



# Near and Distant Neighbours: A New History of Soviet Intelligence

*Jonathan Haslam*

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Near and Distant Neighbours is the first ever substantiated and complete history of Soviet intelligence. Based on a mass of newly declassified Russian secret intelligence documentation, it reveals the true story of Soviet intelligence from its very beginnings in 1917 right through to the end of the Cold War. Covering both main branches of Soviet espionage - civilian and military - Jonathan Haslam charts the full range of the Soviet intelligence effort and the story of its development:

in cryptography, disinformation, special forces, and counter-intelligence.

In a tragic irony, an organization that so casually disposed of others critically depended upon the human factor. Due to their lack of expertise and technological know-how, from early on the Soviets were forced to rely heavily on secret agents instead of the more sophisticated code-breaking techniques of other intelligence agencies. But in this they were highly successful, recruiting spy rings such as the infamous 'Cambridge Five' in the 1930s. Had it not been for Soviet espionage against

Britain's code-breaking effort during the Second World War, Stalin might never have won the victory that later enabled him to dominate half of Europe. Similarly, espionage directed at his allies enabled the Soviets to build an atomic bomb earlier than expected and to take calculated risks in post-war diplomacy, such as his audacious blockade of Berlin which led to the Berlin Airlift.

Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956 alienated many of the foreign 'friends' so valued by the Soviet intelligence services. It also made new recruitment of foreign agents much more difficult, as the USSR rapidly lost its glamour and ideological appeal to potential supporters in the West during the 1950s. However, the gap was finally bridged through exploiting greedy and disloyal Western intelligence officers, using blackmail and bribery - and with great success. In fact, it was the ultimate irony that the KGB and GRU had never been more effective than when the Soviet Union began to collapse from within.

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