The Fight against Russian "Illegal" Spies in Great Britain During the Early Cold War

Trevor Barnes (Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge)

Introduction

In September 1960 Britain's counterintelligence service MI5 (also known as the Security Service) secretly broke into the London bank deposit box of a Canadian businessman, Gordon Lonsdale. They found a treasure trove of KGB spy paraphernalia: proof that Lonsdale was in fact a Russian deep cover "illegal" spy, whose real name was Konon Molody.[1] Although Molody was the first Russian "illegal" spy MI5 uncovered in Britain during the Cold War, the Security Service had been far from complacent in the preceding years about the threat "illegals" posed and had obtained valuable information about their methods from a notorious and earlier American case. In 1957 the FBI had arrested in New York a man known as Rudolf Abel. The bureau shared valuable information about the case with the British, and the declassified Security Service files on Abel (real name William Fisher)[2] provide valuable insights into the reaction of British and other Five Eyes intelligence agencies and their combat against Russian "illegals."

The arrest on January 7, 1961, of Konon Molody and two fellow KGB "illegals" in the Portland Spy Ring—Morris and Lona Cohen—was precipitated by the defection in Berlin

[1] See Christopher Andrew, *Defence of the Realm* (London: Penguin, 2010), 485–88; Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West* (London: Penguin, 2000), 532–37; and Trevor Barnes, *Dead Doubles: The Extraordinary Worldwide Hunt for One of the Cold War's Most Notorious Spy Rings* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2020), 184–85, 219–34. Konon Trofimovitch Molody: born 1922 in Russia, studied in the USA approx. from 1934–39. After he returned to the USSR, he served as an intelligence officer in an artillery brigade during the Second World War. Recruited by the KGB in approximately 1949, he was trained as an "illegal" and sent to the UK with a "dead double" false Canadian passport under the name of Gordon Lonsdale in 1955. In January 1961 he was arrested with other members of Portland Spy Ring, sentenced to twenty-five years in jail, exchanged for MI6 Penkovsky courier Greville Wynne in April 1964, and died after drinking vodka at a picnic near to Moscow in 1970.

[2] Vilyam Genrikhovich Fisher: born UK in 1903, Fisher moved to Russia in the 1920s, worked as a Soviet intelligence radio operator in the 1930s, and took part in intelligence operations against Germany during the Second World War. He subsequently joined the KGB, who sent him to New York to control a network of spies there; arrested by the FBI for espionage in 1957, he was sentenced to thirty years in prison but swapped for U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers in 1962 and died in Moscow in 1971. See Andrew and Mitrokhin, *Mitrokhin Archive*, 192–95.

three days before of Michał Goleniewski. This high-ranking Polish intelligence officer had been an agent of the CIA for around two years, and it was he who had provided MI5 with details that led the Security Service to the Portland Ring. Documents released into the Polish archives and by the CIA shed new light on Goleniewski's life as a Polish intelligence officer. The documents reveal his crucial importance as a Western intelligence asset leading to the arrest of the Portland Spy Ring and in supplying other valuable information.[3]

William Fisher (Rudolf Abel) and Growing Interest in Russian "Illegals" in UK Intelligence

The declassified Security Service files on the Abel case reveal when and why the FBI first contacted British intelligence about their investigation and how the Security Service followed up on its national security implications for Soviet "illegals" operating against Western countries.[4] The unlikely genesis of the case was a nickel given to a thirteen-year-old New York City newspaper boy called James Bozart in June 1953.

The fair-haired and freckled lad delivered the *Brooklyn Eagle* every day to two schoolteachers at their apartment in Brooklyn. One day, as he did so, they handed him a nickel as part of their weekly tip. He later recalled that as he went downstairs, he tripped, dropped the nickel, and "it bounced on the edge of one of the steps and broke in half. [He's] scrabbling for it in the dark and eventually [he finds] the back of the coin, and inside it is a tiny square of something. [He goes] to the window and hold[s] the square up to the light and think[s], *what the hell is that?*"[5] A Top Secret FBI note to MI6 dated November 9, 1953,

[3] Further details of links between Molody, the Portland Spy Ring, Fisher, and Goleniewski are in Barnes, *Dead Doubles*, 10–12, 15–16, 31–33, 50–51, and 82–85.

[4] See MI5 Files on Rudolph Abel, KV2/3897 and 3898. The first part of the files contains correspondence from November 1953 between MI5, MI6 and the FBI, when the FBI first sought British help over the famous 'hollow nickel', to the end of Abel's 1957 trial; the second part, ending in 1958, traces MI5 internal exchanges and those with other Five Eyes intelligence agencies to learn lessons about Russian 'illegals', their tradecraft and operations, from the Abel case.

[5] Quoted in Giles Whittell, *A True Story of the Cold War: Bridge of Spies* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 21–22.

informed the British about the incident and that the "tiny square" was a microphotograph. It contained "207 numerical groups of five digits each. No decipherment of the groups has been effected. The text was prepared on a Cyrillic typewriter." A tiny hole on the head of the nickel enabled the back of the coin to be pushed out. The elderly schoolteachers who gave the change to the newsboy knew nothing concerning the coin, which the FBI described as an "interesting device, possibly used by Soviet intelligence to conceal communications." The Bureau sent the memo to the UK intelligence services in 1953, because it wanted "assistance in breaking the message" contained in the microfilm. The British, however, were no more successful in breaking the code than the Americans.[6]

The key to the code only appeared in 1957, in the form of a Latvian named Reino Hayhanen.[7] He walked into the US embassy in Paris in May and claimed to be a Russian spy trying to steal atomic secrets in America. Flown back to Washington, DC, as a defector, the Latvian confirmed he had been sent by the KGB to work as an "illegal" in 1952 and had been controlled by a man he knew only by the code name MARK. The mysterious hollow nickel contained Hayhanen's welcome message to New York, retrieved from a hiding place and then mislaid—typical, it proved, of Hayhanen's incompetence and unreliability. MARK's cover was as an aspiring painter. He had rented a studio in Brooklyn, and surveillance revealed he also used a tiny room in the Hotel Latham, 4 East Twenty-Eighth Street.

FBI and immigration agents raided room 839 of the hotel at seven in the morning on June 21, 1957, and arrested MARK when he answered the door. A thorough search of the studio hauled in various items connected with MARK's espionage work as an illegal,

[6] Presumably MI5 asked GCHQ for assistance with decoding the blocks of five digit numbers. These were however undoubtedly encoded using a One Time Pad and therefore would have been undecipherable without the decoder having the corresponding Pad or other significant clues.

[7] Reino Hayhanen: born in 1920 to an Ingrian Finnish family, Hayhanen acted as an interpreter for the NKVD during the Second World War, was recruited by the MGB in 1948, and sent to Finland to adopt the identity of a Finnish man, Eugene Maki, before being sent to New York to work with Fisher in 1952; he defected in 1957 to the USA and died in a car accident in 1961. The message in the nickel, when deciphered after Hayhanen's defection, proved to be anodyne: only Moscow Center congratulating Hayhanen on his "safe arrival" in New York. *Mitrokhin Archive*, 223–25.

including three shortwave radios, cipher pads, cameras and film for producing microdots, a hollow shaving brush, and numerous "trick" containers including hollowed-out bolts. In MARK's hotel room the FBI found four thousand dollars, an extended antenna hung out of the west-facing bathroom window to receive messages from Moscow on his shortwave radio, a hollow ebony block containing a 250-page Russian codebook, a hollow pencil with encrypted messages on microfilm (including his complete 1957 radio receiving schedule and letters from his wife and daughter), and a key to a safe-deposit box containing another fifteen thousand dollars in cash. Also discovered were photographs of two other suspected KGB agents and recognition phrases to establish contact between agents who had never met before (known as "paroles").[8]

During interrogation by the FBI, MARK said he was a Soviet citizen called Rudolf Ivanovich Abel and it was in that name that, on August 7, 1957, he was indicted by a grand jury on espionage charges. The Abel Security Service files reveal that Courtenay Young, then head of MI5's Soviet counter espionage section D1,[9] immediately asked the FBI for details to be sent to London by diplomatic bag. "No information has been developed indicating that this [KGB] operation extended into England," replied the MI5 Washington Security Liaison Officer, Harry Stone. In response, the FBI provided an illustrated bureau booklet marked "Top Secret" entitled "Soviet 'Illegal' Espionage in the United States." Young sent all this FBI material to Roger Hollis, the head of MI5,[10] with a covering note stating that "the case

[8] On Abel and Hayhanen see: footnotes 2 and 7; https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/hollow-nickel-rudolph-abel (accessed August 2020); Whittell, *A True Story*, 79–92; Vin Arthey, *Abel: The True Story of the Spy They Traded for Gary Powers* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2015), 149–75.
[9] Courtenay Young: head of MI5's Security Intelligence Far East 1952–55; director of Russian Counter-Espionage 1956–59. Peter Wright, *Spycatcher* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987), 36–37; Alexander Nicholas Shaw, "MI5 and the Cold War in South-East Asia," *Intelligence and National Security*, 32 (6): 799, DOI: 10.1080/02684527.2017.1289695.
[10] Roger Hollis: born 1905, he joined MI5 in 1938 and played a key role during the Second World War and after in monitoring Soviet espionage threat. He was appointed the agency's deputy director general in 1953 and served as director general from 1956 to 1965. Andrew, *Defence*, 281–82; https://www.mi5.gov.uk/sir-roger-hollis (accessed August 2020).

has all the elements of an Eric Ambler [a celebrated contemporary writer of spy fiction] novel." The Security Service were especially interested in the technical aspects and tradecraft of Abel's residency as an "illegal."

Harry Stone confirmed from FBI sources that "in his communication system MARK's receivers were all of American make with one or two modifications," but also noted that he "had been conducting some research with a view to finding a suitable site 'on high ground about three miles out' for a transmitter." Stone and his MI5 colleagues were not above being amused at the expense of Hayhanen, the FBI, or the KGB. Hayhanen for example, took delivery of five thousand dollars in cash hidden in a Dead Letter Box (DLB) in a US National Park intended by the KGB to be given to the wife of an American KGB spy but "Hayhanen, who is strongly addicted to liquor, surfaced having spent every cent (perhaps rather strange that a man with this weakness [for alcohol] should have been entrusted by the Russians)."

Similarly, Hayhanen left a message in a "DLB (a hole at the side of a step in a small flight of steps), which he then discovered had been cemented over by workmen. FBI agents went to the steps and unearthed [the Russian Intelligence Service] reply to Hayhanen, disguised as road menders." The FBI men were however stopped by New York police, whose suspicions had been aroused by them appearing "extremely amateurish" and taking photos of their work. As for the KGB: "On one occasion Hayhanen complained that a D.L.B. had not been loaded as indicated. He was informed that it had been. Had he not noticed the chicken bone? A hollowed-out chicken bone would not seem to be a very satisfactory receptacle [for passing secret material] unless it could be so deodorized as not to attract any passing cat or dog!"

Convicted on espionage charges on October 25, 1957, Abel was sentenced to thirty years' imprisonment on November 15. The Security Service files on the case after the trial demonstrate that MI5 were determined to learn lessons from it about the activities of KGB

"illegals" and how to detect them. One obvious lesson was the great difficulty Western intelligence agencies faced in uncovering "illegals," and therefore the paramount need for them to cooperate and exchange information in order to do so, especially from defectors.

Another lesson was about the espionage tradecraft, in particular the means of communication Abel used, such as encoded radio messages and microdots. The Abel case stimulated interest in Soviet "illegals" by other intelligence agencies in the Five Eyes group, especially in the Australians. On November 14, 1957, George Leggett (then MI5's Security Liaison Officer in Canberra)[11] sent a note to MI5 Head Office headed "'Illegal' Intelligence Networks of the R.I.S," which had attached to it a report of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) on the subject. Part 1 analyzed the characteristics of the organization structure and of the personnel of an "Illegal" network; while part 2 dealt with their operational techniques, especially communications.

One of the issues debated after the Abel case was the use by Soviet "illegals," and the range, of what were known as "flash transmissions": a method of sending encoded messages by radio in a rapid burst, so that the chances of interception were correspondingly reduced. Western intelligence was aware that Moscow possessed this technology, but lacked details. A note by the MI5's Soviet expert, Cedric Cliffe,[12] to Leggett in Australia on January 21, 1958, summarized the then-current state of knowledge: "[We] have definite evidence of the current use of 'flash' transmitters by R.I.S. agents in the field. In particular we know of one case

[11] George Leggett: half Polish, he joined MI5 after the Second World War, and the MI5 SLO in Australia in the mid-1950s (when he supervised in 1954 the daring escape of Petrov's wife from her Soviet minders at Darwin airport). He later worked in MI5's Russian and Polish Counter-espionage sections in late 1950s and 1960s until he was unfairly hounded out of MI5 by allegations of being a Soviet "mole" in the late 1960s. See Wright, *Spycatcher*, 320–24 (Leggett referred to as "Gregory Stevens"); David Horner, *The Spycatchers: The Official History of ASIO 1949-63* (London: Allen and Unwin, 2014), chapter 13.

[12] Cliffe was the Security Service's Russian expert in their counterespionage department in the 1950s and early 1960s, known as "elephant brain" because of his remarkable memory, even appearing (without of course revealing his profession) on the BBC's most erudite programme, the *Round Britain Quiz*. See letter, Bridget Whyte to her father, April 1, 1962, David Whyte papers (Whyte was an MI5 officer in the Soviet counterintelligence section in the late 1950s).

outside Europe where an agent, who was being set up as an 'illegal,' operated a transmitter which had been handed to him by a representative of the local 'legal' residency…The equipment in this case was a mechanically worked high-speed transmitter which required no knowledge of morse on the part of the operator." It is not clear which case outside Europe Cliffe was referring to, but interestingly his note confirms that "flash" transmitters did not require great technical expertise to operate.

As for microdots, Cliffe confirmed they were used by Abel, "who transmitted microdots in a magazine to a live letter-box in Paris. We can also say definitely that the use of microdots by agents in the field is quite a common practice among the [Soviet] Satellites, who, as you know, are close followers of the Russians in such matters of technique. The use of microdots, in fact, is certainly not regarded as too difficult or complicated for an agent in the field... (Apparently ABEL tried to teach HAYHANEN the technique of making microdots, but gave up because he was so slow a learner; HAYHANEN, however, was a low grade agent of limited intelligence and an agent of higher I.Q. should find no difficulty.)"

Cliffe listed the basic equipment for producing microdots as a "reducing camera, which need consist of nothing more elaborate than a suitable lens (e.g. from a microscope) accurately fitted into a holder" and a "supply of Kodak M.R. (Maximum Resolution) plate." Much of this information was "based on current D/A [initials of MI5 Counter-espionage and General services departments] cases," Cliffe told Leggett.[13] The discussion and information exchange about Soviet "illegals" continued into 1958, and documents in the Abel files show that officers in MI5's counterespionage branch, MI6, GCHQ, the Americans and Australians were all involved in the discussions. A note from February 1958 confirmed MI5's view that they had no knowledge of any Russian Intelligence Service "illegal" network operating in the UK at that time.

[13] The memo does not state what these "current…cases" were.

By the early winter of 1960, MI5 were actively investigating the three suspected KGB "illegals" in the Portland Spy Ring (Gordon Lonsdale and Peter and Helen Kroger—the Security Service only learned their real names, Konon Molody and Morris and Lona Cohen, after their arrest on January 7, 1961). It has been widely accepted that Molody was Moscow Center's first postwar "illegal" resident in the UK and that before 1960, MI5 had no practical experience of KGB "illegals" in the UK. But the MI5 files on the Abel case demonstrate the service had been fascinated by and had accumulated a trove of information on how they these enemy agents operated in the preceding years. In the late 1950s, the Security Service had been far from complacent about possible Soviet "illegal" activity, particularly when compared to, for example, the Australians.[14] Central features of that activity were covert "flash" radio communication with Moscow Center and the use of microdots. Both were prominent in the tradecraft of Molody and the Cohens.

Michał Goleniewski and the Fall of the Portland Spy Ring

Although general information about Goleniewski's life and the valuable intelligence he provided to the West before he started to suffer mental health problems are well known, it is only recently that materials declassified in Poland and America have revealed new details of Goleniewski's career in Polish intelligence, his defection, how the timing of the enquiry into his defection in Poland and East Germany related to the arrest of the Portland Spy Ring, and his relations with the CIA after his defection.

Goleniewski's rise within the Polish intelligence service was meteoric.[15] In 1953 aged only thirty-one, he was made the boss of a department of the Polish security bureau, known

[14] Contrary to the views of some. See for example the anecdote of David Cornwell (John Le Carré) about the head of MI5 Soviet counterespionage, Courtenay Young, allegedly telling new MI5 recruits around 1959 that if there were any Soviet "illegals" in the UK MI5 would know their names. Quoted in Adam Sisman, *John Le Carré: The Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 247. This doubtful story no doubt reflects David Cornwell's scornful (and in some respects inaccurate) view of the Security Service at that time.

[15] The new details of Goleniewski's career and defection summarized in this article were researched in the Poland National Archives (AIPN) by Witold Bagieński and published in his "Analiza sprawy ppłk. Michała Goleniewskiego, uciekiniera z wywiadu PRL" [Analysis of the Case of Lt-Col.Michał Goleniewski, defector from the intelligence service of Communist Poland], in *Studia nad wywiadem i kontrwywiadem Polski w XX*

as the UB,[16] in Warsaw. As a sign of the high regard in which he was held, he was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and moved to head the department for scientific and technological intelligence in February 1956. Within the UB, Goleniewski flaunted his links with the KGB and was widely considered to be "their" (that is Moscow's) man, and almost certainly reported back to the KGB on Polish intelligence and their activities. Perhaps for this reason, although not popular with colleagues, he was soon viewed by others in UB as the third most powerful figure in the organization.

His wife, Anna, was Russian. The marriage was far from normal. Anna suffered from schizophrenia, and there is evidence suggesting she was spying on her husband for the KGB, but that he knew she was doing so.[17] Goleniewski was often in Berlin from 1956, where he met with the KGB *rezident* in the Soviet sector. While in Berlin in 1957, he encountered Irmgard Kampf, a school secretary, who became his mistress and who would accompany Goleniewski, masquerading as his wife, when he defected in January 1961. In Soviet Eastern Europe, the intelligence agencies of satellite states spied on the personnel of other East European nations. In September 1960, the East German Stasi informed the UB of Goleniewski's affair with Kampf, and pending an investigation, the UB imposed a ban on its senior officer leaving Poland. Meanwhile, Goleniewski decided to end his marriage. The rules of the UB in communist Poland required any of its officers who wished a divorce to seek permission (reflecting both approval within Soviet intelligence agencies of marital

wieku, tom 3, pod red. W. Skóry i P. Skubisza (Szczecin: IPN, 2016), 551–91; and in his "Sprawa ppłk. Michała Goleniewskiego" in *Wywiad cywilny Polski Ludowej w latach 1945-1961, Tom 1* [Non-military intelligence in Communist Poland in years 1945–1961, vol. 1], 379–88 (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2017). Footnotes 222–44 in Bagieński, *Wywiad*, give references to relevant Goleniewski documents in the AIPN [Archive of the Institute of National Memory]. Some earlier work on Goleniewski in Polish sources was done by Leszek Pawlikowicz, *Tajny front zimnej wojny. Uciekinierzy z polskich służb specjalnych 1956-1964* [The Secret Front in the Cold War. Defectors from Polish Secret Services 1956–1964] (Warsaw: RYTM, 2004). The author is indebted to Michael Bąkowski for translating the materials in Polish, and to Witold Bagieński for responding to various queries about Goleniewski.

[16] The intelligence services in Communist Poland, like their Soviet counterparts, were known by many names over the post-War period and their structure and names are confusing. It is not appropriate or necessary in this article to go into such details. The name UB (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa*) is used here for simplicity's sake.

[17] Bagieński, "Analiza sprawy," 558–62.

stability and Poland's deeply entrenched Catholic history). Goleniewski therefore sent a nine-page letter on November 11, 1960, to the director of the UB, asking for his travel ban to be lifted and for a consent to a divorce. Permission was refused.

In the weeks preceding his defection, Goleniewski pretended to accept this decision and sought special approval to visit Berlin to tell Kampf he was ending their affair and to complete other UB-related work. This permission was granted. On Christmas Day 1960, before travelling to Berlin, Goleniewski withdrew eleven thousand Deutschmarks from the UB finance department and asked the UB *rezident* in Berlin to give him a further thirteen thousand DM and eleven hundred British pounds from operational funds when he arrived in Berlin. When Goleniewski arrived to pick up the additional money, the *rezident* refused to hand it over, arguing that the sum was too enormous—three times what he had provided to Goleniewski on previous occasions—and that he was only willing to give him five thousand DM.

Clearly, Goleniewski was under intermittent surveillance by the Stasi for at least some of his time in Berlin, because Polish intelligence sources later learned that he arrived at Kampf's flat at 10:20 pm on January 3, 1961, the night before the defection. Her flat was only 150 metres away from the border of the Western sector of Berlin (before the erection of the Berlin Wall in late 1961, one could cross between sectors without being checked at any time). Around 11 pm that night, Goleniewski left Kampf's flat with her and her parents in a car, taking with them only Goleniewski's briefcase and Kampf's handbag, and disappeared "in an unknown direction," according to a contemporaneous surveillance report.[18]

The Polish intelligence service only began their search for Goleniewski in Berlin on January 6, 1961, two days after his defection, because he missed a scheduled meeting at a railway station with a major in the UB. The next day, January 7, the UB Deputy Head of

[18] Bagieński, "Analiza sprawy," 561–62.

Intelligence, Henryk Sokolak,[19] was despatched to Berlin to investigate—the very same day that the Russian "illegals" Konon Molody and the Cohens were arrested in London. With the help of the Stasi, Sokolak searched Kampf's flat, discovering that all her jewellery was missing. Goleniewski had left his remaining possessions behind at his accommodation in Berlin. The evidence suggested either a defection or an abduction.[20]

It was only on January 12, back in Warsaw at UB headquarters, that Goleniewski's personal safe was opened. The investigators were dumbfounded to find there a list of all cases being dealt with by Section Six of Department I of the UB,[21] with handwritten additions of the real names of individuals who were the subject of each case, and the relevant UB case officer. To collate such a document was a clear breach of UB rules. The investigators learned that Goleniewski had instructed his deputy in the final months of 1960 to create this top-secret document, explaining that this had been commanded by the most senior people in the department. Highly sensitive code names associated with 191 cases were set out in the list. The note contained the names of a total of 191 agents and potential sources, together with significant background on each case. This included twenty UB people in Polish embassies, eighty-seven individuals within Poland who were agents of the UB, and Western citizens who were either already agents of the Polish intelligence service or people the UB might

[19] Born in 1921 Henryk Mikołajczyk (later changed to Sokolak, probably because Mikołajczyk was the surname of a socialist Prime Minister who tried to work with the communists shortly after the War until he escaped to the West in 1947), he was imprisoned from October 1939 to April 1945 in Nazi concentration camp in Buchenwald. He joined the UB in 1946; served from 1947–49 as tutor and then commandant in UB Political Schools; from 1950 director of various departments in Polish intelligence; director of civilian espionage (Department I of MSW, Ministry of Internal Affairs) from August 1961 to January 1969. Left the service in 1974.

[20] See Sokolak's witness statement (Protokół przesłuchania świadka) of January 31, 1961, in Poland's Central Military Archives (copy kindly provided to the author by Witold Bagieński).

[21] Set up in 1954, this section was responsible for scientific and technological espionage. A Polish intelligence report of June 1960 speaks of 340 specific "themes" for intelligence gathering in seven widely defined areas of nuclear physics, electronics, metallurgy, machine building, chemistry, arms industry, and general science. Goleniewski was the director of Section Six at the time of his defection.

approach. This document was what finally persuaded the UB that Goleniewski had almost certainly defected and passed invaluable information to Western intelligence.[22]

A telegram was rushed out to all UB station chiefs outside Poland the next day, informing them of Goleniewski's disappearance and warning that he was possibly a traitor. The conclusive proof of the defection was evidence that local security and police services were putting under surveillance, or "harassing," undercover contacts of Goleniewski abroad. On January 27, 1961, the boss of the UB, Witold Sienkiewicz,[23] called a formal meeting of its most senior staff and admitted that Goleniewski's defection was "a great blow" with very serious implications, because of his unparalleled knowledge of Polish intelligence operations (he had had free access to all personal and personnel files) and that it had "paralysed the work" of Goleniewski's former UB department.

As a result, the whole internal structure of Department I of UB (in charge of gathering intelligence) was altered, with the Polish intelligence service *rezident* in Berlin moved to a new address, and agents abroad handled differently. *In absentia*, Goleniewski was formally charged with espionage offenses and on April 18, 1961, was sentenced to death. A month later, the UB reported to the KGB on Goleniewski's knowledge of the British Portland KGB spy, Harry Houghton, and how Goleniewski had accessed the UB file on the UK Admiralty clerk (code-named MIRON) for the first time in August 1954.[24] It was Goleniewski who had provided Western intelligence with important new information in April 1960, which enabled MI5 for the first time to pinpoint Houghton as a spy for the Russians, and it was the resulting surveillance of Houghton which uncovered Molody and then the Cohens.

Although Molody may have been gratified by the death sentence passed on Goleniewski, the parallel KGB investigation into his defection disclosed a catalogue of lax

[22] Bagieński, "Analiza sprawy," 573–75.
[23] Born 1920. Director in various departments of the UB from June 1950. Director of civilian espionage (Department I) from November 1956 to July 31, 1961 (replaced by Sokolak after Goleniewski's defection).
[24] Bagieński, "Analiza sprawy," 575–80.

security and complacency that bruised the Moscow Center and, even more severely, Polish intelligence. Goleniewski was to prove a source of first-class intelligence information for British and American intelligence about KGB and UB operations, identifying hundreds of Polish and Soviet intelligence officers, invaluable KGB spies in Western agencies (including George Blake in Britain's SIS[25]), and former Nazis.[26] The combination of the information he had brought with him when he defected and other intel retrieved soon afterwards by the CIA from within Poland, together with his almost photographic memory for names, ensured that in some respects in the year or so after his defection, Goleniewski arguably provided intelligence of more value than that given by later renowned Cold War defectors like Golitsyn or Nosenko.[27]

Sadly in 1963, before the debriefings were completed, the defector became increasingly recalcitrant and obstructive, locking himself in his New York apartment and refusing to return a handgun given to him by the CIA. He wrote lengthy and discursive letters to various US government officials, which when leaked, stoked sensational stories in the press alleging widespread KGB penetrations of the US government. These stories were published and attracted headlines in America only a few weeks before Molody's famous spy swap for British agent Greville Wynne occurred in April 1964. It is inconceivable that the KGB were not aware of these bizarre developments involving Goleniewski by that date. [28]

[25] George Blake: was born in 1922, joined MI6 in 1944 (made permanent in 1946), in 1950 interned in North Korea, recruited by the KGB in 1951. He provided invaluable intelligence to Moscow Center about Western espionage operations before his confession in 1961, trial, and then escape from British prison in 1966. See *Mitrokhin Archives,* 520–22. The recently declassified section on Blake of the Radcliffe Committee Report on Security Procedures in the Public Service (April 1962) confirmed the committee's view that the decision of MI6 to recruit Blake on a permanent basis in 1946 was "an error of judgment": Part 2, para.25, 6: CAB 01/258.
[26] On Goleniewski's intelligence on former Nazis before his defection see, e.g., CIA note titled "Mueller, Heinrich," dated January 15, 1960, and declassified under the US Nazi War Crime Disclosure Act (Goleniewski's CIA code name was BEVISION): https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/MUELLER%2C%20HEINRICH%20%20%20VOL.%201_0024.pdf (accessed May 2020).
[27] Anatoli Golitsyn (1926–2008, defected to USA 1961), and Yuri Nosenko (1927–2008, defected in 1964).
[28] David Robarge, *John McCone: As Director of Central Intelligence 1961–1965* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Intelligence). Declassified, October 10, 2015. Available at: https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/johnmcconedirectorcentralintelligence19611965, 320–21. David Robarge (Chief Historian, CIA), interview.

Documents in Polish archives also confirm how the KGB used Polish intelligence as part of their maneuvres to engineer Molody's spy swap and the later exchange of the Cohens in October 1969. In each case, Polish intelligence were instructed to create false family relations of Molody and the Cohens in Poland to muddy the fact that the three spies were "illegals" working directly for Moscow, and to correspond with the three "illegals" while imprisoned in Britain. The role of Molody's fake Polish mother-in-law was played by the mother of a Polish intelligence officer, and Molody's false wife by another woman who changed her name to Halina Lonsdale to pretend to be the wife of Gordon Lonsdale. After Molody's 1964 spy swap, on the instructions of Moscow Center, the Polish communist authorities created fake life stories for the Cohens which were presented to the British government, stating falsely for example, that Morris Cohen's parents were Polish Jews who had emigrated to the USA before World War One, and that after the Cohens left the USA in 1950, they travelled to Poland and lived in Lublin until 1954.[29]

Goleniewski's final descent into madness in 1964 would have appeared to be some form of bizarre, if just, retribution to the KGB for the Pole's grave betrayal of trust. From around August 1964, the defector started to claim he was Grand Duke Alexey, the long lost son of the last Czar, Nicholas II, the heir to the crown of Imperial Russia, who had escaped miraculously from the secret and brutal massacre of the Czar and his family by the Bolsheviks in 1917.

Conclusion

The Abel case provided UK intelligence with valuable background on Russian "illegal" spies, which was to prove useful when they first started investigating the KGB's first postwar

[29] "Rola wywiadu PRL w uwolnieniu sowieckich nielegałów należących do siatki szpiegowskiej z Portland" ["The role of communist-era Polish intelligence in the spy exchanges of Soviet illegals linked to the Portland Spy Ring"], Witold Bagieński (unpublished essay in Polish kindly provided to Michael Bąkowski in May 2018). A shorter version was published as "Polacy w służbie KGB" ["Poles in the KGB"], in *Historia Do Rzeczy* 2015, 6 (28): 34–37.

"illegal" resident, Konon Molody. Polish and CIA sources not only confirm the key role played by Goleniewski in the Portland Spy Ring case, leading to the arrest of the celebrated "illegals" Molody and Morris and Lona Cohen, but shed light on how it took eight days for Polish intelligence to confirm his defection. Furthermore, the sources reveal how damaging that defection was not just to Polish intelligence, but also to the crucial relationship between that agency and the KGB.

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