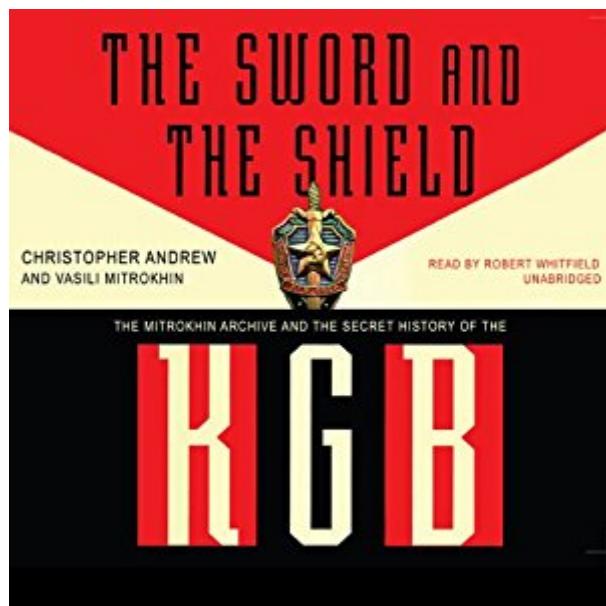


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The Sword And The Shield



Synopsis

This book reveals the most complete picture ever of the KGB and its operations in the United States and Europe. It is based on an extremely top secret archive, which details the full extent of its worldwide network. Christopher Andrew is professor of modern and contemporary history and chair of the history department at Cambridge University, a former visiting professor of national security at Harvard, a frequent guest lecturer at other United States universities, and a regular host of BBC radio and TV programs. His books - which include Her Majesty's Secret Service; KGB: The Inside Story (with Oleg Gordievsky); and For the President's Eyes Only - have established him as one of the world's leading authorities on intelligence history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bought this book in two months ago and still working on it. So be prepared to spend some time on the Mitrokhin Archives. This is a fascinating and DETAILED account of espionage tactics used by the Russians from 1917 to the present. I have been told that some of the exploits described in the book were used as source material and story ideas for the cable TV series "The Americans." The most amazing part of the archive details just how deeply penetrated the Roosevelt presidency was during World War II. Heck, the Soviets even had a Cabinet Secretary in their pocket and THREE scientists on the Manhattan Project. Lots of detail from the Soviet perspective on Kim Philby, Anthony Blunt, The Rosenbergs, Christopher Boyce, Aldrich Ames, and other major spies who we have heard about over the years, but getting the picture from the Russian point of view was interesting.

The Sword and the Shield is at times gripping, at times dry, and at times humorous... but always interesting. Andrew wends his way through the history of Soviet spycraft in chronological order, from the days of the revolutionary Cheka to the (almost) modern day. Every step of the way is fascinating and eye-opening from a historical perspective, especially if you -- like me -- wrongly assumed that actual Soviet cloak-and-dagger espionage in the U.S. was limited and rare. But if The Sword and the Shield reveals that Soviet espionage on U.S. soil was much more common than most people believe, it also reveals that the reality is a lot less romantic and more prosaic than you might have imagined. Interesting characters and motivations are few and far between -- most of the spies we encounter work for money, youthful beliefs, or simply as a career. And while there are dead drops, seductions, secret meetings, and assassinations, most of the secret operations (even the really big ones) amount to patiently cultivating friendships and maybe asking for the occasional innocent-sounding favor. And therein lies both the strength and the weakness of Andrew's book. The constant conspiracies of the espionage trade eventually become repetitive, as repetitive as they must have to the hapless Soviet operatives tasked with chasing down imaginary American conspiracies for the hundredth time. If you want to know what Soviet espionage was really like, warts and all, this book is an eye-opening, fascinating, invaluable read. If you're looking for salacious details and thrilling developments, you might find yourself bailing out after a couple chapters.

The Sword and the Shield is quite the tome. It is a history of the KGB and NKVD, the Soviet Union's counterpart to the USA's CIA, taken straight from their own archives. Mitrokhin, the chief archivist for the KGB for decades, kept meticulous records on current KGB operations throughout the world and kept them hidden in his dacha. He then defected in the early 1990s to the West, taking all of these notes with him. This is the record of the KGB's operations in the U.S. and Western Europe from the 1930s through the 90s. I have read a couple of reviews that say do not make this your first read on the subject, and I would agree. It reads very much like a textbook and can be quite dry for people unfamiliar with the subject matter. It is not really meant for entertainment, but more serious research. This is a very good research source. That said, the information inside blows away any Hollywood spy movie. The section on Kim Philby and the Cambridge Five alone would make a fantastic Hollywood movie with intrigue, sex, betrayal and danger. And it is all real. The important thing to note about this book is that it is from the KGB archives, not packaged for foreign audiences with propaganda galore. The result is a fascinating and shocking account of what the KGB and Soviet Union were up to in the 20th century. Among many of the revelations to me was that while

Joe McCarthy was quite overzealous, he was not as crazy as history has painted him out to be in relation to the scope of intentional Communist penetration into American government and society. Quite a page-turner.

Interesting, the failed mentioning of Hoover Institution, which has all the KGB archives.

The sheer amount of information in this book is astonishing. It highlights and brings to life so many facts, dates, and names, and links them all together into a coherent volume which not only deepens an understanding of the Soviet machine but also adds to our understanding of current geopolitical issues and their true origins. If you have any interest in Soviet history, cold war history, or intelligence, this is a must read.

I would have rated this book as excellent if it was not for the fact that the author's obvious bias towards the British secret services (which should not come as any prize. This is demonstrated by the fact that the author states that ULTRA was the biggest intelligence success against the nazis (and perhaps in the history of warfare). This is debatable as it is known that in the years before world war ii, the USSR penetrated the military, diplomatic and political establishments of all major world powers, which has to rank as one of the greatest achievements in the history of espionage. Is this to say that the achievements of Richard Sorge, the Red Orchestra and the Lucy Spy Ring don't count? Mr. Andrews also downplays the role of the NKVD guerilla groups which is strange because they did contribute to the war effort (especially during Operation Bagration). Apart from this, the author does an excellent job of listing the details of KGB operations worldwide listing its achievements mainly in penetrating a huge number of western establishments and its failings mainly in the field of intelligence analysis. His work teaches us two important details of ideological, one party states: that they depend hugely on their intelligence apparatus to maintain domestic control and to promote their foreign interests and that their ideologies make for poor intelligence analysis. I highly recommend this book.

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