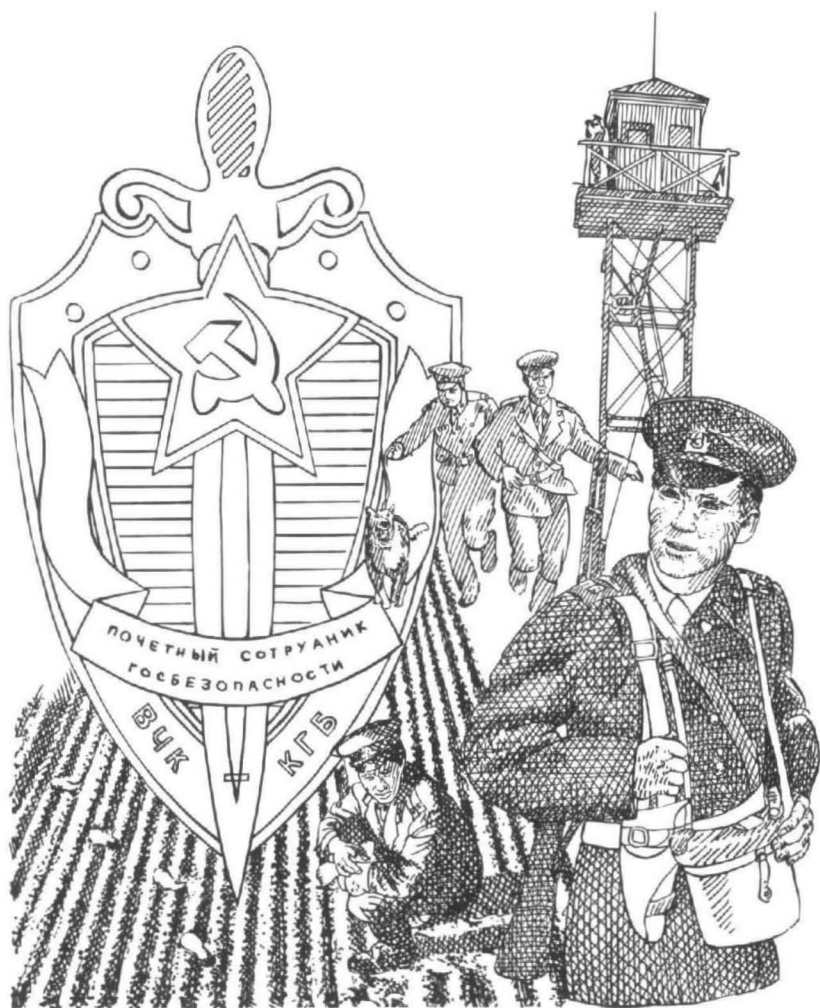


## Chapter 19. Internal Security



*Symbols of internal security: the crest of the Committee for State Security (KGB), border guards near a watchtower, and a member of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD)*

IN THE LATE 1980s, the Soviet Union continued to place great emphasis on ensuring security and internal order. Because it was governed by a monopolistic party, whose leaders were not democratically elected, the Soviet system had no legitimacy based on popular support and therefore protected itself from internal and external threats by means of a strong security system. The system included the regular police, judicial bodies, prosecuting organs, and the security police, as well as an external security and foreign intelligence apparatus. Even in the era of *perestroika* (see Glossary) and *glasnost'* (see Glossary) ushered in by General Secretary Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the organs of internal security still had a key role to play, despite the party leadership's apparent tolerance of criticism of the political system.

The Soviet security, or political, police had a long history, dating back to the prerevolutionary, tsarist period. Although the tsarist political police was ruthless and unscrupulous, the police organs established by Vladimir I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks (see Glossary) in 1917, known as the Vecheka (see Glossary), far surpassed their predecessors in terms of terror and violence. The Bolsheviks allowed the Vecheka almost unrestricted powers to persecute those who were perceived as "class enemies." This set the stage for the development of the brutal Stalinist police state, in which millions of innocent victims perished at the hands of the political police, controlled by Joseph V. Stalin.

After Stalin died, Nikita S. Khrushchev initiated legal reforms and reorganized the police apparatus. The terror ended abruptly, and the political police were brought under the control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The Committee for State Security (Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti—KGB), established in March 1954, was tasked with security functions, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ministerstvo vnutrennykh del—MVD) was charged with combating ordinary crime and maintaining the extensive network of labor camps. A new legal code was established to replace the Stalinist laws, and both the security police and the regular police were subjected to procedural norms and regulations in carrying out their functions. Nevertheless, the party leadership did not eliminate all the legal loopholes and allowed the KGB to circumvent the law when combating political dissent. The KGB also played an important role in implementing the anticorruption campaign, which resulted in the ouster of many state and party

officials after General Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev died. Among its other tasks were guarding the leadership and important government buildings; protecting Soviet state borders; and carrying out intelligence, counterintelligence, and active measures (see Glossary) abroad.

The MVD was restricted to combating ordinary crime and, unlike the KGB, was subjected to constant criticism in the Soviet press, which attacked its inefficiency and corruption. In addition to the MVD, the Procuracy (Prokuratura) and the Ministry of Justice played important roles in implementing the laws and administering justice. The Ministry of Defense's Main Military Procuracy, along with the system of military tribunals, handled crimes within the armed forces.

Both the KGB and the MVD played important roles in the succession crises that followed Brezhnev's death. The KGB, however, was more politically significant than the MVD and, after the early 1970s, had an increasing impact on Soviet domestic and foreign policy making. To reinforce their coercive role, the KGB and the MVD had special troops at their disposal, including the Border Troops, the Security Troops, and the Internal Troops.

## **Predecessors of the Committee for State Security and the Ministry of Internal Affairs**

The KGB and the MVD had numerous predecessor organizations, dating back to the tsarist period. These organizations contributed significantly to the historical traditions of the modern Soviet police, which in several ways resembled those of its forerunners.

### **The Tsarist Period**

The 1980s Soviet police system cannot be properly understood without considering the evolution of the tsarist police, particularly as it related to Russia's political culture and governmental institutions. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Russia was, by all accounts, a "police state," not in the modern sense of the term, which connotes all the evils of Nazi Germany and Stalinism, but in the more traditional sense as it applied to certain European states in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, e.g., France and Prussia. These states, which incorporated secret political police, spying, and encroachments on individual rights with both paternalism and enlightenment, were motivated by a desire to reform and modernize.

Russia's monarchical police state was similar to those in western Europe except that it lagged far behind in its political evolution and was much less efficient. The foundations of the tsarist police

state were established in 1826, when Tsar Nicholas I formed the so-called Third Section, a political police whose purpose was to protect the state from internal subversion. The staff of the Third Section was small, numbering only forty full-time employees, who were burdened with information-gathering and welfare functions that extended well beyond the realm of political surveillance. As a result, its role was vague and poorly defined, and its efforts to combat political dissent, on the whole, were ineffective.

In 1880, as part of an effort to improve the effectiveness of the political police, the much-discredited Third Section was abolished and replaced by the central State Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior. Its chief responsibility was dealing with political crimes, and, although its staff consisted of only 161 full-time employees, it had at its disposal the Corps of Gendarmes, numbering several thousand, and a large contingent of informers. In addition, the notorious "security sections" were established in several Russian cities following the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. Despite the fact that its operations were strengthened, the political police was not successful in stemming the tide of the revolutionary movement, which helped to bring down the Russian monarchy in 1917. Police operations were hampered by the low quality of personnel and grave deficiencies in training. One of the greatest impediments to an effective political police was the general reluctance on the part of the Russian state to use violence against political dissenters. Herein lies one of the crucial differences between the monarchical police state of tsarist Russia and the Soviet regime, which from the outset used violence to preserve its rule and gradually extended the violence to affect broad segments of the population.

### **Soviet Predecessor Organizations, 1917–54**

The Bolshevik regime created a police system that proved to be far more effective than the tsarist version. It swept away the tsarist police, so despised by Russians of all political persuasions, along with other tsarist institutions, and replaced it with a political police of considerably greater dimensions, both in the scope of its authority and in the severity of its methods. However lofty their initial goals were, the Bolsheviks forcibly imposed their rule on the people. They constituted a dictatorship of a minority that had to establish a powerful political police apparatus to preserve its domination.

The first Soviet political police, created in December 1917, was the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage (*Vserossiiskaia chrezvychainaia komissiiia po bor'be s kontrrevoliutsiei i sabotazhem*—*VChK*; also known as the *Vecheka* or the *Cheka*). The *Vecheka* was very much an

ad hoc organization whose powers gradually grew in response to various emergencies and threats to Soviet rule (see table 56, Appendix A). No formal legislation establishing the Vecheka was ever enacted. It was to serve as an organ of preliminary investigation, but the crimes it was to uncover were not defined, and the procedures for handling cases were not set forth. This situation was the result of the extralegal character of the Vecheka, which was conceived not as a permanent state institution but as a temporary organ for waging war against "class enemies." Given its militant role and supralegal status, it is not surprising that the Vecheka, which was headed by Feliks E. Dzerzhinskii, acquired powers of summary justice as the threat of counterrevolution and foreign intervention grew. After an attempt was made on Lenin's life in August 1918, the Vecheka unleashed its violence on a wide scale, the so-called Red Terror, which continued until 1920 and caused thousands to lose their lives.

The end of the Civil War (1918–21), the demobilization of the Red Army, and the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921 brought about a changed atmosphere that seemed incompatible with a terrorist political police. Lenin himself spoke of the need for a reform of the political police, and in early 1922 the Vecheka was abolished and its functions transferred to the State Political Directorate (Gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie—GPU). When the Soviet Union was formed in December 1922, the GPU was raised to the level of a federal agency, designated the Unified State Political Directorate (Ob'edinennoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie—OGPU), and attached to the Council of People's Commissars. On paper it appeared that the powers of the political police had been reduced significantly. Indeed, police operations during the NEP period were considerably less violent, and the staff and budget of the political police were reduced. Initially, the OGPU was subject to definite procedural requirements regarding arrests and was not given the powers of summary justice that its predecessor had. But the legal constraints on the OGPU were gradually removed, and its authority grew throughout the 1920s. The OGPU was drawn into the intraparty struggles that ensued between Stalin and his opponents and was also enlisted in the drive to collectivize the peasantry by force, beginning in late 1929, an operation that resulted in the death of at least 5 million people.

In July 1934, the OGPU was transformed into the Main Directorate for State Security (Glavnoe upravlenie gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti—GUGB) and integrated into the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennykh del—NKVD), which had been given all-union (see Glossary) status

earlier that year. The functions of the security police and those of the internal affairs apparatus, which controlled the regular police and the militia, were thus united in one agency. The NKVD was a powerful organization. In addition to controlling the security police and the regular police, it was in charge of border and internal troops, fire brigades, convoy troops, and, after 1934, the entire penal system, including regular prisons and forced labor camps, or the Gulag (see Glossary). During the period from 1934 to 1940, the NKVD took charge of numerous economic enterprises (see Glossary) that employed forced labor, such as gold mining, major construction projects, and other industrial activity. In addition, the Special Board, attached to the NKVD, operated outside the legal codes and was empowered to impose on persons deemed "socially dangerous" sentences of exile, deportation, or confinement in labor camps. The Special Board soon became one of the chief instruments of Stalin's purges.

Stalin's domination over the party was not absolute at this time, however. Dissatisfaction with his policies continued to be manifested by some party members, and elements existed within the leadership that might have opposed any attempt to use police terror against the party. Among Stalin's potential challengers was Sergei Kirov, chief of the Leningrad party apparatus. Conveniently for Stalin, Kirov was assassinated by a disgruntled ex-party member in December 1934. This provided Stalin with the pretext for launching an assault against the party. Although Stalin proceeded cautiously, the turning point had been reached, and the terror machinery was in place. From 1936 to 1938, the NKVD arrested and executed millions of party members, government officials, and ordinary citizens. The military also came under assault. Much of the officer corps was wiped out in 1937-38, leaving the country ill prepared for World War II. The era in which the NKVD, with Stalin's approval, terrorized Soviet citizens became known in the West as the Great Terror (see Glossary).

The war years brought further opportunities for the political police, under the control of Lavrenty Beria, to expand its authority. The NKVD assumed a number of additional economic functions that made use of the expanding labor camp population. The NKVD also broadened its presence in the Red Army, where it conducted extensive surveillance of the troops. Toward the end of the war, the political police moved into areas formerly under German occupation to arrest those suspected of sympathy for the Nazis. They also suppressed nationalist movements in the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and western Ukrainian republics.

Beria himself steadily gained power and authority during this period. In early 1946, when he was made a full member of the Politburo and a deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers (the new name for the Council of People's Commissars), he relinquished his NKVD post, but he apparently retained some control over the police through his protégés in that organization. In March 1953, following Stalin's death, Beria became chief of the MVD, which amalgamated the regular police and the security police into one organization. Some three months later, he was viewed as a threat to the leadership and was arrested by his Kremlin colleagues, including Khrushchev.

The "Beria affair" and the shake-up in the Kremlin that followed his arrest had far-reaching consequences for the role of the police in Soviet society. The party leadership not only arrested and later executed Beria and several of his allies in the MVD but also took measures to place the political police under its firm control. Thereafter, violence was no longer to be used as a means of settling conflicts within the leadership, and widespread terror was not employed against the population.

## **The Security Apparatus and Kremlin Politics**

The Khrushchev period was important for the development of the internal security apparatus. Legal reforms, personnel changes, and the denunciation of Stalin had a marked effect on the position of the police and the legal organs. As the successor to Khrushchev, Brezhnev did much to reverse the tide of reforms, but later, under Gorbachev, reforms progressed again. The reforms brought opposition to Gorbachev from the police apparatus because the changes curtailed police powers.

### **Khrushchev Period**

One of the first reforms instituted by the post-Stalin leadership under Khrushchev was a reorganization of the police apparatus. On March 13, 1954 a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet established the KGB, attached to the Council of Ministers. The establishment of a state security apparatus separate from that of the regular police was designed to diminish the formidable powers that the police had wielded when its activities were concentrated in one organization. Thereafter, the functions of ensuring political security would be ascribed to a special police agency, whose powers were substantially less than they had been under Stalin.

The party leadership also instituted significant legal reforms to protect citizens from police persecution. On May 24, 1955, a new statute on procurator (see Glossary) supervision was enacted by



the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. This statute provided procedural guarantees of procuratorial power to protest illegalities committed by state agencies and to make proposals for eliminating these illegalities. Another reform that restricted the powers of the political police and protected citizens from police persecution was the enactment in December 1958 of the Fundamental Principles of Criminal Procedure, which were incorporated into the 1960 Russian Republic's Code of Criminal Procedure and were still in effect in 1989, although they had been amended several times.

The new codes, which were established according to the Russian Republic model in the other republics as well, subjected the KGB to the same procedural rules to which other investigative agencies were subject and specified precisely the types of crimes the KGB was empowered to investigate. A new law on state crimes, enacted on December 25, 1958, and incorporated into the 1960 Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Republic, narrowed the range of political crimes that were embodied in the Stalinist codes and made criminal sanctions less severe.

Khrushchev's policy of de-Stalinization also had significance for the role of the post-Stalin political police. His famous "secret speech," delivered at the Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956, called attention to the crimes committed by the police under Stalin. This inevitably weakened the prestige of the KGB and demoralized its cadres (see Glossary), many of whom had participated actively in the purges.

These police and legal reforms were diminished somewhat by the appointment in 1954 of two long-time police officials, Ivan Serov and Sergei Kruglov, to head the KGB and the MVD, respectively. Serov's past was heavily tainted by his participation in the Stalinist police repression, as was that of Kruglov. Both, however, had lent their support to Khrushchev when he made his move against Beria, and apparently they had to be rewarded. Although Khrushchev and the party leadership wanted to demonstrate that they were "cleansing the ranks" of the police by purging many officials, they retained others who were loyal and experienced.

In December 1958, Serov was removed from his post as KGB chief and replaced by Aleksandr Shelepin, a former Komsomol (see Glossary) official. With his higher education in humanities and his untainted record, Shelepin did much to raise the stature of the KGB and to bring renewed efficiency and legitimacy to it. By the late 1950s, efforts were under way to improve the public image of the KGB by portraying its officials in a favorable light in the media and by publishing works on the history of the Soviet political police.

In addition, changes in the legal codes in 1961 broadened the KGB's investigative powers.

Shelepin himself may have been largely responsible for the campaign to rehabilitate the security police. Although he left his post as head of the KGB in December 1961, he continued to oversee the police in his capacity as Central Committee secretary, and his successor, Vladimir Semichastnyi, was a close ally. Both Shelepin and Semichastnyi appeared to have joined the ranks of opposition to Khrushchev sometime before his ouster in October 1964 and were actively involved in the plot to overthrow the party leader. De-Stalinization, legal reforms, and various other measures promoted by Khrushchev to curtail the activities of the security police had no doubt created resentment within its ranks and aroused the displeasure of leading KGB officials.

### **After Khrushchev**

Brezhnev evidently had learned a lesson from Khrushchev's experience and went out of his way to raise the status of the police and clamp down on political dissent. The KGB's investigative powers were extended in 1965 to include certain categories of economic crime, and it continued to be accorded favorable publicity in the Soviet press. Its growing prestige and authority accommodated those neoconservative trends that manifested themselves during the late 1960s and 1970s: curbs on cultural freedom, a crack-down on dissent, and a partial rehabilitation of Stalin.

Brezhnev and his party colleagues became worried about the ambitions of Shelepin, however, and decided to put an end to his influence over the security police. In May 1967, Semichastnyi was removed as KGB chief, and by November of that year Shelepin was out of the Central Committee Secretariat. The new KGB chairman was Iurii I. Andropov, a Central Committee secretary who had served as ambassador to Hungary and later as head of the Liaison with Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries Department of the Central Committee. He was apparently a neutral figure politically, agreed upon by all members of the collective leadership; Brezhnev, however, managed to bring in several of his own protégés to serve directly below Andropov. The most important of these was a KGB official named Semen Tsvigun, reportedly Brezhnev's brother-in-law, who was made first deputy KGB chairman in December 1967. Viktor M. Chebrikov was another official with links to Brezhnev who was brought to Moscow to serve in the KGB. The presence of his allies in the KGB leadership was a source of strength for Brezhnev, and he made certain that their careers prospered. In addition to encouraging favorable publicity

for the KGB, Brezhnev was careful to ensure that employees of the KGB were well paid and enjoyed significant privileges and perquisites.

Brezhnev may have underestimated the political prowess of Andropov, however. Andropov benefited from the increased powers and prestige that the KGB gained under the Brezhnev leadership and became a powerful political leader in his own right. As Brezhnev's death became imminent in 1982, Andropov began contending for the top party post. His success in reaching his goal in November 1982 was due partly to his attack, using KGB files as weapons, on the Brezhnevites for their involvement in corruption. Not surprisingly, Andropov's short tenure as general secretary (November 1982–February 1984) was marked by a stronger KGB role. Even Andropov's illness and death did not result in a decline for the KGB. On the contrary, the extended period of political upheaval in the Kremlin following his death seemed to increase the KGB's influence. Its officials received prominent coverage in the press, and KGB representation on party and state leadership bodies grew.

### **Gorbachev Era**

After gaining the post of general secretary in March 1985, Gorbachev moved with unprecedented speed to implement personnel changes in the party and government. His success in getting rid of so many potential political opponents in such a short time surprised Western Soviet experts, particularly because Gorbachev did not have a substantial power base or patronage network of his own when he took office. Gorbachev apparently relied on the same bases of support that Andropov had used in his ascent to the top, which included the KGB. According to Western experts, Gorbachev appealed to the KGB for help in purging the Brezhnev old guard. The main vehicle used by Gorbachev in carrying out these purges was the anticorruption campaign. By the late summer of 1985, hardly a day passed without a report in the press on cases of bribery, embezzlement, or other forms of economic crime. In addition to high-level party and state officials, MVD and Procuracy employees came under fire for their failure to uncover crimes. Even MVD chief Vitalii Fedorchuk fell victim to Gorbachev, losing his post in early 1986. Fedorchuk's replacement, Aleksandr Vlasov, was a former party apparatchik (see Glossary) with no experience in law enforcement.

Although the regular law enforcement agencies were subjected to sharp attacks for their failure to combat crime, the KGB remained unscathed, despite the fact that it was empowered by law

to investigate certain types of economic crime. There was some turnover in key KGB posts, but these changes were not nearly as widespread as were the changes in the CPSU apparatus and in other state agencies.

Numerous signs pointed to the fact that the Gorbachev leadership was cultivating good relations with the KGB by maintaining its high prestige and political status. KGB chairman Chebrikov was promoted to full membership in the Politburo just a month after Gorbachev came to power. He also figured prominently in the Soviet media. At the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress in February–March 1986, for example, he delivered a speech that was an unprecedented assertion of the power and authority of the KGB.

Although Gorbachev continued to rely on the KGB in his drive to purge the party and state apparatus of corrupt officials, toward the end of 1986 signs indicated that his relations with this organization were becoming strained. The KGB cannot have been pleased about the reformist polices promoted by Gorbachev, in particular openness in the media and liberalization of cultural norms. Calls for reform of the judicial and legal systems, voiced with increasing frequency in the autumn of 1986, signified that the Gorbachev leadership was attempting to curtail arbitrary KGB actions against citizens. This attempt became even more apparent in January 1987, when Chebrikov acknowledged, on the front page of *Pravda*, that employees of the KGB had committed illegalities. Such an acknowledgment of KGB abuses was unprecedented. Even during the Khrushchev era, when the crimes of Stalin's security police were exposed, the KGB was never criticized in the press. Observers speculated that, having depended initially on KGB support to purge the Brezhnevites, Gorbachev decided by early 1987 that he was strong enough to embark on reforms that might antagonize this institution.

It was not long, however, before signs of opposition to Gorbachev's policies arose, and a "conservative backlash" occurred. Although the opposition appears to have been led by disgruntled party leaders such as Egor K. Ligachev, the second-ranking member of the Politburo, the KGB probably joined forces with these conservatives. Chebrikov's comments, in particular his strident speech delivered in September 1987, made it clear that the KGB would not allow the democratic reforms to go too far: "There must be a clear awareness that the restructuring is taking place in our state and society under the leadership of the Communist Party, within the framework of socialism and in the interests of socialism. This revolutionary process will be reliably protected against any subversive intrigues." The subsequent ouster of a leading proponent

of Gorbachev's reforms, Moscow party chief Boris N. Yeltsin, was an indication of the strength of the opposition to Gorbachev.

Although he made some strategic retreats in early 1988, Gorbachev continued to pursue his policy of *perestroika*, and exposures of illegal KGB activities continued. Even more threatening for the KGB were unprecedented revelations about security police terror under Stalin. Although the role of the police in the purges had been discussed since the Khrushchev era, *glasnost*' resulted in a much more devastating critique of the role of the police during this period. Ethnic unrest of various nationalities, together with increasingly bold political demands by the Soviet intelligentsia, also presented the KGB with significant challenges. In a speech delivered in mid-April, Chebrikov expressed concern that things were going too far and that some individuals were "unleashing a wide-ranging arsenal of methods of social demagoguery and substituting bourgeois liberalism for the essence of the concept of socialist democracy." Subsequently, in October 1988 Chebrikov lost his position as chief of the KGB and was replaced by Vladimir A. Kriuchkov.

## **Organization of the Committee for State Security**

The basic organizational structure of the KGB was created in 1954, when the reorganization of the police apparatus was carried out. In the late 1980s, the KGB remained a highly centralized institution with controls implemented by the Politburo through the KGB headquarters in Moscow.

### **Structure**

The KGB was originally designated as a "state committee attached to the Council of Ministers." On July 5, 1978, a new law on the Council of Ministers changed the status of the KGB, along with that of several other state committees, so that its chairman was a member of the Council of Ministers by law. According to the 1977 Soviet Constitution, the Council of Ministers "coordinates and directs" the work of the ministries and state committees, including the KGB. In practice, however, the KGB had more autonomy than most other government bodies and operated with a large degree of independence from the Council of Ministers. The situation was similar with the Supreme Soviet, which had formal authority over the Council of Ministers and its agencies. In 1989 the actual powers of the Supreme Soviet, however, gave it little if any power over KGB operations.

The KGB was a union-republic state committee, controlling corresponding state committees of the same name in the fourteen non-Russian republics. (All-union ministries and state committees, by

contrast, did not have corresponding branches in the republics but executed their functions directly through Moscow.) Below the republic level, there existed KGB administrations (*upravleniia*) in the *kraia* (see Glossary) and oblasts (see Glossary). In the Russian Republic, however, there was no republic-level KGB. Oblast KGB administrations in the Russian Republic were subordinated directly to the central KGB offices in Moscow. At the lower levels, autonomous *okruga* (see Glossary), cities, and *raiony* (see Glossary) had KGB departments or sections.

The KGB also had a broad network of special departments in all major government institutions, enterprises, and factories. They generally consisted of one or more KGB representatives, whose purpose was to ensure the observance of security regulations and to monitor political sentiments among employees. The special departments recruited informers to help them in their tasks. A separate and very extensive network of special departments existed within the armed forces and defense-related institutions.

Although a union-republic agency, the KGB was highly centralized and was controlled rigidly from the top. The KGB central staff kept a close watch over the operations of its branches, leaving the latter minimal autonomous authority over policy or cadre selection. Moreover, local government organs had little involvement in local KGB activities. Indeed, the high degree of centralization in the KGB was reflected in the fact that regional KGB branches were not subordinated to the local soviets (see Glossary), but only to the KGB hierarchy. Thus, they differed from local branches of most union-republic ministerial agencies, such as the MVD, which were subject to dual subordination.

The KGB was directed by a chairman—who was formally appointed by the Supreme Soviet but actually was selected by the Politburo—one or two first deputy chairmen, and several (usually four to six) deputy chairmen. Key decisions were made by the KGB Collegium, which was a collective leadership body composed of the chairman, deputy chairmen, chiefs of certain KGB directorates, and one or two chairmen of republic KGB organizations.

### **Functions and Internal Organization**

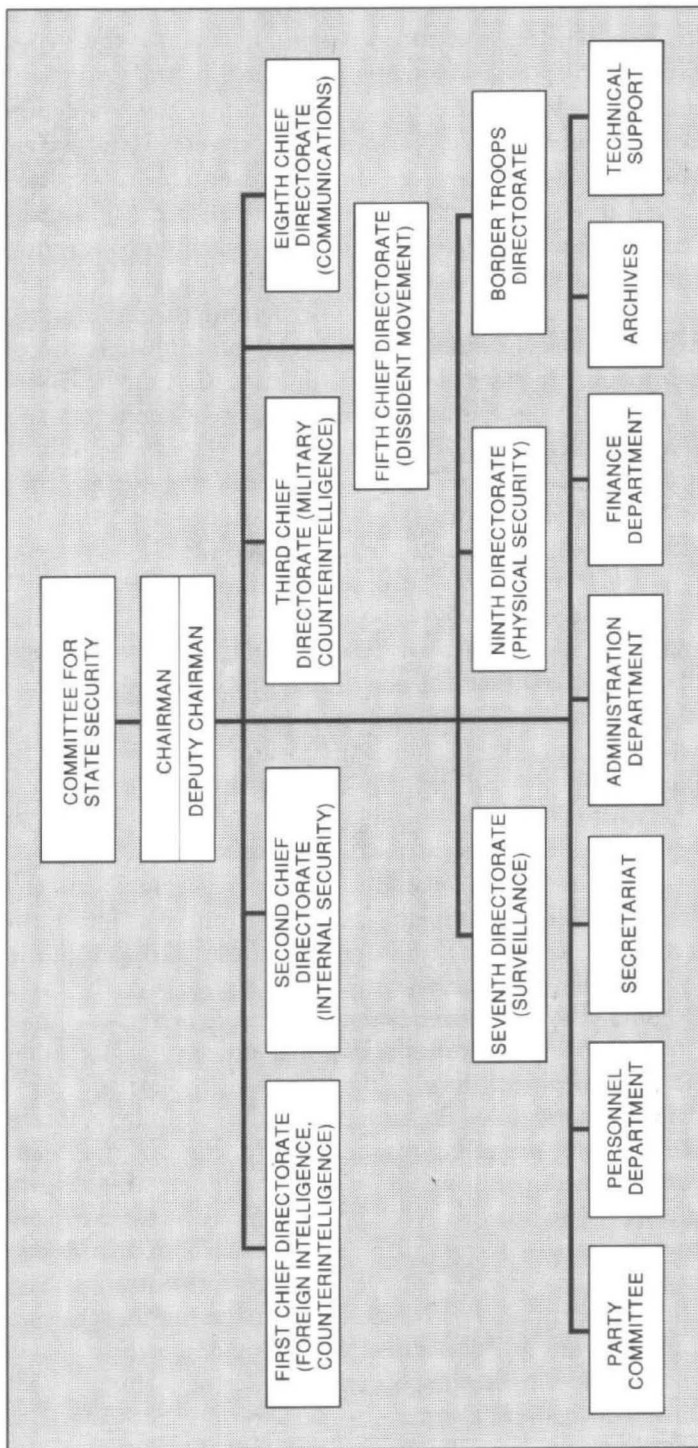
As a state committee with ministerial status, the KGB operated on the basis of a statute (*polozhenie*), confirmed by the Council of Ministers, that set forth in legal terms the KGB's powers and duties. Unlike the majority of statutes governing ministerial agencies, the KGB's statute was not published. Nevertheless, Soviet textbooks on administrative law offered useful statements about the KGB's role and functions. The KGB's tasks were generally defined in

official Soviet publications as encompassing four areas: the struggle against foreign spies and agents, the exposure and investigation of political and economic crimes by citizens, the protection of state borders, and the protection of state secrets. In addition, the KGB was charged with a wide range of preventive tasks, which were designed to eliminate the causes of both political and ordinary crimes. In other words, the KGB was tasked with ferreting out potential threats to the state and preventing the development of unorthodox political and social attitudes among the population.

Official Soviet sources did not discuss the internal structure of the KGB in detail. Nevertheless, some information on KGB organization and functions has been revealed by Soviet defectors and other sources. In 1988 the KGB had five chief directorates and three known (possibly another) directorates that were smaller in size and scope than the chief directorates, as well as various other administrative and technical support departments (see fig. 37). Western estimates of KGB manpower past ranged from 490,000 in 1973 to 700,000 in 1986.

The First Chief Directorate was responsible for all foreign operations and intelligence-gathering activities. It was divided into both functional services—training and management of covert agents, intelligence analysis, and collection of political, scientific, and technological intelligence—and geographic departments for various areas of the world.

The Second Chief Directorate was responsible for internal political control of Soviet citizens and foreigners residing within the Soviet Union, including both diplomats and tourists. The Fifth Chief Directorate also dealt with internal security. Created in the late 1960s to combat political dissent, it took up some of the tasks previously handled by the Second Chief Directorate. The Fifth Chief Directorate had special operational departments for religious dissent, national minorities, the intelligentsia and the artistic community, and censorship of literature. The Seventh Directorate handled surveillance, providing personnel and technical equipment to follow and monitor the activities of both foreigners and suspect Soviet citizens. Much of this work was centered in the Moscow and Leningrad areas, where tourists, diplomats, foreign students, and members of the Soviet intelligentsia were concentrated. The Eighth Chief Directorate was responsible for the highly sensitive area of communications. This directorate provided technical systems, including cipher systems, for other KGB departments and government agencies and also monitored and deciphered foreign communications.



*Figure 37. Organization of the Committee for State Security (KGB), 1988*



The KGB had at least three additional directorates: the Third Chief Directorate, which dealt with military counterintelligence and political surveillance of the Soviet armed forces; the Border Troops Directorate, which protected Soviet land and sea borders; and the Ninth Directorate, which guarded the Kremlin and key offices of the CPSU.

In addition to the various directorates and a special network of training and education establishments, the KGB had a personnel department, a secretariat, a technical support staff, a finance department, an archives, an administration department, and a party committee. Most of these bodies had counterparts within the different directorates. Party committees, which existed in every Soviet organization, handled political indoctrination of personnel. Heads of party committees arranged regular meetings to discuss party matters and served as liaisons between the party and the KGB at various levels, although party membership was probably universal among KGB employees. At the republic level, KGB organization was probably similar to that of the central KGB, although republic KGBs did not supervise units of the Border Troops, which were administered centrally. Nor did they include functions of the Third Chief Directorate, which was organized primarily along military service lines or by military district. In addition, functions such as communications and foreign espionage may have been administered only in Moscow.

### **Party Control**

Although the security police was always a government rather than a party institution, the party considered this agency to be its own vital arm and sought to maintain the closest supervision and control over its activities. The KGB was nominally subordinate to the Council of Ministers. But the CPSU, not the government, exercised control and direction. Aside from the Politburo, which probably issued general policy directives, another vehicle for such party control was, according to Western specialists, the State and Legal Department of the Central Committee Secretariat (see Secretariat, ch. 7). This department supervised all government agencies concerned with legal affairs, security, and defense, including the Ministry of Defense. It implemented party control by approving personnel appointments and exercising general oversight to ensure that these agencies were following party directives. From 1968 to 1988, the chief of this department, which probably had a staff of fifty to sixty employees, was Nikolai Savinkin. From the available evidence, it appears that the department did not involve itself as deeply in KGB affairs as it did in the activities of other

state agencies, such as the MVD. Given the sensitive nature of KGB functions, the party leadership may have been reluctant to allocate to the State and Legal Department the most important decisions about KGB personnel and policy. Rather, the Central Committee secretaries charged with oversight responsibilities for the State and Legal Department probably made the key decisions. Such a portfolio was an important source of political power for a Central Committee secretary and was therefore a highly coveted responsibility. In January 1987, Anatolii I. Luk'ianov was brought into the Secretariat to supervise the State and Legal Department. He was, however, only a junior secretary, so Gorbachev or another senior secretary may have had the ultimate responsibility. Luk'ianov, an apparent ally of Gorbachev, had attended Moscow University's Law Faculty when Gorbachev was there in the early 1950s.

### **Personnel**

Party personnel policy toward the KGB was designed not only to ensure that the overall security needs of the state were met by means of an efficient and well-functioning political police organization but also to prevent the police from becoming too powerful and threatening the party leadership. Achieving these two goals required the careful recruitment and promotion of KGB officials who had the appropriate education, experience, and qualifications as determined by the party. Judging from the limited biographical information on KGB employees, the Komsomol and the party were the main sources of recruitment to the KGB. Russians and Ukrainians predominated in the KGB; other nationalities were only minimally represented. In the non-Russian republics, KGB chairmen were often representatives of the indigenous nationality, as were other KGB employees. In such areas, however, KGB headquarters in Moscow appointed Russians to the post of first deputy chairman, and they monitored activities and reported back to Moscow.

Career patterns indicate that the KGB was a highly professional bureaucratic group with distinct characteristics that set it off from other Soviet elites. After the purges at the top levels of the police apparatus and the introduction of party and other cadres into the newly created KGB in 1954, the influx of outsiders was small, except at the very highest levels. Turnover rates were low in the KGB as compared with other bureaucracies, and KGB officials enjoyed security of tenure, as well as numerous material rewards. The KGB became—and in the 1980s remained—a closed bureaucracy of specialists, similar to the military. The homogeneity of

their backgrounds and their sense of eliteness created a strong esprit de corps among KGB officials.

## **Domestic Security and the Committee for State Security**

The KGB had a variety of domestic security functions. It was empowered by law to arrest and investigate individuals for certain types of political and economic crimes. It was also responsible for censorship, propaganda, and the protection of state and military secrets.

### **Legal Prerogatives**

In carrying out its task of ensuring state security, the KGB was empowered by law to uncover and investigate certain political crimes set forth in the Russian Republic's Code of Criminal Procedure and the criminal codes of other republics. According to the Russian Republic's Code of Criminal Procedure, which came into force in 1960 and has been revised several times since then, the KGB had the authority, together with the Procuracy, to investigate the political crimes of treason, espionage, terrorism, sabotage, anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, divulgence of state secrets, smuggling, illegal exit abroad, and illegal entry into the Soviet Union. In addition, the KGB was empowered, along with the Procuracy and the MVD, to investigate the following economic crimes: stealing of state property by appropriation or embezzlement or by abuse of official position and stealing of state property or socialist property (see Glossary) on an especially large scale.

In carrying out arrests and investigations for these crimes, the KGB was subject to specific rules that were set forth in the Code of Criminal Procedure. The Procuracy was charged with ensuring that these rules were observed. In practice, the Procuracy had little authority over the KGB, and the latter was permitted to circumvent the regulations whenever politically expedient. In 1988 closing some of these loopholes was discussed, and legal experts called for a greater role for the Procuracy in protecting Soviet citizens from abuse by the investigatory organs. As of May 1989, however, few concrete changes had been publicized.

It is important to note that the KGB frequently enlisted the MVD and the Procuracy to instigate proceedings against political non-conformists on charges that did not fall under the KGB's purview. Dissidents were often charged for defaming the Soviet state and violating public order. Sometimes the KGB arranged to have them charged for ordinary crimes, such as hooliganism or drug abuse.

## **Policy**

The intensity of KGB campaigns against political crime varied considerably over the years. The Khrushchev period was marked by relative tolerance toward dissent, whereas Brezhnev reinstated a harsh policy. The level of political arrests rose markedly from 1965 to 1973. In 1972 Brezhnev began to pursue *détente*, and the regime apparently tried to appease Western critics by moderating KGB operations against dissent. There was a sharp reversal after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, and arrests again became more numerous. In 1986, Gorbachev's second year in power, restraint was reintroduced, and the KGB curtailed its arrests.

The forcible confinement of dissidents in psychiatric hospitals, where debilitating drugs were administered, was an alternative to straightforward arrests. This procedure avoided the unfavorable publicity that often arose with criminal trials of dissenters. Also, by labeling dissenters madmen, authorities hoped to discredit their actions and deprive them of support. The KGB often arranged for such commitments and maintained an active presence in psychiatric hospitals, despite the fact that these institutions were not under its formal authority. The Gorbachev leadership, as part of its general program of reform, introduced some reforms that were designed to prevent the abuse of psychiatric commitment by Soviet authorities, but the practical effects of these changes remained unclear in 1989.

In addition to arrests, psychiatric commitment, and other forms of coercion, the KGB also exercised a preventive function, designed to prevent political crimes and suppress deviant political attitudes. The KGB carried out this function in a variety of ways. For example, when the KGB learned that a Soviet citizen was having contact with foreigners or speaking in a negative fashion about the Soviet regime, it made efforts to set him or her straight by means of a "chat." The KGB also devoted great efforts to political indoctrination and propaganda. At local and regional levels, KGB officials regularly visited factories, schools, collective farms (see Glossary), and Komsomol organizations to deliver talks on political vigilance. National and republic-level KGB officials wrote articles and gave speeches on this theme. Their main message was that the Soviet Union was threatened by the large-scale efforts of Western intelligence agencies to penetrate the country by using cultural, scientific, and tourist exchanges to send in spies. In addition, the KGB claimed that Soviet citizens were barraged by hostile



*Headquarters of the  
Committee for State  
Security (KGB) and  
Lubianka Prison,  
Dzerzhinskii Square, Moscow  
Courtesy Jimmy Pritchard*



*Plaque on KGB building,  
Moscow, honoring  
former KGB chairman  
Iurii V. Andropov.  
Courtesy Jimmy Pritchard*

propaganda from the West as part of an effort to undermine the Soviet system.

Another important facet of KGB preventive work was censorship of literature and other media, which it exercised at both an informal and a formal level. The KGB censored informally by harassing writers and artists, arranging for their expulsion from professional organizations or from their jobs, and threatening them with prosecution for their unorthodox views. Such forms of intimidation forced many writers and artists to exercise self-censorship by producing only what they thought would be acceptable. The KGB maintained strong surveillance over the Union of Writers, as well as over the journalists' and artists' unions, where KGB representatives occupied top administrative posts.

The KGB played an important role in the system of formal censorship by taking part in the work of the Main Administration for Safeguarding State Secrets in the Press (Glavnoe upravlenie po okhrane gosudarstvennykh tain v pechati—Glavlit; see Administration of the Mass Media and the Arts, ch. 9). Some Western specialists believe that at least one of Glavlit's deputy chiefs was a KGB official and that the KGB assisted in Glavlit's compilation of its *Censor's Index*, a thick volume, updated frequently, listing all military, technical, statistical, and other subjects that could not be publicized without special permission from the Central Committee.

Another important internal security task of the KGB was to provide the leadership with information about the dissident movement and the political attitudes and opinions of the public as a whole. This task by its very nature gave the KGB influence over policy, particularly because Soviet leaders had no direct contact with dissidents and nonconformists and thus relied on KGB information about motives and foreign connections and on its estimates of numbers and support for various groups. The situation probably changed somewhat after Gorbachev introduced the policy of *glasnost*' in early 1987. After that the KGB no longer had a monopoly on information about the country's political mood because Soviet citizens expressed their views more freely in the press. Nevertheless, the KGB's information gathering continued to be important because direct criticism of the political system was suppressed. Computers no doubt improved KGB methods of processing information and conducting research.

The KGB was given considerable latitude in carrying out the party leadership's policy toward dissent. In other words, the Politburo decided on broad policy guidelines, but the KGB made the day-to-day decisions. Many dissidents, for example, viewed the KGB as extremely powerful and as enjoying considerable autonomy

in implementing regime policy. Although the party leadership clearly determined the general policy toward dissent, it had an interest in promoting the idea that the KGB was responsible because the KGB could then be blamed for the injustices suffered by citizens. Furthermore, the image of the KGB's omnipotence no doubt helped to prevent anti-Soviet behavior. As Seweryn Bialer, a Western Sovietologist, observed of the Soviet system, "Without doubt the key to stability has been the high visibility of the coercive apparatus and policies."

### **Special Departments in the Armed Forces**

Since the 1920s, an important internal security function of the security police has been ensuring the political reliability of the armed forces. This function was carried out through a network of so-called special departments (*osobyie otdeley*), which were under the supervision of the KGB's Third Chief Directorate. Officially designated as a military counterintelligence organization, the Third Chief Directorate performed tasks that extended far beyond counterintelligence to encompass extensive political surveillance of the military and other military security duties.

Special departments were responsible for security clearances of military personnel and for ensuring that security regulations and procedures were strictly observed in all branches of the armed forces. Thus they had control over (or at least immediate access to) military personnel files and information relating to the political reliability of members of the armed forces. The leadership claimed that their armed forces were continually threatened by ideological sabotage, i.e., attempts by Western governments to subvert individuals through bourgeois propaganda aimed at weakening their political convictions. Hence a key element of special department activities was political surveillance on both a formal and an informal level.

Officially, special departments were empowered to investigate armed forces personnel for the same crimes that were under KGB purview for ordinary citizens. In addition, the KGB had the authority to investigate military crimes defined in Article 259 of the Russian Republic's Code of Criminal Procedure—disclosure of a military secret or loss of a document containing a military secret. In investigating cases under their purview, special department employees were supposed to follow set rules of criminal procedure, but they did not always do so. In 1989, however, they no longer had the right to conduct trials, as they did during Stalin's time. Once an investigation was completed, the case was tried by special military tribunals under the Main Military Procuracy.

In addition to criminal investigations, the special departments had extensive informal responsibilities for ensuring the political reliability of the armed forces. Soviet authorities stated that they prevented political crimes by various preventive measures. Thus they carried on daily educational activities to increase political vigilance and communist ideological convictions among the armed forces and monitored telephone conversations and correspondence of military personnel. Special departments relied heavily on a broad network of informers, recruited from among military personnel.

The special departments were also charged with protecting all state and military secrets, including those involving nuclear weapons, a task that placed them in a position of considerable strategic importance. One Soviet official pointed out that "the reliable defense of Soviet forces from all types of espionage took on special significance when the basic defensive strength of the country came to consist of the most contemporary weapons systems, especially ballistic nuclear weapons."

According to Western sources, the KGB had custody and transport responsibilities for nuclear charges, which were separated from missiles and aircraft, until the late 1960s. At that time the KGB apparently relinquished its physical control over nuclear warheads, but it remained involved in the nuclear control process. Not only did it maintain a strategic communications network independent of the military communications system, but its responsibilities for protecting nuclear secrets presumably gave the KGB access to nuclear weapons installations as well as to military plans regarding the use of nuclear weapons.

## **The Foreign Intelligence Role of the Committee for State Security**

The KGB played an important role in furthering Soviet foreign policy objectives abroad. In addition to straightforward intelligence collection and counterintelligence, the KGB participated in the Kremlin's program of active measures. KGB officials also contributed to foreign policy decision making.

### **Organization**

The First Chief Directorate of the KGB was responsible for KGB operations abroad. According to John Barron, a Western authority, the First Chief Directorate was composed of three separate directorates: Directorate S, which oversaw illegal agents (those under deep cover) throughout the world; Directorate T, responsible for





*Soviet intelligence collection ship at sea  
Courtesy United States Navy*

the collection of scientific and technological intelligence; and Directorate K, which carried out infiltration of foreign intelligence and security services and exercised surveillance over Soviet citizens abroad. In addition, the First Chief Directorate had three important services: Service I, which analyzed and distributed intelligence collected by KGB foreign intelligence officers and agents, published a daily current events summary for the Politburo, and made forecasts of future world developments; Service A, which was responsible for planning and implementing active measures; and Service R, which evaluated KGB operations abroad.

The operational core of the First Chief Directorate lay in its eleven geographical departments, which supervised KGB employees assigned to residencies abroad. These officers, or *rezidenty*, operated under legal cover, engaging in intelligence collection, espionage, and active measures. The long-time head of the First Chief Directorate, Vladimir Kriuchkov, who had served under Andropov and his successors, was named head of the KGB in 1988. The Second Chief Directorate also played a role in foreign intelligence in 1989. It recruited agents for intelligence purposes from among foreigners stationed in the Soviet Union, and it engaged in counterintelligence by uncovering attempts of foreign intelligence services to recruit Soviet citizens.

## **Intelligence and Counterintelligence**

KGB intelligence gathering in the West increased markedly after the era of détente began in 1972. Détente permitted a vast influx of Soviet and East European diplomatic, cultural, and commercial officials into the United States and other Western countries. KGB officers and their East European counterparts operated under various guises, posing as diplomats, trade officials, journalists, scientists, and students. The proportion of Soviet citizens abroad who were engaged in intelligence gathering was estimated to range from 30 to 40 percent in the United States to over 50 percent in some Third World countries. In addition, many Soviet representatives who were not intelligence officers were nevertheless given some sort of assignment by the KGB.

Apparently, the First Chief Directorate had little trouble recruiting personnel for its foreign operations. The high salaries, military rank, access to foreign currency, and opportunity to live abroad offered attractive enticements to young people choosing a career. First Chief Directorate recruits were usually graduates of prestigious higher education institutions and had knowledge of one or more foreign languages. The KGB had a two-year postgraduate training course for these recruits at its Higher Intelligence School located near Moscow. The curriculum included the use of ciphers, arms and sabotage training, history and economics according to Marxist-Leninist (see Glossary) theory, CPSU history, law, and foreign languages.

The KGB was the primary agency responsible for supplying the Kremlin with foreign intelligence. According to former Soviet diplomat Arkady Shevchenko, Moscow cabled out questions on a daily basis to KGB *rezidenty* abroad to guide them in their tasks. In addition to political intelligence, KGB officers concentrated increasingly on efforts to acquire advanced Western technology. The KGB reportedly acted as a collector of militarily significant Western technology (in the form of documents and hardware) on behalf of the Military Industrial Commission of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers. This commission coordinated the development of all Soviet weapons systems, along with the program to acquire Western technology, and it levied requirements among the KGB, the Main Intelligence Directorate (see Glossary), and several other agencies, including those of East European intelligence services. The KGB and the GRU increased their technical collection efforts considerably in the early 1980s, when the number of requirements levied on them by the Military Industrial Commission rose by about 50 percent.

The Andropov era saw a greater orientation in the KGB toward electronic espionage—communications intercepts and satellites—to supplement intelligence gathered by agents. According to Robert Campbell, the Soviet Union deployed at least three satellites for intelligence collection. Some of the intelligence may have been strictly military and therefore collected by the GRU, but the KGB reportedly also made use of these satellites.

### **Active Measures**

Active measures were clandestine operations designed to further Soviet foreign policy goals and to extend Soviet influence throughout the world. This type of activity had long been employed by the Soviet Union abroad, but it became more widespread and more effective in the late 1960s. Among these covert techniques was disinformation: leaking of false information and rumors to foreign media or planting forgeries in an attempt to deceive the public or the political elite in a given country or countries. The United States was the prime target of disinformation, in particular forgery operations, which were designed to damage foreign and defense policies of the United States in a variety of ways. Defectors reported that the Soviet Union and its allies circulated forged documents—often purporting to be speeches, letters, or policy statements by United States officials—containing false information. The use of international front (see Glossary) organizations and foreign communist parties to expand the Soviet Union's political influence and further its propaganda campaigns was another form of active measures. The World Peace Council was the largest and most important of Soviet front groups. Together with the International Department of the Central Committee, the KGB funneled money to these organizations and recruited agents of the Soviet Union to serve on their administrative bodies.

Other active measures involved support for terrorists and insurgents. As of 1989, there was no direct, public evidence that Soviet citizens had planned or orchestrated terrorist acts by groups from Western Europe or the Middle East, but there was much indirect evidence to show that the Soviet Union did support international terrorism. The Soviet Union maintained close relationships with a number of governments and organizations that were direct supporters of terrorist groups. The Soviet Union sold large quantities of arms to Libya and Syria, for example, and also maintained a close alliance with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), providing it with arms, monetary assistance, and paramilitary training. Moscow's surrogate, Cuba, played a central role in Latin American terrorism by providing groups with training, arms, and

sanctuary, and the Soviet Union's East European satellite states often served as middlemen or subcontractors for channeling aid to terrorist groups. Although the KGB, with some exceptions, avoided direct involvement with terrorist operations, it played an important role in diverting aid to these groups and providing the Soviet leadership with intelligence reports on their activities.

The KGB also was heavily involved in the support of "wars of national liberation" in the Third World. Together with satellite intelligence services, the KGB helped to organize military training and political indoctrination of leftist guerrillas, as well as providing arms and advisers. The manipulation of wars of national liberation enabled the Soviet Union to influence the political future of the countries in question and to make their new governments more responsive to Soviet objectives. The Soviet regime concentrated mainly on African countries until the late 1970s but then extended its support for "national liberation movements" to Central America, where it regularly employed the services of Cuba.

The KGB relied heavily on the intelligence services of satellite countries in carrying out both active measures and espionage operations. The intelligence services of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Cuba formed important adjuncts to the KGB. Although formally subordinated to their own governments, these satellite intelligence services were, according to many Western experts, heavily influenced by the KGB. A former official in the Czechoslovak intelligence service stated that Soviet intelligence was informed about every major aspect of Czechoslovak intelligence activities, and Soviet advisers (called liaison officers) participated in planning major operations and assessing the results. As far back as the 1960s, the KGB introduced a new element of coordination with the satellite intelligence services through the creation of departments for disinformation in East German, Czechoslovak, and Hungarian intelligence services and the establishment of direct lines of communication from these departments to the KGB.

Soviet active measures involved not only KGB and satellite intelligence services but also several other Soviet agencies, which all participated in a coordinated effort to further Soviet policy objectives. In addition to the KGB, the Central Committee's International Department took a leading role in directing and implementing active measures.

### **Influence on Foreign Policy**

The KGB participated in the foreign policy decision-making process at the highest level because its chief was a member of the

Politburo. At the same time, it influenced the formulation of foreign policy at a lower level as an executor of that policy, a provider of information, and a generator of ideas, solutions, and alternatives. Thus, for example, when the Kremlin decided to invade Czechoslovakia in 1968, KGB chief Andropov, who was an expert on Eastern Europe and had a direct line of intelligence from Czechoslovakia, presumably influenced the decision-making process significantly. Furthermore, the KGB, as the main provider of intelligence to the leadership, was in a position to influence decision making by screening and interpreting the information. The KGB probably favored the invasion because of the threat posed by a possible spillover of unrest into the Soviet Union. Also, efforts by Czechoslovak reformers to reorganize their security police jeopardized KGB operations in Czechoslovakia. Considerable evidence showed that the KGB, in order to bolster the prointerventionist position, used intelligence and covert action to produce proof of counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia.

Andropov did not always favor military intervention as a solution to international problems, however. Other considerations, such as the Soviet Union's international image, no doubt affected his views on the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan (which he reportedly did not favor) and the 1980-81 Polish crisis (where he probably was among those who opposed an invasion). Both these crises occurred at a time when the KGB was trying to mobilize West European public opinion against plans by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to introduce intermediate-range missiles in Europe.

Chebrikov did not have Andropov's foreign policy expertise when he took over as head of the KGB in 1982, but his admission to the Politburo gave him a voice in foreign policy at the highest level. In addition, many Western experts believe that the KGB chairman served on the Defense Council, an important collegial decision-making body that provided top-level coordination for defense-related activities of the Soviet government (see Defense Council, ch. 18). Chebrikov's numerous trips to Eastern Europe after he became head of the KGB indicated that he was personally involved in KGB operations beyond Soviet borders, and his forceful advocacy of Soviet "counterpropaganda" efforts abroad implied a commitment to a strong foreign policy role for the KGB. Kriuchkov, who became head of the KGB in 1988, had been extensively involved in foreign operations as the chief of the First Chief Directorate of the KGB.

## **The Ministry of Internal Affairs**

The MVD, which encompassed the regular, or nonpolitical, police, had a long history in the Soviet Union. It was first established

as the NKVD on November 18, 1917. It has undergone several organizational and name changes since then. When the KGB was established in 1954, the security police was separated from the regular police. The MVD was originally established as a union-republic ministry (see Glossary) with headquarters in Moscow, but in 1960 the Khrushchev leadership, as part of its general downgrading of the police, abolished the central MVD, whose functions were assumed by republic ministries of internal affairs. Then, in 1962 the MVD was redesignated the Ministry for the Preservation of Public Order (Ministerstvo okhrany obshchestvennogo poriadka—MOOP). This name change implied a break with the all-powerful MVD created by Beria, as well as a narrower range of functions. The changes were accompanied by increasing criticism of the regular police in the Soviet press for its shortcomings in combating crime.

Following Khrushchev's ouster, Brezhnev did much to raise the status of the regular police. In 1966, after placing one of his protégés, Nikolai A. Shchelokov, in the post of chief, Brezhnev reinstated MOOP as a union-republic ministry. Two years later, MOOP was renamed the MVD, an apparent symbol of its increased authority. Efforts were made to raise the effectiveness of the MVD by recruiting better-qualified personnel and upgrading equipment and training. Brezhnev's death, however, left the MVD vulnerable to his opponents, Andropov in particular. Just a month after Brezhnev died, Shchelokov was ousted as its chief and replaced by the former KGB chairman, Vitalii Fedorchuk. Shchelokov was later tried on corruption charges. A similar fate befell Brezhnev's son-in-law, Iurii Churbanov, who was removed from the post of first deputy chief in 1984 and later arrested on criminal charges. After bringing several officials from the KGB and from the party apparatus into the MVD, Andropov sought to make it an effective organization for rooting out widespread corruption; Gorbachev continued these efforts.

### **Functions and Organization**

The MVD had a wide array of duties. It was responsible for uncovering and investigating certain categories of crime, apprehending criminals, supervising the internal passport (see Glossary) system, maintaining public order, combating public intoxication, supervising parolees, managing prisons and labor camps, providing fire protection, and controlling traffic. Until early 1988, the MVD was also in charge of special psychiatric hospitals, but a law passed in January 1988 transferred all psychiatric hospitals to the authority of the Ministry of Health.

As a union-republic ministry under the Council of Ministers, the MVD had its headquarters in Moscow and branches in the republic and regional government apparatus, as well as in oblasts and cities. Unlike the KGB, the internal affairs apparatus was subject to dual subordination; local internal affairs offices reported both to the executive committees of their respective local soviets and to their superior offices in the MVD hierarchy.

The MVD headquarters in Moscow was divided into several directorates and offices (see fig. 38). The Directorate for Combating the Embezzlement of Socialist Property and Speculation was established in the late 1960s to control such white-collar crime as embezzlement and falsification of economic plan records. The Criminal Investigation Directorate assisted the Procuracy, and on occasion the KGB, in the investigation of criminal cases. There was a separate department for investigating and prosecuting minor cases, such as traffic violations, and the Maintenance of Public Order Directorate, which was responsible for ensuring order in public places and for preventing outbreaks of public unrest.

The members of the *militsiia* (uniformed police), as part of the regular police force, were distinguished by their gray uniforms with red piping. The duties of the *militsiia* included patrolling public places to ensure order and arresting persons who violated the law, including vagrants and drunks. Resisting arrest or preventing a police officer from executing his duties was a serious crime in the Soviet Union, punishable by one to five years' imprisonment. Killing a policeman was punishable by death.

The Office of Visas and Registration was charged with registering Soviet citizens and foreigners residing in each precinct of a city and with issuing internal passports to Soviet citizens. Soviet citizens wishing to emigrate from the Soviet Union and foreigners wishing to travel within the Soviet Union had to obtain visas from this office. The Office of Recruitment and Training supervised the recruitment of new members of the *militsiia*, who were recommended by work collectives and public organizations. The local party and Kom-somol bodies screened candidates thoroughly to ensure their political reliability. Individuals serving in the *militsiia* were exempt from the regular military draft.

## **Leadership**

In January 1986, when Fedorchuk was retired, Aleksandr V. Vlasov was appointed the chief of the MVD. Vlasov had no background in the police apparatus. In September 1988, Vlasov became a candidate member of the CPSU Politburo, and the following month he was replaced as chief of the MVD by Vadim V. Bakatin.

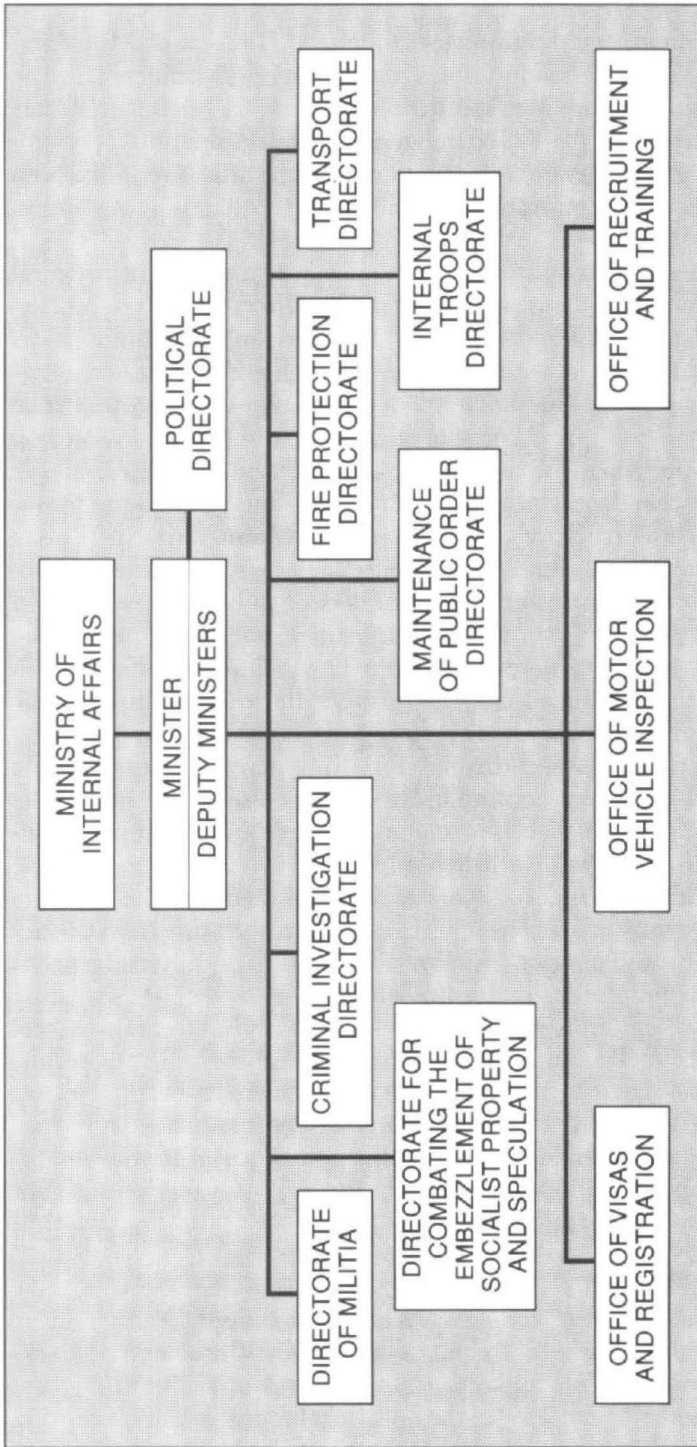


Figure 38. Organization of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), 1988



Bakatin was made a full member of the CPSU Central Committee in March 1986, but his police experience, if any, was not known in the West. In 1989 Leonid G. Sizov and Vasilii P. Trushin were first deputy ministers of the MVD. In addition, the MVD had approximately eight deputy ministers.

The MVD published a vast amount of popular literature devoted to the glorification of the MVD in order to attract well-qualified cadres to its ranks. The fact that MVD salaries were considerably lower than those for the KGB and that working conditions were generally poor (long hours and out-of-date equipment) made recruitment somewhat difficult. The MVD underwent an extensive purge in the mid-1980s as part of the party's effort to rid the organization of corruption and inefficiency. Over 170,000 police officers were fired between 1983 and 1988 for irresponsibility, lack of discipline, and violations of the law.

### **Control by the Party**

The chief vehicle for party control over the MVD was the State and Legal Department of the Secretariat, which had a special section for supervising the MVD. This section presumably participated in the selection of MVD personnel and evaluated the MVD's work in terms of how well it carried out party directives.

Another means through which the party exercised control over the MVD was the Political Directorate of the MVD. This directorate, a network of political organs existing throughout the MVD, was established in 1983 and operated in a way similar to that of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy. The Political Directorate was created because local party officials were not exercising sufficient control over the activities of internal affairs officials but rather were colluding with them in committing economic crimes. Its chief until April 1988 was Viktor Gladyshev, a former section chief in the Administrative Organs Department (present-day State and Legal Department). Gladyshev was replaced by the former personnel chief of the MVD, Anatolii Anikiev.

The minister of internal affairs was usually a member of the Central Committee but as of 1989 had never enjoyed membership on the Politburo. Thus the regular police executed party policy but had little voice in policy formulation at the national level. At the local level, however, the police chief may have had more impact on decision making in the law enforcement realm because he was generally included on both the local soviet executive committee and the local party committee.

## **The Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Judicial Organs, and Nonpolitical Crime**

The Soviet Union had two separate legal systems. The first maintained law and order on a daily basis, enforced the law, and adjudicated disputes that arose among the citizenry. This system was administered by the organs of justice: the MVD, the Procuracy, the Ministry of Justice, and the courts. The other legal system, administered by the KGB on behalf of the party leadership, was arbitrary and repressive and was used to suppress and punish critics of the Soviet regime. Some cases did not fall neatly into one category or another. There was a gray area in which a seemingly ordinary case took on a political character. As Western expert Gordon B. Smith pointed out, "Soviet legal policy must bridge these two systems, providing a framework for the functioning of each."

### **Socialist Legality**

Soviet law displayed many special characteristics that derived from the socialist (see Glossary) nature of the Soviet state and reflected Marxist-Leninist ideology. Lenin accepted the Marxist conception of the law and the state as instruments of coercion in the hands of the bourgeoisie and postulated the creation of popular, informal tribunals to administer revolutionary justice. Alongside this utopian trend, a dictatorial trend developed that advocated the use of law and legal institutions to suppress all opposition to the regime. The latter trend reached its zenith under Stalin, when the administration of justice was carried out mainly by the security police in special tribunals. During the de-Stalinization of the Khrushchev era, a new trend developed, based on socialist legality (see Glossary), that stressed the need to protect the procedural and statutory rights of citizens, while still calling for obedience to the state. New legal codes, introduced in 1960, were part of the effort to establish legal norms in administering laws. Although socialist legality remained in force after 1960, the dictatorial and utopian trends continued to influence the legal process. Persecution of political and religious dissenters, in flagrant violation of their legal rights, continued, but at the same time there was a tendency to decriminalize lesser offenses by handing them over to people's courts (see Glossary) and administrative agencies and dealing with them by education rather than by incarceration.

By late 1986, the Gorbachev regime was stressing anew the importance of individual rights in relation to the state and criticizing those who violated the procedural laws in implementing Soviet

justice. This signaled a resurgence of socialist legality as the dominant trend. It should be noted, however, that socialist legality itself still lacked important features associated with Western jurisprudence. In particular, the ultimate control of the legal system lay with the party leadership, which was not democratically elected by, and therefore not responsible to, the public at large.

### **The Procuracy**

The Procuracy was the most powerful institution in the Soviet system of justice relating to nonpolitical matters. It was a hierarchical organization representing all public prosecutors, all the way down to the city or village level. As specified in the Soviet Constitution, the procurator general of the Soviet Union was appointed by the Supreme Soviet and controlled Procuracy officials throughout the system. Employees of the Procuracy were not subject to the authority of their local soviets, but they were subject to the authority of the party. The Procuracy had a wide range of functions, involving itself at all stages in the criminal process. Procurators carried out investigations of the majority of cases; supervised investigations carried out by the MVD, the KGB, and the Procuracy's own employees; authorized arrests; prosecuted offenders; and supervised prisons. In addition, procurators supervised parole and the release of prisoners and referred judicial decisions to higher courts for review. Procurators also oversaw the operation of all government bodies, enterprises, officials, and social organizations to ensure that they were observing the law. Although the Procuracy possessed the formal authority to supervise the KGB in carrying out arrests and investigations in political cases, there was little evidence that the Procuracy actually exercised this function.

### **Military Justice**

Military justice in the Soviet Union was administered by the Main Military Procuracy, which was subordinated to the procurator general and responsible for ensuring that laws were observed within the military. It also supervised criminal investigations of armed forces personnel carried out by its employees, as well as by the KGB (in cases of political crime). Military cases were tried in military tribunals, which were under the authority of the Supreme Court.

### **The Judiciary and the Legal Profession**

The court structure in the Soviet Union, set forth in the Constitution and governed by several all-union and republic statutes, was quite complex. In courts of first instance, one judge sat with two

elected people's assessors (lay judges), who were ordinary citizens, elected at general meetings of factories, offices, collective farms, or residential blocks for a term of two years. Appellate and review procedure came before a bench of three judges. Although a legal education was not required and any citizen over the age of twenty-four could in principle be elected to the post of judge, more than 95 percent of all judges had higher legal education. The party carefully screened candidates for election to the position of judge, which had a term of five years. Most judges above the local level were party members. In addition to determining innocence or guilt, judges performed an important function of socialization, often lecturing defendants for failing to uphold socialist values. Judges were part of the union-republic Ministry of Justice and the fifteen republic ministries of justice. There was no system of binding precedent, but supreme courts at all-union and republic levels gave "guiding explanations" to be followed.

Advocates, or defense attorneys, were controlled by the Ministry of Justice at the all-union and republic level and at the local level by the justice department of the local soviet. Advocates were usually law school graduates with some practical training. The Soviet Union had approximately 18,000 advocates, organized into colleges of around 150 attorneys each. These colleges maintained consultation bureaus, each with a staff of about twenty, in most towns and cities. The bureaus provided legal advice on a variety of issues, such as divorce, custody, inheritance, property rights, and housing disputes. The bureaus also offered legal defense for persons accused of criminal offenses. According to the 1977 Constitution, all defendants had the right to legal counsel. Legal fees were set by the state and were low enough for most people to afford. According to Soviet émigrés, however, many defense lawyers expected additional payments or gifts "under the table."

Legal advisers to government agencies and departments, enterprises, factories, and state farms (see Glossary) were called *iuriskonsul'ty*. Numbering approximately 29,000 in 1989, they represented their employer in court and drafted internal rules, contracts, and commercial documents.

## **Legal Codes and Abuses of the System**

The fundamental principles of the civil and criminal branches of Soviet law were established at the all-union level and then set down in the legal codes of the republics. The Civil Code dealt with contract law, tort law, and law governing wills and inheritance. Separate codes existed for family law and labor law. The Criminal Code concerned itself with all aspects of criminal behavior.

The Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Republic were revised completely (along with the codes of the other republics) in 1960, incorporating the 1958 Fundamental Principles of Criminal Procedure, approved by the Supreme Soviet. These codes represented a sharp departure from the Stalinist criminal codes, which had provided a formal legal basis for the arrest and prosecution of innocent citizens on groundless charges. Under the Stalinist code, for example, an individual could be prosecuted for committing an act not specifically prohibited by the criminal code but "analogous" to such an act. The 1960 codes abolished the principle of analogy.

The 1960 codes defined political crimes in a more restricted form and made punishments considerably less severe. They also established procedural rules to govern the arrest and detention of suspected criminals. According to the law, a suspect could not be detained for more than three days without a warrant. Thereafter, permission for detention had to be obtained from the procurator or from the courts. The maximum period of pretrial detention was nine months. At the end of such detention, the accused was entitled to the services of a defense lawyer. The trial itself was supposed to be public, with the prosecution conducted by the procurator, who could recommend sentencing.

Despite the existence of formal laws to protect the rights of the accused, ample evidence indicated that these laws were not adhered to when political or other interests of the party came into play. The party was the ultimate authority in the administration of justice, and party officials frequently interfered in the judicial process to protect their own interests. Party approval was required before appointment to any important position in the legal apparatus, and this control over personnel appointments gave the party substantial power (see *Nomenklatura*, ch. 7). The party also exerted influence in the oversight of the legal and judicial organs.

The party sometimes interfered in the administration of justice. CPSU officials put pressure on procurators, judges, and defense attorneys in the conduct of individual cases. In some instances, party officials pressed members of the legal system to arrest and convict innocent persons who were viewed as politically unorthodox. (In these cases, the KGB was often the agency exerting such pressure on behalf of the party.) At other times, party officials arranged to have crimes covered up or ignored to protect their personal or economic interests. This situation frequently occurred with corruption and bribery offenses.

## **Nonpolitical Crime and Punishment**

The Soviet Union did not publish comprehensive crime statistics, so it is difficult to compare its crime rates with those of other countries. According to Western observers, robberies, murders, and other violent crimes were much less prevalent than in the United States. This was explained by the large police presence, strict gun controls, and the relatively low incidence of drug abuse. By contrast, white-collar economic crime was extremely common. Bribery and covert payments for goods and services were universal, mainly because of the paucity of goods and services on the open market. Theft of state property was practiced routinely by employees, as were other forms of petty theft. In 1989 the Gorbachev leadership was making a concerted effort to curtail such white-collar crime. Revelations of corruption scandals involving high-level party employees appeared in the Soviet media on a regular basis, and there were many arrests and prosecutions.

The death penalty, carried out by shooting, was applied in the Soviet Union only in cases of treason, espionage, terrorism, sabotage, certain types of murder, and large-scale theft of state property by officials. Otherwise, the maximum punishment for a first offender was fifteen years. Parole was permitted in some cases after completion of half of the sentence, and periodic amnesties sometimes also resulted in early release.

The Soviet Union had few prisons in 1989. About 99 percent of convicted criminals served their sentences in labor camps, supervised by the Main Directorate for Corrective Labor Camps (*Glavnoe upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei—Gulag*), which was under the MVD. The camps had four regimes of ascending severity. In the strict-regime camps, inmates worked at the most difficult jobs, usually outdoors, and received meager rations. Jobs were less demanding and rations better in the camps with milder regimes. The system of corrective labor was regarded by Soviet authorities as successful in that the rate of recidivism was quite low. Prisons and labor camps, in the views of former inmates and Western observers, however, were notorious for their harsh conditions, arbitrary and sadistic treatment of prisoners, and flagrant human rights abuses. In 1989 new legislation, which emphasized rehabilitation rather than punishment, was being drafted to “humanize” the special system. Nevertheless, in 1989 conditions for many prisoners had changed little.

## **Internal Security Troops**

The government of the Soviet Union had several bodies of troops under its control for the purpose of ensuring internal security. These



*Moscow militia (uniformed police) providing security at the Kremlin for a meeting of the historic Congress of People's Deputies in May 1989*  
*Courtesy Jonathan Tetzlaff*

troops included the Border Troops and Security Troops of the KGB and the Internal Troops of the MVD.

### **Border Troops of the Committee for State Security**

The Border Troops were organized under the KGB's unnumbered Border Troops Directorate, which was headed in 1989 by Army General Viktor Matrosov. He was assisted by one or more first deputy chiefs, several deputy chiefs, and a chief of staff. Within the directorate, a political administration provided political indoctrination and surveillance on behalf of the party. Western specialists reported that there was an intelligence administration within the Border Troops Directorate, but this had not been confirmed by Soviet sources.

The Border Troops strength was estimated in 1989 to be in the range of 230,000 men. Although under the operational authority of the KGB, the Border Troops were conscripted as part of the biannual call-up of the Ministry of Defense, and their induction and discharge were regulated by the 1967 Law on Universal Military Service, which covered all armed forces of the Soviet Union.

The legal status, duties, and rights of the Border Troops were set forth in the Law on the State Border, confirmed by the Supreme

Soviet on November 24, 1982. Article 28 defined the basic duties of the Border Troops. Their duties included repulsing armed incursions into Soviet territory; preventing illegal crossings of the border or the transport of weapons, explosives, contraband, or subversive literature across the border; monitoring the observance of established procedures at border crossing points; monitoring the observance by Soviet and foreign ships of navigation procedures in Soviet territorial waters; and assisting state agencies in the preservation of natural resources and the protection of the environment from pollution. Border guards were authorized to examine documents and possessions of persons crossing the borders and to confiscate articles; to conduct inquiries in cases of violations of the state border; and to take such actions as arrest, search, and interrogation of individuals suspected of border violations.

The Border Troops Directorate administered approximately nine border districts (*pogranichnye okruga*), which covered the nearly 63,000 kilometers of the state border. Border district boundaries were distinct from civil or military district boundaries. The nine border districts were subdivided into detachments (*otriady*), covering specific sections of the border, border command posts (*pogranichnye kometadury*), passport control points (*kontrol'no-propusknye punkty*), and border outposts (*zastavy*). The border area was divided into a border zone, which included the territory of the district and settlements adjacent to the state border, and the border strip, which was approximately two kilometers in depth, running directly along the border. Only permanent residents or those who had obtained special permission from the MVD could enter the border zone. Entry into the border strip was forbidden without special permission from the Border Troops.

Soviet sources repeatedly stressed that a border guard was not only a soldier but also a defender of Soviet ideology. His mission entailed sensitive political tasks, such as detecting subversive literature, and shooting citizens attempting to escape across the border. Enlisted men were trained with their operational units, whereas officers were trained in special Border Troops schools, such as the Dzerzhinskii Higher Border Command School and the Higher Border School in Moscow. Military-political officers received training at the Voroshilov Higher Border Military-Political Academy, founded in the 1930s and located outside Leningrad. In 1972 a higher border military-political school was created in Golytsin, near Moscow. More recently, higher border command faculties were set up at the Frunze Military Academy and the Lenin Military-Political Academy. The period of instruction at the Dzerzhinskii Higher Border Command School was four years. Officer candidates, who were



screened carefully by their local KGB offices before admittance, took general higher education courses along with specialized military and political studies.

To ensure a high level of discipline among personnel of the Border Troops, much attention was devoted to political training and indoctrination. For this purpose, a network of political organs, the Political Directorate of the Border Troops, was established within the Border Troops. It had political departments within all the border districts, detachments, and education institutions, and a network of full-time party political officers worked among all troop units. They conducted political study groups, gave propaganda lectures, and worked to increase the level of combat effectiveness among the troops.

### **Security Troops of the Committee for State Security**

The KGB's Security Troops, which numbered about 40,000 in 1989, provided the KGB with a coercive potential. Although Soviet sources did not specify the functions of these special troops, Western analysts thought that one of their main tasks was to guard the top leadership in the Kremlin, as well as key government and party buildings and officials at the republic and regional levels. Such troops were presumably under the Ninth Directorate of the KGB.

The Security Troops also included several units of signal troops, which were reportedly responsible for installation, maintenance, and operation of secret communications facilities for leading party and government bodies, including the Ministry of Defense. These troops were probably under the command of the Eighth Chief Directorate. Other special KGB troops were intended for counterterrorist and counterinsurgency operations. Such troops were reportedly employed, along with the MVD's Internal Troops, to suppress public protests and disperse demonstrations, such as that of the Crimean Tatars in July 1987 and those in the republics of Armenia and Azerbaydzhán in March 1988. Special KGB troops also were trained for sabotage and diversionary missions abroad.

### **Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs**

Although a component of the armed forces, the Internal Troops were subordinate to the MVD. Numbering approximately 260,000 men in 1989, they were one of the largest formations of special troops in the Soviet Union. The Internal Troops were first established in 1919 under the NKVD. Later they were subordinated to the state security police, and then in 1934 they were incorporated into the expanded NKVD. They were back under the authority of the security police in the early 1950s, but when the KGB

was established in 1954, control of the Internal Troops shifted to the MVD. The chief of the Internal Troops from 1954 to late 1987 was Ivan Iakovlev. Iakovlev's successor was Iurii Shatalin.

Like the regular army, the Internal Troops for the most part were composed of conscripts, who were obliged to serve for a minimum of two years. The Internal Troops accepted candidates for commission both from the ranks of the armed forces and from civilian society. The MVD had four schools for training members of the officer corps, as well as a separate school for political officers.

The Internal Troops supported MVD missions by supplementing the *militiia* in ensuring crowd control in large cities and, in emergencies, by helping to fight fires. These troops also guarded large-scale industrial enterprises, railroad stations, certain large stockpiles of food and matériel, and certain communication centers that were strategically significant. One of their most important functions was that of preventing internal disorder that might threaten the regime's political stability. They took a direct role in suppressing anti-Soviet demonstrations in the non-Russian republics and strikes by Soviet workers. In this capacity, the Internal Troops probably worked together with the KGB Security Troops. There was little evidence to support the theory that the Internal Troops would serve as a counterweight to the armed services during a political crisis. Most Internal Troops units were composed of infantry alone and were not equipped with artillery and tanks; in 1989 there was only one operational division of the Internal Troops in Moscow. According to some Western analysts, the Internal Troops were to perform rear security functions in the event of war, just as they did in World War II.

Internal security in the Soviet Union involved numerous organizations and was guided by the party leadership. It had always served more than ordinary police functions and had covered such areas as intelligence gathering and suppression of dissent. The party and the regime as a whole depended on the internal security apparatus to ensure their own survival.

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Among the sources in English on the history of Soviet internal security are Ronald Hingley's *The Russian Police*; George Leggett's *The Cheka*; Simon Wolin and Robert Slusser's *The Soviet Secret Police*; and Boris Levytsky's *The Uses of Terror*. Amy W. Knight's *The KGB* discusses the current security police. H.J. Berman and J.W. Spindler's *Soviet Criminal Law and Procedure* provides a useful

background for understanding Soviet law and legality. William Fuller's "The Internal Troops of the MVD SSSR" discusses the security forces. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

