

Inside the perfidious Col. Oleg Gordievsky

by Jeffrey Steinberg

KGB: The Inside Story

by Oleg Gordievsky and Christopher Andrew
HarperCollins, New York, 1990
776 pages, hardbound, \$29.95

In November 1981, the American statesman and intellectual author of the Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., wrote a memorandum to a select group of American and Soviet officials. In the memo, LaRouche warned that a malthusian, world-federalist faction, centered in the City of London, was out to destabilize both the United States and the Soviet Union through a variety of cultural and psychological warfare tricks. The logic behind the malthusians' campaign was that it would be impossible to impose a "new world order" to replace the nation-state unless the world's two superpowers were both subverted.

LaRouche wrote that in the nuclear era, the option of a manipulated Third World War was considered too radical a solution, and that the late Lord Bertrand Russell had proposed an alternative course of action, emphasizing cultural subversion. In the West, particularly the United States, that subversion was associated with the rock-drug-sex counterculture and with the absurd "post-industrial society" paradigm. In the Soviet Union, the scheme was principally associated with the zero growth Club of Rome, its offshoot, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, and with the penetration of Edgar Bronfman's so-called "cosmopolitan" friends within the international apparatus of the communist movement.

As an antidote to this Russellite subversion, LaRouche

proposed that the United States and the Soviet Union collaborate to defeat their common adversary through a series of joint projects aimed at advancing the scientific, industrial, agricultural, and infrastructural development of all nations. The November 1981 memorandum made specific reference to directed energy technologies, foreshadowing LaRouche's later focus upon joint U.S.-Soviet Strategic Defense Initiative deployment.

The memorandum also warned that both American and Soviet policy-shaping institutions had been deeply penetrated by agents of the malthusian world-federalist cause and that such agents would go to great lengths to subvert the cause of better Soviet-American relations, strengthening a system of stable nation-states based on economic progress.

It was from the vantage point of this prescient document and a fairly detailed knowledge of the subsequent role of Lyndon LaRouche as an unofficial back channel between the Reagan White House and the Soviets on SDI and related matters, that this reviewer read Oleg Gordievsky's history of the KGB as told to British intelligence historian Christopher Andrew.

Prior to the publication of *KGB—The Inside Story*, Gordievsky had already achieved notoriety as one of the highest-ranking KGB field agents to successfully defect to the West. By his own accounts, Gordievsky first began working for the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) in 1973, while posted as a KGB agent at the Soviet Embassy in Oslo. In June 1985, at the time of his arrest by Soviet authorities, Gordievsky had been named the KGB's chief resident at the critical London base. He was ostensibly summoned back to Moscow from London for his final clearances and briefings before taking charge of the London station at the time of his detention. Somehow (Gordievsky refuses to disclose any

details) the top KGB field hand, with the aid of British SIS networks inside the Soviet Union, managed to escape to England in November 1985. He has been since put forward by British intelligence as an authoritative eyewitness on KGB and Soviet government actions throughout the Reagan era. Indeed, Gordievsky has been described as one of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's most crucial sources of information and advice on Soviet matters.

A more accurate description might be that Oleg Gordievsky has functioned as one of British intelligence's most useful tools in subverting the potential of Soviet-American anti-malthusian collaboration envisioned in Lyndon LaRouche's 1981 memo, as well as in a number of published locations.

In this context, Gordievsky's book only bears reading from the perspective that it is a classic piece of British disinformation aimed at concealing Perfidious Albion's leading role in subverting the SDI.

Oleg Gordievsky first grabbed headlines several years ago when he surfaced in London with the hair-raising claim that in the autumn of 1983, the Soviet Union was about to launch a preemptive nuclear strike against the United States. According to Gordievsky, the Andropov leadership was so paranoid and misinformed about the Reagan administration, that it had erroneously concluded that the United States was about to uncork its nuclear arsenal against Moscow. Rather than wait for an American first strike, the U.S.S.R. would launch first.

By Gordievsky's account, the Andropov regime had reached these false apocalyptic conclusions on the basis of President Reagan's March 23, 1983 televised address in which he announced the SDI policy—including the offer to jointly develop and deploy a strategic defense shield with the Soviet Union. Hardly a *casus belli*. In fact, as early as December 1981, while Andropov was running the KGB and Leonid Brezhnev was still ruling the Kremlin, both the KGB and Red Army's intelligence units were ordered to place top priority on Operation RYAN, a technical intelligence program aimed at detecting early warning signs of an American preemptive attack, according to Gordievsky.

Torpedoing the SDI

According to several former White House sources, in October 1983, Oleg Gordievsky—still a British double-agent in place within the London KGB base—delivered a 50-page memo to his SIS controllers sounding the alarm that Andropov was about to push the nuclear button. The memo shortly followed the Soviet downing of Korean Airlines flight 007. The Gordievsky memo found its way directly into President Reagan's hands: Its purpose was to scare the President into backing off from his SDI proposal.

At the time these events were playing out, Judge William Clark was in the process of leaving his post as national security adviser to President Reagan. Ever mindful that the President was a continuous target of political manipulation, lob-

bing, and disinformation—especially with respect to U.S.-Soviet military relations—Clark had set up a National Security Council staff screening system to provide Reagan with background information, biographical material, and commentaries on all sensitive papers. For reasons and by route unknown, the Gordievsky document bypassed this screen and landed in President Reagan's lap without comment or accompanying warning about the dubious profile of its author.

At about the same time that the Gordievsky scare story reached President Reagan's desk, a series of letters from Margaret Thatcher also argued for the President to either abandon or drastically scale down the SDI.

It is not clear precisely what impact the Gordievsky hoax had on President Reagan. By his own accounts in his recently published autobiography (*An American Life*, Simon and Schuster, New York) Reagan took Gordievsky's claim, that Andropov believed the United States was about to launch a war, at face value—but proceeded to reassure Andropov personally that the U.S. had no such plans or intentions.

It is in the very essence of psychological warfare that effective operations are not always measurable with landmarks, but rather by nuances and tilts. Combined with other efforts aimed at undercutting President Reagan's resolve to end the era of Mutually Assured Destruction, the Gordievsky caper may have been a key contributing piece.

Regardless of the ultimate impact on President Reagan's future negotiating posture toward Moscow, certain things are clear. Gordievsky's characterization of the Andropov leadership as a collection of paranoids ready to push the button at the drop of a phrase was intentionally misleading. In the autumn of 1983, the Soviet Union was not in a position to fight and win an all-out thermonuclear exchange with the United States. And without an assurance of victory, within an acceptable level of casualties, the Soviets would not have gone to war.

Psy-war made in London

Gordievsky's portrait served the interests of precisely those London-centered malthusian world-federalist circles who stood to lose the most by Soviet-American SDI collaboration and the consequent joint economic development. Whether or not Operation RYAN ever existed, Oleg Gordievsky's rendition of events was a made-in-London piece of strategic psy-war. As such it offers a useful piece of clinical documentation for the serious student of intelligence-world methods and procedures. Gordievsky's *KGB: The Inside Story* is not real history—at least with respect to some of the crucial events of recent decades in which the author was a player.

Gordievsky's fairy tale of imminent nuclear holocaust had necessarily to be draped in a certain amount of truth. It is unlikely, however, that the other "bombshell" in the Gordievsky-Andrew effort, the identification of the "Fifth

Man” in the Kim Philby spy ring, is any more accurate than the Operation RYAN story.

It may very well be that John Cairncross was, as Oleg Gordievsky reports, recruited as a Soviet spy by Guy Burgess, while the widely traveled British government senior official was an undergraduate at Cambridge. Cairncross, now in his eighties and living in retirement in France, was not, however, the last of the Philbyite recruits. By offering up the authoritative identification of Cairncross as the “Fifth Man,” Gordievsky with equal “authority” cleared such top British figures as Lord Victor Rothschild and former MI-5 head Roger Hollis of long-held suspicions that they too were working for Moscow as part of the Philbyite cell. Gordievsky’s unequivocal statement that the KGB had no agents inside British intelligence or anywhere else in the British government bureaucracy during his entire time in London base, defies credibility.

Whether the readers of this review decide to plow through the 700-plus pages of this fictionalized account of the KGB and its Chekist antecedents or not, they will be well advised to take note of Gordievsky.

He claims the dubious distinction of having advised both Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachov on each other’s pécadillos prior to their first fateful meeting in December 1984, on the eve of Gorbachov’s coming to power in Moscow. British intelligence has by no means worn out this tool, and we will be no doubt hearing from Oleg Gordievsky again.

When ‘family’ comes before country

by Pamela Lowry

The Lees of Virginia: Seven Generations of an American Family

by Paul C. Nagel
Oxford University Press, New York, 1990
332 pages, hardcover, \$24.95

There are moments, in the midst of burgeoning personal details provided about scores of members of Virginia’s Lee family, over hundreds of years, when the reader is prompted to ask: “What is the point of all this?” Although the Lees were major figures in many of the nation’s crucial events,

the author states in his foreword, “The family’s public experiences . . . must serve mainly as a backdrop since my emphasis is on what the Lees meant to one another.” Ironically, with all the sometimes tedious detail, what keeps this book from being just another interesting family story is that the author, in focusing on the Lees’ overriding concern with family and family aggrandizement, gives us a valuable clue as to why a well-meaning and talented family suffered what they themselves viewed as devastating reverses.

The Lees, although now regarded as one of the “first families” of Virginia, were not always so, and it was their very success at emulating some of the less-endearing characteristics of the leading British oligarchical families of the colonial period that led to many of their subsequent problems.

The Lees of 17th-century Virginia were fairly successful planters who rightfully opposed, along with George Washington’s ancestor John, the 1676 rebellion of Nathaniel Bacon. Bacon, under the cover of attacking Royal Governor Berkeley, burned Jamestown and tried to wipe out the friendly Indians who served as a screen to protect the colony’s frontiers. Bacon’s supposedly local rebellion was actually run from London, which feared the expansion of the American colonies from a looting ground to an actual productive nation. The fight for agricultural and industrial development instead of British looting policies runs as a major theme throughout the history of Virginia. Arrayed against any development but raw materials production, were the “great” feudal families of the Carters, Byrds and Ludwells. Royal decrees allowed them to own hundreds of thousands of acres, and they paid no taxes as long as the lands were left fallow (rather like the way wealthy people in Virginia utilize use valuation taxes today).

Pro-Independence movement

On the other side were Gov. Alexander Spotswood and his faction, which included the Washingtons and Lees, and which formed the core of the future Virginia pro-Independence movement. The Spotswood group, against fierce opposition, was able to transform the colony of Virginia from a sluggish, single-crop backwater hugging the coast, to an optimistic westward-looking territory that fostered iron production, agricultural expansion, and the building of towns and cities.

In 1747, Lawrence Washington, George Washington’s older half-brother and close collaborator of Governor Spotswood, laid the basis for the founding of the Ohio Company. A third-generation Lee, Thomas, served as its first president, but not, as the author says, as its founder. The efforts of the Ohio Company to colonize and farm the Ohio Valley led to the establishment of Pittsburgh and the subsequent expansion of American development to the Great Lakes and Mississippi River.

In these exciting events, the Lees were sympathetic sup-