



IN HIS DEFECTOR HE TRUSTED

Gérald Arboit

► **To cite this version:**

| Gérald Arboit. IN HIS DEFECTOR HE TRUSTED. 2007. <hal-01152762>

HAL Id: hal-01152762

<https://hal.science/hal-01152762v1>

Submitted on 18 May 2015

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 - Attribution - Non-commercial use - ShareAlike - International License

**In his defector he trusted
How the CIA Counterintelligence Staff
broke the Western intelligence community for ten years,
1962-1973**

Gérald ARBOIT
Centre français de recherche sur le Renseignement
Paris
Université Robert Schuman
Strasbourg

No process is as old and simple as that of intelligence: using a defector to obtain information from the “other side”, especially in the case of a closed political system such as the Soviet Regime. In the first twenty years of the Cold War, the CIA was not very familiar with this game¹. Reasons were diverse: its inability to operate in the USSR before 1961, because of the opposition of the State Department; the strong control of the KGB in the Soviet territory, that made it quite impossible for an American to operate freely, and on the Soviet people during Stalin’s era. A logical consequence were the technical programs devised by the CIA to obtain Signal and Image Intelligence data. At the same time, the CIA was the object of many suspicions and attacks in the USA due to the fact that it remained a permanent intelligence agency, even in peacetime². Following revelations of major soviet infiltrations in Roosevelt’s administrations and Donovan’s set, the second “Red Scare”, organised by Senator Joseph McCarthy, and led by John Edgar Hoover’s FBI, the CIA was a firm target. In a way, the main attack that happened was not against Cord Meyer, in the summer of 1953, when he was accused of being a communist; it was more against Harold Adrian Russell (Kim) Philby, a Special Intelligence Service liaison with the CIA between 1949 and 1951. Both were close friends of James J. Angleton³, who was soon to become the first and most powerful Counterintelligence director of the next twenty years.

This is a sketchy background of what was in essence the biggest failure inside the Western Intelligence Community to have occurred during the Cold War, between 1963 and 1974. The main character of this classical tragedy should not be omitted: the KGB agent resident in Helsinki, Major Anatoliy Mikhaylovich Golitsyn⁴. His appearance, on December 1961, marked the beginning of a series of three conflicts:

- the first was linked to finding the elusive Sasha, a mole inside the CIA;

¹ In November 1952, GRU lieutenant colonel Piotr Semionovich Popov was recruited in Vienna to become a “defector *in situ*”, where he was betrayed by George Blake in October 1959. In January 1954, MVD lieutenant colonel Yuri Rastvorov left the residence of Tokyo to surrender first to the MI6, then, not having confidence in the agents escorting him to the airport (they drank and spoke about Philby), to the CIA. One month later, Nikolai Khokhlov, MVD’s killer, did not carry out the murder for which he had been sent to Frankfurt, while Piotr Deriabine, of the MVD Ist Board of directors (foreign Information), changed camp in Vienna, from where he was transferred to Washington and was debriefed by Richard Kovich. Finally, Vladimir and Evdokia Petrovs deserted in Canberra, in April 1954. Five years later, a returned Polish intelligence officer, Mikel Goleniewski, defected *in situ* in Washington. In June, the Soviet Navy captain Nikolai Fedorovich Artamonov, and his fiancé Ewa Gora, went to Sweden. “Undoubtedly, the most important informant that the CIA had for years”, noted James Angleton in the summer of 1961, was the Colonel of the GRU Oleg Penkovski. The Agency managed him with British MI6, but could not prevent the Soviets from arresting him in October 1962.

² Arthur B. Darling, *The Central Intelligence Agency: An Instrument of Government, to 1950* (University Park, PA, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990); Michael Warner, “Salvage and Liquidation. The Creation of the Central Intelligence Group”, *Studies in Intelligence*, Fall 1995.

³ Gérald Arboit, *James Angleton, le contre-espion de la CIA* (Paris, Nouveau Monde, 2007), Tom Mangold, *Cold Warrior. James Jesus Angleton: the CIA’s Master Spy Hunter* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1991); David C. Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors: Intrigue, Deception, and the Secrets that Destroyed Two of the Cold War’s Most Important Agents* (New York, Harper & Row, 1980; Boston, The Lyons Press, 2003), Robin W Winks, *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939-1961* (New York, Morrow, 1987).

⁴ Ennis Jerry D., « Anatoli Golitsyn : Long-time CIA Agent ? », *Intelligence and National Security*, February 2006, vol. 21, n° 1, pp. 26-45.

- the second concerned a "master plan" devised by Angleton and based on information from Golitsyn, followed by an Intelligence Fundamentalist Brotherhood in the Western Hemisphere;
- the third I will discuss in conclusive remarks, and will serve to remind us that intelligence remains a human matter, with all its fragility and its possibilities of success or error...

Seeking Sasha

The first conflict occurred when Golitsyn made his first major revelation: a mole known as Sasha had been operating inside the European branch of the CIA, before being transferred to Washington. Through this allegation, the Soviet defector became a tool of the Counterintelligence Staff (CIS), and the US intelligence services (CIA Soviet Russia Division, DIA, FBI) allowed this to happen because of his relative insignificance. From this moment on, Angleton provoked a major change in his situation, and on the CIS mission as a whole. In fact, ruling defectors were not part of his job; this involved Soviet Russia Division operations, with the CIS only intervening to render it *bona fide*. Until Golitsyn, the CIS mission, as defined by Angleton in the *Clandestine Services Institution* n° 70/1 revised in 1955, was to protect the Agency from infiltration and to identify threats. After him, an operational authority was required but this would be rendered fragile, as the quest for Sasha demonstrated.

According to Golitsyn, Sasha came from Eastern Europe, worked in Western Germany and his name began with a "K". Angleton was informed of this information on 22 December 1961, seven days after Golitsyn's defection. On 6 January 1962, fifteen days later, he was in a position to identify Sasha, or, so he thought. In fact, his CIA personal file review, which took place during the Christmas holidays, showed that Serge Peter Karlov, born Klibansky, was the ideal suspect. He responded to all the criteria laid down by Golitsyn: he was a former OSS agent; a white Russian immigrant; he operated in Germany; and, above all, his initial matched. Neither the CIS nor any other CIA division had the means of prosecuting him. Sasha's file was passed onto the FBI, who carried out the entire investigation. Unfortunately, in June 1963, Peter Karlov was cleared of all suspicion. However, his career was ruined and he had to leave the Agency. He only became fully rehabilitated in 1988 ... New investigations, with Golitsyn's support, brought forward a better suspect, Igor Grigorievich Orlov, also known as Alexandr Grigorievich Kopatzky, and who had the same profile as Karlov. However, he had left the Agency before Golitsyn defected to become a driver for the *Washington Post*, delivering newspapers. Angleton could not believe that this simple man could be Sasha, nor could it really be the NKVD captain Alexandr Ivanovich Navratilov ... By the way, he had not been in active service since he arrived in the United States⁵.

From this moment, the Sasha question would haunt Angleton⁶. Reinterpreting Golitsyn's stories, he decided to search inside the Soviet Russia Division where the mole was. In November 1964, he ran a joint operation with FBI called HONETOL, an acronym of Hoover and Anatoliy (Golitsyn). But, the FBI director rapidly understood that their search was futile. In April 1965, he left Angleton to his quest and kept the FBI out of the operation. Inside the CIA, this five month molehunt caused serious damage, but the molehunt would last only till 1974. The main victim was certainly KGB lieutenant colonel Yuri Ivanovich Nosenko, who was certainly a better informed defector than Golitsyn. However, he came on the scene at a bad moment as the CIA did not want to hear the information he had gleaned. President Kennedy had just been shot and the Lee Harvey Oswald trip to the USSR was deemed suspicious. Angleton was sure that Oswald was a Soviet agent yet Nosenko refuted this claim⁷. In the CIS director's opinion, the unique reason for the defector's attitude was that he was a

⁵ David E. Murphy, « Sasha Who ? », *Intelligence and National Security*, January 1993, vol. 8, n° 1, (*CIRA Newsletter*, vol. 18, n° 3, Fall 1993, pp. 21-25) and « The Hunt for Sasha Is Over », *CIRA Newsletter* 25, n° 3, winter 2000, pp. 11-15.

⁶ The real Sasha was an Army intelligence officer, recruited by KGB resident in Germany Mikhail Alexandrovich Chaliapine because of his expansive German mistress. In 1961, he was promoted in Washington. Five years later, he failed to his annual polygraph examination. As there were no real proof he was a mole, he resign and was never prosecute [Andrew Christopher, Gordiewsky, *Le KGB dans le monde 1917-1990* (Paris, Fayard, 1990), pp. 471 and 713 n. 176].

⁷ Nosenko revelations re-opened inside the CIA all kind of conspiracy theory that have just been turned down...

fake. Had he not in fact lied about his real KGB rank? Did he give new and complete data? Why didn't he know informations available to his rank and know those who were not? From the Sasha perspective as well as in light of the Philby deception, he appeared to be part of a Soviet deception operation aimed at ruining Golitsyn's credibility. All the agents who gave their support to Nosenko in the Soviet Russia Division, such as Richard Kovich, began once again to focus on Angleton and his intelligence fundamentalist brotherhood inside the Special Investigation Group, a particular branch of the CIS.

Nearly one hundred agents, particularly white Russians like Vasia Gmirkin, saw their careers ruined by Angleton's prosecution. Human intelligence activities against the Soviet Bloc were ceased and productive activities were inhibited for long periods of time. The damage to morale lasted longer, however, with about twenty defectors from the Soviet intelligence service finding it impossible to establish their *bona fide* reputations to the satisfaction of the CIS or the Soviet Russia Division. Some were simply betrayed, like Yuri Nikalaievich Loginov. Defectors from other services became suspects, like two from the FBI, Viktor Lesiovski (Fedora) and Igor Kochnov (Kittyhawk). In 1970, Hoover cut off all links with the CIS⁸.

The Master Plan

This particular atmosphere created between 1962-1964 by the Sasha hunt quickly spread through the entire Western intelligence community. At the beginning of 1963, just after Philby's defection to USSR, a new Golitsyn revelation globalised the molehunt. The Soviet defector told Angleton he had taken part in an intelligence meeting in May 1959, organised by the new KGB director, Alexandr Nikolaievich Chelepine. A long-term deception plan had been presented which would “*affect the basic capacity of thinking of the enemy*”. The KGB D Department, in charge of disinformation and secret action, had the responsibility of “*active measure*”: to subvert the CIA by controlling key officials within it and with certain Soviet Russia Division officers, to undermine confidence in Agency leaders and the CIA's Soviet experts, to penetrate those western services less prepared for this kind of action, and to deceive western public opinion by controlling key leaders.

This “master plan”, based on closely reasoned arguments, appeared monstrous to Angleton and his friends in the Western intelligence community. Even if the threat were real, and in their intelligence fundamentalist mind's it was, the CIS could not accept the news. Between April and September 1962, Western intelligence services visited Golitsyn. The Soviet defector also went abroad, to Britain in 1963 and Norway in 1966. He spoke to the British about “Elli”, a GRU mole “*in the Five of MI*”, which began a molehunt even more pernicious than that of Sasha; Prime Minister James Wilson⁹ and Sir Roger Hollis, MI5 general director, were suspected¹⁰. Golitsyn also confirmed that William John Vassal, a Navy intelligence officer, was in fact “Gregory”, identified a year previously by Polish defector, Mikel Goleniewski, and exposed Philby's treason in 1945 in Turkey¹¹. In Norway, he helped with the prosecution of Ingeborg Lygren, the personal secretary of the *Forsvarets Etterretningstjeneste*¹² director, Vilhelm Evang. As she worked in Moscow for the CIA officer Richard Kovich, suspected to be Sasha, she became a suspect for Angleton in November 1964. After she was jailed, the Norwegian authorities founded no real evidence of her treason and swiftly released her. To prevent a complete breakdown of his accusations, Angleton invited Asbjørn Bryhn, *Politiets*

⁸ David Wise, *Molehunt : The Secret Search for Traitors That Shattered the CIA* (New York, Random House, 1992); David Robarge, « Moles, Defectors, and Deceptions : James Angleton and CIA Counterintelligence », *Journal of Intelligence History*, winter 2003, vol. 3, n° 2.

⁹ Stephan Dorril, Robin Ramsay, *Smears. Wilson and the Secret State* (London, Grafton, 1992).

¹⁰ In fact, there were two “Elli”: the first, Kay Willsher, had been arrested in March 1946 after the Igor Gouzenko defection in Canada, six months previously; the second saw his identity revealed in 1981: he was a Blunt recruit of 1935, Leonard Henry (Leo) Long, inactive since 1946.

¹¹ In September 1945, Philby was sent to Istanbul to exfiltrate the NKGB resident Konstantin Volkov, who wanted to defect. However, he arrived two days after Volkov had been sent to Moscow ... Before leaving London, Philby had informed his controller, Boris Krotov, of the Volkov case [Bruce Page, David Leitch, Phillip Knightey, *Philby, the Spy who Betrayed a Generation* (London, Deutsch, 1968), pp. 170-178].

¹² The Norwegian foreign intelligence service.

Overvåkingstjeneste chief¹³, then the chief judge, Jens Mellbye, in Langley and Golitsyn visited the Norwegian intelligence community. In vain... Ingeborg Lygren became fully rehabilitated in May 1967.

As in the quest for Sasha, information delivered by the Soviet defector, in Britain or in Norway, was too incomplete to be truly useful. He said nothing about Anthony Blunt, the last unknown Magnificent Five and never mentioned Gunvor Galtung Haavik, who was the real Norwegian mole and who was finally arrested in January 1977 ... It was the same story with the NATO mole, an associate of the French Sapphire network (five or six KGB and GRU agents infiltrated in the French intelligence services and government), because of a lack of information. Georges Pâques, the NATO press deputy director, was jailed after he admitted to spying for the Soviets; however, he had not been in active service before 1962, one year after Golitsyn's defection. His arrest was not the result of Golitsyn's information, but rather a question of chance for the DST¹⁴. The mole concerned was thought to be French only because he spoke French and because of the bad reputation of the French services in the CIA¹⁵. In fact, he was a French Canadian economist, Hugh George Hambleton, who worked for NATO between 1956 and 1961; he was arrested by the British police in June 1982. The Pâques affair instigated the desegregation of the French intelligence outfit. No Sapphire was found in France, but three major SDECE¹⁶ leaders, Colonel Léonard Hounau, research director, Georges Barazer de Lannurien, general director's principal private secretary, and René Delseny, who debriefed Golitsyn in spring 1962, saw their careers ruined. The reason for Angleton's anger was the French spying programme aimed at stealing US atomic secrets¹⁷ ...

In the Norwegian and French cases, these mole affairs stirred up a little bit more hatred between domestic and military/external intelligence services, when there was not threatened liaison with the CIA CIS for at least ten years. It was not the case in Britain, where the Intelligence fundamentalist brotherhood gained a few recruits in MI5 (Arthur Martin, Soviet espionage section chief) and MI6 (Maurice Oldfield, Stephen Arthur de Mowbray, who served in Washington during the 1960s). But above all, Britain was part of the US defense system and this special relationship was mirrored in the intelligence domain, and in the Angleton "*monster plan*", Britain was a close ally. It took place within the CAZAB network, which was seen to enlarge and centralise Western counterintelligence activities on the UKUSA Sigint model. Leaders of Canadian, Australian, New-Zealander, American and British counterintelligence services decided to meet every eighteen months to share strategical information. The first meeting took place in Melbourne in 1967¹⁸ and, for Angleton, this liaison was a means of prosecuting moles overseas. Everyone who had been in contact with Nosenko or one of his case officers, for one reason or another, became a suspect. Leslie James Bennett, a counterintelligence (B Branch) deputy-director in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, criticised the Angleton molehunt and consequently saw his own career collapse (1964-1972)¹⁹ ...

The failure

The molehunt that occurred between 1964-1974 inside the Western intelligence community had its origins in the US intelligence community. Of course, there were real mole affairs, in Germany²⁰, in

¹³ The Norwegian domestic intelligence service.

¹⁴ Direction de la surveillance du territoire [Directorate of Territorial Surveillance], the French domestic intelligence agency.

¹⁵ Charles Cogan, « Une vision américaine du renseignement français », Pierre Lacoste (dir.), *Le Renseignement à la française* (Paris, Economica, 1998), pp. 579-593, and, « American-French Intelligence Relations and the French Nuclear Deterrent », *Journal of Intelligence History*, vol. 3, n° 1, été 2003..

¹⁶ Service de documentation extérieure et de contre-espionnage [External Documentation and Counter-Espionage Service] was France's external intelligence agency from November 6, 1944 to April 2, 1982 when it was replaced by the Direction générale de la sécurité extérieure.

¹⁷ Claude Faure, *Aux Services de la République. Du BCRA à la DGSE* (Paris, Fayard, 2004), pp. 366-382.

¹⁸ Followed, during the Angleton directorship, Wellington (1969), New York (1970), Ottawa (1972), London (1974).

¹⁹ Reg Whitaker, « Spies Who Might Have Been: Canada and the Myth of Cold War Counterintelligence », *Intelligence and National Security*, October 1997, vol. 12, n° 4, pp. 25-43.

²⁰ The BND Soviet division chief, Heinz Felfe, was arrested in December 15th, 1961. Followed other affairs between 1968 and 1974, which the most important was Gunter Guillaume.

Sweden²¹, in France²²... But molehunts were in fact sides of the same coin, with the cause lying in the mole affairs inside the NSA and the Army during the 1950s, as in the CIA's lack of human intelligence in Soviet Russia, after the Popov and Penkovsky treasons, and its intellectual image of the “other side”. Until the 1980s, the USSR was a kind of inverted USA as concerns US intelligence analysts²³, which was why Angleton trusted Golitsyn far more than those, both inside and outside the CIA, thought necessary to do.

These intelligence clashes came at a particular moment in the Agency's history. The Kennedy assassination two years after the aborted Bay of Pigs invasion, created a surreal climate inside the CIA. Most of its officers had to leave the service. Angleton was one of the last leader, with Sherman Kent, from the Office of National Estimate, nominated during the Eisenhower administration. He was an authority on counterintelligence, especially for newcomers such as the director of Central Intelligence (DCI), John McCoy (1961-1965), but also for old colleagues, such as DCI Richard Helms (1966-1973)²⁴. This protection disappeared with the nomination of his old enemy William Colby in various high level post in Langley (1971-1974)... However, Angleton was also weakened by his own split. Philby's defection in January 1963 provoked deep shocks. He had not only lost a close friend but he had suddenly realised that everything in which he had trusted since World War II was mere illusion. He thought that his beloved London X-2, the OSS counterintelligence branch²⁵, had never been penetrated by Soviet intelligence ... Until he realised that Philby, who served in the British counterpart, was the very mole he never wanted to trust.

Angleton was forty-six when Golitsyn appeared in his life; he was since seven years the CIA Counterintelligence Staff director and had known many mole affairs... This climate made him living an isolated life by choice but also by obligation. His vision of the Cold War was that of an historical actualisation of World War II. He considered reality on the basis of a world which had been rebuilt for his own psychological needs. When he learned about the possible infiltration, he changed the possible into the certain and he encountered the same disillusion with Golitsyn. However, according to Dr John Gittinger, a CIA psychologist, the Soviet defector was in reality paranoid...

The only mole ever found inside the CIA was arrested in 1994 by FBI. Richard Ames joined the Agency in 1986, two years after Angleton died, twelve years after the end of the Intelligence fundamentalist brotherhood's molehunt who disorganised the Western intelligence community...

²¹ In June 20th, 1963, Swedish Air Force colonel, Stig Wennerström, was arrested as a spy.

²² After military attaché Louis Guilbaud suicide, in July 1962, and the sexual affair of President de Gaulle Moscow Ambassador, Maurice Dejean, revealed in February 1964, the Soviet defector Evgueni Runge offered to Angleton the Rumanian network in Western Europe, run from the Parisian embassy by Mihail Caraman.

²³ Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Secrecy. The American Experience* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998).

²⁴ Thomas Power, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets : Richard Helms and the CIA* (New York, Pocket Books, 1981).

²⁵ Naftali Timothy J., « ARTIFICE: James Angleton and X-2 Operations in Italy », George C. Chalou, (dir.), *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II* (Washington, National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), pp. 199-211.