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**The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB by Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin (1999), 700 pages.**



This is an almost encyclopedic history of the Soviet intelligence presented by British historian C. Andrew of Cambridge University and heavily reinforced by papers smuggled out of Moscow. The background of all this is amazing: Vasili Mitrokhin worked at the KGB archives and one of his functions was to transfer 300,000 files to a new building. While at this job for twelve years he made copious notes of hundreds of documents and hid them in his dacha; a Xerox machine was not available. He offered this trove to American agents in one of the Baltic provinces, but they were not interested! Fortunately, the Brits were more alert: by 1992 Mr. Mitrokhin found himself in London, and soon thereafter six large suitcases of his handwritten notes were smuggled out as well. Here you have an espionage story "par excellence."

What do we have? Combined with academic research of the principal author, we have a detailed history of agencies which were known by various names but served a single purpose. In 1917 the Tsarist Okhrana ceased to exist and was promptly replaced by an outfit called CHEKA, otherwise known as A11-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter Revolution and Sabotage, One of its first tasks was simple: Lenin asked his Cheka people to shoot anyone who does not show up for work on Christmas Day. This agency kept changing its name many times, and it became the NKVD in 1934 and the KGB in 1954. Its symbol has a long tradition: the shield defends the revolution, and the sword smites its enemies.

The reader needs to consult the excellent index references in order to locate parts of the long story of interest to him/her. But here are a few highlights: Trotsky was deported in 1929 to Turkey with \$1,500 in "pocket money"; in the late 1930's all potential opposition against Stalin was wiped out in the largest peacetime prosecution and blood letting in European history, with Stalin personally proofreading defendants' speeches and changing them as he pleased. On Sept.2, 1939, Whittaker Chambers (formerly a Communist agent) had/change of heart and informed the U.S. State Department about the numerous Soviet spies in sensitive positions. President Roosevelt read the report and considered it absurd. Soon thereafter the "magnificent Five" British fellow travelers (among them McLean and Philby) delivered 45 volumes of documents to Moscow, followed by 600 rolls of microfilm.

All this occurred while the British and Americans were Russia's allies, Once again we are reminded of Stalin's strong belief that a clash with the West was inevitable. The belief found its reflection during the Cold War years, but here the KGB had a serious problem. The American Communist Party practically ceased to exist, and the top bosses in Moscow had no realistic understanding of the West. They even thought of blackmailing Zbigniew Brzezinski, who annoyed them so much, So did Pope John Paul II, who had the temerity to send his cardinal's cap to Lithuania to be placed at the altar of the *Matka Boska Ostrobramska* ! Most importantly, in 1989 the Soviet Block began to crumble; two years later, half of its territory was lost, and the former empire became smaller than it had been under Catherine the Great. New challenges are now facing the latest version of the intelligence service called SVR or *Sluzba Vneshnei Razvedki*. Incidentally, Polish matters receive scant treatment in this book: out of 31 chapters, one is devoted to the Pope (without determination as to who ordered the assassination attempt), and a short 9 pages on Solidarity. We are also quite certain that the British secret service people kept some parts of Mitrokhin papers to themselves.

To what extent do heads of various governments heed the advice of their intelligence services? Here the reader is left unenlightened. Stalin was told dozens of times that the German army was about to invade in 1941 but paid no attention to the warnings. ("We must punish our Berlin ambassador for bombarding us about the impending attack.") Of course, Hitler saw the writing on the wall when the Stalingrad battle was lost, but he would not give up. None of the world's intelligence services anticipated the Soviet Union's collapse. Indeed, predicting the future is difficult, but persuading others to believe what will happen is often impossible.

**George Suboczewski**