

## Belated Success: Soviet Active Measures against the United States

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Soviet leader Josef Stalin designated the United States the “Main Adversary” of the Soviet Union during World War II, before Germany was defeated, and during the Cold War the USSR waged chronic, wide-ranging political warfare campaigns against the United States and American interests. Soviet practitioners of such attacks expressed confidence that their activities, known as “active measures” (*aktivnye meropriyatiya*), eventually would defeat the Main Adversary, leading to fulfilment of the Marxian promise of the victory of socialism over capitalism. The United States seemingly remained strong when the USSR collapsed in 1991, however, leaving observers of Soviet intelligence no evident need to assess the activities’ effectiveness. Still, the rise of a strong left wing of the Democratic Party, greater racial tensions since Barack Obama served as president (2009-17), and significant and growing domestic political polarization raise a different question: Were Soviet active measures belatedly successful in seriously damaging America, too late for the Soviet Union but in time to help Russia?

Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, for example, has propelled active measures via social media topics into much discussion in the West, but Russian activities remain small compared to longstanding Soviet political warfare.<sup>1</sup> Many factors undoubtedly led to the internal dysfunctions the U.S. experienced in recent decades. Soviet and Russian actions surely did not contribute significantly to all of them. Nevertheless, because the disintegration the Soviets hoped to engineer has largely occurred as they forecast, Russian intelligence officers and President Vladimir Putin reasonably could believe the Soviets (and themselves) helped achieve this feat.<sup>2</sup> Some Western observers also think so, given Moscow’s support of the American Left’s long march into ascendancy in key institutions.<sup>3</sup> Because destruction of the U.S. is not complete, I also muse about what Putin might do to finish the job.

This article is speculative. Unlike many assessments of active measures, it takes a Soviet/Russian perspective on one aspect of Soviet active measures—the intelligence services’ fight against the United States. It relies on accounts of former Soviet intelligence officers Yuri

Bezmenov,<sup>4</sup> Victor Cherkashin,<sup>5</sup> Anatoliy Golitsyn,<sup>6</sup> Oleg Gordievsky,<sup>7</sup> Oleg Kalugin,<sup>8</sup> Stanislav Levchenko,<sup>9</sup> Vasili Mitrokhin,<sup>10</sup> and Sergei Tretyakov,<sup>11</sup> as well as Czech defector Ladislav Bittman<sup>12</sup> and Romanian defector Ion Mihai Pacepa.<sup>13</sup> It also cites fine studies of Soviet intelligence by Natalie Grant,<sup>14</sup> Thomas Rid,<sup>15</sup> Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson,<sup>16</sup> Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev,<sup>17</sup> and others.

Methodologically, this article is an amalgam of the process tracing method of social sciences and the structured intelligence analytic technique of “backcasting”—the process of assuming that a future event has occurred and assessing how the hypothesized event could have transpired. It focuses on goals the Soviets tried to achieve and assesses whether their efforts may have helped produce the current situation in the United States. Hence, it is a history-based, theory-generating, not theory-testing, exercise. While we know a great deal about Soviet active measures, despite continuing secrecy surrounding Soviet/Russian intelligence, I do not claim a definitive judgment on this subject. However, I suspect that additional evidence is likely to strengthen, and identify more links between, the remarkably consistent accounts cited herein.

### BACKGROUND: SOVIET (AND RUSSIAN) ACTIVE MEASURES

Russian political warfare predates the birth of the Soviet Union. Early Bolsheviks used information operations to advance Marxism and to defeat other claimants to power in post-Czarist Russia. Vladimir Lenin formulated early Soviet doctrine on political warfare via active measures which, while defined in many ways, are used herein roughly as Thomas Rid conceived them: numerous activities that sometimes involve physical actions such as sabotage but usually deceive or manipulate targets through use of disinformation (*dezinformatsiya*) or lies designed to achieve specific purposes; are largely products of intelligence bureaucracies; and are designed to weaken adversaries in strategically significant ways.<sup>18</sup> As longtime student of Soviet disinformation Natalie Grant noted, disinformation operations generally had one of two goals: damaging foreign or domestic enemies or weakening the

credibility of accurate reports of events unfavorable to the Soviets, both of which helped the USSR.<sup>19</sup> Reversing Clausewitz, Lenin saw political conflict as war by other means.<sup>20</sup>

The earliest Soviet intelligence service, the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage, or Cheka, focused on combating internal threats and anti-Soviet Russian émigrés.<sup>21</sup> Soviet and Russian intelligence officers still frequently call themselves “Chekists,” honoring the legacy of the Cheka. Early active measures included disinformation designed to mislead West European governments into thinking the new Soviet Union was seriously troubled internally and was not a threat to their systems of government. Attacks on anti-Soviet Russian groups included the famous “Trust” deception that badly damaged royalist émigré groups in the 1920s.<sup>22</sup> However, the long-term goal, per Lenin, always was strategic, political, and aggressive: to identify and exploit fissures in targeted groups, countries, and alliances, leading to their defeat and disintegration (or what the East Germans called *Zersetzung*), and thus to conquest of the West by “peaceful” means.<sup>23</sup> No weakness was too small to ignore. From the beginning, according to Oleg Gordievsky, who defected from the Committee for State Security (KGB) in 1985 as a senior officer, active measures were about “spreading the revolution.” Gordievsky thought that Stalin believed permanent peace with capitalist countries was impossible.<sup>24</sup>

The Soviets conducted political warfare abroad through the foreign-focused arms of civilian intelligence services such as the Cheka and later the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD), which became the KGB, military intelligence (GRU), and the Communist International (Comintern), whose principal mission was subversion abroad. All these organizations used disinformation extensively to mislead or deceive their targets.<sup>25</sup> The Comintern was active in the U.S., where it worked closely with the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA).

The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 convinced many Americans that capitalism did not work. Utopian visions of socialism and inaccurate reports generated by Soviet disinformation specialists about the allegedly wonderful life in the Soviet Union seemed to offer a better future. The election of Franklin Roosevelt as president in 1932 gave Moscow major additional opportunities: Roosevelt’s recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933 enabled establishment of diplomatic posts and associated intelligence residencies in Washington, New York, and San Francisco. In addition, Roosevelt’s “New Deal” programs sharply increased the size of the U.S. government and attracted liberals and communists to government service, thereby enabling the NKVD, GRU, Comintern, and CPUSA intelligence elements to recruit hundreds of agents in the

U.S. government, creating what has been called a “golden age” of Soviet espionage in the United States. The NKVD even recruited at least 22 employees of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), a predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), including Army MAJ Duncan Lee, an aide to OSS chief MG William Donovan.<sup>26</sup> By one estimate, 50-100 OSS employees may have been members of the CPUSA.<sup>27</sup> Although Stalin abolished the Comintern in 1943 in deference to his putative wartime Western allies, he transferred its mission of subversion to the intelligence services without change.

The “golden age” ended soon after the defections in late 1945 of GRU officer Igor Gouzenko in Ottawa and CPUSA intelligence officer Elizabeth Bentley, who confirmed many of the details that Whittaker Chambers, a defector from the NKVD, had passed to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 1939. These security lapses led Moscow to reduce intelligence activities in the U.S. Other challenges included the emerging Cold War, better counterintelligence by the FBI, and the twin blows in 1956 of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin’s crimes, which sharply curtailed ideology-motivated recruiting of Americans, and the brutal Soviet invasion of Hungary. Nevertheless, subversive active measures operations against the U.S. continued despite the loss of espionage assets.

Following World War II, the Soviets used many organizations, overtly and clandestinely, to conduct integrated campaigns of political warfare. With émigré groups including royalists and Trotskyites largely defeated, the Soviets shifted to foreign states. The Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) set primary targets and goals. Supporting themes and campaigns were established by the CPSU Central Committee’s (CC’s) International Department and other CC departments, which supervised implementing actions by government and party elements, including the CPSU newspaper *Pravda*, press agencies such as Tass and Novosti, foreign-focused literary outlets such as the English-language *New Times* and *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, elements of the Academy of Sciences, front organizations abroad, and the intelligence services, especially the First Chief Directorate (FCD, foreign intelligence) of the KGB.<sup>28</sup>

By the late Soviet period, active measures were a large and important KGB activity. Stanislav Levchenko, who defected from the KGB in 1979, called active measures “the most powerful weapon in Soviet hands.”<sup>29</sup> Oleg Kalugin, who headed Directorate K (foreign counterintelligence) of the FCD in 1973-79 as a major general and retired from the KGB in 1990, asserted in a 1998 interview that subversion via active measures was “the heart and soul of Soviet intelligence.”<sup>30</sup> He separately observed that the main focus of Soviet intelligence activities was “not intelligence

collection, but subversion: active measures to weaken the west, to drive wedges in the western community alliances of all sorts, particularly NATO, to sow discord among allies, to weaken the United States in the eyes of the people of Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and thus to prepare ground in case the war really occurs.”<sup>31</sup>

Former senior FCD counterintelligence officer Victor Cherkashin who, like Kalugin earlier, served in Washington in the 1980s, similarly called disinformation “a favorite KGB activity.”<sup>32</sup> Sergei Tretyakov, who entered the KGB in 1982 and defected as a senior Russian foreign intelligence (SVR) officer in 2000, reported that the SVR’s primary disinformation aims remained unchanged: sow dissension in the United States and foster anti-American feelings abroad.<sup>33</sup> Disinformation specialist Grant wrote before the collapse of the USSR that Soviet disinformation had “achieved spectacular results and will continue to do so if unchecked.”<sup>34</sup> Clearly it was never well understood in the West, let alone “checked.” Indeed, Oleg Gordievsky opined in 2005 that Russian illegals, like the Soviet ones before them, were “trying to build connections to lawmakers, journalists, and businessmen” in the West.<sup>35</sup>

These actions were aggressive in nature. While the Soviets had legitimate security concerns at times (as in 1941-45), the focus of active measures, according to all the intelligence sources cited in this article, was always offensive. Claims of weakness vis-à-vis allegedly aggressive imperialists were parts of complex deception campaigns, the doctrinal basis of which the military called *maskirovka*. The Soviets claimed they needed a huge military complex for defensive purposes, but the military generated mainly offensive doctrines and practiced war plans that may have enabled the Red Army, after initially “defending” against an imaginary NATO attack, to launch offensives that could have conquered most of Western Europe.<sup>36</sup> The cosmetic defensive elements of exercise scenarios were designed to fool the Soviet people, who were targets of internally focused propaganda. Officials did so even though Soviet Bloc intelligence services had thoroughly penetrated NATO countries’ defense ministries and the alliance’s headquarters, which meant the Soviets knew that NATO had no plans for aggressive operations.<sup>37</sup>

The Soviets refined Lenin’s thinking over the years. Anatoliy Golitsyn, who acquired notoriety as a contributor to the paranoia of CIA counterintelligence chief James Jesus Angleton, was well-placed in Moscow before his defection from the KGB in 1961 to see the emergence of the near-final version of Soviet political warfare strategy, which he and others believe formed in the late 1950s. Golitsyn argued that Soviet foreign policy was in flux from March 1953, when Stalin died, until June 1957, when Khrushchev won largely uncontested power, enabling new foreign policy initiatives.<sup>38</sup> A reorganization of the Soviet government, including

appointment of “reformers” such as Aleksandr Shelepin, accompanied expansion of active measures as tools of political warfare. Drawing on lessons of a major research program on active measures conducted in the late 1950s, Shelepin proposed a more sophisticated approach to subverting the West, which would resurrect some of the techniques the Cheka used in the 1920s and extensively use Soviet intelligence services. Political leaders accepted Shelepin’s ideas, and he became chief of the KGB in December 1958.<sup>39</sup> In 1959, at Shelepin’s direction, the FCD created a unit to conduct disinformation called Directorate D (for *Dezinformatsiya*), which in 1962 was upgraded in status and resources and renamed Service A (for *Aktivnyye meropriyatiya*).<sup>40</sup> During the period 1961-64, at Soviet direction, six East European intelligence services established similar units that worked directly for their KGB “advisors.”<sup>41</sup> The FCD soon thereafter enlisted the foreign intelligence service of Cuba, the Directorate General of Intelligence (DGI), in that effort.<sup>42</sup> In 1965 Department 8, the active measures unit of the Czechoslovak intelligence service, State Security (Státní Bezpečnost, or StB), employed some 25 professionals and conducted about 100 disinformation operations.<sup>43</sup> East Germany built an active measures capability in Department X (or 10) of the Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung (HVA), the externally focused part of its Ministry for State Security.<sup>44</sup> According to Tretyakov, the SVR retained the KGB’s Service A but gave it a new name—Department MS.<sup>45</sup>

The Bloc’s effort was massive. The CIA reportedly estimated that the Soviets spent the equivalent of \$3 billion on active measures in 1978 and \$4 billion in 1982.<sup>46</sup> Rid estimated peak Soviet spending on active measures at \$3-4 billion in 1985.<sup>47</sup> In 1981, KGB documents show, global active measures campaigns produced 70 books or monographs, 60 films, 4,865 news articles, 1,500 radio and television programs, and 3,000 conferences and exhibitions.<sup>48</sup> By several accounts, the KGB poured growing quantities of resources into Service A and related field operations in the 1960s and later. The FCD’s training school, the Andropov Institute, added courses on active measures in the 1980s.<sup>49</sup>

The Soviets and now the Russians relied extensively on a concept known as “reflexive control”—the process of providing messages to target audiences that lead targets voluntarily to make decisions consistent with Soviet goals, often with no inkling they have been manipulated.<sup>50</sup> While the “reflexive control” concept in its present form dates from the 1990s, Soviet ideas about manipulating others into making “independent” decisions favorable to Moscow, and sophisticated techniques for doing so, are much longer-standing.

The Soviets understood their active measures campaign would not have immediate effects, and they knew some

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operations would fail, but they expected excellent cumulative effects over the long run, justifying the massive effort.<sup>51</sup> To succeed, they needed to produce and effectively deliver carefully crafted, psychologically- and culturally-sensitive messages to targets who would absorb them and voluntarily act on the USSR's behalf, sometimes willingly but often unwittingly, and pass Soviet messages to others such as students and newspaper readers who knew even less about the extent to which they were being manipulated. Single disinformation campaigns might take five to seven years to unfold.<sup>52</sup>

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By many accounts, Soviet goals for subversive operations in the United States in the 1960s prominently included stoking racial tensions, penetrating the American press, and influencing government policymaking.<sup>53</sup> Kalugin reported that Soviet leaders believed America's demographic diversity was its greatest vulnerability and exploited it for decades by placing much race-focused disinformation aimed primarily at blacks and Jews in the hands of left-leaning U.S. media and other opinion makers, anticipating correctly that it would trigger emotional outrage.<sup>54</sup> The Soviets characterized American racial tensions as symptomatic of a general “crisis of the west,” and they targeted the American war in Vietnam in the 1960s-70s and defense policies for political gains globally and in the U.S.<sup>55</sup> Women and gays also got considerable attention as alleged victims of oppression. Ion Mihai Pacepa, who worked closely with the KGB when he was chief of Romanian foreign intelligence before he defected in 1978, asserted that the primary task of Soviet ambassador to the United States in 1947-52 Aleksandr Panyushkin, who was also a career intelligence officer, was to persuade American leftists to create “peace movements” in the country, which aimed to generate unilateral U.S. disarmament.<sup>56</sup>

The Soviets' domestic policies and situation were irrelevant in shaping these campaigns. They simply lied about their motives and the realities of communism. Moscow wanted “peace” movements to work only against its Western adversaries, not the huge Warsaw Pact military establishment. It mattered not that there was no real democracy or a socialist utopia in the USSR; there was “people’s democracy.” The Soviets did not bother to report

that Russians chronically discriminated against blacks in the Soviet Union.<sup>57</sup> No women ever served on the CPSU Politburo, and there were no women or Jews in senior KGB positions after about 1950.<sup>58</sup> The Soviets did not tolerate internally the decadent lifestyles they encouraged in the West.

Yuri Bezmenov, who defected from the KGB while under cover as a Novosti representative in New Delhi in 1970, stated that Yuri Andropov, then chief of the KGB (1967-82), declared the Soviet Union's political war against the United States was “the final struggle for the *minds* and hearts of the people.”<sup>59</sup> In 1984 Bezmenov provided details of the war plan. He explained the Soviets foresaw eventual triumph over the U.S. as the culmination of four sequential stages of a long process: (1) demoralization; (2) destabilization; (3) crisis; and (4) restoration of stability under a communist regime.<sup>60</sup> Stage one featured overt and covert propaganda; use of agents of influence; use of front organizations created by the KGB or other organs of the Soviet government to bring appearances of legitimacy and respectability to the Soviet Union and to finance groups of subversives and radicals “legally”; provoking and manipulating mass demonstrations and assemblies; spreading rumors; forging U.S. government documents that allegedly confirmed nefarious American actions, plans, and intentions; planting phony stories in local media; and subsidizing hundreds of newspapers globally, knowing some of their stories would get picked up by American media.<sup>61</sup> Examples of all of these techniques are documented by numerous independent sources.

Bezmenov argued that it takes 15-20 years to demoralize a target nation based on his belief that it takes a generation for young people to be taught dysfunctional beliefs in a culture deformed by active measures.<sup>62</sup> Demoralization would affect three “levels” of the target society: (1) ideas, including religion and politics; (2) structures, including the judicial and law enforcement systems, security and defense organs, political parties and groups, foreign policy formulating bodies, governmental and nongovernmental, such as “think-tanks” and universities; and (3) what Bezmenov called “life”—unhealthy bodies and minds, and the material and cultural elements of societies including race relations.<sup>63</sup> While this scheme seems plausible and the Soviets acted in all these areas, Bezmenov's temporal estimate clearly was too short. Not all young people can be transformed at once, and older people also need to be socialized. Still, Bezmenov plausibly argued that the U.S. in 1984 already was burdened with the dysfunctional social detritus of the 1960s, a period of societal upheaval the Soviets encouraged.<sup>64</sup> Pacepa later agreed that Soviet disinformation “had put down roots” in America.<sup>65</sup> These assessments suggest that the Soviets saw what later was called “reflexive control” as already self-replicating, creating a kind of path dependency that was

useful to them.<sup>66</sup> Bezmenov argued that key parts of the demoralization process were mass education and manipulation of the media, which he believed Soviet disinformation had easily achieved.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, many 1960s radicals, entranced in part by Soviet disinformation, never left the universities, knowing that education was the best route to transform new generations into radicals. By the 21st century, American universities and the press had become major centers of left-wing political activism.<sup>68</sup>

In Bezmenov's account of the Soviet scheme, successful demoralization leads to destabilization, which may take two to five years.<sup>69</sup> Again, this period seems too short in the U.S. case. Crisis may take only a matter of months, with successful establishment of a dictatorial socialist regime being the permanent result. For Putin's non-communist Russia, however, the ultimate result need not be a socialist American state, just one that is substantially weakened at home and abroad. Generally consistent with Bezmenov's claims, Stanislav Bittman, who worked for Czechoslovakia's civilian intelligence service, the StB, for 14 years until shortly after the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion of that country in August 1968, and in 1964-66 was deputy chief of its disinformation unit, wrote that a major goal of Soviet intelligence and his own service was the "internal demoralization and erosion of power" of target countries, which would unfold over "several decades."<sup>70</sup> Bittman concluded in 1985, "The strategy seems to work."<sup>71</sup>

Based initially at KGB headquarters at the Lubyanka in Moscow and then at the new FCD headquarters complex in Yasenevo, near Moscow, Service A's first head was General Ivan Agayants (1959-68), who developed core KGB active measures themes, including emphasizing anti-Semitism in the West and exacerbating racial tensions in the U.S. mainly by exaggerating and manufacturing reports of anti-black racism, thus spurring radical reactions by blacks and their white allies.<sup>72</sup> Service A also developed other themes, messages, and means to convey them. It initially had 40-60 experienced officers in Moscow and others in East Germany who drafted finished books, articles, and information packages for distribution to sympathetic publishers globally.<sup>73</sup> In 1985, Gordievsky reported, Service A had 80 professional staffers at Yasenevo and another 30-40 at the headquarters of the Novosti Press Agency in downtown Moscow.<sup>74</sup> These officers also produced information packages and general guidance to sympathetic writers in the West who crafted Soviet messages in their own style.<sup>75</sup> Service A and some friendly intelligence services forged documents useful in disinformation campaigns, frequently based on the formats of, names in, and signatures of actual foreign government documents acquired by the agencies' collection elements, which also compiled data on potential targets, managed agents and provocateurs, and disseminated finished disinformation products.<sup>76</sup>

KGB residences mainly used Line PR (political intelligence) officers to conduct active measures in the field. KGB chief Yuri Andropov in the late 1970s ordered Line PR officers globally to spend 25 percent of their time on active measures.<sup>77</sup> Line KR (counterintelligence) and Line N (illegals) officers also did such work. As a young KGB officer in New York City in the late 1950s-early 1960s under cover as a Radio Moscow correspondent, Oleg Kalugin worked active measures as part of his assignment.<sup>78</sup> According to Kalugin, "Our active measures campaign did not discriminate on the basis of race, creed or color; we went after everybody."<sup>79</sup> For example, he provided KGB-written stories and funds to American publishers, including M.S. (Max) Arnoni, who published *A Minority of One* magazine.<sup>80</sup> Kalugin worked to enhance racial tensions both by exaggerating racism in America and by trying to stoke it, cultivating black leaders in Harlem. Kalugin also hired local agents to paint swastikas on synagogues in Washington and New York City and to desecrate several Jewish cemeteries. He then wrote stories condemning anti-Semitism and racism in America—small parts of a much larger and enduring campaign.<sup>81</sup>

Active measures overwhelmingly employed persons with political views sympathetic to the USSR.<sup>82</sup> The Soviets knew that people of all political persuasions could be targeted for espionage purposes. They sometimes defamed conservatives, but leftists most helpfully supported their goal of subverting adversaries. Indeed, the firmly established record of Soviet policies, personnel, and actions indicates that witting agents of influence were ONLY persons with left-of-center political views, many of whom were hard leftists.

In the United States in the 1920s and 1930s, especially, CPUSA members were eager collaborators. Fellow travelers, or communist sympathizers, and other "progressive" persons who shared Soviet ambitions also were counted upon to advance Soviet interests, knowingly or not. The Comintern popularized "solidarity" as a term of intellectual alliance with Soviet goals, which is still frequently used in "progressive" American circles.<sup>83</sup> The Soviets primarily targeted left-of-center persons because they were generally sympathetic to Soviet messages and asked few questions about the sources and accuracy of the stories and forgeries the Soviets disseminated. Vladimir Lenin famously called these people "useful idiots" and Josef Stalin called them "naïve dupes." Wilhelm "Willi" Münzenberg, a successful Comintern propagandist of the 1920s, established "Innocents' Clubs" for gullible Europeans who could be talked into supporting "vogueish causes" consistent with Soviet interests.<sup>84</sup>

The KGB found such people, including many Americans, easy to persuade with even crudely fabricated disinformation. As several defectors noted in various ways, it was easy to fool people who wanted to be fooled. The Soviets relied on what psychologists call “confirmation bias”—the tendency of all people to accept messages they expect (and perhaps hope) to see. The Soviets especially targeted receptive journalists, educators, politicians, and other opinion leaders who could further spread Soviet messages to people who had less ability to recognize the origins and ultimate goals of the messages, consistent with the goals and techniques of reflexive control.

KGB officers understood that their collaborators came in many varieties, and they had names for three distinct categories.<sup>85</sup> First, “agents”—individuals on the KGB’s payroll—collected intelligence, disseminated disinformation, and performed other assigned tasks. Second, “confidential contacts” were people with whom the KGB dealt on a cooperative basis, took KGB gifts and suggestions, and voluntarily gave the Soviets information; many of them were senior political leaders such as West German Chancellor Willy Brandt.<sup>86</sup> As a young man, Brandt ran a news agency and offered to pass Soviet-written stories to “Soviet comrades” in the United States.<sup>87</sup> Third, “agents of influence” were persons who might provide useful intelligence but mainly spread Soviet political messages. These in turn came in several varieties: some persons knowingly took Soviet writings and published them as their own, often for money; others took Soviet messages, knowing they might have come from the Soviets but not caring; and still others were completely oblivious to Soviet connections but willingly conveyed messages consistent with Soviet interests and ideologies—and their own.<sup>88</sup> Many Americans fell into all three categories. Agents of influence were used to target two groups: national decision-makers and public opinion.<sup>89</sup> All such persons were useful.

## MEANS OF EXPLOITATION

The Soviets used many means to influence all the American targets whom Bezmenov identified. Methods often overlapped, creating sophisticated, complementary influence mechanisms that were hard to identify, let alone counter. These techniques, with modern wrinkles, by many accounts now are used by Russian “Chekists.”<sup>90</sup>

### Soviet Intelligence and the CPUSA

The CPUSA during the Soviet era was an unquestioning supporter of the Soviet Union.<sup>91</sup> CPUSA leaders sometimes traveled to Moscow for meetings, but they regularly took instructions and money from Soviet intelligence officers in

the United States. The CPUSA received on average several million dollars annually in Soviet funding until the demise of the USSR in 1991.<sup>92</sup> The Party was strongest in the 1920s-30s when Marxism was popular and Soviet disinformation led many Americans to believe the USSR really was a workers’ and peasants’ paradise. Disinformation and ideological faith meant few American Marxists were upset by Stalin’s show trials and purges in 1936-38, although the Soviet-German pact of 1939 shocked some. Among the many Americans Soviet intelligence recruited, some of the most important were agents of influence, including Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Harry Dexter White (NKVD codename JURIST), a close advisor to Secretary Hans Morgenthau. White and Roosevelt advisor Harry Hopkins, who evidently was a fellow traveler, are widely believed to have influenced U.S. policy in ways favorable to Moscow by, for example, helping to convince the administration to take a hard line vis-à-vis Japan in 1941 by curtailing exports of critical natural resources, thereby encouraging the Japanese to attack southward to acquire replacement resources, far from the Soviet Union, and by influencing U.S. policy on the construction of post-war Europe.<sup>93</sup>

Originally a Stalinist party focused on workers and the economic struggle against capitalism, the CPUSA by the 1930s had expanded its horizons to appeal to ethnic minorities, including the black civil rights movement and then black nationalist extremists.<sup>94</sup> Although the CPUSA ran candidates for president in its early years, it did poorly. Yet, the CPUSA saw a kindred spirit in Roosevelt, leading it to briefly declare a “united front” with “progressive” elements of the Democratic Party and to back Roosevelt for reelection in the 1930s.

With the collapse of the USSR in 1991, money and instructions from Moscow vanished, but the CPUSA’s basic ideological orientation did not change. It remained a Stalinist party. In 2000, after the death of long-time leader Gus Hall, new Party leaders told members to go underground, to join the Democratic Party again, and to be politically active as nominal Democrats.<sup>95</sup> The CPUSA reportedly was delighted by the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States in 2008, and it supported Joe Biden in 2020.<sup>96</sup> In his college days, Senator Bernie Sanders was a member of the communist Socialist Workers Party, a supporter of Stalin’s rival Leon Trotsky. Later, Sanders called himself a “Democratic Socialist.” The tally of members of the “progressive caucus” in the House of Representatives, some of whom also call themselves “Democratic Socialists,” reached 97 in 2021. The “Democratic Socialists of America” platform is clearly Marxist.<sup>97</sup> Some of these people act in ways consistent with the traditional communist (and CPUSA) technique of hiding or misrepresenting their beliefs to avoid alienating non-believers. While their Marxian ideology now diverges from Moscow’s, Sanders and other

“progressives” support Cuba and Venezuela, to which Russia continues to provide assistance, and still work in many other ways consistent with Soviet and Russian interests.

The CPUSA was also active in cultural arenas.<sup>98</sup> It nurtured musicians who put political messages into their verses. Said one observer, the party acted as a “mid-wife” to the revival of folk music in the 1930s-40s, which was “strongly influenced by the Communist outlook.”<sup>99</sup> CPUSA operatives recognized folk music in the rural South as a potential tool. Woody Guthrie joined the CPUSA in 1936, partnering with Pete Seeger, who was already a CPUSA member.<sup>100</sup> Another well-known communist musician was Burl Ives.<sup>101</sup> Later, the folk left worked against the U.S. war in Vietnam, mouthing lyrics similar to those that Bloc active measures specialists were disseminating in other ways. In the 1960s, Seeger openly admired the communist regime in Cuba, visited the Soviet Union, and called himself a Stalinist, a view he reconsidered only late in life.<sup>102</sup>

Over the years, the KGB used the CPUSA in many other ways. Understanding the importance of communications, communists were active in Hollywood. One of the FBI’s early double agents in the Party was a minor movie producer the Soviets thought had access to prominent Americans.<sup>103</sup> The movie industry was a target of communist hunters in the 1950s and Ronald Reagan, then-president of the Screen Actors Guild, strongly disapproved of communists in the movie industry.<sup>104</sup> Leftists clearly recovered considerably thereafter and remain strong in Hollywood. Other CPUSA efforts included organization of, and participation in, demonstrations; formation of coalitions with other groups sympathetic to Soviet causes; sponsorship of seminars and workshops; support for the U.S. “peace movement”; and organization and conduct of letter-writing campaigns.<sup>105</sup> For example, in response to President Jimmy Carter’s chronic criticism of the Soviet human rights record, Service A sponsored an international letter-writing campaign to Mrs. Carter protesting alleged human rights violations in the United States.<sup>106</sup>

### Front Organizations

The Soviets created and operated about a dozen major front organizations abroad that fostered their foreign policy objectives. Each targeted narrow constituencies, such as scientists, and/or had a focused political goal.<sup>107</sup> Intelligence services recruited prominent local people to serve as figurehead leaders, provided illegal officers to partially staff them, and largely funded the groups. The fronts organized rallies, protests, and letter-writing campaigns, and they produced “studies” and “news” releases that they and Soviet intelligence sent to receptive journalists. All of the fronts targeted U.S. interests. Some had affiliates in the United States.

The most prominent and arguably most effective front organization was the World Peace Council (WPC), which was established in Paris in 1949, the year the Soviet Union first exploded a nuclear device. The WPC fostered groups in NATO countries dedicated to the unilateral disarmament of their own countries, but not of the Soviet Union.<sup>108</sup> The U.S. war in Vietnam also was a major WPC focus, helping damage the U.S. government globally as well as in the United States.<sup>109</sup> The KGB called its long-running support for Western “peace movements” Operation MARS, and the East Germans oxymoronically but appropriately named their closely aligned operation “PEACEWAR.”<sup>110</sup> The CPUSA formed its affiliate of the WPC, the United States Peace Council (USPC), in 1979.<sup>111</sup> At the founding meeting of the USPC, the USSR was represented by Oleg Bogdanov of the CPSU CC International Department and Yuri Kapralov of the KGB.<sup>112</sup> According to FBI reporting, in 1981 Soviet officials told Romesh Chandra, the Indian communist who headed the WPC, that they had “big plans” for joint WPC-USPC activities in 1982-83 and were delighted about how easy it was to organize events in the U.S.<sup>113</sup>

### Exploiting the Press and Publishers

The Soviets and their allies cultivated journalists and publishers, using them as agents of influence even when the intelligence agencies could not recruit them as intelligence collectors. Media conveyed and often amplified Soviet messages, and they lent respectability to active measures-generated falsehoods. In 1986 the HVA Department X’s chief, Rolf Wagenbreth, asked rhetorically, “What would active measures be without journalists?”<sup>114</sup> In 1985 a West German government study similarly concluded, “Manipulating the media is the single most commonly used method to realize ‘active measures’ in the Western world.”<sup>115</sup> The Soviets long had close relationships with major elements of the American press, which frequently published nonsense about the Soviet Union. For example, in 1944 *The New York Times* incongruously reported that Marxism was out of fashion in the USSR and that it had become a capitalist country.<sup>116</sup> *Time* magazine declared in 1943 that Lenin was the greatest man of the current century and compared the massive, murderous Soviet secret political police apparatus to the FBI.<sup>117</sup>

Many Bloc intelligence officers had cover positions as journalists or writers for Soviet publications. They recruited foreign journalists, spread rumors, and provided “tips” that sometimes led to stories in Western media.<sup>118</sup> Stanislav Levchenko, for example, was ostensibly a *New Times* correspondent in Tokyo, where he conducted traditional espionage tasks and planted stories with cooperative Japanese journalists; he was certified as a KGB active measures specialist.<sup>119</sup> As noted earlier, Yuri Bezmenov ostensibly was a Novosti correspondent and Oleg Kalugin was a Radio Moscow correspondent. Vitaly Yevgenyevich Lui, better known as

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Victor Louis, was a KGB officer deployed as an agent of influence whose perceived credibility brought him worldwide audiences, including those of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.<sup>120</sup> Louis worked for CBS News in Moscow and for *Look* magazine. He was even invited to the White House by Vice President Hubert Humphrey in 1966 and by national security advisor Henry Kissinger in 1971.<sup>121</sup>

Favorite disinformation items for many years were forged documents purporting to demonstrate (actually non-existent) racism against blacks by prominent Americans and other publications and actions designed to promote actual racism and anti-Semitism.<sup>122</sup> Bloc intelligence officers marveled about how even crudely forged documents, quickly debunked, had legs; the stories appealed to leftists, and Western government officials' accurate denunciations of forgeries frequently were seen as lies. Bittman reported that Bloc intelligence officers also commented often on the political naiveté and credulity of many Americans.<sup>123</sup> Kalugin believed American journalists were more difficult to fool with anti-American disinformation than people in other parts of the world, but Americans clearly fell for much of it, often by picking up stories first published abroad.<sup>124</sup> Sometimes, fairly crude disinformation was disseminated to deflect skeptics' attention from more subtle and important messages. Moreover, practitioners often noted that even ostensibly skilled Western observers chronically underestimated the scope, sophistication, and effectiveness of Soviet active measures campaigns.<sup>125</sup>

In several countries, Soviet intelligence financially supported newspapers and related businesses to facilitate the spread of disinformation. For example, the NKVD provided \$5,000 to communist William Dodd to help buy *The Blue Ridge Herald*, a small newspaper in Virginia, after it supported his unsuccessful run for Congress in 1938, and the KGB subsidized the "Victor Kamkin" bookstore in Rockville, Maryland, which specialized in selling Russian-language publications.<sup>126</sup> The KGB paid the Liberty-Prometheus Book Club, based in the U.S., to produce and market publications favorable to Soviet interests.<sup>127</sup> The KGB also used Indian media extensively as original outlets of Soviet-produced disinformation which it accurately expected American media to pick up, and it bought full ownership of some Indian newspapers.<sup>128</sup>

Soviet Bloc intelligence services chronically succeeded in influencing American journalists. Techniques included use of tips, forgeries, rumors, agents of influence, and front groups. For example, the fifth section of the Cheka disseminated disinformation prepared in Moscow to West European journals in the early 1920s.<sup>129</sup> Grant argued that American newspapers in the 1920s nearly always accepted forgeries and other Soviet disinformation without question.<sup>130</sup> They later became slightly more discriminating,

but years later some stories written in Moscow still were printed verbatim by knowing American publishers, as Kalugin and others reported.<sup>131</sup> In 1982 a rumor campaign against a Polish émigré to the U.S., Jerzy Kosinski, who was actively critical of the USSR, achieved success when *The Village Voice* ran a story falsely accusing Kosinski of plagiarism and the more unforgivable sin of working for the CIA; other frequent venues for KGB disinformation picked up the story, including *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *The Boston Globe*.<sup>132</sup> The KGB targeted many American journalists with a forgery in 1980 claiming that an unnamed State Department official opposed U.S. policies in Central America. *Boston Globe* reporter Stephen Kinzer fell for it and wrote a story which *The New York Times* picked up.<sup>133</sup>

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***Arguably the Soviets' favorite American media target was The New York Times. That newspaper's close relationship with Soviet Russia began when Walter Duranty became its Moscow correspondent.***

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Arguably the Soviets' favorite American media target was *The New York Times*. That newspaper's close relationship with Soviet Russia began when Walter Duranty became its Moscow correspondent. Duranty had an unusually long posting in Moscow (1922-36) and eventually became, by many accounts, a confidant of Soviet leader Stalin. Duranty's stories glowed about Soviet communism despite obvious troubles such as industrial problems in the 1920s and the famine of 1932-33, caused largely by Stalin's collectivization of agriculture and persecution of the kulaks, which killed several million Soviet citizens. Duranty also justified the show trials of the 1930s that repulsed many observers.<sup>134</sup> Disinformation of the sort Duranty reported surely helped deceive many Americans about the true nature of Soviet communism. Later, the *Times* accepted many forgeries and got other stories partially right.<sup>135</sup> For example, the KGB made and mailed racist flyers to African and Asian diplomats at the United Nations which ostensibly were produced by the Ku Klux Klan. The diplomats unsurprisingly were outraged. Because the flyers contained obvious grammatical errors that no native English speaker would make, the FBI immediately investigated them as likely forgeries. *The New York Times* helpfully did not report the forgery part of the story.<sup>136</sup> By many accounts, Soviet forgeries became more sophisticated over time, making detection of disinformation more difficult.<sup>137</sup>

The Soviets also targeted non-governmental organizations. For example, James F. Sattler, an American working for the Atlantic Council, was an agent of influence for the East German HVA when he wrote an



article on tensions in U.S.-West German relations published in *The New York Times* in 1975. Worried about exposure, he finally filed with the U.S. government as a foreign agent, admitting that he was recruited by an East German named Rolf in 1967 and had been paid about \$15,000 for his services.<sup>138</sup>

Soviet disinformation did not go completely unnoticed at the time. John Scali, an ABC News correspondent who acted as an intermediary between the U.S. and Soviet governments during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, recognized the KGB's disinformation prowess, remarking he wished the U.S. was as good.<sup>139</sup> William F. Buckley's *National Review* showed clearly how gullible the press often was by printing in 1971 a made-up story claiming the U.S. planned to use nuclear weapons against North Vietnam if Hanoi did not negotiate an end to the war in good faith.<sup>140</sup> Before Buckley announced his hoax, *The Washington Post* made the story front-page news and the Voice of America broadcast the story globally.

### Émigré Agents of Influence

In its early years, the Soviets (and the CPUSA) relied extensively on émigrés to the United States from Russia and Eastern Europe who were confirmed leftists before they arrived. Later, the Soviets used the estimated 3,000 intelligence personnel Cuba infiltrated into the U.S. among the periodic migrations of persons fleeing Castro's regime.<sup>141</sup> Some of them ended up in American research organizations, where they produced some disinformation. During the pulses of departures, Cuba also sent denizens of its prisons and mental institutions involuntarily to the U.S., where some of them, as presumably intended, continued old habits, damaging the U.S. in other ways. In 1970 the DGI established an "Illegals Center" to train people it inserted into refugee flows into the U.S. in espionage and subversion skills.<sup>142</sup>

## TARGETS ATTACKED AND GOALS ACHIEVED

These activities combined to produce results in targets that, per Bezmenov and others, Soviet leaders and active measures specialists wanted to achieve. This section presents events which an active measures specialist—Soviet or Russian—might chronicle as organizational achievements. There are other views of these events, including those of people unhappy about the state of American society and those the Soviets duped. For space reasons, these views must be presented elsewhere.

Consistent priorities drove active measures campaigns in the late Soviet period. Targets included security arrangements such as the NATO alliance, the CIA and FBI, and troubles in American society, most prominently race relations and the

controversial war in Vietnam. The goal was to delegitimize U.S. policies and defenses, making the nation seem to be, to foreign audiences and Americans alike, the cause of most of the world's problems.

### NATO Disintegration

The Soviet Union worked hard to disrupt NATO, its major military rival. Putin's Russia clearly shares this goal. Intelligence services played major roles, especially by directing front organizations like the World Peace Council and disseminating disinformation, frequently based on forgeries. The Soviets' extensive campaign against NATO occurred largely in Europe.<sup>143</sup> While the effectiveness of specific active measures often is hard to evaluate, and NATO continues to exist, the Soviets occasionally achieved unambiguous successes. One such case was its derailing of the planned U.S. deployment of enhanced radiation weapons, or "neutron bombs," in Europe.<sup>144</sup> The KGB and Bloc intelligence services employed the front organizations to mobilize large demonstrations in West European countries, and their disinformation emphasized America's supposedly aggressive nature and the allegedly capitalistic nature of the weapons, which purportedly would destroy people but not property. At the same time, they invented a story that nuclear warfare would create a "nuclear winter," or environmental catastrophe, which physicist Carl Sagan and other ostensibly credible scientists picked up.<sup>145</sup> Although focused on a military objective, this campaign also reinforced American leftists' objections to U.S. foreign policy in general. The effort clearly succeeded when President Carter canceled development of the weapon in 1978.

### The Anti-CIA and -FBI and Defense Department Campaigns

The Soviets tried to damage U.S. security institutions, often by encouraging fellow travelers' fantasies. For example, the KGB called the FBI a tool of the extreme right in America, asserted that the Bureau chronically violated Americans' civil rights, and, in the days before LGBTQ+ persons felt free to broadcast their sexual preferences, labeled director J. Edgar Hoover a homosexual who tried to turn the FBI into "a den of faggots."<sup>146</sup>

A favorite target was the CIA, the KGB's primary enemy in the spy-versus-spy battles of the Cold War. Bloc intelligence officers attacked the CIA whenever they could. They helped CIA defector Philip Agee (KGB codename PONT) write books that identified serving CIA officers abroad and fed intelligence-derived information to left-wing publications in the U.S., such as the *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, which also published names of CIA officers.<sup>147</sup> They gave disinformation to *New York Times* reporters they believed to be anti-CIA, reportedly

including Seymour Hersh, Harrison Salisbury, and Tad Szulc.<sup>148</sup> For example, when Hersh visited Moscow in 1983 to investigate the Soviet shoot-down of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 after it strayed accidentally into Soviet airspace but was not on a spy mission, as the Soviets claimed, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Georgi Kornienko reportedly told him, “Your mission is to find that [the plane] was an intruder.”<sup>149</sup> Apparently this order failed, but one might wonder why Kornienko was so blunt. Had Hersh obeyed other such directives? Furthermore, to deflect criticism of the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, the KGB and Czech intelligence fabricated a tale that the CIA had sparked an insurrection which good fraternal socialist partners of the Prague regime had to help put down.<sup>150</sup> Many other examples exist.

One of its best, and easiest, disinformation campaigns was the KGB’s Operation DENVER—exploitation of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic in the early 1980s. Originally a conspiracy theory of Charles Shively, a Boston-based gay anarchist and editor of *Fag Rag*, who hypothesized that the U.S. government might be trying to kill blacks and gays, the story was revised by *The Patriot*, a small KGB-supported left-wing newspaper in India, which declared that AIDS was the product of a Defense Department biological weapons experiment.<sup>151</sup> At this point the KGB enlisted the help of an ostensibly credible East German scientist and spread the disinformation globally. Long after the natural origins of AIDS were firmly established, many African Americans continued to believe that AIDS was a genocidal attack on blacks.<sup>152</sup> Gordievsky believed DENVER was the KGB’s most successful active measures campaign.<sup>153</sup> Consistent with many KGB successes at stimulating and manipulating paranoia<sup>154</sup> in African Americans, U.S. Representative Maxine Waters (D-CA) often repeated an inaccurate American reporter’s story that the CIA disseminated hard drugs domestically as part of a master plot to destroy inner-city black America.<sup>155</sup> Following the Soviet lead and aided by it, leaders of the Democratic Party periodically “play the race card” to stoke black persons’ paranoia and sense of victimization when it is politically expedient.

Congressional Democrats hobbled the CIA’s comparatively small active measures program in the mid-1970s following both accurate and fanciful revelations about CIA misdeeds.<sup>156</sup> Soviet release of information about the CIA via Philip Agee, the *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, and *Ramparts* magazine, discussed below, surely played some role, although one can only speculate about the overall influence of Soviet disinformation on these decisions—and their implications.

## Target America: The 1960s

The accelerated Soviet active measures offensive of the late 1950s coincided with a major cultural change in the U.S.—the long decade from the late 1950s to roughly 1975, known as “The Sixties.” While the period was widely applauded in the U.S. as a period of freedom and experiment, for the Soviets it was a golden opportunity to foster trends that damaged their major geostrategic rival by encouraging societal decay. The CPUSA and KGB had already coopted many journalists, making them valuable allies. The Sixties were characterized by major increases in drug usage, pushed by such gurus as Timothy Leary; radical black groups’ actions, characterized by the Black Panther Party and Eldridge Cleaver, a serial rapist who especially enjoyed raping white women as an “insurrectionary act” and who became the Black Panther Party’s “minister of information”;<sup>157</sup> an aggressive women’s liberation movement that encouraged sexual freedom and women’s liberty from husbands and children, encouraged by such writers as Susan Sontag;<sup>158</sup> open homosexuality by many of the cultural leaders of the day; criminality in the form of violence, drug use, and widespread but low-level civil disobedience to laws deemed immoral or otherwise unattractive; and novels, films, essays, and songs that advocated, rationalized, and glorified these trends.

The Soviets did not directly control these events. Most of the lifestyle activities were anathema to prudish KGB officers and were seen as exploitable vulnerabilities, not virtues. Nevertheless, the Soviets worked hard to push three beliefs that gelled with the causes of the perceived decadence noted above: (1) opposition to the American war in Vietnam and America’s alleged imperialism, a classic Marxist-Leninist charge; (2) perceptions of often imaginary limitations and weaknesses of capitalism; and (3) the fraught history of race relations in the U.S. All three campaign themes appealed to Sixties’ cultural leaders, many of whom were strongly leftist and often were avowed Marxists. It did not matter that many of them did not like Stalin’s deviance from their personal concepts of socialism; the pursuit of utopian ideals opposed to the American system of government was good enough to help achieve Soviet objectives. Kalugin reported that the KGB was pleased by the large-scale rioting which followed the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968, believing it to be an “inevitable consequence of decades of smoldering racial tension in the United States.”<sup>159</sup> The Soviets, he said, played no direct role in the rioting, but they had stoked racial tensions in the United States for many years as formal policy, clearly hoping for such societal disintegration.<sup>160</sup>

Fashionable, upper middle-class leftists were helpful collaborators, publishing “radical chic” advocacy pieces and literary reviews in venues such as *The New Republic*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Ramparts*, and *The Village*

*Voice*. Some of the writers published in these venues traveled to North Vietnam to support the troops there. Moreover, some of the activists, such as Daniel Berrigan and William Sloane Coffin, Jr., became lifelong WPC-style “peace” advocates, supporting Soviet goals in other ways. As they did for the more traditional press, Soviet Bloc intelligence provided material for some of their stories. Soviet links to *The New Republic* are especially clear. Michael Straight, son of the magazine’s founders, Willard and Dorothy Straight, was an NKVD agent briefly, breaking with the Soviets over Stalin’s 1939 pact with Hitler.<sup>161</sup> While evidently still a philosophical communist, he was the journal’s editor from 1948 to 1956.

*Ramparts* magazine was a reliable outlet for Soviet disinformation. Published between 1962 and 1975, *Ramparts* was a stalwart of the New Left. The magazine collapsed when its staff split on ideological grounds; many of its serious leftists then formed *Mother Jones*, which still offers left-wing fare. The CIA reportedly investigated *Ramparts* and found that it published Soviet material, which some staffers later admitted.<sup>162</sup> In his memoirs, *Ramparts* editor Warren Hinckle, who regularly published stories favorable to the USSR in the 1960s, including stories opposing the U.S. war in Vietnam and praising communist Cuba, acknowledged that some of the information he used may have come from the KGB.<sup>163</sup> It is unclear whether the Soviets provided information, published by *Ramparts* and *The New York Times*, which led to exposure and eventual Congressional abolition of some of CIA’s covert action projects, such as support for the Congress of Cultural Freedom and *Encounter* magazine.<sup>164</sup>

There were plenty of half-baked revolutionary groups in post-1945 America, but the Soviets did not directly aid them militarily, as they did in other parts of the world. The political dangers evidently were seen as too great. Still, the Soviets provided training and propaganda support and gave sanctuary periodically to refugees from American justice such as Eldridge Cleaver. With certain Soviet concurrence, Bloc intelligence services provided closer support. For example, the Cuban DGI provided guidance in the 1970s to the inept Weather Underground, which was a violent revolutionary group that saw Castro’s Cuban revolution as its model and which the FBI called a terrorist group, via an officer assigned to Cuba’s mission to the United Nations. The DGI provided contact points for Weatherpersons who became separated from their comrades.<sup>165</sup> East Germany and North Korea supplied money, equipment, and safe havens.<sup>166</sup> The DGI also directed and funded black extremist groups, leading to the expulsion of Cuban “diplomats” from Havana’s UN mission in 1968 and 1969.<sup>167</sup>

The Soviets worked hard to shape popular perceptions of the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy.<sup>168</sup> This case illustrates the complexity of Soviet disinformation campaigns, their long-term nature and frequent

effectiveness, and the difficulty in finding and thwarting them. It illustrates well the disinformation technique of “framing,” or shaping popular perceptions of actors as heroes or villains as desired.<sup>169</sup> While there are disputed allegations that the Soviet Union and/or Cuba directly encouraged or supported assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, claims that the Soviets sought to alter Americans’ perceptions of the event, whether to deflect justifiable or unwarranted but feared blame, are less controversial.<sup>170</sup> The first book published on the assassination was *Oswald: Assassin or Fall Guy?* by Joachim Josten, a former German communist. The Mitrokhin archive indicates that the KGB paid the book’s publisher, Carlo Aldo Marzani (codename NORD), to publish pro-Soviet material; in the 1960s he received \$672,000.<sup>171</sup> The first review of the book, published in the Soviet journal *New Times* in September 1964, was by Victor Perlo (codename RAIDER), whom Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley identified as leader of one of the most important Soviet espionage rings in the U.S. government before and during World War II. American leftists refused to believe the assertions about Perlo, but Venona decrypts and Soviet archives later confirmed them. Perlo’s rave review repeated Josten’s assertion that Oswald must have been a CIA or FBI agent. Josten dedicated his book to Mark Lane, an American leftist who soon published his own book, *Rush to Judgment*, and who was a paid KGB operative (codename SHAMROCK).<sup>172</sup> Gordievsky reported that Lane frequently talked with KGB officer Genrikh Borovik.<sup>173</sup>

This disinformation meme soon was picked up by others. Well-known journalist, author, and newsletter publisher I.F. Stone, who was a paid KGB agent of influence (codename BLIN), wrote an article speculating on why the U.S. government (via the CIA and FBI) might want to kill its own leader.<sup>174</sup> Stone was recruited on ideological grounds in 1936 and appears in Venona traffic.<sup>175</sup> (Kalugin met him once on orders from Moscow.<sup>176</sup>) Stone asserted that “warlike” people in the U.S. government, who also allegedly performed dastardly militaristic deeds in Europe such as plotting wars of aggression, were behind the attack. Stone also was a regular contributor of writings with anti-Vietnam war and other leftist themes during the 1960s. New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison, who believed some Soviet disinformation, also accused U.S. intelligence services of conspiring to kill Kennedy and published books on the alleged conspiracy in 1970 and 1988, which Oliver Stone featured in his 1991 movie *JFK*.<sup>177</sup>

The campaign worked. Because of its prominence, American pollsters tracked popular perceptions of the assassination. Despite the conclusions of the Warren Commission, the U.S. government’s official investigation of the assassination, that Oswald acted alone, a Gallup poll conducted in 1976 found that 81% of Americans believed Oswald had accomplices.<sup>178</sup>

In 2013 Gallup found that 52% of respondents still believed Oswald did not act alone; only 29% thought he did. In 2013, Americans believed killers may have included the Mafia (13%), the federal government (13%), the CIA (evidently not seen as part of the government, 5%), Cuba (5%), and unidentified special interests opposed to Kennedy's policies (5%).<sup>179</sup> Others named by fewer respondents included the Ku Klux Klan, labor unions, and Vice President Lyndon Johnson.<sup>180</sup> Only 3% thought the Soviets may have been involved. The KGB presumably monitored such surveys and reasonably could have concluded that other disinformation campaigns achieved similar success. This campaign effectively melded several Soviet disinformation themes: deflection of attention from Moscow's actions, real or imagined; the untrustworthiness of U.S. government (Warren Commission) judgments; the evils of the CIA and FBI; and the evils of right-wing conspirators. All were balms to the Soviets' leftist supporters and influenced the ignorant.

### **Soviet and Russian Intelligence and U.S. Presidential Elections**

The Soviet Union often tried to influence U.S. presidential elections. Soviet intelligence evidently worked only on behalf of Democrats, whom Moscow consistently saw as more compatible with Soviet interests than Republicans despite occasionally productive working relationships such as that with President Richard Nixon in the détente era of the early 1970s. For example, at Khrushchev's direction, the Soviet ambassador in Washington in January 1960 offered to help Democrat Adlai Stevenson, who had lost elections in 1952 and 1956 running on platforms the Soviets liked, mount another campaign.<sup>181</sup> Stevenson declined the offer and told James Reston, Washington bureau chief of *The New York Times*, about the meeting.<sup>182</sup> KGB records indicate Khrushchev then told the KGB's residency in Washington to develop diplomatic, propaganda, or other ways to help Senator Kennedy's presidential campaign.<sup>183</sup> During the 1964 campaign, Czechoslovakia's StB printed thousands of pamphlets depicting Republican candidate Barry Goldwater as racist and disseminated them in the U.S., Africa, and Asia.<sup>184</sup> In 1968 the Kremlin offered to subsidize financially the campaign of Democrat Hubert Humphrey, to which Humphrey's campaign did not respond.<sup>185</sup> In 1972 North Vietnam worked to elect Democrat George McGovern, who promised promptly to withdraw U.S. troops from Vietnam; Soviet active measures evidently supported Hanoi's unsuccessful efforts to defeat President Nixon.<sup>186</sup> Moscow appears to have done little in 1976 and 1980, disliking Jimmy Carter's criticism of the Soviet human rights record. In 1983, however, the CPSU Politburo decreed that the primary mission of Service A and KGB residencies in the U.S. was to develop ways to defeat President Ronald Reagan's 1984 reelection bid.<sup>187</sup> With the possible exception of the 1960

campaign, none of these efforts came close to altering an electoral outcome, but they repeated themes that Russia still uses: prominent Americans and American society in general are aggressively imperialistic, racist, and the source of most of the world's ills. Many Americans, especially those of the political Left, clearly have bought this line of reasoning. Russian efforts in 2016 and 2020 were more ideologically balanced; they aimed to further societal disintegration by damaging both Democrats and Republicans.<sup>188</sup>

### **Altering the Universities**

Arguably no part of American life has been more affected by Soviet communism than its universities. Here the Soviet influence is much broader than the work of Soviet intelligence services, and more diffuse, but Bezmenov and Tretyakov reported that universities were favorite targets of Soviet and Russian intelligence services' disinformation.<sup>189</sup> For example, a major theoretical influence on modern American education was the work of John Dewey, a "progressive" professor at Columbia University, who visited Stalin's Russia, sometimes in fellow traveler-like ways praised the Soviet Union and its educational system, including its emphasis on the collective, not individuals, and viewed education as an indoctrination process necessary for social progress.<sup>190</sup> The teacher, Dewey averred, is "engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life."<sup>191</sup> Marxian social engineering agendas are now common at American schools of education.<sup>192</sup>

The cultural changes of the 1960s were largely youth-oriented and nowhere appeared in greater volume and significance than on campuses, where the Soviets' lifestyle, race, and anti-war disinformation themes played well. While not all students were affected, many of the student radical true believers of the 1960s never left campuses. They went to graduate school, then became professors and administrators who altered university life in their image.<sup>193</sup> Some focused on education departments, helping to create large numbers of left-leaning public school teachers who would instill "progressive" thinking in young minds. For example, William Charles Ayres, a co-founder of the Weather Underground in 1969 who somehow avoided prosecution, took graduate degrees in education at Columbia University, where John Dewey previously taught, and became a theorist of elementary education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Ayres knew community activist Barack Obama, although the nature and depth of their relationship are debated. The cultural revolution of the 1960s largely succeeded in altering campus life and the ideological tone of scholarship and textbooks the radical professors produced.<sup>194</sup> Like Ayres, other Weathermen over the next half century retained their revolutionary zeal and connected with "anti-fascist action" (antifa) groups and the Black Lives

Matter Movement, training new generations in revolutionary techniques.<sup>195</sup> Thus, over a longer period of time than Bezmenov anticipated, but substantively as he projected, the radicals propagated their views throughout the American educational system and thence American society. In 2014 the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA found that 60% of university professors self-identified as “liberal” or “far-left,” up from 42% in 1990, while in the same period “moderates” declined from 40% to 27% and “conservatives” declined from about 18% to about 12%.<sup>196</sup> By the 2020s, national teachers’ unions were among the most left-leaning in the country. Reflecting these trends, a YouGov poll conducted in 2019 found that 36% of millennials (then persons aged 23 to 38) approved of communism, up from 28% in 2018, and 70% were extremely or slightly likely to vote for a socialist candidate in the future.<sup>197</sup>

University professors and administrators generated ideas that helped the disintegration campaigners, demonstrating the usefulness of reflexive control. Two influences advocated by scholars of the so-called Frankfurt School of Marxian theorists (formally the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt, Germany), were especially important.<sup>198</sup> The Institute was originally named after the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow but changed its name to avoid controversy in Germany. Frankfurt School people were influenced mainly by Soviet institutions other than the intelligence services.<sup>199</sup> Yet, there were intelligence connections. For example, Richard Sorge, who was a valuable GRU officer in Tokyo before World War II and in its early stages before being arrested in 1941 and later executed, in the early 1920s was a research assistant to Professor Kurt Albert Gerlach of the Institute.<sup>200</sup>

First were the views of Herbert Marcuse, a scholar who like the rest of the staff of the Frankfurt School left Germany soon after Hitler took power and settled at Columbia University, a favorite haunt of Marxists in America and a prime Soviet/Russian intelligence target.<sup>201</sup> Unlike prominent Frankfurt School scholars such as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, Marcuse’s revolutionary Marxian ideals remained intact, and he stayed in the U.S. until his death in 1979. At four universities, Marcuse advocated use of violence to achieve a socialist paradise via mechanisms that he, like all utopian socialists, assumed would appear but never described in detail. Still, the destruction of capitalism and the U.S. form of government surely was part of his dream.

Marcuse asserted that the ostensibly liberal American concept of freedom of expression actually was repressive because it enabled “false consciousness” that all was well in America, thereby discouraging recognition of the truth he managed to see—“oppression” of blacks and women, especially, throughout American society. He argued in a

prominent 1965 essay titled “Repressive Tolerance” that it was good to suppress expressions of liberal views in favor of progressive, Marxian views such as his own.<sup>202</sup> This illiberal, intolerant perspective is now widespread on college campuses in many forms, including speech codes; denial of access to campus by conservative and even liberal speakers; the “cancel culture” that kills writing not deemed politically correct, and often the jobs of its writers; and denial of jobs to applicants for professorships who do not pledge or demonstrate fealty to ideologically acceptable views. It also is a tenet of anarchist antifa groups that seem to have grown markedly in recent years.<sup>203</sup>

One of Marcuse’s favorite students at Brandeis University was Angela Davis, whom he helped radicalize and who later received a PhD from Humboldt University in East Berlin. She ran for vice president on the CPUSA ticket behind Gus Hall in 1980 and 1984, did jail time, led black activist and feminist parts of the CPUSA, received the Lenin Peace Prize from the Soviet Union and an honorary degree from East Germany, and came out as a lesbian. She thereby touched many of the ideological and lifestyle bases of the modern political left. The CPUSA led the popular movement to defend her from charges of murder and kidnapping.<sup>204</sup> The Rolling Stones, plus John Lennon and Yoko Ono, wrote songs in her honor in the early 1970s. She is now a professor emerita at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and still an activist on race and feminist issues. Davis called the large number of newly created pan-African studies programs at U.S. universities the “intellectual arm of the revolution.”<sup>205</sup>

Second, the “critical theory” of the early Frankfurt School morphed over time in ways conducive to societal disintegration in the U.S. Borrowing from Frankfurt scholars and Italian communist Antonio Gramsci, American professors who had been activists in the 1960s by 1977 developed “critical legal studies,” which argued that social conditions make the law fundamentally biased against blacks and other minorities.<sup>206</sup> They wanted to use the law politically to alter social conditions radically. Because reality allegedly is socially constructed, critical theory, like Soviet disinformation practice, justified rewriting history imaginatively to help achieve ideologically attractive goals. Critical theory was adapted further to produce “critical race theory” (CRT), which argues that all Caucasian Americans allegedly “oppress” all minorities. “Critical pedagogy” tells teachers how to indoctrinate their students with such perspectives.<sup>207</sup> “Critical” advocates argue that a fundamental restructuring of American society is required. Supported by the logic and “facts” of Soviet disinformation, using the active measures technique of framing and steeped in Marcuse’s version of “tolerance,” they helped create over a period of many years a mass movement of people committed to revolutionary change who, as Eric Hoffer described, absorbed the ideology with religious zeal.<sup>208</sup>

More recently, prominent CRT proponents such as Ibram X. Kendi went further, proclaiming that blacks deserve special treatment to the point that blacks as a group should measure equally compared to all other major demographic groups in all socio-economic, political, and even demographic characteristics such as life expectancy. This intellectual fashion soon spread widely among leftists, who elevated Obama's "diversity and inclusion" policies to the mantra of "diversity, *equity*, and inclusion" (DEI). There are, Kendi averred, two kinds of people: good "anti-racists" like himself and evil "racists," defined effectively as people who disagree with him.<sup>209</sup> The ever-helpful *New York Times* contributed by sponsoring the "1619 Project," an effort to frame—the same term Soviet active measures specialists used—white America as evil by rewriting the entire span of American history as an exercise in racism and making white people responsible for all that is wrong with black America. They thus created a latter-day version of Marx's Manichean conflict between capital and labor—this one between races. Several reputable historians—including James McPherson of Princeton University and Gordon Wood of Brown University—promptly rejected the Project's "history" as, in essence, revisionist junk.<sup>210</sup> No matter. Leftists of the press gave the instigator of the 1619 Project, Nikole Hannah-Jones, a Pulitzer Prize. Leaving Martin Luther King's assimilationist civil rights aspirations in the distant past, the racism of Kendi and Hannah-Jones, and their white leftist supporters at *The New York Times* and elsewhere, further fragmented American society along racial and political lines—largely achieving goals General Agayants and Service A established over half a century earlier. Even better for Service A's legacy, the DEI agenda cannot be achieved, ensuring continued racial tensions.

These trends were aided by other Marxian intellectual trends in the United States, evidently abetted to some extent by the CPUSA. In particular, communist activists observed in the 1940s and 1950s that the standard Marxist notion that capitalists and workers were inalterably in conflict did not appeal to American workers who displayed the "false consciousness" that capitalism worked for them, too. Again employing ideas of Gramsci, they looked for other exploitable social fissures and found them in race, ethnicity, and gender.<sup>211</sup> Employing the new concept of intersectionality, they convinced many Americans to see themselves not as individuals but as members of demographic groups that, like workers in traditional Marxian theory, were "oppressed," this time by white men, not capitalists. This work blossomed into what now are called identity politics and multiculturalism. It helped enable development of the "E" part of the DEI ideological agenda.

The death of George Floyd while in police custody in 2020 was a boon to black activists and their allies, who pushed harder for radical policy and cultural changes that

traditionalists do not accept—creating a situation in which compromise seems unlikely. The Black Lives Matter movement, run by overtly Marxist women, has advocated special perquisites for blacks and since 2014 recurrently has called for boycotts of "white businesses." Progressives have not minded such racism. President Obama invited the group's leaders to the White House. Variants of CRT are now widely taught in American schools and throughout the U.S. government. President Trump did little to thwart these trends and the federal bureaucracy ignored most of his September 2020 order to stop race-based training of federal employees. President Biden pushed them further than any previous president. Those who object are pilloried as "white nationalists" or "white supremacists"—yet more negative framing of the opponents of "progress." The now-prominent right-wing "Proud Boys" militia group was founded in September 2016, long after the left's "long march" through American institutions had achieved major successes. Indeed, the FBI and Department of Homeland Security in April 2016 declared "anarchist extremists," such as antifa, to be the primary instigators of violence against police officers and political institutions.<sup>212</sup> However, the FBI, according to former Attorney General William Barr and others, recalling that it received some of its worst public criticism when it targeted leftist groups, has continued to focus mainly on right-wing groups.<sup>213</sup> It thereby skews its reporting, and public perceptions, of ideology-based threats to national security.

Progressives in the Democratic Party, now largely in control of President Biden's policy agenda, are pushing for institutional changes that will solidify leftist control of the country in several ways, including packing the Supreme Court with new justices who will, per critical legal theorists' advice, remake institutions that can advance and defend the progressive political agenda. Bills in Congress aim to alter "voting rights" to ensure Democrats' ability to "harvest" votes, a mostly legal form of voter fraud. Democrats expect that their efforts to make citizens out of undocumented immigrants of "color" will expand their voting tallies at white Republicans' expense, consistent with Soviet racial themes. Progressives want a massive expansion of the federal government, creating welfare programs that they expect will cement the political allegiance of persons happy with big personal entitlements to their vision of dominant government. This effort is consistent with the revolutionary leftist "Cloward-Piven strategy" of the 1960s—a plan to sharply increase welfare benefits and eligibility rolls, overload government's capacity to operate effectively, and then impose a socialist dictatorship as part of the government response to quell resulting unrest.<sup>214</sup> Progressives also want to cut defense spending drastically—a World Peace Council objective that appeals to Putin. Progressives rail at opposition to such radical proposals, by traditional American standards, claiming that

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“democracy” is under threat. They use the propaganda technique of “projection”—asserting that opponents want to do what they themselves aim to accomplish. Communists know they only have to win one election to establish a “people’s democracy.”

The country has divided culturally and politically into “red” and “blue” communities and states, further stoking social conflict. Although conservatives and centrists did well in scattered elections in 2021 and, as of this writing, were generally expected to do better in mid-term congressional elections in 2022, the electorate is fickle. Even if progressives lose in 2022, a large minority of the population, including a significant share of recent college graduates, university communities, and the press have adopted sharply leftist views and urge radical change in the U.S. The new DEI agenda is widespread in government and in corporations.<sup>215</sup> Furthermore, Americans have begun to talk openly about the possibility of civil war, something practically unheard of even when Obama was president.<sup>216</sup> Movement toward the disintegration the Soviets wanted has been considerable and seemingly has accelerated in recent years.

### **DOES THIS ASSESSMENT MAKE SENSE? WHAT COMES NEXT?**

**E**xtensively assessed by Americans who lament the changes noted above, these efforts also are defended or seen as innocuous by people who like or are fooled by them.<sup>217</sup> There are, however, no systematic assessments of the effects of Soviet active measures on the American polity.<sup>218</sup> This ignorance may be irrelevant if the U.S. is in such an advanced state of disintegration that inertia takes the country to the crisis of civil war or a coup featuring the arrest of leaders of the right, center, and even moderate left parts of the political spectrum. Former CIA Director John Brennan stated in January 2021 that Biden administration intelligence leaders “are moving in laser-like fashion to try to uncover as much as they can about” the pro-Trump “insurgency” that harbors “religious extremists, authoritarians, fascists, bigots, racists, nativists, even libertarians.”<sup>219</sup> While this view apparently does not now reflect widespread thinking in the Intelligence Community, it will change if leaders push this perspective strongly. Biden administration officials as I write are focusing on “domestic extremists,” defined as supporters of former President Trump.

These trends lead to other questions: Given that the Russians evidently still harbor Service A-like ambitions, what are they doing to achieve those goals? The KGB had limited abilities to measure the effectiveness of disinformation. Per Bittman, these included numbers of disinformation stories published outside of the Soviet Bloc and the amount of discussion generated, including the

political tone of such discussion.<sup>220</sup> The KGB and its East German partners assessed the MARS and PEACEWAR campaigns as having made “important contributions for the deepening and widening of the peace movement” in the West.<sup>221</sup> Operation DENVER and disinformation about Kennedy’s assassination also clearly worked well. The intelligence services sometimes knew how they had infiltrated and influenced targeted groups, and how the perceptions they managed supported Soviet interests. Elsewhere, success could be measured more indirectly, such as assessments of motives for votes in favor of Soviet positions at the United Nations.<sup>222</sup> However, active measures had not, evidently, disintegrated any national target by 1991, and the Soviets could not know for sure how much progress they had made in the U.S. Although some observers think Soviet leaders may have fooled themselves, the Bloc intelligence officers discussed herein unanimously asserted that their leaders thought political warfare campaigns were gradually achieving their goals. The best indicator of the accuracy of this view is that the Soviets devoted increasing resources to active measures in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>223</sup> Near the end of the Soviet era, KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov, who formerly directed the FCD, and FCD head Leonid Shebarshin pointedly expressed satisfaction with the achievements of the KGB’s active measures.<sup>224</sup>

Vladimir Putin and the former security officers who are now senior Russian officials surely know this history and thinking. As a KGB officer based in Dresden, East Germany, in the late 1980s, Putin reportedly worked active measures against West Germany.<sup>225</sup> The heightened use of active measures by Russia in the 2010s suggests strongly that Putin believes in their efficacy. In recent years the GRU and the Federal Security Service (FSB) successfully pursued long-standing Soviet campaign themes, including exploitation of racial divisions in the U.S., using the new technologies of cyber operations including posting disinformation on social media.<sup>226</sup>

In July 2022, the U.S. Justice Department charged Aleksandr Viktorovich Ionov with working with at least three other (unnamed) FSB officers from December 2014 to March 2022 to orchestrate “a years-long foreign malign influence campaign that used various U.S. political groups to sow discord, spread pro-Russian propaganda, and interfere in elections within the United States.”<sup>227</sup> The unnamed political groups are based in California, Florida, and Georgia. According to Justice, “Ionov provided financial support to the groups, directed them to publish pro-Russian propaganda, coordinated and funded direct action by these groups within the United States intended to further Russian interests, and coordinated coverage of this activity in Russian media outlets.”<sup>228</sup> After arranging a Russian-paid trip to Moscow in May 2015 for leaders of the Florida group, Ionov “exercised direction and control over senior members” of the group from 2015 to 2022. Press sources indicate this

group is the Uhuru Movement, a St. Petersburg-based arm of the revolutionary African People's Socialist Party.<sup>229</sup> The Georgia organization reportedly is the Atlanta-based, radical separatist Black Hammer Party.<sup>230</sup> The California group reportedly was a now-defunct a right-wing group that wanted California to secede from the union.<sup>231</sup> Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen concluded, "I onov allegedly orchestrated a brazen influence campaign, turning U.S. political groups and U.S. citizens into instruments of the Russian government."<sup>232</sup> These words nicely summarize the activities of *many* Soviet and Russian intelligence operatives, and of *many* cooperative American individuals and institutions, over *many* years. Justice talked tough about Ionov but did not indict any of his witting American collaborators.

The Russian state that largely continued Soviet practices in active measures using technologies unavailable to the KGB also seems to be pursuing Service A's ultimate objective—destruction of the United States as we know it.<sup>233</sup> Anderson, "The Chekist Takeover of the Russian State."

By many accounts, Putin wants revenge against the U.S., which he blames for what he has called the greatest political tragedy of the 20th century—the collapse of the Soviet empire. The United States and NATO also stand in the way of Russian success in Putin's war on Ukraine and potentially other territorial ambitions. Russia now faces a much more fragmented American adversary than the Soviets confronted. Putin, or a successor if the 2022 invasion of Ukraine or rumored health issues ultimately lead to his downfall, has many options to ensure the final success of the active measures program—internal collapse of the U.S. While undoubtedly not an exhaustive list, several schemes seem plausibly viable, alone or in combination:

- Do nothing. The disintegration program is well underway and may simply succeed on its own inertia with no new actions needed. Although Soviet communists wanted a socialist America, Russia now needs only destruction of the U.S.
- If Democrats badly lose upcoming elections, more work may be needed. Yet, the press, universities, and the Biden administration seem to have tools they need to disparage conservatives and buttress the convictions of progressives. A little more carefully targeted disinformation might help.
- The push for Donald Trump to run for president again in 2024 may be desirable. He is a lightning rod in the U.S., and another candidacy seems likely to ensure the victory of almost any Democrat who runs—Biden or someone else—and keep political tensions high. Hence, disinformation

that appeals to Trump's vanity and to his supporters could be useful.

- Continue to push the West on defense and other issues, increasing pressure on a weak Biden presidency under scrutiny from many directions. As I write, fighting in Ukraine continues. An inept U.S. response could give Ukraine to Putin or trigger more turmoil in Washington. On the other hand, Russian errors might further unify NATO against Russia, at least temporarily, or spark a wider, much more damaging war. It could lead to a coup in Moscow. Care is needed here.
- Finally, given that many knowledgeable observers think a new American civil war is a growing possibility, provoke violent confrontations that might take on lives of their own. Given the history of Americans' gullibility and fixation on real and imagined racism, a race-based confrontation might offer the best opportunity.

Under several scenarios, the success of the long Soviet/Russian active measures campaign now seems within reach. Knowing its history and character can help those who want it to succeed as well as those who oppose it. Time may now be short before a major, violent confrontation between ideologies occurs in the United States. If that happens, it will change the world. This article can be seen as a prognosis. I hope it also is read as a warning which updates Yuri Bezmenov's heartfelt *Love Letter to America*, written in 1984, which has been largely ignored for much too long.

#### NOTES

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<sup>4</sup> Yuri Bezmenov, *Love Letter to America*, <https://ia800602.us.archive.org/11/items/love-letter-america/love-letter-america.pdf>.

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<sup>6</sup> Anatoliy Golitsyn, *New Lies for Old* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990).

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- <sup>14</sup> Natalie Grant, *Disinformation: Soviet Political Warfare 1917-1992* (Washington: Leopoldis, 2020).
- <sup>15</sup> Thomas Rid, *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020).
- <sup>16</sup> Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984).
- <sup>17</sup> Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev, *The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America – The Stalin Era* (New York: Modern Library, 2000).
- <sup>18</sup> Rid, *Active Measures*, 9; Andrzej Krzak, "Operational Disinformation of Soviet Counterintelligence during the Cold War," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 35:2 (2022): 265-278.
- <sup>19</sup> Grant, *Disinformation*, 20, 149.
- <sup>20</sup> Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 1, 7-9; Rid, *Active Measures*, 317.
- <sup>21</sup> Rid, *Active Measures*, 313-317; Grant, *Disinformation*, 35-36.
- <sup>22</sup> Grant, *Disinformation*; Rid, *Active Measures*, 17-32.
- <sup>23</sup> Rid, *Active Measures*, 316; Pacepa and Rychlak, *Disinformation*, 96.
- <sup>24</sup> Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB*, 65, 234, 258; Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 1-2, 8.
- <sup>25</sup> Rid, *Active Measures*, 25; Gioe et al., "The Soviet Legacy of Active Measures," 523-524.
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- <sup>38</sup> Golitsyn, *New Lies for Old*, 23.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.
- <sup>40</sup> Rid, *Active Measures*, 128; Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB*, 462-464.
- <sup>41</sup> Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation*, 1-2, 46; Max Holland, "The Propagation and Power of Communist Security Services *Dezinformatsia*," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 19:1 (2006): 6-8.
- <sup>42</sup> Levchenko, *On the Wrong Side*, 204-205.
- <sup>43</sup> Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation*, 8, 70.
- <sup>44</sup> Rid, *Active Measures*, 121, 196-197, 424.
- <sup>45</sup> Earley, *Comrade J*, 195.
- <sup>46</sup> Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 31.
- <sup>47</sup> Rid, *Active Measures*, 313.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.
- <sup>49</sup> Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*, 245.
- <sup>50</sup> Timothy Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17:2 (2004): 237-256.
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- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.
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- <sup>56</sup> Pacepa and Rychlak, *Disinformation*, 95.
- <sup>57</sup> Levchenko, *On the Wrong Side*, 64.
- <sup>58</sup> Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB*, 22, 616; Earley, *Comrade J*, 36.
- <sup>59</sup> Bezmenov, *Love Letter to America*, 3.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 30; Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation*, 77, 81; Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB*, 503.
- <sup>62</sup> Bezmenov, *Love Letter to America*, 31.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-47.
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 32; Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 55-57.
- <sup>65</sup> Pacepa and Rychlak, *Disinformation*, 34.
- <sup>66</sup> Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military," 237-256.
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- <sup>70</sup> Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation*, 2; Rid, *Active Measures*, 160.
- <sup>71</sup> Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation*, 2.
- <sup>72</sup> Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB*, 462-464.
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- <sup>74</sup> Ibid., 628.
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid., 629.
- <sup>76</sup> Holland, "The Propagation and Power of Communist Security Services *Dezinformatsia*," 1-31, Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB*, 31, 78-79.
- <sup>77</sup> Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB*, 629.
- <sup>78</sup> Kalugin, *The First Directorate*, 36.
- <sup>79</sup> Kalugin, *Spymaster*, 54.
- <sup>80</sup> Pacepa and Rychlak, *Disinformation*, 145; Rid, *Active Measures*, 140-141; Kalugin, *The First Directorate*, 53-54.
- <sup>81</sup> Kalugin, *The First Directorate*, 52-53.
- <sup>82</sup> Rid, *Active Measures*, 332.
- <sup>83</sup> Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB*, 81-82.
- <sup>84</sup> Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 112; Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB*, 187, 242.
- <sup>85</sup> Levchenko, *On the Wrong Side*, 238-239.
- <sup>86</sup> Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*, 440-445.
- <sup>87</sup> Ibid., 441.
- <sup>88</sup> Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation*, 59.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid., 61, 96; Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 37-38.
- <sup>90</sup> Abrams, "Beyond Propaganda"; Gioe et al., "The Soviet Legacy of Active Measures"; Rid, *Active Measures*, 354.
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- <sup>95</sup> Daniel Rosenberg, "From Crisis to Split: The Communist Party USA, 1989-1991," *American Communist History* 39 (2019): 54.
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- <sup>110</sup> Rid, *Active Measures*, 262, 265.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid., 280.
- <sup>112</sup> Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 117.
- <sup>113</sup> Rid, *Active Measures*, 280, 417-418.
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