

In Depth: Who Really Betrayed The USSR? EDITED

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Vyacheslav *Matuzov*

Interview with Soviet diplomat and Analyst, Arab Countries, Vyacheslav Matuzov, by Sarkis Tsaturyan

How did Trotskyism liquidate the state of Lenin and Stalin? What constrained the Comintern, the international department of the Central Committee and the KGB? **What of Pitovran, Andropov and Primakov?**

What follows is an interview with the well-known Soviet diplomat and political analyst Vyacheslav Matuzov, who lifts the veil from the main secret of the 20th century. We believe readers will take great interest in this, for it explains how parallel structures were created [in the Soviet Union] and shows that these were made possible by shadowy figures, although in fact were well known and operated in public view, penetrating right up to the top of Soviet power. This interview explains the mechanics involved, and the arrival of a mysterious and subversive dual structure that had the powers of the KGB but which was decidedly not the KGB.

At the same time, this interview is necessarily limited. It is conducted in a somewhat Platonic manner, the reader must untangle the relationship between the USSR's structures as observed from this critical 'diplomat' who engaged in cipher work on a daily basis on Lebanon and Palestine, and how these related to a stark shift in Soviet power which appeared to betray the PLO and the PFLP [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine]. What does that lead to, what does that mean? – J. Flores

– **What questions did you deal with in the international department of the CPSU Central Committee?**

– My working day began at 9 am. For the first 2–3 hours I read the cipher telegrams in a special room.

They covered everything related to my area from the GRU, the General Staff, the Foreign Ministry and the KGB. In each embassy, ??various departments had their coders. The people working there were highly professional.

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Yasser Arafat

From 1974 to 1988 I was an analyst for Lebanon. During this period there was a civil war going on, and those parties with which the CPSU cooperated were at its epicenter. For example, the Lebanese Communist Party, *Progressive–Socialist Party*, was headed by **Kamal Jumblatt**, and starting in 1977 it was led by his son **Walid Jumblatt**. Relations with the Palestinian parties were also in my area of ??responsibility, including **Yasser Arafat** and other politicians in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

The CPSU has often been accused of supporting terrorists, but this is not true. We strictly observed the line between terrorists and national-patriotic forces that fought against imperialism. If the smallest Palestinian organization was caught participating in armed actions against a civilian population, it was automatically dropped from the framework of assistance, even contacts. There were many such organizations.

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George Habash

There were also those who promised the USSR to abandon terrorist methods. In particular, we accepted the apologies and assurances of the leadership of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, in the person of **George Habash**, that they would never engage in terrorist activities. After that, they were given scholarships to study at Soviet educational institutions. I remember how members of the Politburo's eyebrows shot up, when **Leila Khaled** was among the students of the University of Peoples Friendship. Then it was decided to transfer her to the Kiev Medical Institute. Past terrorist attacks carried out by the Popular Front affected the climate of relations between the USSR and this organization. However, their representative **Abu Ali Mustafa** was a member of the PLO Executive Committee, as was **Mahmoud Abbas** from Fatah. We treated the Front as an integral part of the PLO, but followed them closely to ensure there was no recurrence of terrorism.

Relations with the communist parties were carried out through the Solidarity Committee, the most influential organization in those days. **Unfortunately, these days we do not see any such public organizations that would serve as side structures and complement diplomatic agencies.** In modern Russia the role of the public is reduced to incomprehensible meetings in Vladimir and [the youth forum that's held in] [Seliger](#). **This is a problem.**

In our international department, work was conducted on a serious level. Suffice it to say that the Tajik writer **Mirzo Tursunzade** was the head of the Solidarity Committee. But the real work was done by **Alexander Dzasokhov**. Dzasokhov was responsible for [many] different directions: one – for the Arab [countries] and another – for the African [countries]. He had an executive secretary for general affairs. At different times, different people worked there. Work on the ground was carried out through a structured apparatus in which all departments were represented. This allowed people who were at the top of the party to look around and set the general direction.

After all, if you handed over all these problems to representatives of the KGB and the GRU, or to people with [just a] general education, who know nothing about the matters at hand, the system would not be able to work effectively. There had to be an approved political line. Therefore, we had a division for working with public organizations. One person in it was responsible for the Committee of Solidarity, another – for the Peace Committee, etc. Everything was structured.

– How was the Communist Party funded?

– Each fraternal party had its own budget. By today's standards, it wasn't much money – what one oligarch makes in a month. Suppose the Lebanese Communist Party was allocated \$200,000/year, at first, then it was raised to \$300,000. We had a man in the department who controlled the cash vault. A KGB officer with a briefcase would come to him and get the specified amount, which was then transferred via the station chief, who distributed the money and kept receipts.

When we arrived in a country, the ambassador would greet us with open arms. But on a day-to-day basis, members of the special services would watch over the staff of the international department of the Central Committee.

– It turns out that the participation of the GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate) was minimal?

– The participation of the GRU was purely theoretical. Military intelligence handed the analysis, for example, of the Palestinian resistance movement. And contacts with Arafat went through the Committee of Solidarity, where **Lev Baucin**, a colonel from the KGB (First Main Directorate), sat. He was responsible for ties with the PLO. We had friendly relations with everyone. The military solved their own problems. Those were smart, talented guys, strong analysts. Where did they all go then? Age, I guess. Many of them were older than me ...

With the collapse of the USSR, the GRU system was destroyed. The GRU was turned into the Directorate of the General Staff. The status, rates and the role of the agency all went down. At the time of **Peter Ivashutin**, the GRU was an influential structure that had the right to reach the top person with its information and analyses. After Ivashutin left in 1987, everything went downhill.

– The Central Committee of the CPSU had an effective decision-making system, called “party intelligence” by some experts. When and why did this system start to fail?

– In my view, party intelligence as such did not exist, but there was intelligence from the Comintern. Stalin shut down the structure of the Comintern May 15, 1943; but on its foundation the Communist Information Bureau was formed, in 1947 (which was liquidated after the 20th CPSU Congress in 1956), after the cadres of the Comintern moved to the international department of the Central Committee of

the CPSU. For example, **Boris Ponomarev**, head of the international department of the Comintern was a member of [CPSU Central Committee]. **Grigory Shumeiko** from the Comintern also worked with us. The methods of the Comintern were preserved and used on a party basis.

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Yuri Andropov

Today they say that **Vasily Kuznetsov** was allegedly the head of party intelligence. This wasn't the reality. Can you imagine that **Yuri Andropov** would allow anyone to control the special services?

– **Nevertheless, Kuznetsov was a weighty figure ...**

– Yes, he was an honorable man, a candidate member of the Politburo. Sometimes he replaced the chairman of the Supreme Council when he was ill or went on a business trip. A chair-warmer. He wasn't responsible for anything. Kuznetsov never had contact with the fraternal Communist Parties.

That is, there was no party intelligence; at least, not in 1966, when, while I was still a student, I contacted the international department of the Central Committee. However, the Central Committee apparatus worked very closely with the First Main Directorate (PGU) of the KGB – this is an unequivocal fact. Full partnership with the PSU.

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Leonid Brezhnev

Although after Khrushchev times there was an unwritten law that prohibited the KGB from following the workers of the Central Committee and obtaining any information in the Central Committee staff. What's more, they were instructed to render the Central Committee every assistance. **Leonid Brezhnev** had a feeling that the KGB at some stage could take advantage of its power to liquidate the party leadership.

The party system itself has never collapsed. Take note of **Alexander Dzasokhov**, who was [Yevgeny Primakov](#)'s closest friend. While still serving as the executive secretary, he first left as ambassador to Damascus, then became secretary of the North Ossetian Regional Committee of the CPSU, and on the eve of the collapse of the USSR – a member of the Politburo. As a result of the change of leadership that **Mikhail Gorbachev** was conducting, people far from the party work became members of the Politburo. Primakov and Dzasokhov had nothing to do with the party.

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Yevgeny Primakov

I knew Primakov since 1970. At that time I arrived in Lebanon, where he was a correspondent for the Pravda newspaper. It turned out that my boss in the international department, the most talented Arabist, **Vadim Rummyantsev**, and Primakov had studied together and were friends. So they invited me to join them and their buddies, and we'd drink tea in the evenings (*smiles*). I was 33 years old. We knew each other well.

I think that Yevgeny Maksimovich [Primakov] was the central figure that carried out the transition from "perestroika" to the shootout [the White House shelling by Yeltsin] and the current situation. I believe that **Boris Yeltsin** and Gorbachev were secondary people. [They] were the figure heads for the outside. But the real mechanism that controlled the whole process — before perestroika, during perestroika, and after perestroika, when all sorts of Austrian institutions were formed, was tied to Primakov and other heirs of the Andropov plan.

– **Speaking about the Austrian institutions, do you mean the centers where Anatoly Chubais and the whole team of future young reformers went to study?**

– Yes. The same forces also created the Leningrad Center, where at one time they transferred Major General **Oleg Kalugin**, who at the PSU headed the department of the USA and Canada, and also was the head of foreign counterintelligence of the PSU.

This was connected not so much with Primakov, as with Andropov. When I joined the staff in 1966, Andropov was also in charge of the Central Committee department for working with socialist countries. In 1967, he became chairman of the KGB, not having the status of a member of the Central Committee and a member of the Politburo. Just like **Andrei Gromyko** .

Our chief, Ponomarev, was superior in status. He was a candidate member of the Politburo, secretary

of the Central Committee, and head of all international relations. Between a candidate member of the Politburo and a member of the Politburo there is a big difference: you have the right to listen, but you have no right to vote.

With the appointment of Andropov, the very status of the KGB chairmanship soon changed, since in the post-Khrushchev period Brezhnev was very careful and did not allow the special services to dominate the party apparatus. The head of the KGB has now become a member of the Politburo. The status of Gromyko also increased. And the status of the international department fell. Although then there were some relapses, the agony lasted for a long time ... Until the last day, the international department was trying to prove to the USSR Foreign Ministry that it was closer to the body of the leader.

– Was there a strong competition?

– Very strong. Relations between Ponomarev and Gromyko were strained to the limit ... Who will be the first to grab the information and the first to write a note to the Politburo? I believe that as a member of the Politburo, Gromyko had information from every department – from the KGB, the GRU, the General Staff.

Everything that was transmitted through closed ciphers was laid out on the table of a member of the Politburo,. By the way, not every member of the Politburo had access to read all the information that was intended for 2–3 members, and sometimes just for one.

– You worked under Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko and Gorbachev. With Brezhnev, I understand. And what changed in the relationship of the rest of the Soviet leaders to the leading figures of the party?

– The dynamics went unnoticed. Already today, given the information appearing on the Internet and on television, it is possible to get an overall picture. For example, **Aleksandr Tsipko**, whom no one at the Central Committee took as a serious worker, now says that he worked under the eye of Andropov personally and that he prepared private documents for him which Andropov did not leave in the KGB archives.

The KGB was a system that did not allow one to deviate from the general line. Andropov, having created this system himself, understood that if information gets into it, then it will automatically become an asset for many employees who may be dissatisfied with one or another political position of the leadership.

Therefore, further changes (“restructuring”) were not carried out on behalf of the KGB, but with the help of the KGB – and outside the framework of the KGB. Where did Primakov come from? He is not from the KGB system. He is from the collateral entities that Andropov created, as Andropov was already chairman of the KGB and a member of the Politburo. [Same applies to] **Georgi Arbatov** (Director of the Institute of USA and Canada), **Nikolai Inozemtsev** (Director of IMEMO), and **Bobojan Gafurov** (Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies).

These were parallel structures that duplicated the KGB. Outwardly, they worked in conjunction with the party apparatus. But in reality, these institutions were so strong, being under the patronage of Andropov, that the leading departments of the Central Committee had zero influence on them.

At the time, I did not know about it. I happened to fall out of favor with Primakov precisely because of my ignorance. When Primakov was head of the Institute of Oriental Studies in 1977, he was immediately given the status of a member of the Central Committee, that is, untouchable. By the way, Inozemtsev was a very talented person. The two of us traveled for 40 days after the day of the killing of Kamal Jumblat. I talked with him for 7 days in Beirut. Made a strong impression.

– Intellectual?

– Very strong. With colossal life experience, a veteran of World War II, was awarded four military orders. Restrained, not a single superfluous word or even movement with his eyebrows. He was a trained public figure, and that enabled him to keep his personality discrete.

Tsipko speaks the truth when he recalls Andropov, who did not allow him to send notes to the KGB archives. The last time I met was Tsipko in Washington, when in 1990 I worked as an adviser to the embassy. By then the Central Committee had collapsed, there was no one there to connect with them. The entire cipher translation was banned from being sent to the Central Committee as early as the end of 1988.

– It turns out that Gorbachev just finished off the system?

– Gorbachev is a rag, a pawn, nothing at all. Responsible for the collapse of the USSR were the heirs of Andropov. That is, conditions were created for the transition from the system in which we lived to the Western model.

– “Why did they need to destroy the country?”

– Let me answer by telling you to a little story from life. In October 1974, when I was in Lebanon, I worked as the first secretary of the embassy, and ??my mother died. I flew to Novosibirsk for the funeral. On the way back [via Moscow], I called **Vadim Rumyantsev**, who at that time had been made the deputy head of the International Department of the Central Committee. He invited me to his place. Visiting him were Primakov and his wife ... At that time Primakov was a member of the editorial board of the Pravda newspaper.

Let me ask you, how important was “Pravda” in those years? If there was a small negative note published by Pravda about an official, then he was immediately removed from his post. Suddenly I heard Primakov say: **“The socialist system has become obsolete. We must move away from it and start living as they do in the West.”**

And here I entered into an argument with Evgeny Makedonovich [Primakov]. In those years, that was his middle name ... When I visited Primakov in 1975, he told me: “Slava, call me Evgeny Maksimovich now.”

– He changed his middle name?

– Yes, this is a unique thing in his biography. Primakov’s background has been completely masked to this day. I believe that he was the main actor who completed Andropov’s plan to reorganize the Soviet Union. In simple terms, Primakov had been watching the process — all these years.

Returning to my dispute with Primakov. I gave him examples from the history of the USSR ... The civil war ended in 1922. The country was in ruins. After 7 years, industrialization began, and by 1939, on the eve of World War II, the USSR faced it with its industry and agriculture in place, with the political will of the leadership, and most important – **it was the [support from the] population. My maternal grandmother recalled how they lived before World War II: the shelves were filled with goods, food was cheap, socially equipped life, the economy was flourishing. These were colorful memories. And today nobody talks about this: officially, all the information is distorted and destroyed, and people who have seen it with their own eyes are gradually passing away.** In 1941-1945, half the country was evacuated to Siberia. I remember that, I myself lived in Siberia then. And in 1945-1955, the rocket industry was already being developed ... Then, during the discussion, Yevgeny Makedonovich looked at me like a beast.

The deputy head of the international department, Vadim Rumyantsev, kicked me under the table: “Slava, let’s go for a smoke.” I went out with him. “Stop it! Do you know who you’re arguing with? Shut up immediately,” Rumyantsev tells me. In other words, already in 1974, the head of the International Department of the Central Committee deferred to the point of view of a Pravda correspondent like Primakov. And what can we say about the higher levels? Then I realized that my boss, Ponomarev, and Andropov, were on the same team.

The “perestroika” plan was carried out by Primakov’s supporters outside the KGB, partly drawing from the personnel that Andropov had personally created. After all, Andropov himself didn’t become head of the KGB and a member of the Central Committee out of nowhere. And here it is interesting to consider the roots of Andropov himself.

– **By the way, about those roots. What factors contributed to Andropov’s career takeoff?**

– Andropov was the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Komsomol of the Karelian-Finnish SSR. **Otto Kuusinen** stood behind him. And who was Kuusinen involved with? With Lt. Gen. **Yevgeny Pitovranov**. This is the “father” of all of them: Andropov, Primakov and other figures of “perestroika”.

– **What was the role of Pitovranov?**

– The thread stretches back to the Comintern and **Leon Trotsky**. The “red thread” in this story is the struggle of **Joseph Stalin with Trotskyism in the ranks of law enforcement agencies**. In my opinion, all this opposition was created within the special services.

– **Would you say that Trotskyism took revenge on Stalinism in 1991?**

– Absolute revenge. And with the same goal – against Stalinism.

– **So, what was the Comintern?**

– This is an interesting topic. The Arab Communist Parties, especially the Lebanese, were especially

interested in the mechanisms of the Comintern. The Lebanese at that time were still powerful veterans from the days of the Comintern themselves. Every year at [what had been Stalin's] Volyn dacha, we held meetings of the Arab Communist Parties and discussed plans. In 1968, the Lebanese requested to check the Comintern archives; legally they had that right.

Then I was sent to the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, where the super-secret archive was located. Nobody was allowed in, even if they had an ID proving they were employees of the Central Committee. However, a pass was ordered for me. I sat down and looked through the archive of the Lebanese Communist Party, after which I reported to my boss Rumyantsev: "Vadim Petrovich, honestly, I would not show them a single piece of paper" (*laughs*).

– Is it completely over the edge?

"Lord have mercy!" The relationship was very crude. For example, on a request to the Comintern to clarify such and such a question, there is a note from the well-known head of the department: "Stick it up his ass!" And further – in a similar vein. By the way, I don't know where the archive of the Comintern is now.

– Was the Comintern an intelligence organization?

– Of course. In the years 1925-1930, the Communist Parties of the Arab countries were created. The epicenter of the communist movement in the Middle East was the Communist Party of Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Egypt. The Comintern sent its emissaries to this base, who with a lot of money created party structures there and engaged in propaganda. And the most reliable employees of the Comintern were people of Jewish origin, who had no sympathy for the local population and clearly followed the instructions of the Center.

Here, I should say a word about why Britain made a bid to create the Muslim Brotherhood (*an organization whose activities are prohibited in the territory of the Russian Federation – ed*). I studied a lot of materials on this topic, I read the memoirs of British intelligence. As a result of the activity of the Comintern, in the 1930s London felt a threat to its influence in all the Arab countries.

Those who came to the Middle East in the name of helping in the struggle against colonialism and the exploitation and oppression of the Arab people received the strongest support on the ground. The French were less astute about what was going on, but the British came to all the necessary conclusions. Therefore, from 1929 to 1932, they created the movement called the "Blockade of Godless Communism".

That is, British intelligence billed the struggle against communism as a battle with godlessness, thus hoping to win over the believing population. So the Muslim Brotherhood was born. This organization is still rooted in the 1930s. True, the control system has changed today, but not by much: **MI-6 simply handed over the controls to the CIA.**

– And what is Mikhail Gorbachev?

– Gorbachev is a very narrow-minded person, two-faced. He did not have any convictions, except for the desire to destroy socialism. The significance of Gorbachev's views is over-estimated in the West, and that's why he's so well paid. He survived on the Politburo by making decisions based on who was

the first to approach him.

Let me give an example. In November 1988, I was returning from Algeria from the National Council of Palestine, when a fight between Arafat and pro-Syrian groups broke out that could have destroyed the PLO. The deputy head of the international department of the Central Committee, **Karen Brutents**, gave me an oral instruction: "Don't interfere, don't do anything. Let them destroy each other. It will be easier for us to establish diplomatic relations with Israel [which had been severed in June 1967]. "

It was clear that Brutents was stating a personal point of view, and not an official position. I took the responsibility and ignored this instruction, since in Algeria Arafat had approached me in the congress hall and declared: "Tell your Marxists to stop destroying me. Yesterday, I signed a cooperation agreement with the Palestinians who support **Hafez Asad**. And tonight, I received calls from the King of Morocco, **Hassan II**, and Egyptian President **Hosni Mubarak**, who demanded an immediate end to the agreement. Tell them that it was not I who liquidated it, but Arab leaders, and I cannot stand up to them."

I told Arafat the following: "Abu Ammar, you, the wisest of the wisest, have always been able to maneuver. If you are the source of destruction of the PLO Executive Committee, then I guarantee that Moscow will no longer support you." To which Arafat retorted: "Well, I will do everything possible, but you talk to your Marxists." Let me remind you that Arafat was thrown out of Lebanon by the hands of pro-Palestinian Syrians. And Arafat was offended by us, because the USSR did not protect him from the Syrians.

After Arafat, his opponent came to me – the leader of the pro-Syrian wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PLFP], Georges Habash. "Arafat is a traitor. Yesterday we signed an agreement, and today he broke it," he said. I said to Habash: "I just spoke to Arafat. He said it was not his decision. You are a wise man, do not become the cause of the destruction of the PLO."

In those days, our conversations were recorded in their entirety. Very soon, our international department learned the content of the conversations. Brutents did not receive me for a week after I arrived back in Moscow – he was allegedly busy. When we finally met, he remarked to me: "I told you not to do anything, and you ignored my instructions." I replied to my boss: "But the PLO has survived, and it could have split into thousands of terrorist organizations."

Upon my return to Moscow, in my role as an officer of the Central Committee, I prepared a briefing outlining the situation and some proposals. Next, the note went to the Politburo. It was extremely important. After all, US President **George W. Bush** was commenting on the situation with the Palestinians several times a day: the Americans were following the events closely. And from us, there was only silence, like now ...

But then I learned that Brutents, behind my back, had presented a separate note to the Politburo (without my signature) – we were under very strict discipline that forbid anyone from submitting such a document without the signature of the person in charge of that area, and accordingly the document was dismissed by the general department of the Central Committee (which was once headed by **Konstantin Chernenko**) and was not considered at a meeting of the Politburo. Meanwhile, I prepared a paper with my proposals and handed it to Gorbachev, who said that the resolution on this issue had already been adopted, but the proposals set forth in my note would be implemented by direct order...

The system had already been destroyed. In December 1988, all information flows to the Central Committee were liquidated. There was no information via special channels. The GRU and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stopped sending cipher telegrams. The only thing that remained was that the KGB sent us generalizing materials and analyses, not daily briefings from the embassies, as they had before. The structure was virtually gone. Then I went to work at the Foreign Ministry as an expert in the Middle East, and my colleague **Vitaly Churkin** went to work as an expert in the secretariat of **Eduard Shevardnadze** .

– How do you remember Churkin?

Amazing specialist. Brilliant man, open. He knew the language brilliantly. Dobrynin brought him to the international department. Churkin headed the press service in the Washington embassy for 10 years.