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(b)(3)*A Fixation on Moles***James J. Angleton, Anatoliy Golitsyn, and the  
“Monster Plot”: Their Impact on CIA Personnel  
and Operations**

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**Angleton became convinced that the KGB had penetrated CIA at high levels and that they had taken advantage of these penetrations to successfully run agent provocations against the Agency.**  
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*This article is based almost entirely on classified studies and papers written by senior CIA officers who either worked with James Angleton during his time as chief of the CIA Counterintelligence Staff or who worked in CIA Soviet operations at that time. These are paper files that were never entered into the CIA electronic records system and until recently remained largely inaccessible. Supplementing these sources is a collection of oral history interviews of a number of the primary players during this period.*

**Introduction**

James Angleton was in charge of counterintelligence (CI) in CIA for 20 years, from 1954 to 1974. In this position he wielded immense authority, particularly on operations against the Soviet Union, the country's most important intelligence target at that time.

Angleton became convinced early in his career that the Soviet Union's KGB for many years had successfully run major deception operations

against the West in general and against the United States, in particular. He became convinced that the KGB had penetrated CIA at high levels and that it had taken advantage of these penetrations to successfully run agent provocations against the Agency. In the end, Angleton took the position that virtually every major Soviet defector or volunteer was a KGB provocation. This position adversely affected CIA operational efforts against the Soviet Union for almost two decades—veterans of the period say it paralyzed operations—and led to a pursuit of penetrations in CIA in the 1960s, a program codenamed HONETOL.

Buttressing Angleton's thinking was KGB defector Anatoliy Golitsyn, who from his defection in 1961 through at least 1965 provided analysis of KGB deception operations against the Western allies that meshed completely with Angleton's theories. They called what they thought they saw the “Master Plan.” Later, those who witnessed the damage the theo-

*All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this article are those of the author. Nothing in the article should be construed as asserting or implying US government endorsement of its factual statements and interpretations.*

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Born: 9 December 1917

Birthplace: Boise, Idaho

Father: James Hugh Angleton, former US Cavalry officer with service in Mexico. Worked for National Cash Register Company and was posted to Italy early in his son's life.

Mother: Mexican-born Carmen Mercedes Moreno.

Education: Prep school in England; college at Yale University (graduating in bottom quarter of his class); Harvard law school.

World War II Service: Drafted into Army in 1943; assigned to Office of Strategic Services and assigned to X-2 (counterintelligence)

Postwar: Assigned to Central Intelligence Group in 1946. Hired by CIA in 1948 to serve as head of operations in the Office of Special Operations. From 1954 to 1974 was in charge of counterintelligence in CIA.

Angleton is one of the most written about US intelligence figures ever; literature about him, his life, and his effects is treated in an essay in *Studies in Intelligence* by CIA Chief Historian David Robarge. See "The James Angleton Phenomenon 'Cunning Passages, Contrived Corridors': Wandering in the Angletonian Wilderness" in *Studies in Intelligence* 53, No. 4 (December 2009).

This table is Unclassified.

ries caused came to call it the the "Monster Plot." □

Angleton's thesis, which defined the plot, was that the United States and the Western world had been the targets of a vast, complex conspiracy that originated in the Soviet Union more than 50 years previously. To carry out this conspiracy,

designed to undermine the West and eventually bring it under Communist domination, there had been a relentless, multi-pronged, world-wide attack involving the continuing use of carefully orchestrated political, economic, military, scientific and intelligence assets and resources. □

Angleton looked to Golitsyn to help him unravel these purported KGB operations; he used Golitsyn as a sounding board to weigh the bona fides of other Soviet defectors and volunteers; and, predictably, Golitsyn found them all wanting. Angleton also arranged to give Golitsyn access to the personnel files of CIA staff officers and contractors to provide him the means to determine which were potential KGB moles. □

**James Angleton** □**Early Experiences and Influences**

James Angleton's career and the future of counterintelligence in the US intelligence community began when he was drafted into the Army in 1943 and assigned to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). He was placed in X-2 (CI), which had only been established that year under the tutelage of the United Kingdom's Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, Section V (CI). It was then that Angleton first met Harold "Kim" Philby as a liaison contact in MI6 —Philby would reveal himself in 1963 as a KGB spy, long after he had established a close relationship with Angleton. □

Angleton's experience as an OSS officer in London during WW II greatly affected his approach to CI for the rest of his career. This is particularly true of his knowledge of the successful British Double Cross operation in which the British were able to identify virtually all German agents in England and turn many back against the Germans. Those who couldn't be trusted as double agents were quietly arrested. This enabled the British not only to neutralize German intelligence collection in England but also to successfully run major deception operations against the enemy. □

In addition, many German agents used wireless transmitters to communicate with their case officers in Germany, a fact that helped British code-breaking efforts. The British had earlier acquired a German Enigma code machine and, via cryptanalysis (the ULTRA program), were eventually able to decipher the bulk of German wireless communications. In later years Angleton often spoke about the success of Double Cross and of the vital need to have a communications intelligence (COMINT) capability as part of any deception operation. □

Another likely influence on Angleton was the British practice of limiting to extremely few people knowledge of the ULTRA and Double Cross programs and giving the officers running these programs virtual veto authority over other British intelligence activities. Angleton

used this approach as a model to establish similar, unique operational authorities when he later ran CIA's Counterintelligence Staff (CIS). [ ]

In 1944 Angleton was transferred to Rome to work in X-2. Within a year he became the unit's chief. Notably, in that period, he renewed his acquaintance with Philby, when the latter attended a meeting with Angleton hosted by MI6's chief in Rome. [ ]

### **Counterintelligence in CIA —Early Years**

Through the years immediately following the war, Angleton retained his focus on CI matters through the rapid evolution of US central intelligence functions. He served in the Central Intelligence Group and then in the new CIA's Office of Special Operations, where he also had foreign intelligence (FI) responsibilities. When OSO was organized into four staffs in 1949, he was made the head of one, the Operations Staff, which encompassed agent operations and defectors. [ ]

It wasn't until 1954, after the CIA organization was stabilized into the familiar functional directorates, that Angleton took control of CIA's CI function with the creation of CIS. At the time the staff's main task was to monitor operational issues regarding Soviet and Soviet Bloc countries and, to a lesser extent, Israel. Dep-

uty Director for Plans Richard Helms reportedly looked on the Soviet Russia (SR) Division and CIS as equals in running operations against the Soviet Union. SR Division, however, had no insight into the activities of CIS, but Angleton and his staff had full access to SR operational files. [ ]

### **Indications of Mindset**

Only a handful of written records exist containing Angleton's assessments of Soviet intelligence capabilities during the war and his early years as CIA's senior CI officer. What little there is strongly suggests that Angleton had become convinced very early on that the KGB was an extremely capable organization and that it had successfully penetrated Western governments at high levels and for many years had successfully run strategic deception operations against the West. [ ]

One indicator of this is the importance Angleton attached to the so-called Trust Operation as a forerunner of KGB strategic deception operations. Trust was a brilliantly successful operation run in the early 1920s by the KGB's predecessor organization, the Cheka, against other Russians seeking to overthrow the new Bolshevik government. In this operation, the Cheka created or infiltrated (which is still an unsettled argument) and ultimately took control of the Trust opposition group (formerly

known as the Monarchist Association of Central Russia) and presented it both inside and outside of the Soviet Union as a viable anti-Soviet organization. As a result, most anti-Soviet elements rallied to Trust and a number of Western intelligence services covertly supported it. After maintaining this deception for several years, the Cheka arrested the key leaders of Trust and destroyed the organization, effectively breaking the back of the anti-Soviet forces. [ ]

The communist Polish government's intelligence service (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa [UB]), with KGB assistance, successfully carried out a similar deception operation from 1948 until 1952.<sup>1</sup> The service infiltrated and covertly took control of the Polish resistance organization Freedom and Independence, known by its Polish initials WiN (Wolność i Niezawisłość). With a legacy as a legitimate Polish anti-Nazi organization during WW II, WiN leaders obtained US and British support [ ]

[ ] for efforts to work against Soviet domination of Poland. In 1952, the key leaders of WiN were suddenly rolled up by the communist government, and the two major WiN leaders publicly stated that they had been working with the Americans and the British. It was later learned that the two had been working for the UB from the beginning and that all of WiN's activities had been

[ ] Similar activity took place in Czechoslovakia; see Igor Lukes, "KAMEN: A Cold War Dangle Operation with an American Dimension, 1948-1952," *Studies in Intelligence* 55, No. 1 (March 2011).

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directed by the UB with KGB support. The WIN operation contributed to the creation of the CIS and almost certainly affected Angleton's assessment of KGB methods and capabilities. [redacted]

Some of the best insights into Angleton's early views on Soviet intelligence capabilities are contained in two interviews (one in July 1976 and another in June 1977) he granted after his forced retirement from CIA in December 1974. [redacted]

In 1976, Angleton told his interviewer, John Hart—a former senior operations officer—about his experiences in OSS, "when OSS found that the Soviets were involved in major espionage operations against their allies." "We were living in a dream world," he recounted. "We had (broken) Enigma and could track German agents, but when Igor Gouzenko<sup>2</sup> defected he opened our eyes about the KGB Rote Kapelle and Rote Drei operations."<sup>3</sup> Angleton then noted that VENONA had showed that the KGB had "perforated" the OSS.<sup>4</sup> [redacted]

In 1977, Angleton told the interview team of Cleveland Cram [redacted] and Richard Drain of his experiences in Italy uncovering KGB operational activities. He described a case of a KGB penetration of OSS and went on to say that the case typified the "hundreds of cases in X-2 which showed [Soviet] penetrations." Angleton then said that "through research analysis we re-created over 400 cases under [Felix] Dzerzhinskiy, which controlled all information from Russia to the Western allies for some 15 to 20 years; the Trust and everything else." He concluded that "we were so god-damned proliferated [*sic*] with Communist Party members." [redacted]

#### **Angleton and Kim Philby**

It seems almost certain that the revelation of Kim Philby's duplicity in 1963 and the experience since 1951 of uncovering four other Soviet agents in the service of the British had a profound effect on Angleton and his views of the KGB's capability and his propensity to believe it likely that CIA had also been penetrated at high levels. By

the time Philby left a posting in Beirut, Lebanon, for the Soviet Union, he had become a close contact of Angleton, especially during 1949–51, when Philby was in Washington. Records show that during the period Philby visited CIA 113 times, 22 of which involved meetings with Angleton.<sup>5</sup> [redacted]

Many of these meetings reportedly were followed by long lunches over cocktails, and, given the fact that Angleton either didn't keep or later destroyed any record of their discussions, it seems highly likely that there were many more meetings with Philby that weren't documented. [redacted]

[redacted] Philby was also read in on the VENONA Project, which began to point suspicion on one of the later-to-be-infamous Cambridge Five British KGB agents. Philby warned the two in most immediate danger of being unmasked and arranged for the departure from Washington of the one, Guy Burgess, who served in the British embassy and shared Philby's apartment. [redacted]

<sup>2</sup> [redacted] Igor Gouzenko was a GRU code clerk who defected in Canada in 1945 and passed the Canadians a treasure trove of GRU documents that uncovered extensive Soviet espionage activities in Canada.

<sup>3</sup> [redacted] Rote Kapelle (Red Orchestra) was the German code name for a highly effective Soviet military espionage operation of some 118 agents which was run in German-controlled Europe during the war. Rote Drei refers to three GRU agents in Switzerland who were connected to the Rote Kapelle network and were rolled up in 1943.

<sup>4</sup> [redacted] VENONA refers to the US cryptology effort during WW II to decipher the encoded messages Soviet intelligence officers used to report to Moscow on espionage activity in the United States. VENONA indicated that the Soviets had around 300 assets of various kinds inside the US government.

<sup>5</sup> [redacted] Insert footnote suggesting readings on Philby and the other British spies.

Reflecting on the defection of Burgess in 1951, Angleton wrote a detailed memo to the DD/P on 7 June in which he described the relationship of Burgess to Philby and to himself.<sup>6</sup> Angleton said he knew Burgess well, having encountered him regularly in many social engagements with Philby. He described Burgess as a "close and old friend" of Philby. He noted that Burgess was present "at almost every social function which the Philby's gave for CIA personnel." He wrote that throughout, Burgess had "always evidenced considerable knowledge regarding the SIS and Philby's intelligence activity." Angleton ended the memo by writing, "If Subject [Burgess] has defected to the Soviets he will be capable of supplying them with a great number of secrets which involve CIA/SIS accords."

Shortly after the defections of Burgess and Donald Maclean, another member of the ring, CIA formally asked that Philby be withdrawn as MI6 representative because of suspicions that he too was a KGB mole. Philby returned to London and resigned from MI6 in July 1951. Over the following years, the investigation of Philby continued, but not particularly aggressively. As result, there was no resolution of the case until 1963, when Philby defected to Moscow from Beirut.

Little beyond the 7 June memo reveals what Angleton thought about Philby during the extended period he was under investigation. The one piece of evidence that does exist is Angleton's observation recorded in 1956 that although Philby may not have been a KGB mole, his close association with Burgess might have resulted in the loss of secrets to the KGB—essentially an echo of the 1951 memo. There is no record of Angleton's reaction to Philby's defection in 1963.

#### *Angleton's Early Views of Major Soviet Agent Cases*

Even before the defection of Anatoliy Golitsyn, Angleton's conviction that the KGB was successfully running deception operations against the US government was apparent in a number of major Soviet and Soviet Bloc agent cases in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

In January 1961 the volunteer defected to CIA in West Berlin. He was Michal Goleniewski, a senior UB officer who had worked closely with the KGB. Goleniewski's information led to the uncovering as KGB spies of MI6 officer George Blake, British Admiralty officer Harry Houghton, and West German intelligence officers Heinz Felfe and Hans Clemens. In addition, he identified KGB illegals officers Gordon Lonsdale and the husband and wife team Peter and Helen Kroger. All in all, Goleniewski provided CI information that was highly damaging to the KGB. Even so, Angleton never accepted Goleniewski as a bona fide defector.

#### *Oleg Penkovskiy*

In December 1960, GRU Col. Oleg Penkovskiy volunteered to a British businessman in Moscow after several failed attempts to contact CIA. The businessman informed MI6, which brought CIA into the operation. Penkovskiy was run jointly until his arrest in the autumn of 1962. As is well known, Penkovskiy provided tremendously valuable information, including information on Soviet intentions during the Berlin Blockade in 1961 and during the Cuban Missile Cri-

<sup>6</sup> Angleton did not actually sign the memo, but it is almost certainly from him, given the way in which the relationships were described.

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sis in 1962. Penkovskiy, who was executed in May 1963, is considered to be one of the most valuable agents CIA ever handled.

Even in this most widely acknowledged and accepted of cases, Angleton came to have doubts, largely as a result of Golitsyn's influence. At first, Angleton seemed to accept Penkovskiy as legitimate, but after Golitsyn was allowed to review the Penkovskiy files in the UK in 1963, Angleton came to accept Golitsyn's conclusion that even Penkovskiy was a provocation.

### Anatoliy Golitsyn

#### Background and Early Handling

No one played a greater role than Anatoliy Golitsyn in cementing Angleton's predisposition to believe the KGB was aggressively, and successfully, running provocations and major deception operations against US intelligence. A mid-level KGB officer who defected in Helsinki, Finland, in December 1961, Golitsyn offered "analysis" of the KGB and how it operated that ultimately led to Angleton's belief in the Master Plan. It was an idea consistent with Angleton's OSS experience and one he became totally invested in.

Golitsyn was born in 1926 in the Ukraine of a humble fam-

ily. He entered the Soviet army in 1944 and was assigned to a military CI unit in 1945. After the war, his unit was transferred to the KGB, and in 1951 Golitsyn moved to the CI Department of the First Chief Directorate (Anglo-American operations) of the KGB, where he was involved in running operations against the United States.

Golitsyn claimed that in 1952 he and another KGB officer secretly sent a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) outlining their criticism of the KGB and proposing changes. According to Golitsyn, he and his KGB com-patriot were then summoned to a meeting with Joseph Stalin himself. There, Golitsyn personally presented his recommendations, including the proposal that two former senior KGB officials who had been banished from the service be brought back to run the First CD. According to Golitsyn, these proposals were accepted, but they were not acted on by the time Stalin died the following year.

It is not clear whether any independent corroboration of this incident was ever obtained. On the face of it, it seems highly unlikely that Golitsyn, at the time a 26-year-old junior officer in the KGB, would have gotten an audience with Stalin,

much less been able to convince Stalin to reinstate banished KGB leaders. In any event, the Golitsyn's recounting of these events is consistent with his later demands for personal audiences with President John F. Kennedy and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover so that he could offer recommendations for changes in US policy toward the USSR.

Golitsyn was assigned to the Soviet embassy in Vienna from 1953 to 1955. He then spent four years in a KGB school. From there, in August 1960, he was sent to Helsinki.

On 15 December 1961, Golitsyn

defected. As the precipitating factor in his decision, he cited disagreements with the KGB resident in Helsinki. He went on to say that he wanted to fight "the evil inherent in the KGB and the Soviet system," and he asked for \$10 million for the effort. Golitsyn brought 23 KGB documents with him. The only substantive CI lead he provided up front was his "knowledge of a penetration of CIA in Germany." This turned out to be the "Sasha" lead. (See facing page.) Unfortunately, Golitsyn made this the cornerstone of his hypothesis about multiple senior-level penetrations of CIA.

Golitsyn was basically cooperative until September 1962. He submitted to exhaustive debriefings by the CIA, FBI,

**Igor Orlov aka Sasha**

Golitsyn told debriefers that he knew of a "penetration of CIA who worked in Germany at least as early as 1953." Golitsyn recalled that he had seen "Sasha's" true name, his date and place of birth, and the area in which his relatives or parents lived in the USSR. He thought the name was Polish-sounding and began with a "K" and ended with a "ski." Shown a list of names of CIA staff and contract employees with "Slavic" names, he immediately pointed to the name Klibanski as Sasha's true name. Klibanski was the birth name of a CIA officer who had changed his name to Serge Peter Karlow. In part because of this identification, Karlow became the first innocent victim of Golitsyn's testimony.

Karlow had served in Germany in the late 1940s or early 1950s. The Karlow lead was turned over to the FBI, which mounted a full investigation. At the end of it, in 1963, the FBI concluded that Karlow was not identifiable with "Sasha." Nonetheless, reportedly at the urging of Angleton, the decision was made to pressure Karlow to resign, which he did. (Karlow was ultimately compensated for his forced resignation by a special act of Congress.)

Meanwhile, in February 1964 Golitsyn provided additional information on the Sasha lead. This led to the firm identification of an Igor Orlov as Sasha. Orlov had worked for CIA—apparently as a contract agent—against a Russian émigré organization in Munich and had used the name Aleksandr Kopatskiy. (Sasha is a common nickname for Aleksandr, and the last name Kopatskiy fit Golitsyn's original description of the agent's surname.) However, by 1964, the case was moot. Orlov had stopped working for CIA in 1961.

and the newly minted Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). On the other hand Golitsyn was very demanding and very much a prima donna from the beginning. Although he never met Kennedy or Hoover, at his insistence he did meet twice with Attorney General Robert Kennedy and multiple times with DCI John McCone (a total of 11 times starting in July 1962). Golitsyn also demanded access to CIA and FBI files. At first, his request was denied.

During this period, Golitsyn made no claim to having information regarding KGB penetrations of CIA beyond Sasha. In his early debriefings, he asserted that Western intelligence was well penetrated by the KGB, but he said nothing about CIA. In fact, at one point he said that he "excluded the possibility that the KGB had

any agent placed as high as a country desk in CIA."

Golitsyn did provide leads to other American agents of the KGB, but none of these was new or timely. He identified William Weisband as a KGB penetration of the US Army Security Agency, but Weisband had already been identified and arrested in 1950.

Oddly, in light of his later conspiracy theories, in August 1962, Golitsyn reportedly told debriefers that the Sino-Soviet split was real. However, in discussing the matter with Golitsyn, one of the debriefers speculated on the possibility that the Sino-Soviet split might be a sophisticated Soviet disin-

formation operation. Not long after, Golitsyn began to espouse that position.

### ***Handling Problems and Early Theories of Soviet Deception Operations***

By September 1962 things began to go south with Golitsyn. At that point he "went on strike" and refused to be debriefed. He asked for another meeting with McCone, getting it in December 1962. At this meeting he began to elaborate on his theory of the existence of a KGB strategic deception program. He stated that Khrushchev's de-Stalinization program was a myth and that the purported Soviet splits with China and Yugoslavia, as well as the Cuban Missile Crisis, were all deception operations—while McCone might have been sympathetic to the idea of strategic deception, the last claim would have strained the credulity of the DCI, who was one of the few to have expected to find Soviet missiles in Cuba.

In February 1963 Golitsyn seemed to have given up helping the United States and

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moved his family to the UK, officially becoming a defector to the British. At first, he appeared to be content with British handling, but he gradually became disenchanted and returned to the United States in August. When he returned he elected to live in New York City rather than in the Washington area to have more privacy and separation from CIA.

Golitsyn returned to find James Angleton and CIS in full control of his case. He was granted another meeting with McCone. In the session, Golitsyn told the DCI that British Prime Minister Harold Wilson was a KGB agent and he repeated his claim that the Sino-Soviet split was a disinformation operation. He went on to stipulate that the same was true to some degree in the public relationships of the USSR with Albania, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Finally, Golitsyn insisted that the Soviet inva-

sion of Hungary in 1956 was a deception operation intended to give the West the impression that the Soviet Bloc was divided. By this time Golitsyn was also arguing that Oleg Penkovskiy, who had played such an important role in the Cuban crisis, was actually a KGB double agent. In addition, he postulated that through the Trust operation the KGB had been able to develop penetrations of Western intelligence—even though the Trust operation had ended in the mid-1920s.

Golitsyn also began to insist that he be accepted as an equal by CIA and FBI, not as a Soviet defector, and be given full access to appropriate CIA and FBI files to uncover high-level KGB penetrations of the US government and other Western intelligence services. He outlined his plan of action for defeating the KGB as follows:

- He should have total access to relevant materials (i.e., CIA

personnel and operational files).

- He would apply his KGB background and experience to analyze these materials.
- He would combine his analysis with what CIA or other Western intelligence services knew about the KGB and its operations.
- He would provide his analysis and recommendations for action.

**Enter Yuriy Nosenko**

**Background and First Contact**

If a single event could have broken through Angleton's mindset, it might have been the arrival on the scene in June 1962 of KGB Capt. Yuriy Nosenko, who knew enough to at least create doubts in Angleton's mind about the skill of Soviet intelligence. Instead, with the help of Golitsyn, the chief of counterintelligence descended even more deeply into Master Plan theology.

Nosenko volunteered his services in Geneva that month, but he would not defect to CIA until January 1964. He embarked on an ordeal he could never have imagined.

Nosenko was born in October 1927 in the Ukraine. His father had been a minister of shipbuilding, a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. After several career false starts, Nosenko, through the influence

of his father, landed a job in 1953 with the KGB. He was given a job in the First Department of the Second CD (internal counterintelligence) to work against the US target, an assignment he held until his defection. Despite a reputation for drinking and carousing, Nosenko was promoted to captain in 1959.

In June 1962, Nosenko was dispatched to Geneva as the security officer for a Soviet disarmament delegation. There he contacted a State Department officer, who arranged a meeting with a CIA case officer. Nosenko said he needed \$250 (the amounts vary by account) in Swiss francs to replace money that had been stolen from him (presumably official funds lost to a prostitute or to alcohol). In return, Nosenko provided what was described as "two pieces of good CI information." One piece identified a KGB penetration of the British Admiralty named William Vassall. This item prompted a cable in which [ ] reported, "Subject conclusively proved his bona fides." Nosenko insisted at first that he was neither willing to work in place for CIA nor interested in continuing a relationship. He soon relented, but he insisted that he not have any contact with the Agency in Moscow. He ultimately returned to the Russian capital with the Soviet delegation.

Tennent "Pete" Bagley was one of two case officers who debriefed Nosenko in Geneva. Bagley reportedly believed Nosenko was a legitimate volunteer until Angleton, using information from Golitsyn, convinced him that Nosenko had to be a provocation.<sup>7</sup> [ ]

Angleton arranged to have Nosenko's reporting passed to Golitsyn almost immediately. Golitsyn quickly suggested that Nosenko's appearance was somehow part of a scheme to arrange a "kidnapping [presumably of a CIA case officer] to arrange an exchange for me" or intended to divert attention from Golitsyn's leads by "throwing up false scents." Angleton told John Hart in 1976 that he and Golitsyn had immediately seen a provocation in Nosenko's defection in Geneva during a second assignment there in January 1964. Angleton said it was not credible that Nosenko would volunteer and provide valuable CI information simply for "getting drunk and needing \$300." [ ]

Although SR Division was formally responsible for handling Nosenko, Angleton—as suspicious of Nosenko as he was at the beginning—remained heavily involved, and he brought Division Chief David Murphy around to his point of view. Contributing to Angleton's argument (and Golitsyn's) was the conviction that a CIA penetration had been responsible for

the arrest and execution in 1959 of GRU Col. Petr Popov, who had volunteered to CIA in 1953 in Vienna. The two reasoned that the same penetration would have told the KGB that Nosenko had contacted CIA in 1962, thus, the argument went, the KGB wouldn't have let Nosenko travel out of the USSR again unless he was under its control. [ ]

Another factor that contributed to their judgment was Nosenko's reporting on the so-called Cherepanov Papers. In November 1963, an official working for the Soviet international book distribution agency passed some 103 pages of copies or summaries of secret and top secret KGB documents to an American couple from a US university who were in the Soviet Union to buy books. CIA later learned the official was Alexandr Cherepanov, a former KGB Second CD officer who had worked against the American target in Moscow before being forced out of the KGB in 1961. [ ]

Cherepanov had instructed the couple to give the papers to the US embassy, which they did. Unfortunately, the chargé d'affaires decided the act was a Soviet provocation and ordered the documents turned over to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Photocopies of the papers, however, were made by CIA's station chief before they were sent to the ministry. The

<sup>7</sup> That he ever believed in Nosenko as a genuine defector is an assertion Bagley vigorously denied in his book *Spy Wars: Moles, Mysteries, and Deadly Games* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2007).

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documents contained very detailed and valuable information about the KGB's operations against the US embassy and station in Moscow. Asked about the affair after he defected, Nosenko said he had been directly involved in the KGB investigation after the embassy returned the materials to the foreign ministry. According to Nosenko, Cherepanov was a legitimate volunteer and the materials he provided genuine. He went on to explain that Cherepanov had been arrested and executed.

Angleton and Golitsyn would have none of it. Angleton told John Hart that he believed the Nosenko defection was, in effect, a result of the Cherepanov case. The document delivery to the US embassy, he held, had been an effort to establish a bogus line of reporting from Moscow to US intelligence that had failed in Soviet eyes because the documents were returned (and presumably not believed by US intelligence). In this hypothesis, Nosenko's mission fit in as an attempt to carry on the deception in another way. Years later, an exhaustive CIA review of all reporting on Cherepanov indicated that without question Cherepanov had been a legitimate volunteer.

**Nosenko and Lee Harvey Oswald**

Nosenko's bona fides were of particularly critical importance when he defected because of information he offered in the wake of the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963. Nosenko claimed that he was responsible for KGB handling of Lee Harvey Oswald when Oswald received political asylum in the Soviet Union in 1959. Nosenko said the KGB never trusted Oswald and had sent him to Minsk, where he labored in a factory, to keep him isolated. While Oswald was in Minsk, Nosenko claimed, the KGB had no contact with him and was, in fact, pleased when Oswald insisted on returning to the United States.

Nosenko stated categorically that the KGB had not recruited Oswald and was not involved in the Kennedy assassination. Given Angleton's conviction that Nosenko was a provocation, it followed in his mind that Nosenko's claims could not be taken at face value. The then-deputy director for plans, Richard Helms, later was quoted as saying that it was because of the importance of verifying or disproving Nosenko's apparent knowledge that he and DCI McCone approved having Nosenko kept in isolation and interrogated for more than three years.

Nosenko's ordeal began in April 1964, when he was administered his first polygraph; five more would eventually follow. The polygrapher said he was told ahead of time that Nosenko was a provocation and that the purpose of the testing was to break his story. Who was responsible for this instruction is not entirely clear. Angleton insisted later that it was SR Division Chief Murphy's idea. Angleton said he would first have heard Nosenko out and looked for inconsistencies. Reviews of the polygraph charts years later would show that Nosenko had not shown deception in response to a number of key questions—though he was accused of deception in all his answers. Nosenko did lie about some things, his KGB rank and other relatively minor issues, for example; other statements that had been judged to be lies turned out to have been the product of poor translations.

Following the polygraphs, Nosenko was isolated while Golitsyn served as a behind-the-scenes adviser for his interrogation by others.

**Golitsyn and Angleton's Fantasies Grow**

Golitsyn outlined his judgments on Nosenko in a memorandum Angleton sent to McCone in July 1964. In it Angleton quoted Golitsyn as asserting that Nosenko was a KGB provocation sent out "for the salvage and protection of very sensitive KGB penetra-

tions in the State Department and CIA itself; disinformation...regarding Soviet intelligence and security organization, operations and potential; and the physical liquidation of Golitsyn himself." In this memorandum Angleton stated that Golitsyn "wanted to work closely with the Agency, the State Department and the FBI" to identify and neutralize KGB penetrations and provocateurs. To do so, Golitsyn "made a strong appeal for access to the files and case materials on our agents and on our personnel engaged in operations against the USSR." Angleton strongly supported Golitsyn's request [ ]

In October 1964, Golitsyn was granted another meeting with McCone. In this meeting Golitsyn for the first time named five CIA staff employees as KGB moles. Golitsyn also told McCone that "there could well be 30 penetrations of CIA." At Golitsyn's request, personnel and related operational files on these CIA employees were passed to him so that he could pursue leads. [ ]

By this point, Angleton's acceptance of the Master Plan, supported by Golitsyn's analysis, had matured, and Angleton and his CIS acolytes had, in effect, come to see the KGB as "10 feet tall," head and shoulders ahead of CIA in the intelligence profession. This, in turn, led Angleton to conclude that no CIA operation against the USSR could be valid because CIA had been penetrated and that US intelligence could not recruit any Soviets because

they would automatically be exposed to the KGB by these penetrations and would eventually come under KGB control. [ ]

To operate thus and to manage CIA penetrations, Bagley would later explain, required a highly secret KG? element independent of the known First and Second Chief Directorates. This would have been run by a KGB deputy chairman. In order to support and protect Soviet penetrations, KGB and GRU provocations would be dispatched to volunteer to CIA with information designed to cover the penetrations. Nosenko was one such provocation, the analysis held, and thus it stood to reason that any KGB or GRU volunteer who verified Nosenko's bona fides was by definition just another provocation. Since Golitsyn was the only KGB defector to report otherwise, he was the only KGB source telling the truth. [ ]

Golitsyn's analysis flowed from a 1959 presentation by then-new KGB Director Alexander Shelepin in which Shelepin laid out an initiative to politically attack the West through KGB disinformation operations. (Another source had reported similar information previously.) From this, Golitsyn reasoned that a super-secret, powerful disinformation department had been created to carry out these policies. Also created, he suggested, was a super-secret COMINTERN organization that included as members, among others, Nikita Khrushchev and Che Guevara. [ ]

Golitsyn contended that the KGB had sent out multiple provocation agents to carry out this plan. Further, such provocations could not be successful unless there were penetrations of the target services to provide feedback on the effect of the efforts. Thus, it was not a question of whether the KGB had penetrated CIA but rather of identifying the penetrations that were certain to exist. [ ]

In April 1966, Angleton offered a window on Golitsyn's logic in a presentation he made to his officers after he and Golitsyn returned from a trip to Europe. Angleton discussed how much emphasis Golitsyn had put on the Trust operation and how it had served as a model for Shelepin's plans for strategic deception operations in the future. (Angleton's review of the Trust operations of the 1920s consumes two full pages of a 24-page transcript of the meeting.) Angleton went on to stress the importance of COMINT as an essential part of the feedback loop in the British Double Cross operation. In this case, the British ability to read German communications with German agents in the UK allowed the British to manipulate their agents and feed deception information back to the Germans with the assurance that the agents were transmitting what the British wanted the Germans to get. In the case of the KGB, Angleton argued, it was the presumed penetrations of CIA that provided the KGB its equivalent of COMINT. [ ]

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In this discussion, Angleton repeated arguments he made elsewhere that the Sino-Soviet split was a KGB deception, as were the purported differences between the USSR and Eastern Bloc countries "such as Romania, Albania, etc." (Angleton expanded on this latter theme in a letter that he sent to the chief of counterintelligence of the French internal service in 1966. Angleton wrote

*The Bloc, having achieved equality under a common ideology, now represents for the first time, a true international. As such, it derives great flexibility in presenting a wilderness of mirrors to a confused West. Once common objectives are agreed upon in secret, each Bloc country can go forth and deal with the West in a different fashion, but still guided towards the common objective in accordance with the decisions of the conspiracy."*

Angleton specifically cited FBI sources Dimitri Polyakov (a GRU colonel) and Aleksey Kulak (a KGB science officer) as deception agents (see following text boxes). He also fingered Soviet scientist Mikhail Klochko, who defected to the Canadians in 1961. All three, according to Angleton, had been used to support the fiction of the Sino-Soviet split. He reviewed the Nosenko case and

that of Yuriy Klotkov, a KGB officer who defected to the British in 1963. Both were sent to "mutilate" Golitsyn's information about KGB penetrations.

**HONETOL**

In his April 1966 soliloquy Angleton referred repeatedly to the joint FBI-CIA molehunt, HONETOL, even though what had started as a joint effort with the FBI in November 1964 had long since morphed into a solely internal CIA project.<sup>8</sup>

HONETOL was formed in November 1964 to work on Golitsyn's assertion that at least five and possibly as many as 30 Agency officers or contractors were Soviet penetrations. Golitsyn insisted that Hoover participate directly in the task force, but the director refused. Instead a senior FBI officer and Angleton were the most senior representatives.

The five people Golitsyn had specifically named as KGB moles became the prime subjects of the HONETOL investigations. They were: Igor Orlov (Sasha)

Richard Kovich, and SR Division Chief David Murphy. To this list of suspects, Golitsyn later added

Their common thread in Golitsyn's mind was that all

**Dimitriy Polyakov (aka TOPHAT/SCOTCH)**

Dimitri Polyakov was a GRU colonel serving in the Soviet UN Mission in New York when he was recruited by the FBI in January 1962. He worked in place until his return to Moscow in the summer of 1962. From the start, Angleton took the position that Polyakov was under KGB control and at some point he apparently convinced senior FBI officials of this as well.

Polyakov went on to serve in Rangoon from 1965 until 1968 and in New Delhi from 1973 to 1977. In between he served in GRU headquarters in Moscow. CIA handled Polyakov throughout this period, and he was seen as a consistently highly productive agent. He was again assigned to New Delhi in 1979, but returned to Moscow after only six months. He never again traveled outside of the Soviet Union as far as we know, and US intelligence had no further contact with him. All in all Polyakov was one of the most highly productive Soviet sources in the history of CIA.

Angleton, however, stuck to his position throughout the life of the case, seeing Polyakov as a KGB double agent. The memos concerning the Monster Plot imply that Angleton may have leaked information about Polyakov to the media. Even with the leaks, Polyakov was not arrested, presumably because of his senior position and because Soviet authorities had no hard evidence of his treason. Robert Hanssen may have cast suspicion on Polyakov in 1980, but we believe that it was not until 1985 that he was arrested and ultimately executed, after confirmation was received from Hanssen and Aldrich Ames.

<sup>8</sup> (U) The name is a compound of Hoover and Anatoly. The FBI quit the project in February 1965 after concluding that Golitsyn was unreliable.

**Aleksey Kulak  
(aka FEDORA/BOURBON)**

Aleksey Kulak was a KGB science and technology officer assigned to the Soviet UN Mission in New York at the same time as Polyakov. Kulak volunteered to the FBI in 1962 and was run by the Bureau in New York from 1962 to 1967 and again, when he returned to New York, from 1971 to 1976. Kulak was an extremely productive source, and the FBI was convinced of his credibility.

From almost the very beginning of the case, however, Angleton viewed Kulak as a KGB provocation. In 1978 Edward Jay Epstein published *Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald*, in which Epstein described Kulak's relationship with the FBI in some detail, using information that most likely was leaked to Epstein by a former FBI deputy director, who shared much of Angleton's analysis. Nonetheless, Kulak was never arrested, and reportedly died of natural causes around 1986.

had served in Berlin in the late 1950s.

Throughout the life of the HONETOL investigations, Golitsyn insisted that he was 100 percent convinced that Orlov, [redacted] Kovich, and [redacted] were KGB agents, but he vacillated about Murphy. Golitsyn also continued strongly to suggest there had been or still were other KGB moles in CIA and that the penetrations went back to 1950. In the end, the FBI agreed about Orlov but dismissed the other claims.

Remarkably and tragically, all of Golitsyn's "leads" to KGB moles in CIA except for Orlov

(see page 45) were based not on sensitive information he had acquired as a KGB officer but from postulations based on his knowledge of KGB modus operandi and his review of CIA personnel and operational files. Moreover, in view of the fact that upon his defection, Golitsyn had claimed to be unaware of any penetration of CIA beyond Sasha, it seems reasonable to speculate that Angleton's own predilections about KGB deception operations and penetrations were the foundation of Golitsyn's assertions.

**HONETOL Victims**

Golitsyn and Angleton's convoluted logic and tortuous reasoning are apparent in the cases they made against the suspects.

**Richard Kovich** was an SR Division case officer. Like all of Golitsyn's suspects, he had served in Berlin in the late 1950s. Golitsyn's circumstantial case against Kovich grew out of his search through CIA operational files for leads to Sasha, who he had come almost from the beginning to suspect was Igor Orlov.

No information was ever developed to support the case against Kovich, and the FBI formally concluded there was no basis for an investigation. Nonetheless, Angleton's accusations put a freeze on Kovich's career. Ultimately a special act of Congress compensated Kovich's family.

*Despite the fact that Murphy had been cleared, Angleton continued a distrust of him.*

**David Murphy** was chief of SR Division when Golitsyn defected. Golitsyn said he suspected Murphy "might be a KGB agent," apparently partially out of pique that Murphy would not give Golitsyn access to certain CIA operational files. Golitsyn had nothing but speculation to support his thesis. The FBI determined in 1965 that there was no reason to launch an investigation of Murphy. In 1970, a thorough review of Murphy's background and operational history conducted by Angleton's own Counterintelligence Staff cleared him.

Ironically Murphy had been a convert to the Angleton-Golitsyn theology. As late as 1967, SB Division under his leadership produced a 125-page study entitled "The Soviet Penchant for Provocation," which discussed early Tsarist provocation operations as well as the Trust and WiN operations and concluded that "Soviet provocation ... always involved penetration of the staff and/or agent networks of the opposition." It went on to state, "The targets of most important provocations today are the intelligence ser-

vices now working against the USSR, principally CIA." SB Division was also on record in 1966 as strongly supporting the thesis that Nosenko was a provocation and believing that at least 12 other "Soviet intelligence cooptees or volunteers" were the same.

Despite the fact that Murphy had been cleared, Angleton continued a distrust of him that may have precipitated the CI chief's fall from CIA.

then-new DCI William Colby, who ordered another complete and vain review of Murphy's file. This incident was apparently the final straw for Colby, who shortly thereafter forced Angleton to retire.

In addition to those named above, reportedly "scores" of CIA officers had their files reviewed as a result of the suspicions of Golitsyn and Angleton.

**Nosenko's Ordeal**

By the summer of 1964, Nosenko's situation had dramatically worsened. He was held a virtual prisoner in the Washington area while continuous efforts were made to convince him to "confess" his KGB role. In August 1965, Nosenko was moved to [redacted] where he remained until October 1967 in near total isolation. [redacted]

In December 1965 the first protest of his treatment came from senior SB Division Reports Officer Leonard McCoy, who had been given access to Nosenko materials, concluded that Nosenko was a valid defector. McCoy then wrote a 31-page paper in which he detailed the unique value of the CI information Nosenko had provided, which stood in contrast to many of Golitsyn's vague leads. He also strongly attacked the analysis by which Nosenko had been judged. SR Division Chief Murphy rejected McCoy's paper, but McCoy jumped the chain of command and in April 1967 sent a memo directly to DCI Helms making his case that Nosenko was a valid defector. [redacted]

In October 1967, based on the recommendation of DDCI Adm. Rufus Taylor (and possibly as a result of McCoy's memo to the DCI), Nosenko was turned over to the Office of Security (OS) for handling. OS immediately removed him from solitary confinement and through August 1968 conducted its own polygraph examinations, which concluded that Nosenko had been substantially truthful on all relevant questions. In September 1968 the FBI concluded after its own interrogations of Nosenko and collateral inquiries that there were no indications of deception by Nosenko and no good reason to doubt his bona fides. [redacted]

Finally, in October 1968, OS officer Bruce Solle wrote a memorandum which concluded that Nosenko was the person he claimed to be, that he served in the KGB in the positions that he claimed to serve in, that he was not dispatched by the KGB, and that previous inconsistencies in his debriefings were not of material significance. The OS report went on to cite voluminous valuable CI information Nosenko provided. [redacted]

Angleton never accepted Nosenko's rehabilitation. In January 1969 he continued to insist that Nosenko was a provocation, since to judge otherwise would have repudiated Golitsyn, "a proven reliable KGB source." [redacted]

Nosenko died in August 2008. According to his obituary in the *Washington Post*, he had lived under an assumed name. The obituary asserted that in 1975 he found Angleton's telephone number and called him; the conversation apparently led nowhere. [redacted]

**Golitsyn's Slide into Irrelevance**

After his involvement in the HONETOL investigations, Golitsyn became increasingly removed from operational activities. In July 1965, the FBI broke off all contact with him. From then on, Golitsyn became immersed in writing books with his analysis of Soviet government behavior and goals and what he thought the West needed to do to defend itself. For the most part, he withdrew from contact with CIA or other intelligence services. He has produced two books that maintain his conspiracy and deception theories. A Facebook page is kept in his name; 38 people have "liked" the page as of the end of 2011. [redacted]

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### ***Concluding Remarks:***

CIA's operations against the critically important Soviet target were adversely affected in the 1960s and 1970s as the result of Angleton's insistence that the KGB controlled virtually every source that CIA handled. This made difficult—even paralyzed, said veterans of period—efforts to recruit Soviet agents and diminished CIA ability to produce intelligence from human sources on the subject of most importance to US policymakers.

There are a number of lessons that can be derived from this history. The first is that no counterintelligence officer should be allowed to have unfettered authority in an intelligence organization. Counterintelligence is a vitally important part of the intelligence business, and it is ignored at great peril. But in the end it should only be part of a process of operational decision making.

In addition, counterintelligence units should contain a mix of long-time staff and personnel who rotate in and out from other parts of an intelligence organization. Continuity at the working level is invaluable, but at the senior level fresh eyes are periodically needed to ensure balance.

Another, perhaps rather obvious, lesson is that no defector, no matter how valuable and loyal he may seem, should ever be allowed access to organizational information beyond that which the defector himself reported.

Finally, this history illustrates the fallacy of making firm intelligence judgments based solely on analytic reasoning and in the absence of hard facts, a lesson that we only recently relearned when it was posited in 2002 without factual support that Saddam Hussein had an active weapons of mass destruction program.

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### **Bibliography and Suggested Readings**

The primary sources used in this paper are major studies (marked below with an asterisk) that were compiled following the retirement of Angleton. These studies were written by senior CIA officers who were seeking to document and explain Angleton's tenure as C/CIS as well as the infamous "Monster Plot" theory and its ramifications for CIA. These studies, and the memoranda cited below, were stored as paper files and never entered into the official NCS record system. All are classified ~~SECRET~~

\*The Monster Plot: Counterintelligence in the Case of Yuriy Ivanovich Nosenko  December 1976)

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Letter from W. G. Wyman, Assistant Director, Office of Special Operations, CIA to J. Edgar Hoover, Director, FBI (25 June 1951)

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