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Defectors are one of the most important and fascinating species of spies. Despite the importance of defectors during the Cold War, little scholarly work exists analyzing the historical evolution of using defectors as sources of intelligence information during the Cold War in Britain and America. Kevin P. Riehle's well-organized and cogently argued paper "seeks to track the evolution of early Cold War U.S. and British defector policy using a broad series of Soviet cases that influenced the iterative maturation of defector policies from nothing to highly developed integrated programmes." (344). He therefore provides a valuable addition to the literature. It fills the gap on the early origins of British and U.S. Cold War policy toward using people who had left their home countries and who offered useful information to intelligence agencies. But it also presents some surprises and problems. It turns out the current definition of a defector is not the same one that was applied during the early Cold War. Defectors and deserters were put in the same category. As Riehle argues, there is far more nuance to the reality of defectors.

Riehle states that during the early years of the Cold War, the terms 'deserter' and 'defector' were often used interchangeably. Officials in Britain and the U.S. frequently saw defectors simply as people who had left their country for another. Technically, that is the definition of a defector, but usually in intelligence circles defectors are understood to be intelligence officers or agents who have defected to another country in order to provide intelligence information. The term 'deserter' is usually used to refer to low-level military personnel who have deserted the military for another country. This distinction did not emerge until later into the Cold War.

Riehle argues that U.S. and British defector policy evolved from specific cases. He shows that the British and Americans had no coherent policy for handling, interrogating, and resettling defectors during World War II. They even turned away Soviet military intelligence officers who walked into embassies or consulates and offered their services.

But there was a flood of defectors and deserters in the immediate post-war period that required a more systematic policy. Many of these early defectors and deserters had to be sent back to their home countries because of a policy of repatriation with allies and the Yalta Agreement of 1945. By 1950, the U.S. and Britain had defined policies on how to protect defectors. By that time the policymakers recognized defectors as a source of valuable intelligence and realized that they could serve as useful propaganda tools for the West.

Though the U.S. and Britain had clear policies by 1950, there was a new problem by that point. Although there had been a flood of defectors in the early post-war period, that flood turned into a trickle by the time policy caught up with the playing field. Because of the meager pool of defectors, Britain and America had to start inducing Soviet citizens to defect. A huge propaganda war started: Voice of America and the BBC broadcast Western propaganda across the East Bloc with the hopes of inducing more defectors.

While this paper is strong on the directives and policies the author has dug up primarily in British and American National Archives, it is weak on the cases of the defectors themselves. Early in the paper, the author refers to the case of Victor Kravchenko, a prominent Soviet defector who resigned his position at the Soviet Purchasing Commission in Washington, DC in 1944, and asked for permission to stay in the U.S. as a defector. The Soviets pushed to have him returned, but President Franklin Roosevelt disagreed and Kravchenko stayed. Other than this information we learn very little about Kravchenko.

The author makes references to other prominent defectors like Igor Gouzenko, a Soviet cipher clerk in Canada, and Nikolai Khokhlov, a KGB officer, in passing, but does not dwell on them. And yet both individuals are important and deserve more detailed attention. After all, Gouzenko, who defected to Canada in September 1945, was one of the most important defectors in Cold War espionage history. His information led investigators to scores of Russian sleeper agents embedded in Canada and the United States.

While Riehle uses the Gouzenko example to show that officials delayed for two days in taking him in, thus showing that future policy called for a quicker acceptance of defectors, it would have been helpful if the author had provided more information about his importance. The other problem is that Gouzenko's 1945 defection occurred so early. Although Canadian officials delayed in accepting him, they did so in a matter of days and recognized his intelligence importance. The Canadians, at least, did not need a policy to use Gouzenko's intelligence information effectively. How was the Canadian experience different than that the British and Americans?

Similarly, Nikolai Khokhlov, who defected to Germany and then to the U.S. in 1954, was one of the most important defectors in the 1950s. He testified before Congress about KGB activities as well as providing information to intelligence agencies. When he went to Frankfurt for a trip in 1957, the KGB poisoned him with Thallium, thus offering insight into their methods of assassination. Khokhlov's name is mentioned here in the context of new policy that needed to be developed in 1950, yet he did not defect until 1954, a fact which creates some confusion in the paper. The author also uses the case to show that because Khokhlov initially defected to Germany, the U.S. Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC) was involved and wanted to keep him but the CIA whisked him away to testify before Congress, thereby upsetting the FBI. The implication is that there also needed to be an 'anti-ruffling agencies' feathers' policy.

It would also have been helpful if the author had said more about the covert program codenamed REDCAP that had been initiated by the CIA in 1951 to recruit defectors in place or to induce defection. Riehle includes only one paragraph, in passing, yet this was one of the CIA's major programs to recruit defectors in Soviet satellite states.

Since Riehle indicates that his forthcoming dissertation examines Soviet intelligence officer defections more generally, the reader can hope that individual cases will be fleshed out in his larger work. All in all, this is a valuable contribution to the nascent scholarly field of defector studies.

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