, defense capacities, and indeed, potential bombing targets. Thus, for instance, American tourists, businessmen, and official travelers were asked to gather visual intelligence on Soviet defense installations, bridges, and railroads to help the American Air Force to create a bombing database.⁸ Another CIA operation, codenamed LINCOLN, briefed American scientists and engineers on obtaining information about Soviet rocketry and nuclear capacities from Soviet interlocutors,⁹ while a joint American-Canadian operation tasked Ukrainian and Baltic emigres sent as tourists and private travelers to the Soviet Union to gather both

⁶ Gabor Rittersporn, *Anger, Anguish and Folkways in Soviet Russia* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2014).

⁷ Walter Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda Culture and the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1997).

⁸ Curtis Peebles, *Twilight Warriors: Covert Air Operations against the USSR* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press), 2005, ch. 6.

⁹ Robert Vandaveer, “Operation Lincoln,” *Studies in Intelligence* 7(1963), 69-75, accessed online via: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000608379.pdf, on 4/16/2015. *Studies in Intelligence* is CIA’s in-house classified journal.

visual intelligence and details about Soviet officials and institutions in sensitive border areas.¹⁰ Non-state actors, like the émigré organization NTS, also dabbled in conspiratorial activities in an attempt to use tourism to forge contacts with fledgling underground groups.¹¹

While such activities seem to have faded after the early 1960s, if only because satellites proved a better information gathering device than “spy-tourists,” less conspiratorial activities proved to be longer-lasting and, from point of view of Soviet authorities, more damaging, avenues of Cold War attack. A vast array of organizations, including CIA funded cultural cold war organizations, religious groups, nationalist organizations, and human rights committees, used tourists and exchange participants, men and women like Dash, to smuggle forbidden literature into, and *samizdat* materials and other forms of information from, the Soviet Union. For instance, travelers associated with the CIA’s massive book smuggling program smuggled over 600,000 copies of books printed abroad into the Soviet Union between 1956 and 1970 alone.¹² Information smuggled by travelers in the other direction also proved important for the history of the cultural Cold War. Significant elements of Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s work, for instance, were smuggled abroad by the French embassy employee (and Russian émigré) Anastasia Douroff using the unwitting services of French citizens asked to deliver “gifts” to her contacts in Paris.¹³

Thus, whatever concerns Soviet authorities had about the dangers of foreign subversion and espionage, these concerns were rooted in solid factual foundations. However, like in all matters pertaining

¹⁰ See, for example, Chief SR/3-PP to Chief SR, “AERODYNAMIC/FI Opportunities in 1959,” 9/4/1959, accessed online at [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1705143/AERODYNAMIC%20%20%20VOL.%2017%20%20\(OPERATIONS\)_0063.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1705143/AERODYNAMIC%20%20%20VOL.%2017%20%20(OPERATIONS)_0063.pdf)

¹¹ See court cases of Evdokimov B.D and G.V (1972) at GARF f. 8131, op. 36, d. 4966 (1972), and Gureev N.D and others (1967) GARF, f. 8131, op. 31, d. 99976 (1967).

¹² ¹² Isaac Patch, *Closing the Circle: a Buckalino Journey Around our Time* (Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College Printing Services, 1996, 257. According to Patch who ran the program, overall, the CIA, operating behind a non-profit front (Bedford Publishing Company), distributed 1.5 million books in the Soviet Union, of which 40% , or 600,000 were carried by American travelers. Unfortunately, the files of the Bedford Project are still classified, and according to Peter Finn and Petra Couvee, may well have been destroyed (*The Zhivago Affair: The Kremlin, the CIA, and the Battle over a Forbidden Book* (London: Vintage, 2014), 264.

¹³ Anastasia Durova (Douroff), *Rossiia: Ocheshchenie ognem. Dnevkin khristianki, 1964-1977* (Moscow: Rudomino, 1999),170.

to intelligence evaluation and analysis, these raw facts had to be analyzed and weighed against the benefits international exchange brought to the Soviet state, an analysis that takes place in specific political, institutional, and epistemic context.¹⁴ In the Soviet case, this analytic enterprise lay more or less entirely in the hands of the State Security Committee, better known as the KGB, which was the body in charge of intelligence gathering and assessment, counterintelligence operations, border controls, and political secret policing.

In some ways the most famous, certainly the most iconic of all Soviet institutions, the KGB was also, and still remains, an opaque body, that received many popular treatments¹⁵ but relatively little scholarly attention. The reasons for this omission are simple: the central archives of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) are, and will remain for the foreseeable future, closed to researchers. Other sources of information, say, memoirs by veterans or defectors, tend to be either opaque or self-serving (or both), to focus more on foreign intelligence than the less prestigious domestic work of the KGB, and as historian Julie Fedor noticed, often veer into wild conspiracy theorizing on issues relating to foreign subversion.¹⁶ However, sufficient materials exist for taking a stab at the problem of KGB approaches to the foreign danger: KGB archives from Lithuania and materials from Ukraine that became available in the wake of the Maidan revolution¹⁷ contain large amounts of material on the day-to-day operations of Soviet security services in these border republics, both frequented by “regular” foreigners and large numbers of

¹⁴ For an interesting take from a practitioner on the problems of cultural and institutional evaluation of intelligence, see Rob Johnson, *Analytic Cultures in the US Intelligence Community* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Intelligence 2005). For a recent treatment of similar issues in the context of Soviet Cold War security operations, see Strobe Tallbot, *Soviet Leaders and Intelligence: Assessing the American Adversary During the Cold War* (Washington, DC: University of Georgetown Press, 2015).

¹⁵ John Barron, *The KGB: the Secret Work of Soviet Secret Agents* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1974) was the prominent Cold war era representative of the genre. See also Christopher Andrew's work with KGB defectors Sergei Mitrokhin and Andrei Gordeivski. For a recent example of scholarly work on the KGB, see Jonathan Haslam, *Near and Far Neighbors: a History of Soviet Intelligence* (New York: Strauss and Giroux, 2015). Unfortunately, like Andrew's work, it focuses on the foreign intelligence functions of the KGB. Amir Weiner's forthcoming project on the domestic work of the KGB promises to do much to address this balance.

¹⁶ Julie Fedor, “Chekists Look Back on the Cold War: the Polemical Literature,” *Intelligence and National Security* 26, no. 6(2011), 842-863.

¹⁷ The materials from Ukraine used here are from a collection of digitized files made available by the SBU archives in Kyiv in the immediate wake of the Revolution. They were kindly provided for me by Orysia Kulik and Beth Kerley, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to them.

members of diasporic communities coming to visit the old country.¹⁸ Some published collections of KGB documents shed useful light on the problem, as does an internal history of the KGB used as a textbook in its Higher School and declassified in the 1990s.¹⁹ Memoirist literature, with all its distortions, provides useful hints as to the nature of the KGB's epistemic community. Finally, given agreement between archival documents, memoirs, and the tenor of official published sources from the Soviet period, the latter provide an important window on to Soviet state security state of mind.

The KGB, the successor organization to the Stalin-era NKVD, was formed at a moment of crisis for Soviet security agencies that faced severe manpower and budgetary cuts and deterioration of their political standing in the wake of Khrushchev's revelations of Stalin's crimes. Faced with the necessity to reformulate its *raison d'être* in an era in which the search for domestic enemies was significantly loosened, the defense of the Soviet state against foreign enemies became the organizing principle of the KGB.²⁰ From the Khrushchev era to the Gorbachev period, the mission of the KGB was to "concentrate[e]...main efforts on exposing and firmly suppressing the activities of hostile intelligence agencies," as KGB Chairman Alexander Shelepin put it in a public address in 1962,²¹ and to "closely observe the machinations of imperialist intelligence services" as his famous successor Iurii Andropov put it in 1981 in a talk to his senior cadres.²²

As it sought to shield the Soviet state from these dangers, the KGB identified two major dangers stemming from the "machinations" of foreign powers. The KGB's first concern had to do with counterintelligence, against the "use of the channels of exchange, tourism, and private visits for purposes

¹⁸ On security anxieties related to these republics, see Amir Weiner, "Déjà vu all over again: Prague Spring, Romanian Summer and Soviet Autumn on the Soviet Frontier," *Contemporary European History* 15, no. 2 (2006), 159-194.

¹⁹ A.A. Makarov et al (ed.) *Vlast i dissidenty* (Moscow: MKhG,) 2006/ *Istoriia Sovetskikh organov gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti* (Moscow: Vyshaia shkola KGB, 1977).

²⁰ On the KGB's campaign to rehabilitate itself, see: *Russia and the Cult of State Security: the Chekist Tradition from Lenin to Putin* (London: Routledge, 2011), ch. 30-58.

²¹ "Vystuplenie tov. A.N. Shelepin, predsedatelia Komiteta Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti," *Pravda* 27/10/1962.

²² From a speech by Andropov to leading KGB cadres in May 1981, quoted in V.I. Alidin, *Gosudarstvennaia bezopasnost i vremia* (Moscow: Veteran MP, 1997, 217. V.I. Alidin was at the time the chief of Moscow's KGB.

of espionage.”²³ The second goal was to protect Soviet society from “ideological subversion”- activities along the lines described above. Here, foreign presence in Soviet life could be used to reconcile the gap between the post-Stalin declaration of the Soviet Union as an “all-people state” and the obdurate survival of dissent, “anti-social phenomena,” nationalism, and religious observance well into the 1980s. As one Soviet official explained, in a 1960 speech in the heart of a major vigilance campaign that followed the Soviet shoot-down of an American spy airplane, since the Soviet state “smashed” the social basis that could serve as ground for the penetration of hostile ideologies onto Soviet soil, American security services had to rely on the services of “parasitic elements” to forge domestic opposition. In this telling, disgruntled youth, intellectuals curious about Western culture, speculators in Western consumption goods, “girls of frivolous behavior,” jazz lovers, and others tempted by the allure of Western ways of life were seen not as a social problem but a component of Western conspiracy – transmitters of “bourgeois ideology,” or outright spies and saboteurs.²⁴

Such rhetoric could be easily dismissed as nothing more but propagandistic fodder, and indeed, in the wake of the collapse of the Khrushchev era drive to build Communism in the immediate future, largely disappeared from Soviet public life for the next 20 years.²⁵ However, archival materials from Ukraine reveal that concern about the baleful influence of foreign presence in Soviet life remained at the forefront of the KGB’s concerns. Daily reports filed by the KGB to the Ukrainian Politburo on conditions in the republic invariably began with a careful statistical breakdown of the numbers of foreigners in Ukraine. Even the smallest incidents involving foreigners, for instance deaths, suicides, and brawls between foreign students and Soviet citizens, were reported to the republican Politburo.²⁶ Reports on visits of journalists, foreign delegations, and diplomats to Ukraine invariably nearly always included lists

²³ *Istoriia organov*, 547.

²⁴ “Bditelnost: nashe oruzhie” *Komsomolskaia Pravda* 9/15/1960.

²⁵ On the campaign against “parasites” and other hindrances to the struggle to construct communism, see: Sheilla Fitzpatrick, “Social Parasites: How Tramps, Idle Youth and Busy Entrepreneurs Impeded the Soviet March to Communism,” *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 47, no. 1/2(2006), 377-408.

²⁶ See, for example among many, “Informatsionnoe soobshchenie [IS], 24/5/1977, Galuzevyi Derzhavnyi Arkhyv Sluzhby Bezpeki Ukrainy [DGA SBU], f. 16, op.7, ark. 26, spr. 13, “IS, 3/4/1987,” DGA SBU, f. 16, op. 4, spr. 2, ark. 92, “IS 2/8/1982,” DGA SBU, f. 16,op. 7, spr. 69, ark. 190-191.

of questions asked by the visitors, revealing a barely hidden anxiety that curiosity about any aspect of Soviet life was, ipso-facto, an attempt to obtain information that was better kept hidden.²⁷ Such a suspicious tone might be seen as no more than an attempt to cater to the preferences of the political leadership. However, deep suspicion of foreign was operationalized in the normal course of KGB operations. For instance, in the spring of 1972, the investigative department of the KGB devoted significant resources to tracing the possibility that a cholera outbreak in the Ukrainian countryside was the result of deliberate sabotage by the visiting foreigners from Germany or the United States.²⁸

ИНФОРМАЦИОННОЕ СООБЩЕНИЕ

за 5 июня 1973 г.

На территории Украинской ССР находились 1896 иностранцев: из США - 555, Англии - 88, Франции - 96, ФРГ - 71, Канады - 294, других стран НАТО - 219, иных капиталистических и развивающихся государств - 573 человека. В том числе: в Одессе - 629, Киеве - 437, Львове - 161, Ялте - 126, Тернополе - 93, Харькове - 87, Запорожье - 83, Херсоне - 75, Донецке - 42, Ворошиловграде - 40, Житомире - 12, Полтаве - 12, Виннице - 11, Ужгороде - 10, других городах - 78 человек.

В Одесском, Ждановском и Херсонском портах находились 17 судов из капиталистических стран, экипажи которых состоят из 650 человек, из них: 8 судов из США - 312 чел., 2 судна из Индии - 126 чел., 2 судна из Италии - 51 чел., 1 судно из Испании - 39 чел., 1 судно из Англии - 36 чел., 1 судно из Греции - 31 чел., 1 судно из Алжира - 30 чел., 1 судно из Либрии - 25 человек.

²⁷ See, for example, "IS 12/2/1972," f. 16, op. 3, spr. 14, spr. 271-272.

²⁸ "Informatsionnoe soobshchenie o prodelannoi rabote organov gospezhopasnostyi respubliky po obsepecheniiu karantinnykh meropriatii, 24/5/1977," DGA SBU, f. 16, op. 7, spr. 26, ar. 6-8.

Figure 1: Daily Report, 6/5/1972 DGA SBU f.16, op. 3, spr., 5, ark. 86.

Even more importantly, a deep concern about Western attempts to stir nationalism and other forms of dissent and, conversely, a conviction that every stirring of dissent had Western origins, was rooted deep in the heart of the KGB's model of the world. The Ukrainian KGB, for instance, faithfully transmitted information from Czechoslovak security services, pinning significant elements of blame on the unrest that culminated in the events of the Prague Spring on the activities of Western embassies and security services who allegedly infiltrated "emissaries" disguised as tourists and exchange students to stir political opposition²⁹- information that no doubt helped stir the deep concerns that local leadership harbored about the possibility of unrest spilling over to Soviet soil.³⁰

In the years following the events of the Prague Spring, KGB leadership in Ukraine became increasingly concerned about the activities of emissaries of Western-based nationalist groups and the alleged control they exerted over the activities of local dissidents. In a series of conferences and reports in the early 1970s, the Ukrainian KGB presented a nightmarish picture, under which Ukrainian nationalists, operating under the control of Western intelligence services, used the services of "emissaries"- diaspora Ukrainians on tourist or exchange visas, to forge Ukrainian dissidents into unified political force by means of material support and ideological suasion. These nationalists, moreover, sought contacts with Jewish nationalists, themselves, as we will see below, operating in close contact with foreign emissaries, and with Moscow dissidents, connected to Western journalists and embassies.³¹ This information, in turn, shaped the security perception of higher party leadership, with Petro Shelest, the Ukrainian party leader, complaining that his republic was witnessing "a merger of the NTS with bourgeois nationalists of all shades and colors and with Zionist elements... a forging of active political formations [oppositional to the

²⁹ "Tezisy vystupleniia na predstoiashchem soveshchaniii ofitserov gos. Bezopasnosti Vostochno-Slovatskogo kraia," [N/D, May 1968], DGA SBU, f. 16, op. 3, spr. 2, ark. 140-141.

³⁰ Amir Weiner, "De ja Vu."

³¹ See for example, speech of Ukrainian KGB chief Fedorchuk to the aforementioned meeting, "Protokol zonalnogo soveshchaniia," Delo 28, t. 1, 1971, ark. 121-134.

regime]”, and calling for “re-examination of certain aspects of our policy regarding foreign tourists” in a presentation to the all-Union Politburo.³²

While the restrictions on Western tourism Shelest advocated did not materialize, the picture of an emerging opposition monolith controlled by foreign “ideological centers” controlled, in turn, by Western secret services, was convincing enough to conduct a massive wave of arrests. Held under the tellingly codenamed “Operation Bloc,” this wave was triggered by the arrest of the Belgian-Ukrainian student Yaroslav Dobosh, a member of a nationalist youth organization who was indeed visiting Ukraine to make contact with local dissidents. His subsequent interrogation focused heavily on obtaining information implicating him in contacts with nationalist organizations on the one hand and Ukrainian dissidents on the other, while other arrestees were pressured to recount any and all encounters and exchanges of information they had with diaspora Ukrainians and other foreigners- an orchestration of a phantom opposition movement out of the loose strands of diffuse Soviet dissent movements.³³

The ascription of any and all oppositional, dissenting, or informal activities to the machinations of foreign intelligence services was not limited to the early 1970s Ukraine but was rather part of a wider epistemological pattern. The activities of human rights activists in the 1970s and their connections to Western diplomats and visiting foreigners were seen by the KGB as attempts to revive the organizational structure allegedly dissolved by Operation Bloc.³⁴ As late as the mid-1980s, the Ukrainian KGB fretted about Uniate activists, supposedly stirred by Vatican emissaries working in concert with Ukrainian nationalists,³⁵ and, more surprisingly, reported that the activities of hippies, punks, and yoga practitioners were manipulated by Western pacifist organizations operating under Western command to weaken “the ideological vigilance of Soviet youth.”³⁶ In Lithuania, similar concerns about the impact of visiting

³² As recorded by Shelest in his diary (Petro Shelest, *Da ne sudimy budete. Dnevnikovyie zapisi, vospominaniia chlena Politbiuro TsK KPSS* (Moscow: Edition Q, 1995), 503-504.

³³ See reports on the interrogations in DGA SBU, f. 16, op. 3, spr 2, DGA SBU, f. 16, op. 3, spr.3.

³⁴ See reports in DGA SBU, f. 16, op. 7, spr. 33, spr. 34, spr. 36, spr. 37.

³⁵ “O podryvnoi deiatelnosti zarubezhnykh ounovskikh tsentrov, 22/6, 1987, DGA SBU f. 16, op. 4, spr.3,ark. 140-142.

³⁶ “O negativnykh protsessakh sredi chasti sovetsoi molodezhi, 16/4/1987,” SBU f. 16, op. 4, spr. 2, ark. 130-133.

diaspora nationalists and other Westerners were regularly raised in meetings and reports of the local KGB.³⁷ In the center, these epistemological structures were expressed, for example, by Filip Bobkov, long-serving chief of the KGB's notorious Fifth Department, who, in a long note to the Politburo in 1976 about the rise of various forms of dissent, argued that Western "ideological centers" who used tourist travel and academic exchanges to "propagandize bourgeois philosophical values [and] Western ways of life and make contacts with representatives of Soviet youth in order to ideologically convert [*obrabatyvat*] them in order to incline them to hostile activities."³⁸ In his post-Soviet memoirs, Bobkov reiterated this point, arguing that "agents of influence" recruited by such methods were indeed responsible for *perestroika* and the Soviet collapse.³⁹ Whether in public or in private, in the regions or the center, a conception of the explosive subversive potential of foreign travel and other forms of international exchange formed the prism through which the KGB observed Soviet changing Soviet society

*"A Bug in Every Room"*⁴⁰

The significance of the "foreign problem" in the KGB's worldview was therefore reflected in its organizational structure and everyday activities. The mammoth Second Main Directorate of the KGB, the counterintelligence arm of the organization, contained multiple departments charged with surveillance of tourists, diplomats, foreign students, black market dealings involving foreigners, and other similar activities.⁴¹ Until 1968, the Second Main Directorate was in charge with investigating both espionage and

³⁷ See, for example, see "Plan osnovnykh agenturno-operativnykh meropriatii 2 upravleniia KGB pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR za 1976 god, 15/1/1976)," Lietuvos Ypatingajam Archyvui [LYA], f. K-41, ap. 1, s. 737, ll. 5-9.

³⁸ "Analiticheskaia spravka o kharaktere i prichinakh negativnykh proiavlenii sredi uchiashcheisia molodezhi i studenchestva," in *Vlast i dissidenty* 135-148.

³⁹ Fedor, "Chekists," 853-854. As Fedor shows, this point of view is very prevalent among former senior KGB officers.

⁴⁰ Richard Beeston Senior, "Frightful Food and Bugs in Every Room," *The Times*, 10/26/2010.

⁴¹ "2-e glavnoe upravleniie," <http://shieldandword.mozohin.ru/kgb5491/structure/2GU.htm>, accessed online at 10/25/2015.

“political counterintelligence.”⁴² After 1967, these functions were spun off to the Fifth Department; yet, based on Lithuanian materials, the Second Main Directorate remained deeply involved in the battle against “ideological diversion.”⁴³ The Seventh Directorate, in charge of street surveillance, focused its efforts mostly on foreigners.⁴⁴ Even bodies not particularly concerned with foreign visitors in the Soviet Union touched on the problem. The First Main Directorate (intelligence) of the KGB, which famously ran the KGB’s foreign operations, also relied heavily on recruitment of visiting foreigners to fulfill its tasks, at least on the republican level.⁴⁵ KGB territorial departments, even in areas closed to foreigners, spent much of their time emphasizing in their reports meager interactions between the population of their regions and foreigners.⁴⁶ Even officers of the Third Main directorate, charged with military security, saw one of their main tasks to stem the penetration of “bourgeois ideology” to the minds of Soviet soldiers, by, among other things, ferreting out and penalizing contacts between soldiers and foreigners.⁴⁷

How did this massive machinery of control and surveillance work to mitigate the dangers of foreign presence? The first means at its disposal was the control the Soviet state exhibited on mobility within its borders. While exact archival data about the extent and development of these regions is hard to locate, many Soviet towns and vast tracts of the countryside were formally closed to foreigners (in 1966, for instance, only 6,259 miles of Soviet roads were open to travel by foreigners).⁴⁸ In Ukraine, such zones included border areas in the Western part of the republic, and the areas around the famous “rocket city” of Dnepropetrovsk.⁴⁹ In the Baltic states, nearly the entire countryside, and some cities (for instance, Kaunas

⁴² Vladimir Semichastnyi, *Bespokoinoe serdtse* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2002), 89-91.

⁴³ See among many others, “Plan...za 1976 god,” LYA, f. K-41, ap. 1, s. 737, ll. 5-26.

⁴⁴ For this department, see the memoirs of one of its officers (E. Grig, *Da, ia tam sluzhil: zapiski ofitsera KGB* (Moscow: Olma Press, 2001).

⁴⁵ Alexander Nezdolia (ed.), *KGB: Rassekrechennye vospominaniia* (Donetsk: Kashtan, 2008), 12-18.

⁴⁶ “Protokol zonalogo soveshchaniia ruk. sostava organov KG, provedennogo Komitetom gosbezopasnosti pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR, v gor. Kieve, 5-6/8/1971.” The file containing this document, a stenogram of a meeting of the leading cadres of the Ukrainian KGB, was recently digitized, and not yet receive its archival designation in the DGA SBU archival system. Here, I will refer to it by its old KGB designation: Delo 28, t.1, 1971, 171.

⁴⁷ “Zonalnoe soveshchenie,” Delo 28, t.1, 197, ark. 52-53.

⁴⁸ Zigurds L. Zile et al, *The Soviet Legal System and Arms Limitation: a Case Study of Policy Implementation* (New York: Praeger, 1972), 166.

⁴⁹ On Dnepropetrovsk, see Seregei Zhuk *Rock and Roll in the Rocket city: The West, Youth and Identity in Soviet Dnepropetrovsk* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2010).

in Lithuania) were closed to foreigners. In general, the number of open cities rose steadily, from 30 in the 1950s to above 130 in the mid-1980s.⁵⁰ However, scant archival evidence on this issue shows that the process of opening hitherto closed regions encountered at least some bureaucratic resistance from Soviet security forces.⁵¹

In addition to sealing off some Soviet regions, Soviet authorities controlled, at least to some extent, the itineraries of travelling foreigners. Tourists, for example, had to stipulate the places they wished to visit when purchasing their packages from Intourist, the foreign tourism monopoly, and had to apply for permission to add new locations to their itinerary. Journalists and diplomats had to apply to appropriate authorities to visit areas outside of Moscow, including major cities like Leningrad and Kyiv. Certain activities, like taking pictures from airplanes and of bridges, train stations, and other key installations, were prohibited.

The next level of Soviet security barriers was erected around the locations where foreigners were especially prominent: border crossings, tourist areas, Intourist hotels. For example, in the early 1970s, the border crossing in the Ukrainian border town of Chop, on the Slovak-Hungarian-Ukrainian border triangle, saw about 600 tourists from the West; these were “served” by a staff of over 200 KGB officers, agents, and “trustees” [*doverennye litsa*].⁵² Train coaches where foreigners sat were intensely surveilled, by KGB agents under cover of train conductors and passengers, as well as wiretaps.⁵³ Foreign sailors in the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda were put under an intense surveillance system, involving everything from officers of the Seventh Department tracking the movements of suspects to active recruitment by the KGB

⁵⁰ “O sostoianii razvitiia inostrannogo turizma v 1980-1982 godu i perspektivakh ego razvitiia na 1983 g.,” GARF, f. 9612, op.3 d. 1594, l. 2.

⁵¹ For example, when Intourist, the Soviet tourist monopoly petitioned to allow tourists along roads in Ukraine and Belarus without escort of a guide, the KGB, army and military all objected, citing security reasons. Dudorov (MVD Minister), to TsK KPSS 7/9/1959, GARF, f. 9401, op. 2, d. 506, ll. 222-225. As late as 1990-1991, Soviet cities were petitioning the Soviet government with requests to open them up to foreign travel, in the face of resistance from the KGB. See, for example, letters from Kronstadt, Kaliningrad, Gor’kii, Kirov to the RSFSR government in GARF, f. a-381, op. 1, d. 836, ll. 101-102, 151-155, 165.

⁵² In the KGB parlance, officers were full-time operatives. Agents were civilians paid money for information, trustees, were people who occasionally delivered information or conducted operational tasks voluntarily.

⁵³ “Zonalnoe soveshchanie,” delo 28, t. 1, ark. 191. For samples of surveillance reports from trains carriages, see: LYA, f. K-41, ap. 1, b. 740.

of local sex workers and black market operatives.⁵⁴ A similar “dense” approach was taken in the Crimean city of Yalta that drew large numbers of KGB agents and officers, who were promised hotel rooms in exchange for helping the local KGB department with surveillance tasks involving foreigners and their contacts.⁵⁵

Yet, the most crucial element of surveillance involved the KGB’s coordination, co-optation, and control of Soviet organizations devoted to handling various groups of foreigners. For instance, UPDK, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs department that handled the needs of foreign diplomats and other resident foreigners in Moscow (journalists, businessmen, engineers working on major projects, and so on), was widely assumed by its “clientele” to be a cover for intelligence operations, no doubt for very good reasons.⁵⁶ However, given the vast numbers of foreigners it served, (not to mention the much better archival and memoirist trail it left) Intourist, the massive Soviet foreign tourism monopoly, was the key institution in this regard.

Intourist’s participation in surveillance operations was conducted on several layers, some transparent, some semi-hidden, and some hidden (but not so well-hidden as not to become, as we will see in a moment, part of the mythology surrounding travel to the Soviet Union). On the most basic level, Intourist guides filled a disciplinary function not unlike that of all other Soviet officials involved in propaganda and “political education.” As they escorted their groups, it was their job not only to provide a proper ideological framing of what their charges saw, maintain “discipline” in their groups to make sure that tourists did not leave their groups, isolate hostile tourists, and if possible, turn other group members

⁵⁴ See, among many, “O rasstanovke I zagruzke operativnogo sostabva apparata UKB pri SM LSSSR, v g. Klaipede, i na Litovskom morskome basseine, 21/6/1963,” YAL, F. k-1, op. 10, b.324, ll. 208-216; “O merakh po sostoianii I merakh useileniia operativnoi deiatelnosti na obektakh promyshlennosti I otdeleniia otdela KGB pri SM LSSR v gor. Klaipede I na Litovskom morskome basseine, po sostoianiiu na 20/3/1969 g.” YAL K-41, ap.1, b. 668, ll. 37-44; “Spravka o sostoianii profikakticheskoi raboty v otdela KG pri SM LSSR v g. Klaipede i v LMB na kanale morskogo sudokhodstva i na kanalakh vyezda Sovetskikh grazhdan za granitsu, v 1973-1974, YAL, f. K-41, ap. 1, b. 786, l. 153. For more on KGB use of dubious social elements in Soviet ports, see Oleg Kalugin, *Spymaster: my 32 Years in Intellegence and Espionage against the West* (New York: Basic Book, 2009), 15-16.

⁵⁵ “Stenogramma soveshchaniia rukovodiashchikh rabotnikov organov KGB Ukrainskoi SSSR, 24-26/2/1971,” DGA SBU, f. 16, op.8, spr. 1, ark. 75-76.

⁵⁶ See for example, an account of a former British embassy driver, “Ex-Soviet Agent Vows to Fight Lubianka ‘Cancer’,” *The Independent*, 10/13/1991.

against them. Following these trips, all Intourist guides were charged with writing reports on group behavior, questions asked by tourists, unusual incidents, and other irregularities. These documents, indistinguishable in form and function from the famous *svodki* of public opinion that were key to the authorities' understanding and shaping of Soviet society,⁵⁷ were then transmitted upwards, through the Intourist propaganda department, and found their way both to party authorities⁵⁸ and the KGB, which, according to KGB colonel Oleg Nechiporenko, scoured them for "behavioral irregularities" indicating possible hostile activities.⁵⁹ Other disciplinary functions were filled by doormen in Intourist hotels (widely rumored to be former KGB officers), charged with not letting "a-social elements" enter hotels, and the renowned *dezhurnye*, hall monitors who made sure that no inappropriate activity would take place inside hotel rooms.

Furthermore, it was a common assumption held by both many Soviet people⁶⁰ and travelers that all, or the vast majority, of Intourist employees were reporting on guests and their Soviet contacts in exchange for their continued employment. Available sources don't allow us to make a determination of the extent to which it is true, but this belief had no doubt a foundation in fact. Thus, recollections of Intourist guides represent recruitment attempts by the KGB as a rite of passage.⁶¹ Intourist was one of the top employment locations for "active reserve"⁶² KGB officers, as it both allowed cover for travel and employment abroad, and allowed KGB officers close supervision of goings-on in Intourist locations.⁶³

⁵⁷ On the *svodki* see Holquist, "Alpha and Omega," 431-432.

⁵⁸ See, for instance, reports in Rossiiskii Gosudarsvennyi arkhiv [RGANI], f. 5 op. 55, d. 121.

⁵⁹ Oleg Nechiporenko, *KGB i zagadka smerti Kennedy* (Moscow: Algoritm, 2013), 28. Despite this book's somewhat sensationalist title, the information provided by the author, a KGB colonel, agrees with my impression of Intourist practices.

⁶⁰ For example, an interview subject in Paola Messina's oral history project on Soviet communal apartments remembers that he knew as a child that his neighbors "very beautiful young couple, tall and blonde waiters at the hotel Intourist-Kaluga.. were obviously KGB, like all waiters in hard currency hotels. (*Soviet Communal Living: an Oral History of the Kommunalka* (London: Palgrave MacMillan), 101.

⁶¹ Active reserve, in KGB parlance, means an officer temporary stationed at a job in another institution, as either cover, a security related post, or respectable semi-retirement.

⁶² On this practice, see "O rabote ofitsera deistvuieshego rezerva KGB Litovskoi SSR rabotaiushchego po prikrytiem v otdelenii VAO "Intourist," v gor. Vilnius za 1979 god," LYA, ap. 1, b.758, ll- 182-207.

⁶³ For such accounts, see Lyudmila Noble, *Just Touching the Memory* (New York: X-Libris, 2013) [e-book], Russel L. Volkema, Elena Turner, *A Russian Intourist Guide Visits the USA* (New York: Vintage, 1996) 6-9, Dora Anchipolskaia *Memuary odinokoi zhenshchiny* (Jerusalem: Mishmeret shalom, 1998), 100-101

Hotel rooms themselves were a prime site of surveillance. In Tallinn's hotel Viru, for instance, over sixty rooms were bugged, according to its post-Soviet management.⁶⁴ According to KGB defector Victor Sheymov, the same was true in restaurants receiving foreigners, where the latter were shunted to tables containing hidden microphones.⁶⁵

Another major component of the KGB's surveillance network were agents and trustees who were, as mentioned above, tasked with surrounding foreigners as tightly as possible. Generally speaking, this vast network consisted of two elements. First, there were agents whose job was to become close to foreigners who interested the Soviet authorities- most often either members of the intelligentsia who could converse with foreigners about topics that interested them, or attractive women who had other means in their disposal to connect to foreigners.⁶⁶ The second group in this regard were employees of various institutions frequented by foreigners selected and briefed to be the sole points of contact for foreigners, and thus keep Soviet secrets safe from their reach.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Personal communication during a visit to Viru's 23rd floor "KGB Museum," May 15, 2014. On the museum, see "Pay no Attention to the Spy on the 23rd floor," *The Smithsonian.com*, 8/4/2013, accessed online at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/ist/?next=/history/pay-no-attention-to-the-spies-on-the-23rd-floor-17885145/>, on 30/10/2015.

⁶⁵ Victor Sheymov, *Tower of Secrets: a Real Life Spy Thriller* (Annapolis, MD:Naval Institute Press, 1993), 177-179. Sheymov was a senior officers in the Eight Directorate (signals security), was recruited by the CIA and was smuggled out of the Soviet Union in a major CIA operation. (David Hoffman, *The Billion Dollar Spy: a True Story of Cold War Espionage and Betrayal* (New York: Double Day, 2015), 126-128. On surveillance in restaurants and other settings, see also Kalugin

⁶⁶ See, for instance, a list of Vilnius agents employed to surveil foreigners, "Spravka o sviaziakh agentury Vilniuskogo GO KGB LSSR s inostrantsami [n/d, 1985), LAY, f. k-18, ap. 1, b. 21, ll. 71-80.

⁶⁷ Plan kontrrazvedyvatelnogo obespecheniia turistov iz inostrannykh stran vo vremia poseshchenia imi promyshlennykh predpriatii, uchebnykh zavedenii i drugikh obektov pokaza, 21/4/1971," LYA, f. K-41, ap. 1, b. 788, ll. 142-147.



Figure 2: a Wiretap Room, Hotel Viru Tallinn

The purpose of this massive information gathering campaign was, of course, identifying, deterring, or neutralizing foreigners who harbored ill-intent towards the Soviet system. Some categories of foreigners, like diplomats and journalists, were automatically appended close surveillance (as were, no doubt Soviet journalists and diplomats in Western countries.)⁶⁸ High profile delegations and foreigners whom the KGB considered of particular interest were surveilled by any possible means.⁶⁹ Among tourists, candidates for surveillance were picked, it seems, based on “behavioral irregularities”: attempts to seek contacts with Soviet citizens, unfavorable remarks about the Soviet Union, reports from previous trips, suspicious behavior while entering Soviet borders, and warnings from the First Directorate about potential trouble makers associated with “ideological centers.” Sometimes, even simple eccentricity could suffice to make one a suspect: according to an officer of the Seventh directorate, one American tourist in

⁶⁸ On the parallels of treatment of Soviet and American journalists, see Fainberg, “Reports from Rotten West.”

⁶⁹ See, for example, “Plan operativnykh meropriatii po obektu razrabotki ‘Bil’”, n. 1530, 28/11/1988,” LYA, K-35, ap. 2, b. 689, ll. 78-80.

Moscow became a subject of intense surveillance, as his habit of taking long daily walks seemed like a potential agent-running operation.⁷⁰

What kind of consequences could trouble-making (or worse) foreigners expect? The most basic and probably most common disciplinary action taken by the KGB was a “friendly warning” issued to misbehaving foreigners at Intourist offices or militia stations under KGB tutelage.⁷¹ Tourists who ignored this warning could expect, as we will see below, harassment and surveillance designed to be noted. Foreigners who took pictures of buildings or key installations or simply ungainly sites that could embarrass the Soviet Union could expect to be attacked by Soviet citizens- sometimes undercover KGB operatives, sometimes members of Komsomol patrols, and, at least according to KGB documents, at times by genuinely wary Soviet citizens.⁷² Often when encountering troublesome foreigners, the KGB documented their behavior by taking in “complaints” from Soviet citizens that could be used as foundation for deportation and barring them from further entry to the Soviet Union.⁷³ Especially for journalists, exchange students, but sometimes also for tourists, such actions were often accompanied by publications in the Soviet media, clearly meant not only to shame and isolate the “misbehaving” foreigner, but to serve as warnings for others.⁷⁴ Finally, beyond the inevitable wiretapping and sometimes recording of their deeds, the KGB had a bag of “dirty tricks” in its employ. To cite one example, KGB operatives were not above searching the hotel rooms of visitors suspected of possessing pornographic literature and confiscating their findings.⁷⁵ More seriously, journalists and diplomats travelling outside

⁷⁰ Grig, *Ia tam rabotal*, 53.

⁷¹ “Spravka o sostoianii profilakticheskoi raboty 1 Otdela 2 Upravleniia KGB pri SM LSSR, 25/10/1974,” YLA, K-41, ap. 1, b. 786, l. 150.

⁷² On encounters between troublesome foreigners, in this case, military attaches of NATO powers, and “concerned Soviet citizens, see E.S William, *Cold War, Hot Seat: a Western Defense Attache in the Soviet Union* (London: Robert Hale, 2000). On Soviet citizens spontaneously neutralizing foreigners armed with cameras, see “IS, 11/12/1972,” DGA SBU, f. 16, op. 3, spr. 14, ark. 257.

⁷³ See, for example, “IS 24/7/1972,” DGA SBU, f. 16, op. 3, spr. 10, ark. 17-18.

⁷⁴ For an example, V. Andreev, *Nauchnyi obmen i ideologicheskaiia diversiia* (Lenigrad: Lenizdat, 1970), 20-29, for a hit on American historian Edward Keenan, charged with, among other things, not working hard enough in the archives, spending his time in “markets and synagogues,” glorifying the Western way of life, faking a boat ticket to visit a monastery on a White Sea island to which foreigners were banned from entry, and, inevitably, CIA connections. On the psychological effects of such attacks, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, *A Spy in the Archives: a Memoir of Cold War Russia* (London: I.B Tauris, 2015), 47.

⁷⁵ Andropov to TsK KPSS, “Rapport du K.G.B. sur la diffusion d'ouvrages pornographiques par

Moscow could expect harassment, encounters with “concerned citizens” orchestrated by the authorities, and, at times, serious provocations that could end with imprisonment or deportation, or blackmail operations that aimed to put foreigners in compromising positions for purposes of discreditation or blackmail.⁷⁶ At the highest level of operations, the KGB organized complex deceptions that connected foreigners to dissident groups operated by the KGB (see below) and dissidents to pseudo-foreigners who were in fact KGB officers.⁷⁷

Finally, perhaps the most important task of the KGB in regards to the foreign danger was to identify Soviet citizens in danger of conversion or recruitment by foreigners. In theory, surveillance in this regard was intended to track Soviet people who exhibited disloyal inclinations and to safeguard “secret-bearers” [*sekretonositeli*] from possible contacts by Western security services.⁷⁸ In practice, any serious contact with foreigners seems to have been sufficient to bring a Soviet citizen into the KGB’s orbit. Thus, in Kyiv, American exhibits were honeycombed with KGB officers seeking out and identifying Soviet people engaged in conversation with exhibit guides or other foreigners and sometimes impersonating Americans in order to entrap Soviets showing undue curiosity about foreigners.⁷⁹ In Lithuania, for instance, more than 2,000 residents who had contacts with foreigners were registered as possible security risks, while in the countryside, surveillance of people who had such contacts while visiting open areas seems to have been a central preoccupation of the local counter-intelligence officers.⁸⁰

des étrangers, 2/2/1970,” cited in Nicholas Werth (ed.) *Rapports secrets soviétiques. La société russe dans les documents confidentiels, 1921-1991* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 441. No record remains of what KGB operatives did with this particular form of contraband.

⁷⁶ To cite one example among many a letter from J. Edgar Hoover to CIA chief Alan Foster Dulles, in regards to a report by conservative columnist Joseph Alsop that he was recorded by the KGB engaging in homosexual sex in a Moscow hotel. (Hoover to Dulles, 4/16/1957, available online at: <http://www.foia.cia.gov/document/0005528186>).

⁷⁷ Mitrokhin and Andrew, *The World was Going Our Way*, 375-376.

⁷⁸ On KGB operations in regards secrecy, see Mark Harrison and Inga Zaksauskienė, “Counter-Intelligence in a Command Economy”, an SSRN working paper, accessed online at: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2331301 on 10/20/2015. See also Bobkov, *Kgb I vlasti*, 227-243.

⁷⁹ See, for example, “Spetsialnoe soobshchenie, 6/7/1976,” DGA SBU, f. 16, op.7, spr. 33, ark. 57-64.

⁸⁰ See for example, “Otchet o kontrazvedyvatelnoi deiatelnosti Shauliaiskogo GO KGB po Litovskoi SSSR v 1978 godu,” LYA, K-18, op.1, b. 524, l.43-53.

The number of people known to the KGB as possible “vectors” of foreign ideological contamination cannot be ascertained, but a copy of an instruction sent from Moscow to the Lithuanian KGB (and to all other republican organizations) on July 4, 1973 hints at the vast ambitions of the program. The order describes a soon-to-be-activated mainframe based program, code-named FORT-67, aiming to “gather, process, and distribute information about contacts of foreigners from capitalist and developing countries with citizens of the Soviet Union.”⁸¹ Based on its description, the purpose of this software was to convert the vast paper holding of information held by local departments into digital form, allow easier entry of information into the system and easier cross-checking and cross-referencing of information across regional and republican lines, and, in theory at least, allow total informational awareness regarding contacts between Soviet people and foreigners.

This description of the vast, complex network woven around foreigners travelling in the Soviet Union clear raises the question of whether indeed a foreigner entering the Soviet Union stepped into a reality of total surveillance, as many believed at the time.⁸² Judging from the point of view of the KGB, the answer to this question would be, it seems, a resounding no. To some extent, the problem here was the usual Soviet conundrum of quantity versus quality. Oleg Kalugin, former chief of the First Directorate counterintelligence department,⁸³ sent to “exile” as First Deputy of the Leningrad KGB, found that despite (or because of) the immense manpower under his command, “nearly everything we did was useless”.⁸⁴ Even Bobkov, no slouch when it came to the epistemology of suspicion, found the scope of the surveillance project counter-productive, citing in his memoirs a case of a wife of a Donetsk doctor who was permanently tagged as a suspect after spending half an hour sharing a bench with a Canadian

⁸¹ “Prikaz predsedatelia Komiteta Gosudarsvennoi Bezopasnosti pri Komitete Ministrov SSSR: o vvode v deistvie v kontrazvedyvatelnykh Komiteta gosbezopasnosti informatsionnoi sistemy Fort-67, 4/7/1973” LYA, K-1, ap. 46, b. 118 l. 72-79.

⁸² One side effect of this myth of ever-present KGB surveillance was the urban myth that in order to get better service in Intousit hotels, one needed to speak loudly enough to be captured by the bugs installed in the hotel. See John Miller, *All Them Corfields and Ballet in the Evening* (London: Houghton Press, 2010), 101, for an amusing retelling.

⁸³ Not to be confused with the Second Main Directorate engaged in all other counterintelligence operations, this department’s task was recruitment of officers of Western intelligence services.

⁸⁴ Kalugin, *Spymaster*, 336..

tourist.⁸⁵ The deterrent effect of the KGB's disciplinary efforts was no doubt limited due to the fact that, for instance, the penalty for visits to closed regions was usually not much more than an administrative warning.

The KGB also suffered from a set of problems familiar to students of Soviet institutions: coordination difficulties, resource constraints, and technological lags. Thus, due to lack of manpower and backward technology, no more than 10% of printed materials smuggled by foreigners were apprehended.⁸⁶ Manpower for surveillance squads outside major cities was insufficient.⁸⁷ The KGB could not raise sufficient numbers of agents with knowledge of relevant languages, and thus was forced to lower its recruitment standards.⁸⁸

Heavy reliance on Intourist, a commercial organization with a large contingent of youth interested in the West, was another element of weakness in the foreigner surveillance scheme. KGB officials often complained that Intourist officials were too interested in "commercial" affairs and did not devote enough aspects to the "political" aspects of their organizations' work.⁸⁹ Intourist doormen, *dezhurnye* and other lower level staff were often interested not so much in preventing unsavory people from interacting with hotel clientele as in getting kickbacks from sex workers and black marketeers who wished to enter Intourist grounds. The same guides who describe attempts at KGB recruitment also all report they refused collaboration- and remained working in Intourist. Intourist reports, especially after the mid-1960s, seem to have become much less detailed and meticulous. Finally, Intourist guides were at least as likely to develop infatuation with "bourgeois ideology" as serve as bulwark against it. Marriages between these "fighters on the ideological front" and their charges were an endemic problem, while some

⁸⁵ Bobkov, *KGB i vlast'*, 234.

⁸⁶ "Stenogramma", DGA SBU, f. 16, op. 8, spr. 1, ark. 120-121.

⁸⁷ Ibid, ark. 15,

⁸⁸ Ibid, ark. 136.

⁸⁹ See for example, Stenogramma vseouiznogo soveshchaniia rukovodiashchikh rabotnikov VAO Inturist, 17/1/1961," GARF, f. 9612, op. 2, d. 286, ll.159-165.

guides developed ideological deviations- whether affinity for Zionism⁹⁰ or establishing the Soviet Union's first Beatles fan club.⁹¹

These weaknesses no doubt blunted the effectiveness of KGB operations on the margins. However, the most telling evidence about the gap between the analytic assumptions behind the Soviet surveillance effort and its actual performance may be gleaned in a more straightforward way- by looking at facts and figures. Yearly reports of the KGB to the Politburo provide a numerical breakdown of the numbers of foreigners the KGB pinpointed and penalized as spies and saboteurs or expelled as emissaries of hostile organizations. In 1976, the year in which Bobkov sounded his warning about foreign subversion of Soviet youth, 114 foreigners were deported from the Soviet Union and 11 foreigners were exposed as officers of foreign intelligence services.⁹² In 1978, this number declined to 100 and the number of “burned” intelligence officers declined to 2.⁹³ In 1982 at the height of the so-called “Second Cold War” and its attendant hysteria about Western ideological sabotage,⁹⁴ the combined number for both categories was 75.⁹⁵ Given what we know about the scope of the Soviet security operations and the large numbers of visitors that fit at least some criteria of the very nebulous Soviet definition of an ideological saboteur, the discrepancy between these numbers and the genuine alarm exhibited by the KGB regarding ideological subversion requires some explanation. Unfortunately, sources produced by the Soviet state are to no avail here, as the entire rhetorical intent of KGB reportage was to convince the decision-makers that its efforts were indeed appropriate to the level of threat the Soviet state faced. We are faced, therefore with the “dogs that didn't bark” conundrum: how do we explain this curious gap between perceptions and actions, when the documents revealing the conceptions and (relative lack) of actions, are silent on the problem?

⁹⁰ Anchipovkaia, *Memuary*, 114-116.

⁹¹ Vladimir Marochkin, *Moskva Rock-n-rolnaia* (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2014), 87.

⁹² Zapiska n. 709- A/OV, predsedatelia KGB SSSR Iu.V Andropova Generalnomu Sekretariu TsK KPSS L.I Brezhnev, ‘Othchet o rabote KGB SSSR za 1975 god’,” in idem, in Makarov, ed. *Vlast i dissidenty*, 112..

⁹³ Zapiska n. 646- A/OV, predsedatelia KGB SSSR Iu.V Andropova Generalnomu Sekretariu TsK KPSS L.I Brezhnev, ‘Othchet o rabote KGB SSSR za 1978 god’,” in *ibid*, 211.

⁹⁴ On ideological clampdown in the early 1980s, see Zhuk, *Rock and Roll*, 265-284.

⁹⁵ Zapiska n. 574- Ch/OV, predsedatelia KGB SSSR V.M Chevrikova v TsK KPSS i Generalnomu Sekretariu TsK KPSS Iu.V Andropovu ‘Othchet o rabote KGB SSSR za 1982 god’,” in *Vlast i dissidenty*, 255.

To take a shot at an answer, I argue, we would do well to give a second look at Dash, or rather at the interaction of the movement of which he was part and the Soviet state.

Zionist Emissaries, the KGB and the Dogs that didn't Bark

Dash's "errand on behalf of Soviet Jewry" was rooted in a 40 year struggle between the Soviet state, Soviet Jewish nationalists, and the international Zionist movement, a struggle that in many ways was nearly tailor made for the KGB's ever-present concern of foreign subversion. From the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, one of its central foreign policy goals was creating mass emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel, a goal that required convincing (or pressuring) Soviet authorities to open their borders to emigration and stirring up migratory moods among Soviet Jews. In 1952, the Israeli government established a clandestine organization named *Lishkat ha-keshet* [Bureau of Communication], and better known as *Nativ* [the Path], in charge of both establishing connections with Eastern European Jewry and garnering support for their cause among American and West European Jewish organizations in order to stir Western public opinion and governments to apply pressure on the Soviet state.⁹⁶

Until the Six Day War in 1967, the struggle for Jewish emigration was a relatively low key affair.⁹⁷ However, the smashing Israeli triumph, the strident anti-Israeli reaction of the Soviet government, and rising discrimination against the Jewish minority in the Soviet Union⁹⁸ triggered a mass emigration movement among Soviet Jewry. While the Soviet state accommodated some of the emigration demands in the détente years, many of the Jews who wished to emigrate were refused permission, for reasons of both state security and concern about the precedent unbridled emigration might create. These refuseniks,

⁹⁶ The archival files of *Nativ* are not available for researchers. However, two of its chiefs released their memoirs: Nehmiah Levanon, *ha-Kod: Nativ* (Tel Aviv: Am oved, 1995), Ya'kov (Yasha) Kedmi, *Milhamot avudot* (Tel-Aviv: Matar, 2011). Additionally, the Israeli Association for the Documentation of Secret Activity for the Soviet Jewry- a veterans' association of *Nativ*, published an oral history of *Nativ's* activities, especially in regards to foreign travel, a shorter version of an unpublished, and probably classified, manuscript (Shelomoh Rosner, *Bi netiv ha-demamah: ha-peilut ha-hashai le-maan Yehudei Berit ha-Moatsot* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar le-heker toldot ha-'am ha-Yehudi, 2012).

⁹⁷ Yaacov Ro'I, *The Struggle for Soviet Jewish Emigration, 1948-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁹⁸ On anti-Jewish discrimination in the late Soviet period, see: Sara Fainberg, *Les Discrimines ; L'Antisemitisme Sovietique De Staline A Nos Jour* (Paris: Fayard, 2014).

who had to resign their jobs in order to apply for emigration, formed a nucleus of a Jewish nationalist movement in the Soviet Union, and their plight triggered a mass outpouring of support for their cause that far outstripped *Nativ's* initial efforts.⁹⁹

The possibilities offered by the opening up of the Soviet Union to foreign traffic were a crucial element in the strategy of the Soviet Jewish movement. For instance, Israeli diplomats travelled across the Soviet periphery, where many traditionalist and Zionist Jews resided, making stops in synagogues, striking conversations on the streets, and giving out Jewish ritual items and Zionist literature.¹⁰⁰ *Nativ* representatives working under cover of diplomats made connections with clandestine Zionist circles.¹⁰¹ Visits of Israelis to their Soviet relatives gave them, and other Jews, access to pieces of Israeli life and Zionist and Jewish literature.¹⁰² Despite Soviet efforts to isolate it, the Israeli delegation in the famous 1957 Moscow Youth festival caused a massive furor, and a number of Soviet Jews ascribe their national awakenings to meeting its tough, war-veteran delegation members.¹⁰³ Similar emotions were triggered by young Jews who viewed occasional Israeli concerts and shows on Soviet soil.¹⁰⁴

Foreign travel was also crucial in propagandizing the plight of Soviet Jewry: the most important publication on Soviet Jewry, the stresses it faced, and its desire to reconnect to its traditions published before 1967, *The Jews of Silence*, was penned by its author, the young journalist Elie Wiesel, after a

⁹⁹ For work on this movement, see: *My snova evrei: ocherki po istorii sionistkogo dvizheniia v Sovetskom Soiuze*, (Jerusalem: self published, 2007) Bin'yamin Pinkus, *Tehiyah ve tekumah leumit: hatsiyonut ve ha tenuah ha- tsiyonit be Brit ha-moatsot 1947-1948* (Sde Boker: ha-merkaz le moreshet ben gurion), 1998, Gal Beckerman, *When They Come for Us, We'll be Gone: the Epic Struggle to Liberate Soviet Jewry* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2010), Petrus Buwalda, *The did not Dwell Alone: Jewish Emigration from the Soviet Union, 1970-1989* (Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ For specific examples, see, "Memorandum from P. Ivashutin to Central Committee," cited in Boris Morozov (ed.) *Documents on Soviet Jewish Emigration* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 43-44, "Pis'mo upolnomochennogo Soveta po delam religioznykh kultov pri Chernovicheskom Oblispolkome Urycheva," in Ze'ev Khanin (ed.) *Shetidenvania Voina i Evreiskoe dvizhenie v SSSR* (Moscow: Akademicheskaiia seriia, 2008), 111-113 (Moscow: Akademicheskaiia seriia, 2008), 111-113.

¹⁰¹ Pinkus, *Tehiyah*, 201-217, Levanon, *Nativ*, 86-92.

¹⁰² See, for example, German Branover, *Vozvrashchenie* (Jerusalem: Shamir, 1991).

¹⁰³ Pinkus, *Tehiyah*, 219-221. According to his estimation, the Israeli delegation met with 30 to 60 thousand Soviet Jews. David Shaham, *Pegishot be-Moskvah* (Merhavayah: Sifriyat Po'alim, 1957), Lev Timmerman, *Moi put' v Izrail'* (Jerusalem: Biblioteka alia, 1977), 149-150,

¹⁰⁴ Gillel Butman *Leningrad Ierusalim s dolgoi peresadkoi* (Jerusalem: Biblioteka alia, 1981), 20.

reporting trip on behalf of an Israeli newspaper, with behind the scenes *Nativ* backing.¹⁰⁵ Finally, as Zionist circles in the Soviet Union grew and solidified in the mid-1960s, *Nativ* started the practice of sending “tourist emissaries” [*tayarim-shelihim*], usually young men with American or Scandinavian passports affiliated with the religious-Zionist *Bnei Akivah* movement, to make contact and exchange information with Soviet Zionist activists.¹⁰⁶

The path of the tourist-emissaries proved especially useful after 1967, when the Soviet Union broke its diplomatic relations with Israel. In the immediate wake of the war, American Jewish organizations pondered a partial travel boycott on the Soviet Union. The Israelis, aware of the crucial role travelers could play in providing aid and coordinating activities with Soviet Jewish activists, quickly dissuaded the Americans from this course of action.¹⁰⁷ Instead, from 1967, the numbers of “tourist-emissaries” rapidly rose, quickly overtaking *Nativ*’s modest numbers. By the mid-1970s, travel to the Soviet Union on missions of aid to refuseniks became a mass phenomenon in North American and Western European Jewish communities. Local Jewish organizations recruited, briefed and debriefed travelers, who usually traveled on a tourist visa or participated in exchanges with Soviet professionals. Inside the Soviet Union, these travelers’ main goal was to visit refuseniks whose names and addresses they received from their briefers, provide them with material aid, Hebrew study materials and Zionist literature, and, to the extent of their contact with Soviet authorities, raise the issue of Jewish emigration with the officials they encountered. Upon return, these activist tourists were debriefed and produced trip reports, which were then processed, compiled, and circulated to their briefers. These materials were then

¹⁰⁵ Beckerman, *When They Come for us*, 130-133.

¹⁰⁶ Rosner, *Demamah*, 35-42, Levanon, *Nativ*, 69-72.

¹⁰⁷ Levanon, *Nativ*, 227.

used to brief subsequent cohorts of travelers, adjust goals and activities with an eye to the situation on the ground.¹⁰⁸

Here was, therefore, the KGB's nightmare come true: an international movement, supported by both foreign governments and "ideological centers," sending thousands of emissaries (and, over the period of 20 years between 1970 and 1990, surely tens of thousand) of emissaries on missions of subversion that aided and abated activities that both shattered the Soviet myth of the "friendship of the peoples" and were deemed just short of treason by Soviet authorities. As we have seen above, this real threat was indeed interpreted by the KGB not as a stand-alone movement with defined goals but as part of a global conspiracy against Soviet power. More interesting still was the fact that for some Soviet KGB officers at least, Zionism did not seem like a component of the global imperialist war against the Soviet Union but its puppet-master. One report on Zionist activity to the Ukrainian Politburo, mentioned as a matter of fact, that "Zionists" controlled many large American monopolies and "up to 80% of international press agencies."¹⁰⁹

How did the KGB fight this menace? Before 1967, it seemed to have had little trouble in dealing with the problem. Zionist activists in touch with Israeli diplomats could be imprisoned for lengthy terms,¹¹⁰ while their contacts could be deported and slandered in the Soviet media in

¹⁰⁸ For details on the organization of this effort, see: NSCJ Records, Jewish Historical Society Archives, New York, Box 86, Folder 1, "Briefing Materials," Box 87, Folder 1, "Debriefing Questionnaires," Box 89, "NCSJ Travel Group". For perspectives of individual tourists, see: Rosenfeld, *Journey*, 37-67, Wendy Eisen, *The Struggle to Free Soviet Jews: a Canadian Perspective* (Toronto: Burgher Books, 1995), 133-145, Dov Peretz Elkins, *My Seventy Two Friends: Encounters with Refuseniks in the USSR* (New York: Growth Associates, 1989). Additionally, thousands of trip reports are extant in the files of different Soviet Jewry organizations housed at the Jewish Historical Society Archives and elsewhere.

¹⁰⁹ "V. Fedorchuk to V. Scherbritskii [Head of Ukrainian Communist Party], 5/2/1982, DGA SBU, f. 16, op. 7, spr. 66, ark. 229. This was not an isolated point of view within the KGB- see similar reports cited in Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The World was Going Our Way*, 226-237. Another indication of the conspiratorial view of Zionism held by some KGB officers was their conviction that the OUN and "Zionist centers" were cooperating against the Soviet state. In 1982, for instance, the Ukrainian KGB reported that Israel was raising Ukrainian-Canadian OUN mercenaries to fight in Lebanon. ("IS, 28/10/1982"), DGA SBU, f. 16, op. 7, spr. 71, ark. 61.

¹¹⁰ Levanon, *Nativ*, 180.

a way that served as a warning to Soviet Jews to keep their distance.¹¹¹ Given their small numbers, Israeli visitors could become objects of surveillance on a heroic scale. One Israeli journalist who travelled in the Western USSR reports on tens of KGB agents following him in every town he visited,¹¹² while every Israeli visitor to Vilnius, their contacts, and, it seems, their contacts' contacts came under a nearly hermetically sealed surveillance cap.¹¹³

While no KGB reports indicate as such, this level of surveillance was clearly impossible to maintain in the 1970s and 1980s. Instead, KGB operations against activist travelers focused on harassment, propaganda, and what the KGB termed “operative games.” On the most basic level, Jewish activists could expect open surveillance, calls to hotels in the middle of the night, searches of their rooms, and, at times, assaults by “hooligans”.¹¹⁴ At times, emissaries detained and deported from the Soviet Union were forced to give depositions to Soviet media and television before they were expelled from the Soviet Union.¹¹⁵ In these statements, and in other public assaults on refuseniks, the fact that they were living on “alms” [*podachki*] and other material goods donated by foreigners was played up to both indicate disloyalty and hint at the privileged lives the Jewish “renegades” led.¹¹⁶ Finally, the KGB conducted complex operations aimed to identify, pressure, and suffocate refusenik networks. Dash’s encounter at Kharkov was one example of such endeavor. Far more seriously, the KGB was able, through the use of sleeper agent sent to Israel, to convince various Zionist organizations of the existence of a Zionist cell in

¹¹¹ “Diplomat s ulitsy Lielenbliuma,” *Pravda* 9/22/1957.

¹¹² Hanov Bartov, *Yerid be-Moskvah* (Tel-Aviv: Ma’riv, 1989), 57-69.

¹¹³ See surveillance reports in YAL f. K-41, ap. 1, b. 627.

¹¹⁴ For examples of arrests and harassment, see Paritskii, *Molitva*, 118-120, 173-174, Eisen, *Canadian Perspective*, 139-141, Lein, *Zabyt’*, 162.. On the prevailing sense of harassment and surveillance activist tourists felt, see: Philip Baskin “Journey to the Unknown” [Report on a 1977 trip to the Soviet Union,” NCSJ Records, Jewish Historical Society Archives, New York, Box 12, Box 3.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Mark Glotter, 10/14/2014.

¹¹⁶ See, for example, *Belaia kniga: svidetelstva, fakty, dokumenty* (Moscow: Iuridicheskaia literature), 1977, 173-181.

Odessa, which was in fact controlled by the KGB. The members of that “cell” then were used to divert material aid from authentic Zionist circles, to provide false information to visiting American Jews, and try and convince them that other Ukrainian Zionists were not reliable.¹¹⁷

Despite the occasional success, there can be no doubt that the KGB failed in creating a deterrent effect among Zionist travelers. Oral history interviews with former travelers reveal that few of them fretted or feared travel to the Soviet Union.¹¹⁸ Contemporary documents from the Jewish organizations reveal calls for prudence and avoiding activities that violate Soviet legislation- but no sense that the people going there were faced with any physical danger. This was perhaps not surprising, as even the most radical of visiting Zionist activists, members of the Meir Kahane’s Jewish Defense League, could expect no worse than deportation from the Soviet Union.¹¹⁹ As we had seen, even this was not a serious danger, statistically speaking, given the discrepancy between the large number of Zionist travelers and the tiny numbers of total Soviet deportations.

Thus, we must return to the question laid above: why did the dogs not bark? Why did the Soviet alarm at Zionist machinations and awareness of the crucial role of the Zionist travelers in supporting the refuseniks not translate into resolute action? The answer, I argue, lies in the fact that the Soviet Jewry movement managed to nestle itself into the cultural, economic, and scientific-technological networks that increasingly bound the Soviet Union to the rest of international society, and its ability to credibly threaten damage to these connections. The large numbers of refuseniks’ supporters who participated in international scientific exchanges allowed

¹¹⁷ “Dokladnaia zapiska o meropriatiakh protiv zarubezhnykh sionistkikh organizatsii, 5/2/1982,” DGA SBU f. 16, op. 7, spr. 66, ark. 219-222.

¹¹⁸ Interviews with Mark Glotter, Avner Rappoport, Sylvia J. Yehiel, Stephen Meizlish, conducted in September-October 2014.

¹¹⁹ Levanon, *Nativ*, 343.

them to exhibit support for refusenik scientists, but also pose a credible threat that international scientific organizations would distance themselves from their Soviet counterparts.¹²⁰ When the Soviet authorities denied visas to suspected Zionist activists, their colleagues could threaten to abolish their own trip, thus creating both a propagandistic headache and denying their Soviet colleagues the international connections they sought. When Soviet legal authorities, in urgent need of integrating their practices into international commercial law, sought to create a network of exchanges with the American Bar Association, its Jewish membership vowed to refuse them unless all groups sent to the Soviet Union would have a strong Jewish component.¹²¹ Intourist was no doubt restrained from imposing “discipline” on Jewish travelers by the constant flood of complaints the latter produced, which eventually gelled into a major lawsuit against Intourist’s American office that Jewish organizations were preparing to file in 1986, just before events made it obsolete.¹²²

This leveraging of international exchanges for purposes of “ideological diversion” is the key to understanding the gap between Soviet perception of the dangers of foreign travel, the efforts the KGB put into surveillance, and its curious failure to act decisively against subversive foreigners. Soviet integration into a transnational regime based on mobility of people, capital,

¹²⁰ Thus, for example, the Soviet authorities suffered serious propagandistic harm when they stopped a number of foreign scientists, including several Nobel prize winners, from attending a seminar held at the apartment of the refusenik physicist Mark Azbel. Azbel and the other instigator of the seminar, were soon released, and other seminars ran by refuseniks were allowed to run into the 1980s. Mark Azbel, *Refusenik: Trapped in Moscow* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 301-350. “Memorandum from Iu. Andropov to the CPSU Central Committee,” in Boris Morozov, (ed.) *Documents on Soviet Jewish Emigration* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 197-199. In another case, academics working on behalf of the refusenik sinologist Vitalii Rubin pressured to move the World Sinologist Congress in 1975 from Moscow to Mexico, thus giving a “black eye” to the head of the Soviet Oriental Institute, Babojon Ghafurov. (I.M Rubina Akselrod, *Zhizn kak zhizn’: vospominania* (Jerusalem: Klick, 2006), volume 2, 218-220. As Masha Kirasirova demonstrates, Ghafurov was an important institutional player, and this fact might explain why Rubin was allowed to leave in 1976 (Masha Kirasirova, “Sons of Muslims in Moscow: Soviet Central Asian Mediators to the Foreign East, 1955-1962,” *Ab Imperio* 4(2011), 106-132

¹²¹ “Michael A. Jacobs, Memorandum: ABA/ASL AGREEMENT: meeting with Weyman Lundquist March 25, 1986,” Spencer Ackerman Collection, Soviet Jewry Movement Archives, Box 1, Folder 6.

¹²² For documents relating to this suit, see NCSJ record, Soviet Jewry Movement Archives, Box 38, Folder 8.

and information changed the environment in which the Soviet surveillance system operated. The KGB, guardian of the absolute sovereignty claims of the Soviet state, found itself constrained by growing Soviet dependence on the economic, reputational, and scientific-technological benefits of international exchanges- and the serious threat to the welfare of the Soviet state that massive coercive actions against foreign visitors would have represented. Thus, even as it continued to operate on the basis of its epistemology of suspicion, it consistently failed to enforce its sovereignty claims to their fullest extent. This retreat of the Soviet state allowed a social space for the emergence and survival of the Soviet Jewry movement- and the flourishing of new sub-cultures, Westernization, and national identities supported by contacts with diaspora communities in the late Soviet period- a development whose importance became clear when *glasnost and perestroika* let them break into the political realm.