



KGB: The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev

Christopher M. Andrew , Oleg Gordievsky

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The international bestseller critically acclaimed as "undoubtedly the most important book ever written on Soviet espionage."--San Francisco Chronicle.

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From Reader Review KGB: The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev for online ebook

Erik Graff says

Andrew is a clear, well-researched, but rather dry author of books on the history of espionage. Soviet turncoat Gordievsky, listed as his co-author, did not actually write any of this volume, but did serve as a consultant and source of much 'current' (pre-1990) inside dope about the KGB's operations.

As might be expected, the story of the KGB is a depressing one. Like our own CIA, but often on a vaster scale, it has a sordid history, particularly during the Stalin era.

Going as far as 1990, during the Gorbachev reforms, the story ends on an upbeat note. Sadly, shortly thereafter there was the failed abduction of Gorbachev and the Yeltsin coup in Russia made possible by the breakup of the Soviet Union. The rise of Putin within the KGB occurs after this account ends.

Flapane says

Un mattone. Nondimeno, molto interessante, in particolar modo la storia che va dalla WWII alla Perestrojka.

J.M. says

A complete and compelling history of a secret organization, co-written by a defector. This made for a great read, even if its later chapters are conspicuously outdated-- this was published right as the Soviet Union was beginning to disintegrate. The anecdotes and reflections on how the government and intelligence services of Soviet Union actually viewed the West, and the details of their conspiracy-theory mindset, made it extremely interesting. This read like a story lurking behind familiar facts, a secret layer of history.

Lis says

Pesante.

Il libro tratta la storia del KGB dalla Rivoluzione di Ottobre all'ascesa di Gorbaciov basandosi su una serie di documenti trafugati da un colonnello del KGB che ha defezionato nel 1985

Pesante.

Il tutto è molto dettagliato, anche troppo. E' ottimo per sapere quale spia era controllata da quale agente, magari anche quali erano le sue preferenze sessuali o come è stata reclutata. Interessante anche alcuni dettagli della vita operativa e alcuni episodi curiosi.

Spesso però questi dettagli estremi non sono accompagnati da una visione più d'insieme: quali "danni/benefici" veri hanno portato i documenti rubati o le azioni intraprese?

Pesante.

E' un buon testo anche per vedere la storia del secolo scorso da un altro punto di vista, in particolare come l'URSS vedeva il resto del mondo e come si sentiva sempre al centro di un complotto internazionale.

Ho già detto che è pesante?

Elaine says

I thought this was going to be boring. It wasn't. An inside look at one of the worlds oldest and most brutal spy organizations

Armen Chakmakjian says

Long and ponderous.

Celik Celiku says

A book that tells realisticly the comunist system in all estern European countries, especialy in Albania.

Thank you to authors.

Ironman Ninetytwo says

Encyclopedic in scope and fairly balanced in the retelling, ultimately there were too many names and eras to keep it all straight in my head. I guess the one theme that comes through is the self-destructive paranoia of the Soviet leadership, starting under Stalin, but continuing effective for the entire time period (1917-1990 or so).

A couple other highlights: The perfume in the early 50s, run by Molotov's wife, called "Stalin's Breath". How delicious.

And this highly relevant anecdote (page 463): "One of Agayants's first targets as head of Department D in 1959 was West Germany, which the KGB sought to portray as riddled with neo-Nazis. To test one of his 'active measures' before trying it in Germany, Agayants sent a group of his officers to a village about fifty miles from Moscow with instructions to daub swastikas, paint anti-Jewish slogans, and kick over tombstones under cover of darkness. KGB informers in the village reported that though the incident alarmed most inhabitants, a small anti-Semitic minority had been inspired to imitate the KGB provocation and commit anti-Jewish acts of their own."

"During the winter of 1959-60 Agayants used the same technique with great success in West Germany. East German agents were dispatched to the West to deface Jewish memorials, synagogues, and shops, and to paint anti-Semitic slogans. Local hooligans and neo-Nazis then spontaneously continued the KGB campaign..."

Chris Schaffer says

I was more interested in the early days of the Cheka in the Stalin era as well as the Stalin era and WWII Cambridge Five era and the latter years 1970-to the end of the Soviet Union. In that respect it was a good read. I skimmed a lot of the middle part. Very dense. But cool stuff on the KGB's operations in Europe and Scandinavia in the '70s.
