

Real and Imagined Encounters in the Social History of Surveillance: Soviet Migrants and the Petrov Affair

Abstract

Soviet intelligence officer Vladimir Petrov's defection to the West in 1954 was Australia's first Cold War spy scandal, quickly dubbed the "Petrov Affair." It was followed by a Royal Commission investigating Soviet espionage, during which the cover of Michael Bialoguski, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation's main agent in the Petrov operation, was blown. Bialoguski, a Polish refugee, had been targeting not just Petrov but the pro-Soviet migrant community, infiltrating their lives over a period of six years. This article uses the Petrov Affair as a vantage point to examine pro-Soviet migrants' experiences of Cold War surveillance in Australia. Soviet migrants arrived in the West with prior experience of ubiquitous security states and anticipated that they would be monitored. But for those involved with pro-Soviet groups like Sydney's Russian Social Club, brushes with intelligence were not only expected but often desired. They had both real and imagined encounters with surveillance, and imagined encounters shaped their experiences and perceptions of the security state just as actual ones did. A social history of the surveillance of pro-Soviet migrants complicates our understanding of the effects of surveillance and of its panoptic qualities. It also reveals the Australian security state as mutually constituted—not just by the state itself, but by the personalities, perceptions, transnational experiences, and social worlds of its subjects.

On June 1, 1955, *The Sun*, a popular Sydney tabloid, advertised a sensational new serial: the true story of Australia's "most famous secret agent." This was Dr. Michael Bialoguski, a Polish migrant who had played a key role in the defection of Soviet spy Vladimir Petrov to the West the previous year. Bialoguski was to reveal,

that beneath the surface of our ordinary work-a-day world, agents of both sides were living a cloak-and-dagger existence comparable with the characters in the most picturesque spy fiction. People in the highest places, as well as the

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common folk, rubbed shoulders every day with spies and agents engaged in dramatic and sinister enterprises.¹

Better yet, he promised names—potentially prominent ones—who had “knowingly and unknowingly played parts in this first great Australian spy sensation.”² He had already outed several former acquaintances in testifying at the Royal Commission on Espionage which followed Petrov’s defection. But many of his former targets had so far escaped the public eye. The migrant community which he had befriended and infiltrated must have braced itself as *The Sun* touted its new sensation. If Bialoguski’s private betrayal had been forgivable, surely this public one would not be.

Cold War battle lines were drawn among Sydney’s Eastern European expatriates following the Second World War. Most were anti-communist White Russians: émigrés who had fled the 1917 Revolution, or postwar “displaced persons” (DPs), resettled after refusing to return to communist homelands. But a few were Red. These pro-Soviet migrants, including both pre- and postwar arrivals, congregated around the Russian Social Club. The club was targeted by both Soviet and Australian intelligence officers as the Cold War developed. Alien (non-British) nationals had long been objects of suspicion for Australian authorities—doubly so if they were pro-communist—but this intensified with the rapid expansion of Australia’s security state following the Second World War, often resulting in surveillance.³

This expansion of Australia’s security state began with the establishment of a new domestic intelligence service in 1949: the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO). Australia had been ostracized by the Western intelligence community in the late 1940s, after the U.S. Army’s top secret Venona decryption program revealed that confidential documents had been leaked to the Soviets from Canberra. In response, the United States withheld classified information from Australia until its security affairs were in order and MI5 officers were dispatched from London to assist in establishing a corresponding Australian service.⁴ ASIO worked, initially, to investigate the leaks and earn its intelligence bone fides.

By 1954, the Australians appeared to have triumphed, securing the defections of MVD officers Vladimir and Evdokia Petrov.⁵ The subsequent Royal Commission, a public inquiry investigating Soviet espionage, transformed the incident from a diplomatic dispute to a domestic political and social watershed which quickly became known as the Petrov Affair.⁶ At the commission hearings, real spies provided testimony, revealing details of both Soviet and Australian intelligence operations. The security state’s veil of secrecy was punctured and its incursions into everyday life became apparent. The affair’s political controversies have been thoroughly explored elsewhere and are not the subject of this article.⁷ But the political scandal left a unique archive in its wake, in which experiences of surveillance become partially visible.

Drawing on official government documents and personal accounts, this article uses the Petrov Affair as a vantage point to examine pro-Soviet migrants’ experiences of early Cold War surveillance and their interactions with the security state in Australia. These migrants had been under surveillance from ASIO’s inception. The resulting dossiers provide interesting pictures of migrants’ lives and their interactions with the state. However, these sources are incomplete;

the voices of ASIO's targets appear only in fragments. None of the documents directly recorded migrants' experiences of surveillance, nor did their subjects provide follow-up commentary, except for a handful who found themselves tangled up in the Petrov Affair.⁸

The Royal Commission ultimately blew the cover of Michael Bialoguski, ASIO's primary agent in the Eastern European migrant community. Bialoguski followed his testimony at the commission with a tell-all memoir in 1955, which recounted his work for ASIO and the lives he had infiltrated. In response, a handful of other migrants recorded their experiences, including Bialoguski's former lover, a Russian woman named Lydia Mokras, and his Polish compatriot George Marue. Bialoguski's ex-wife Patricia, an Australian, also published her version. This article uses the personalities and accounts of Bialoguski, Mokras, and Marue, alongside fragments from ASIO's files to reconstruct migrants' encounters with intelligence and through them, a social history of surveillance.

Soviet migrants had prior experience with ubiquitous security states in Europe. There had been the Soviet NKVD, the predecessor to the MVD, and during the war, the German Gestapo. Those who migrated via East Asia also had to contend with Japanese occupation forces and Chinese security police in Manchuria. Arriving in Australia, they expected to be monitored, that some people they met would be informants, and that informing was an option for them, too, if they needed it. For those who became involved with pro-Soviet groups like the Russian Social Club, encounters with intelligence were not only expected, they were desired, as they conferred glamour and symbolic capital. Soviet migrants typically approached the security state with greater ambivalence than their Australian neighbors, seeing it as a fact of life rather than an injustice.

When migrants came within ASIO's orbit, their telephone conversations were intercepted, their words reported to handlers by agents, and their commutes down city streets trailed by field officers. Yet in some cases, migrants believed they were under far greater surveillance than they actually were, perceiving intelligence officers around every corner despite ASIO's already-stretched resources. They usually knew less about ASIO than it did about them, and this imbalance shaped their interactions. The history of ASIO's incursions into left-wing migrant communities is therefore a history of both real and imagined encounters. ASIO became a presence both in the lives and in the minds of Soviet migrants and imagined encounters shaped the experience of surveillance just as actual ones did.

In this sense, ASIO's surveillance was panoptic. The security state's reputation—the appearance of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence—was key to its power, and shaped Soviet migrants' behavior and social cohesion. But this was not exactly Foucault's panopticism, the state at the center producing “homogenous effects of power,” nor Bentham's prison, separating its subjects into individual cells.⁹ ASIO was surveilling a community and became entangled with it; the security state worked through messy, complex relationships between its own officers and their agents, and these agents and their targets. As a result, the line between state and subject often blurred and shifted. ASIO was never entirely in control of its own reputation or omnipresence: both were shaped by its subjects, the stories they told, and their social worlds.

Histories of surveillance in the Cold War's Western democracies have generally been examined in relation to civil liberties and politics, with everyday experience typically left to historians of authoritarian or police states.¹⁰ Social historians who do write on surveillance in the West primarily focus on political activists and intellectuals, who more often recorded their experiences or assessed their own security files.¹¹ The surveillance of groups like migrants, who already sat on the margins of their communities, has remained largely unexplored.¹² Such scholarship is needed. As this case study demonstrates, understanding individual experiences of surveillance requires us to look beyond the actual surveillance itself to the prior knowledge, comparisons, and social and cultural dynamics that informed subjects' encounters with intelligence—both the real and the imagined. The social and the individual should be taken seriously in examining state surveillance; they shape perceptions of the security state and by extension, its ability to influence behavior and establish the legitimacy of its operations. Social histories of surveillance deepen and complicate our understanding of the security state's broader impacts, but also reveal it to be mutually constituted, made up of complex personalities and communities, as well as state authority.

This article moves chronologically through the revelations that accompanied the Petrov Affair and Royal Commission. In the next section, I explore the period prior to this public confirmation of ASIO's activity, tracing how Soviet migrants' prior experiences led them to anticipate surveillance and how those experiences combined with cultural depictions to make espionage appear glamorous. This social milieu, along with ASIO's actual field work, provided fertile ground for imagined encounters. The section following that examines the moment of revelation, in which the security state had a more direct hand in shaping its reputation via the Royal Commission. But here, too, ASIO remained dependent on its agent, Bialoguski, and his relationship to the community. Ultimately, the inquiry vindicated the migrant community, legitimizing its suspicions and imagined encounters. The final section traces the community's recalibration, as new information about the security state shifted their perceptions of ASIO's effectiveness, ubiquity, and power.

Anticipating Surveillance and the Glamour of Espionage

In the middle of Cold War Sydney, a long way from the cosmopolitan centers of Europe, Balalaika dance tunes and Russian toasts floated out toward the street on weekend evenings. The Russian Social Club had no liquor license, but patrons' bottled supplies contributed to a spirited atmosphere.¹³ On one such evening in 1951, Sasha Dukin regaled a circle of acquaintances—Lydia Mokras, an enigmatic Russian woman; Michael Bialoguski, a young Polish doctor; and Vladimir Petrov, a Soviet diplomat—with a lengthy tale of his wartime exploits.¹⁴ Dukin, “obviously boosted by drink,” boasted not only of military service but of a career with the infamous Soviet intelligence service: the NKVD. Mokras joined in, backing up Dukin, though Petrov maintained “stony silence.”¹⁵ Such open talk of espionage seems to have spooked Petrov (who actually was an intelligence officer), while Bialoguski eagerly took mental notes for his ASIO handler. For these migrants, the security state's covert work was not just the stuff of novels and films. Being able to tell your *own* spy story

conferred symbolic capital and a kind of glamour at the Social Club. Some of these stories were fabrications but others were real, and most were informed by prior experience with security states, leading migrants to anticipate surveillance and act accordingly.

Michael Bialoguski, a wartime refugee, was fascinated by spies and had volunteered his services to ASIO's predecessor, the Commonwealth Investigation Service (CIS) in 1945.¹⁶ Bill Barnwell, a long-standing CIS officer, directed the young agent to join the pro-Soviet Russian Social Club. Bialoguski's initial work was straightforward: socialize and report club patrons' names to Barnwell (usually in swimming attire and in the surf at Manly Beach).¹⁷ Barnwell had reservations about Bialoguski, suspecting his motives were mercenary, but he remained a useful agent.¹⁸ Another officer described Bialoguski as "security minded," which is probably how he saw himself.¹⁹ Patricia, his then-wife, recalled him using code-names, peering down hallways for eavesdroppers, and tiptoeing about the house.²⁰ When Patricia asked once why they planned to attend the Russian Social Club on Stalin's birthday, he put a finger to his lips, "glanced suspiciously all around him, spy fashion," and instructed her on acting naturally.²¹ Bialoguski's espionage activities were performative but still mostly real: he successfully infiltrated the club and was being paid for it.

If their own stories were to be believed, there were quite a number of spies at the club. Bialoguski and the Soviet officials who attended naturally kept their intelligence work secret. But among the club's young patrons, mostly DPs in their twenties, looser lips prevailed. Lydia Mokras said she first heard such talk in Sydney from Sasha Dukin, the supposed former NKVD lieutenant. He told her "all kinds of cloak-and-dagger stories in which he starred as convincingly as an MGM lover boy might in a film version of one of Peter Cheyney's 'dark' novels."²² Mokras claimed she was left "aghast" and "disturbed" by this first brush with espionage in Australia. But if so, she quickly overcame these qualms and was soon at the center of the club's spy-talk. She also spoke of a wartime intelligence career, even showing off German maps apparently marked with American gun positions, and intimated an ongoing role.²³ It seems that Soviet DPs, too, could be caught up in the glamour of Western "bourgeois" spy films and novels—this, combined with firsthand experience and socialization in the Soviet Union, produced fictions which were both exciting and plausible.²⁴

Soviet DPs also benefitted from curating an ambiguous past. Dukin, apart from the more savory NKVD biography he gave Petrov, spoke of being a double agent—for the Russians and the Americans—and fleeing Europe when a romantic entanglement revealed his duplicity.²⁵ In another telling, he shot his way out after the Soviets imprisoned him.²⁶ Having multiple versions of one's biography was almost expected among the DPs; to secure resettlement they commonly altered birthdates, nationalities, occupations, and wartime histories.²⁷ While some of these fictions could be dispensed with upon arrival, others became part of new lives: a spouse in Europe, some Nazi collaboration, or a few years of one's age could easily be left behind.²⁸ At the Social Club, a spy story might add just the right element of excitement to one's new biography.

While DPs like Mokras and Dukin sought status at the Social Club with their spy stories, Bialoguski chased something similar with Australian security. Upon ASIO's establishment, he applied to be an officer, wanting to "read the files and see what was happening in the cases."²⁹ ASIO did not want him as an

officer but as a source, he could get close to the Soviet officials frequenting the Social Club.³⁰ Their big break came when Mokras introduced the doctor to Vladimir Petrov. The relationship grew steadily as the two men enjoyed similar pastimes—drinking, dining, and soliciting—but both were also, covertly, engaged in intelligence work.³¹ Petrov sought information from Bialoguski on migrants he treated at his medical practice; Bialoguski's handlers directed him to get close to Petrov, suspecting he was the MVD *resident*.³² The young Pole was an expansive agent and played his part with panache, securing influence in the organizations he infiltrated and forging convincing friendships with his targets.³³ There was an element of material glamour in Bialoguski's undercover role, too; ASIO funded his outings to restaurants and nightclubs with Petrov and he moved into a sophisticated waterfront apartment to build his reputation in the Soviet man's eyes.³⁴

Though still only an agent, Bialoguski seemed to feel he was becoming an ASIO insider. Bialoguski knew the Sydney agent master—whose poor security practices became notorious—by his real name and sometimes met other intelligence officers during debriefings.³⁵ He tried to cultivate a similar relationship with Jack Gilmour, his next handler, frequently inviting Gilmour to his flat for drinks.³⁶ ASIO was concerned by how much Bialoguski knew about its personnel and, like the CIS, distrusted him.³⁷ Charles Spry, ASIO's director-general, later described Bialoguski as “an absolute bloody scoundrel. . . . But he was a magnificent agent.”³⁸ Spry thought he proved difficult because he was “too bloody smart by half. . . . I would say he was cleverer than some of the people who ran him.” Bialoguski would have agreed. He believed he knew more about intelligence work than ASIO's officers and later reflected that “they resented me teaching them their job and criticising their performance.”³⁹ Though these difficulties owed much to Bialoguski's mercurial personality, they are perhaps also indicative of ASIO's broader distrust of Eastern European migrant sources, considered naturally “conspiratorial” and prone to denouncing others for status or revenge.⁴⁰ There was probably something to it; Soviet migrants expected others to inform on them and knew they could act in kind. But many reported earnestly, believing that no matter how far they were from the Soviet Union, the stakes of the Cold War remained high.

Bialoguski thought conducting surveillance was a glamorous business but being under surveillance was a different story. Unsure of the doctor, ASIO double-checked his movements and information.⁴¹ But Bialoguski became enraged when he suspected that ASIO had his phone tapped and flat searched.⁴² He complained to Gilmour when he thought there were ASIO men stationed at adjacent tables, watching him drink with Petrov.⁴³ He was correct about the phone tap, but he also thought ASIO had Mokras keeping an eye on him (which she was not) and saw far more field officers in bars, restaurants, and shop window reflections than appear to have been deployed.⁴⁴

A Polish DP named Slawomir Maruszewski would later allege that ASIO employed him to watch Bialoguski. Known as George Marue in Australia, he also claimed a wartime intelligence career in Europe and volunteered these skills to ASIO. He did not know that Bialoguski was also with ASIO; he was simply informed the doctor was a potential Soviet spy.⁴⁵ So, he contrived meetings at Sydney's émigré haunts and referred compatriots with medical complaints to Bialoguski to curry favor. Marue claimed he followed Bialoguski, searched his

apartment, and publicized the doctor's left-wing activities, inducing other Poles to provide dirt on their apparently communist countryman.⁴⁶

Such operations were characteristic of Marue, a prolific informant who "went to great pains to collect" information and pass it to ASIO.⁴⁷ Like Bialoguski, he had initially sought a more substantial position with the security service, writing to Prime Minister Robert Menzies to propose a semi-clandestine organization of migrants and Australians that would "wage an open war on Communism" under Marue's own leadership.⁴⁸ Both Bialoguski and Marue claimed their anti-communism drew them to work with ASIO but this was also their chance to be the inside man, adding status and glamour to their lives in 1950s Australia. This complicated their relationships with their case officers, fueling ASIO's suspicions and blurring the line between source and subject.

Soviet migrants were often used to life under surveillance and these experiences traveled with them to resettled lives. Bialoguski had left war-torn Europe at twenty-three, after brushes with both German and Soviet security.⁴⁹ A medical student in Lithuania when war broke out, he was imprisoned and interrogated first by Nazi-linked Lithuanian authorities (about storing weapons for dissident friends) and later, during Soviet occupation, by the NKVD (for protesting the Red Army's takeover of the local theater).⁵⁰ Though collaboration was not uncommon, Bialoguski did not appear to be an insider with either regime and was forced to flee.

Mokras remembered friends' parents disappearing during the years of the Great Terror, and being questioned by local NKVD men as a teenager in Soviet Ukraine.⁵¹ She later told ASIO that the NKVD recruited and trained her in 1939, after which she posed as a forced laborer, gathering intelligence on the Nazis.⁵² Finding herself in a DP camp at war's end, she heard rumors about the bleak fate awaiting Soviets who returned home and chose to resettle abroad instead (though NKVD men apparently continued to contact her). It is difficult to verify the details of her story, which were prone to change and contradiction, but Mokras had grown up in the Soviet Union so was certainly accustomed to the security state's gaze. She likely had a few brushes with spies and they occupied quite a space in her mind. Her memoir, likely drafted in the late 1950s, was peppered with images of SS officers, the "tight-lipped" woman who escorted her through the NKVD's fortress-like building in Dnepropetrovsk, and the MVD men she described evocatively as "learned collectors of rare insects"—intelligent, meticulous, and unable to see people as more than creatures to be cataloged.⁵³ Like Bialoguski, she thought ASIO followed her and questioned her neighbors.⁵⁴ Some of this was real: ASIO was indeed monitoring her. But most of their information came from Bialoguski (with whom she had begun an affair), and Mokras perceived more figures in the shadows than actually lurked there.⁵⁵

Marue also said he had done intelligence work, as a courier for the Polish Underground.⁵⁶ He was caught (apparently seduced by a glamorous female Gestapo agent) but survived Auschwitz and claimed he did security work with the British Army after the war.⁵⁷ He felt that this background provided him the necessary skills to play a role in Australia's battle against communism. It is not entirely clear whether ASIO actually did employ him to spy on Bialoguski: Robert Manne's canonical account *The Petrov Affair* takes Marue at his word, an internal ASIO account of the affair dismisses him ("no credence whatsoever could be placed in Marue's statements"), and the more recent *Official History*

makes no mention of it.⁵⁸ But ASIO certainly knew him and he did supply them information, even if they thought much of it dubious.⁵⁹

Marue, for his part, felt the security service strung him along, interested only in his value as an agent and not the anti-communist organization he wished to establish (likely with their funding).⁶⁰ ASIO perhaps would have disputed that it was interested in him at all, but Marue was growing weary of their lack of appreciation. Though they had a common enemy, Marue felt that ASIO continually dismissed his expertise on communists and espionage. He thought the fledgling security service was sloppy, complaining at length in his memoir about loose-lipped handlers lacking basic tradecraft.⁶¹

Ever the intelligence man, Marue apparently ran countersurveillance on the officers, checking their movements and what information they could be induced to divulge. On this point, he addressed readers of his memoir directly: "I am telling this not because I regard myself as a master-spy, but I was trained as an intelligence officer during the war, when for a careless man was one price only—DEATH."⁶² This was probably true, if a little dramatically put. If Marue was in the Polish Underground as he claimed, the stakes were indeed higher than in Cold War Sydney, where ASIO's early agent running was characterized by poor security.⁶³ In any case, Marue's story reflects many Soviet migrants' belief in the skills and knowledge they could offer the security state, and their frustrations at not being taken seriously.⁶⁴

Mokras's attempts to engage with the Australian security state were more ambiguous but she, too, struggled to be taken seriously. Bialoguski's initial ASIO work focused on Mokras, as she intimated that she ran a Soviet spy ring.⁶⁵ This seemed plausible at first—Mokras was well-acquainted with Petrov and other Soviet intelligence officers.⁶⁶ But as she drew Bialoguski into her "spy work," the stories unraveled. She convinced him to take excursions in his car to photograph airports and army camps and spoke of plans to rendezvous with a mysterious "Alexander" in Brisbane.⁶⁷ Bialoguski became increasingly confused, sure that she was on someone's payroll but confounded as to whose.⁶⁸

As Mokras's spy stories became increasingly contradictory, she was dismissed by the men around her. ASIO officers assessed, likely correctly, that Bialoguski was stringing them along about Mokras so that they would continue financing the couple's glamorous lifestyle and instructed him to avoid her (though he did not).⁶⁹ Spry would later write that he thought Mokras "something of an adventuress in the intelligence sphere who has proved a considerable nuisance."⁷⁰ Gilmour, Bialoguski's handler, was particularly scathing in his dismissal: "it would be superfluous for me to endeavour to assess Lydia Mokras, other than saying. . . she is an undoubted liar, a prostitute, and a person who at some stage may have been engaged in some low level [Soviet] espionage in Germany."⁷¹ Soviet intelligence was also wary, concerned Mokras was a Western provocation. Petrov avoided her after she provided a false address for her relatives in Moscow and Evdokia Petrova recalled hastily declining a black velvet dress which Mokras suggested the fashionable Petrova might keep "as a gift."⁷² Both Petrovs suspected Mokras was untruthful and probably an ASIO plant.⁷³

Mokras had fabricated many of her spy stories. She may have done some intelligence work in Europe, perhaps encountering the NKVD as she claimed, but her stories about conducting espionage in Australia were generally implausible. ASIO thought her lies frivolous and attention-seeking; Mokras, however, saw

them as purposeful, driven by her knowledge of security states. When she gave Petrov her relatives' false "address," she wanted to see if he would check the information with Moscow. And when Petrov showed his hand, calling her out on the lie, she felt sure that he was with the MVD.⁷⁴ She reflected:

Curiosity killed the cat? So they say. But it has kept me alive for most of my life. When you once got entangled with the NKVD or MVD...they would always keep on trying to entangle you again. And unless you are one step ahead all the time, you are sunk.⁷⁵

Mokras said she then tried a similar tactic with Bialoguski, contriving the photography excursions on the supposition that he would only risk something so overtly spy-like if he had the patronage of a security service.⁷⁶ ASIO's internal history would later say Mokras "ostentatiously photographed" infrastructure and "generally played the part of a Mata Hari" while her "true role...was not revealed until after the Royal Commission when she admitted that she was merely trying to impress Bialoguski."⁷⁷ She had said this. But it was only her second explanation for her actions and ASIO's internal historian omitted her first: she was attempting to ascertain whether he was genuinely a communist.⁷⁸ ASIO thought that Mokras chased adventure and intrigue—and perhaps she did, like the Social Club's DPs who boasted about spying and Bialoguski, who tiptoed around his own house checking for eavesdroppers. She probably did want to be Mata Hari, or the glamorous heroine of spy novels. But she also perceived her actions as self-protective. Some of Mokras's encounters with intelligence were imagined, certainly, but her proximity to espionage was not.⁷⁹ And even if her stories were not true—or not *entirely* true—they added to her community's dialog about the security state and its apparent ubiquity, shaping its shadowy presence among her peers.

Others did not seek out espionage directly but were drawn into its path. The Russian Social Club attracted migrants who did not connect with the strident anti-communism or Orthodox Christianity of the White Russian organizations.⁸⁰ That it was the only place in Sydney one could see Soviet films was also an attraction. But even if a migrant attended primarily for culture, they would often find themselves rubbing shoulders with the security state: being introduced to Petrov, playing cards with an embassy "attaché," or chatting with the popular young doctor, Bialoguski. They would have heard the stories that DPs like Mokras and Dukin told about their previous lives as spies and perhaps, in this milieu, bought into the glamour of espionage. For them, too, interacting with spies and informants was generally not new. Some suspected that the Soviet officials had intelligence connections and many expected surveillance from the Australians, but this was mostly rumor—until 1954.⁸¹

Revelation and Vindication: Out of the Shadows

On April 14, 1954, Sydneysiders awoke to dramatic headlines: Vladimir Petrov, an MVD officer, had defected and would reveal a "Russian spy ring," including Soviets and their Australian contacts.⁸² This no doubt sent shock waves through the migrant community where Petrov had socialized; they had expected and imagined shadowy encounters with Australian security, but how had ASIO

turned a Soviet spy? Was there another traitor in their midst? Ten months of Royal Commission hearings provided a steady, if slow, stream of information, though few answers, initially. But one important question could be laid to rest: the security state *had* been watching them. Jacob Horowitz, a Polish Jewish member of the Russian Social Club's committee, became "a very worried man indeed," confiding in an ASIO informant that,

We are very concerned as to who was responsible for getting Petrov to go over to the Australian authorities. Petrov had been very friendly for a good while with a certain Dr. Bouski [Bialoguski]. . . an outstandingly brilliant and capable man with a domineering personality. . . we suspect [he] led Petrov astray by introducing him to the women and liquor of the social life of Sydney. We suspect Bouski of having been in the employ of the Australian Security Service.⁸³

Horowitz had reason to be worried. He had likely met Petrov and often spoke with Bialoguski about his activities in left-wing Jewish organizations.⁸⁴ Bialoguski's work for ASIO was not yet public knowledge, but everyone knew he was close with Petrov. Horowitz, and presumably others, assessed him the likely candidate. This is not to say that Bialoguski had long been under suspicion, however. When ASIO interviewed Augusta Klodnitskaya (the Social Club's former president) after Bialoguski's unmasking, she remarked that "they were more or less deceived by Bialoguski. . . [who] impressed them as a likable person and they had invited him to their home."⁸⁵ Though the community had expected surveillance, they had not expected it from Bialoguski, who appeared to be a genuine friend and comrade.

Bialoguski was angling for a glamorous public role at the Royal Commission on Espionage but until ASIO agreed to blow his cover, he continued working as an agent. He does not appear to have returned to the Social Club but maintained other left-wing associations, "taking the temperature" of these communities as the affair unfolded. Reactions to the doctor were mixed and some appeared uncomfortable in his presence.⁸⁶ He was still nominated for the New South Wales Peace Council's committee that year but thought this perturbed a few key council members.⁸⁷ Their suspicions were apparently not acute enough to denounce Bialoguski publicly yet, but one, Lily Williams, made her feelings clear after his unmasking. She refused to shake the doctor's proffered hand at a reception, explaining curtly to her interlocutor: "He is a Police spy."⁸⁸

Bialoguski appears to have broken cover only once during this period, in a heated exchange with George Marue. According to Marue, Bialoguski accused him of informing on him to ASIO. When Marue suggested that any number of migrants could have done so, Bialoguski apparently lost his cool and outed himself:

Listen here, Junior, Security Organization that is ME and I have been working with them for several years. . . If you are going to report one word more about me, or about our conversation, then I shall fix you up and the officer who asked you to spy on me.⁸⁹

Bialoguski subsequently began telling their common friends that Marue was a "Police spy" and should not be trusted.⁹⁰ Incensed, Marue approached Bialoguski for another confrontation where he also dropped his cover,

pronouncing that he, too, had friends at ASIO. Both men perceived that connections with the security state conferred esteem—and this esteem could be claimed publicly as the Royal Commission began its hearings.

Bialoguski wrote repeatedly in his diary about wanting to testify at the commission.⁹¹ This was part of his plan for publishing a wildly popular memoir about being a “secret agent,” but he also appears to have felt left out: the Petrovs’ story appeared in every newspaper but omitted his role in coaxing Vladimir toward defection. Patricia Bialoguski thought her ex-husband particularly resented Evdokia Petrova, whose stylishness and articulate testimony captured nationwide attention.⁹² He bought new shoes and suits in case he was called to the stand, and apparently told Patricia: “All this glamourising of Mrs Petrov will come to a finish when this beard hits the papers! Little children will turn in the street when they recognise Bialoguski.”⁹³ Along with his new wardrobe, Bialoguski studied the commission transcripts and talked strategy with Lydia Mokras.⁹⁴ She offered suggestions on gaining the public’s favor, encouraging Bialoguski to testify but shying away from doing so herself, fearing it would jeopardize her job.⁹⁵ Nevertheless she was happy, as usual, to be involved behind the scenes, working with Bialoguski on his new identity as Australia’s most famous spy.

Bialoguski did take up this mantle, moving out of the shadows alongside several ASIO officers. Public knowledge of ASIO was hazy in the early 1950s—a vague, faceless “security service” with anonymous “security men”—and the Royal Commission was a chance to shape its own image directly.⁹⁶ The organization was widely discussed throughout 1954–55 and gained a public face as the likes of Spry, Richards, and Gilmour testified and other officers were seen in the courtroom daily. The Russian Social Club’s migrants, so used to the imagined presence of such officers, must have been a little curious: finally, these spectral figures had some discernible form.

But the appearance of a familiar face surely produced trepidation. Bialoguski “exuded confidence” as he took the stand during September 1954.⁹⁷ Sydney’s migrants now knew with certainty: Bialoguski revealed that he had infiltrated the pro-Soviet community, where his left-wing views were only “the guise I wore” and that ASIO even paid his membership fees.⁹⁸ But his testimony focused on the Petrovs rather than his former friends from the Social Club, likely to their relief.⁹⁹ In burning his cover, Bialoguski jettisoned his old identity as a migrant infiltrator and saw himself as joining the ASIO clan. He relished his prehearing briefings with Gilmour and being seated in the courtroom among the ASIO men.¹⁰⁰ There, he even had his only interaction with the director-general, when Spry returned to the group after giving evidence and, flushed, asked the men: “How did I go?”¹⁰¹

The Petrov case, in revealing actual Soviet espionage, lent legitimacy to ASIO’s work. But it also made Bialoguski part of the security service’s public face, entangling its reputation with that of its roguish agent and his stories. The doctor fielded interested enquiries and tips, but also animosity.¹⁰² After his testimony, he claimed that communists followed and verbally abused him, and he did receive threatening letters.¹⁰³ Several were in Russian; Bialoguski suspected that Mokras had actually written these, but she suggested it was the Klodnitskys, the former Russian Social Club president and her husband.¹⁰⁴ It is not unlikely that his former migrant friends wanted to write him anonymous hate mail—and

perhaps they did—but Bialoguski also wanted people to think that shadowy Russians, even the KGB, were after him. Apart from the drama, being an enemy of the KGB legitimized his continuing involvement with the security state, marking him as ASIO's man.

Bialoguski's new celebrity spy status rankled Marue. Once Marue understood the doctor's importance to the defection operation, he planned to sell *kompromat* (compromising material) on Bialoguski to ASIO's political opponents.¹⁰⁵ At their final confrontation, Marue was apparently prepared, arriving with a tape recorder surreptitiously strapped to his wrist.¹⁰⁶ According to Marue, Bialoguski bragged about his clout with ASIO, declaring:

You have to understand George, that in . . . the job I was doing knew only top men in the H.Q. of the Security and they also had to do what I wanted. . . you did not have any chance to do anything against me. . . They trusted me and disregarded your reports.¹⁰⁷

ASIO's internal history later attributed Marue's attempts to discredit Bialoguski to jealousy, while Bialoguski thought Marue was just short on money.¹⁰⁸ But regardless of his motive, the conflict between the two men is indicative of the status they felt credibility and influence among intelligence officers conferred (though neither necessarily had much of either). Further, Marue's intelligence eventually found its way to the floor of parliament and was used to attack the security service—despite its efforts at the commission, ASIO's image was still tied up with Bialoguski and his personal conflicts.¹⁰⁹

Though many of Bialoguski's left-wing acquaintances likely loathed him, like Lily Williams, some appeared to be ambivalent. Bialoguski ran into a former associate, Mr. Hyman, a week after his testimony and felt the other man was "hostile but tried to cover it up."¹¹⁰ After Bialoguski explained himself, Hyman replied simply "one learns by one's own experiences," offered the doctor a lift home, and they parted on friendly terms. Hyman sounded ill at ease in Bialoguski's company but could evidently tolerate his security work. Mokras, unsurprisingly, relished it. The two continued their tumultuous relationship, cohabitating for a few years after the commission.¹¹¹ She had always imagined the security state's gaze, even sought it, but with Bialoguski's new identity it was more overt. He even warned her that he would have to report any of their relevant conversations to ASIO going forward.¹¹²

The migrant communities Bialoguski had infiltrated often perceived ASIO's gaze prior to the Royal Commission. They regularly presumed that someone was either watching or listening, and ASIO had been known to deliberately cultivate the impression of omnipresence.¹¹³ While Australians were shocked by stories of ASIO debriefing informants in cemeteries and Russian spies drinking in Sydney bars, for Soviet migrants this was more a vindication than a revelation. They had expected spies and informants and though they had not suspected that Bialoguski was the traitor in their midst, it made sense to them that there had been one. The Royal Commission legitimized many of their imagined encounters with spies and gave a face to the faceless men who watched them: that of a former friend.

Aftermath of a Spy Scandal

With the Royal Commission complete, those in its orbit had to grapple with what they now knew about the security state and its attentions. Bialoguski was not quite done, however, and published a series of newspaper articles and a book in June 1955, before the Royal Commission had even completed its report. Six months later, Marue unsuccessfully approached Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* (which had published Patricia Bialoguski's version of the incident) to secure his own series. Marue believed ASIO, concerned about his potential criticisms, had stonewalled him. This apparent obstruction of his attempt at "truth-telling" spurred him to draft his memoir regardless.¹¹⁴ Marue considered an efficient security state crucial, but he objected to what he thought were amateur and authoritarian tendencies on ASIO's part.

Marue and Bialoguski would never get along (Marue continued to send him hate mail for years) but regarding ASIO, they came to remarkably similar positions.¹¹⁵ Perhaps thinking himself a Bond-like figure, Bialoguski unsuccessfully approached Prime Minister Robert Menzies in 1955 seeking a role with the Australian security service overseas, as an international spy.¹¹⁶ The doctor's minor fame was beginning to wane: the Hollywood film rights he expected did not eventuate, his medical practice stalled, and money was running out.¹¹⁷ ASIO had no further use for him, particularly after he attempted a little counterespionage on his own initiative and against explicit instructions.¹¹⁸ Bialoguski was running out of options. Like Marue, he became embittered and critical of ASIO; informants reported he was "most abusive" regarding its handling of the Petrov operation.¹¹⁹ He wrote newspaper articles declaring the security state as a "vital necessity" while also calling for more effective officers and checks and balances to protect civil liberties.¹²⁰ The long-running conflict between Marue and Bialoguski was ultimately competition over intelligence work's symbolic capital. Both believed in the importance of an ASIO, so long as they got to be involved—their gripes with the security service emerged when they were excluded from its work. Both wanted to be an insider, to have friends and "contacts" at ASIO, but despite their work for the organization, neither ever really got there. Nevertheless, the two Poles and their tumultuous relationship had helped to establish ASIO's presence in migrant communities. Apart from the intelligence they gathered, their work, testimonies, and imagined encounters had promulgated the idea that ASIO was always watching.

While Bialoguski struggled to revive his fading celebrity, his former friends had to contend with what he had written about them publicly—much of it nasty. One imagines they were curious initially and alerted each other when their names appeared. In his book, Augusta Klodnitskaya was "a hopelessly frustrated woman," while Freda Lang, the Russian Social Club's secretary, was "endowed with more than her fair share of physical assets which seemed to be trying to burst from the seams of her frock."¹²¹ Even if they were not named individually, his derision extended to the club at large:

These ill-fitted souls were ready to ponder for hours over magnificently edited and illustrated Soviet journals. . . glad to find support for the belief that the answer to their problems was not within themselves. They were glad to read that

the cause of their misery lay in a faulty capitalistic social system. An easy way out.¹²²

Such comments no doubt caused offense, but Bialoguski's words would also have shaped migrants' assumptions regarding what he had told ASIO about them. Having largely escaped the Royal Commission's summonses and ASIO's interviews, they were left to their own devices in imagining what information ASIO had been adding to their files.

The next question was how to respond to the security state's attentions. Some receded in the face of ASIO's apparent omnipresence, distancing themselves from the club. Jacob Horowitz, the Russian Social Club committee member who had surmised Bialoguski's role, gradually withdrew after his wife advised that they would "be under suspicion."¹²³ He left the committee, but it was not a complete break: both Horowitzs still attended the odd event and were involved with other left-wing organizations and friends.¹²⁴ Others stayed, despite ASIO's gaze. Boris Binetsky, a China-born Russian and club president during the mid-1950s, remained on the committee and was even reelected as president.¹²⁵ He was one of the few to be interviewed by ASIO's Royal Commission section and thus had direct confirmation that he was considered suspicious.¹²⁶ His family was apparently not pleased: he and his brother were barely on speaking terms by 1955 due to Boris's politics.¹²⁷ But Binetsky persisted, and indeed, increased his activities in the face of real encounters with Australian security.

The Social Club's members had long watched for spies and informants.¹²⁸ After Bialoguski, one imagines they examined the ranks carefully and it appears that at least one suspect was quietly purged. Sasha Dukin, the young Russian who often talked spies, should have been concerned by Petrov's defection. He had bragged about NVKD service in Petrov's presence and presumably thought Petrov had told ASIO, putting a large black mark in his file.¹²⁹ But it is also possible that he was working *with* ASIO. Dukin left Sydney, seemingly run out of town by the club's committee. Whether he really worked for ASIO or not, they believed he had and expelled him under the pretext of associating with "undesirable" women.¹³⁰ The committee did not want informers, but nor, it seems, did it want to add to the perception that ASIO had riddled its membership with spies. So they sent Dukin packing, fabricating a comparatively benign scandal as cover.

Though the Social Club's committee might have sought to draw a clean line between the security state's agents and its targets, there often was not one. In different contexts, you could be one, the other, even both. Lydia Mokras continued to play multiple sides and was accommodated, or at least humored, by each. After falling out with Bialoguski, she moved toward an anti-ASIO, Labor Party crowd but when ASIO interviewed her about them she was "most co-operative."¹³¹ It does not appear she was working for ASIO, but there were certain things she decided they should know.¹³² ASIO still thought her unreliable but allowed her participation in situations that appeared useful. Mokras was not party to such information, of course, and actually thought ASIO gentlemanly. Their interviews convinced her that ASIO men were "well-educated, good-mannered," insightful, and generally effective.¹³³ In part this was comparative: she had perhaps experienced NKVD interviews and found ASIO's "a new and pleasant experience," where she was treated respectfully (if only to her face).¹³⁴

Mokras, too, seemed to view the security state as a part of life in any country. Wherever she went, she engaged with security and presented or withheld information, believing this protected her country or more often, herself.

Some of Mokras's migrant friends were still willing to accommodate her actual and rumored intelligence connections. She had withdrawn from regular participation in the Social Club prior to the defection but retained several friendships and membership of related groups.¹³⁵ Notably, she remained close with Augusta Klodnitskaya, even while still romantically involved with Bialoguski. The Klodnitskys were likely more careful with what they said around Mokras after the commission's revelations, but the friendship survived and appeared to be deep and genuine.¹³⁶ Klodnitskaya was even Matron of Honor at Mokras's wedding (to a comparatively ordinary Czech man who appeared to have no intelligence connections) in 1961. Mokras occupied a liminal position: she spoke to ASIO about some of her migrant friends but did so privately, in interviews, allowing her to remain in these communities. She was critical of Soviet intelligence and unquestioning supporters of communism, but continued to associate with openly left-wing and pro-Soviet people.¹³⁷ She came to loathe Bialoguski and had some criticisms of ASIO, but not so many as her new Labor Party friends.¹³⁸ Mokras's life had room for ambiguity and nuance, and she found ways to accommodate, and be accommodated, amid these complexities.

Though Australia's Communist Party declined following the Petrov Affair, the Russian Social Club did not: its membership increased, buoyed by an influx of Russians from Manchuria.¹³⁹ Soviet officials avoided the club after the defection but were a regular presence again from the mid-1960s, while ASIO recruited new migrant agents to infiltrate the community—and so the dance continued.¹⁴⁰ Australia's pro-Soviet migrant community did not dissolve under the pressures of the Red Scare, even as it occurred in their midst. This is notable: many similar left-wing organizations did not survive the early Cold War.¹⁴¹ And perhaps this survival was connected to how these migrants approached the security state and its incursions into their lives. They were generally more used to informants and surveillance than their Australian-born counterparts, to tolerating the blurred lines between participating in and being subject to state surveillance. The security state appeared natural and necessary to many of them. Many learned to accommodate surveillance and make use of it, or at least control the narrative about its ubiquity where they could, and so, just as they had in Europe and China, the community carried on.

Spy scandals like the Petrov Affair provide unique glimpses of the security state at work. At the Royal Commission on Espionage, stories of infiltration, betrayal, informants, and spies emerged publicly, and with them, fragments of the everyday experience of surveillance. The hearings unmasked previously unknown informers and provided faces for ASIO's faceless men. For the Soviet migrants caught up in the affair, the commission was both a bombshell and a vindication. Dr. Michael Bialoguski was summarily rejected from the left-wing émigré community after his duplicity was revealed—not that he had sought to remain a part of it. Bialoguski had long been enamored with the idea of being an ASIO insider and, pursuing a new identity as “Australia's most famous spy,” tried to place himself squarely on ASIO's team.

Bialoguski's betrayal of the community was both public and encompassing; this perhaps saw others, like Sasha Dukin, quietly removed. But some ambiguity

in one's relationship with the security state could be tolerated and accommodated—even expected. These migrants had both direct and indirect prior experience dealing with security states. Some had worked for intelligence (or claimed they had), particularly during wartime, and sought to pick up in Australia where they had left off. But even if not, they had all previously negotiated the bureaucracies of security, from Nazi Germany's Gestapo or *Sicherheitsdienst* intelligence division, to the Japanese *kempeitai* secret police, Soviet NKVD, or even Allied military intelligence. The security state, and particularly surveillance, was part of everyday life for most Soviet émigrés—and perhaps added a little glamour to their lives in early Cold War Australia.

As a result, some experienced a kind of panoptic surveillance, seeing spies around every corner. These imagined encounters with intelligence affected how migrants interacted with Australia's security state, sometimes creating conflict—as in the cases of Bialoguski and George Marue. They also affected the community's social cohesion and were as much a part of the lived experience of surveillance as their real encounters with intelligence. Understanding these experiences requires us to examine not just the surveillance and the state, but the transnational experiences, comparisons, and social dynamics which its subjects brought to bear in negotiating it. Surveillance was a deeply ambivalent experience for these migrants; sometimes they sought the state's gaze and wanted to participate in its security apparatus, other times they avoided it. The line between the security state and its subjects was rarely clear, particularly in the relationships between migrant targets, agents, and ASIO officers.

For some Soviet migrants, the Petrov Affair and Royal Commission revealed ASIO to be less effective than they had imagined. They arrived in Australia expecting to be monitored and instead encountered an ad hoc, adolescent security service. But it appears they often agreed with the need for an ASIO—indeed, the necessity of the security state was self-evident to them. They also generally viewed Australian intelligence more positively than their prior encounters, particularly the NKVD and Gestapo. They did, however, have some notes for ASIO; in their minds, Australian surveillance, as they had lived it, had room for improvement. The views of other Soviet migrants under surveillance remain elusive. But in the remaining fragments the Australian security state emerges as mutually constituted: not just by the state itself, but by those involved in and under surveillance. Though they were a minority in all senses, the lives of these left-wing Soviet migrants point to the way security cultures and experiences of surveillance traversed borders, shaping both the migrant experience and the security states of their new homes. The Australian security state exercised power over migrant communities via social relationships: its officers' relationships with agents, like Bialoguski or Marue, and these agents' relationships with their communities. But ASIO, as a clandestine organization, was also dependent on its reputation: its perceived presence, effectiveness, and ubiquity. Migrants' perceptions of the security state—which shaped their behavior, their social world, and their belief in the state's legitimacy—always remained somewhat outside the state's control, a product of prior experiences, of individual conversations, friendships, and animosities, and of real and imagined encounters.

Endnotes

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1. National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA): A6119, 993, "BIALOGUSKI Michael Supp 2": "Bialoguski's own story – 'How I Got Petrov,'" *The Sun*, June 1, 1955, f. 2.
2. NAA: A6119, 993: "Bialoguski's own story," June 1, 1955, f. 2.
3. On the security state's expansion see David Lowe, *Menzies and the 'Great World Struggle': Australia's Cold War 1948-1954* (Sydney, 1999), 119. On monitoring migrants see Mark Finnane, "Controlling the 'Alien' in Mid-Twentieth Century Australia: the Origins and Fate of a Policing Role," *Policing and Society* 19, no. 4 (2009): 442–67.
4. Demond Ball and David Horner, *Breaking the Codes: Australia's KGB Network, 1944-1950* (Sydney, 1998), 174–6; John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (New Haven, 2000), 37–8.
5. The MVD (*Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del*) was one of the primary Soviet intelligence agencies 1946–53, preceded by the NKVD (*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*) and succeeded by the KGB (*Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti*).
6. Robert Manne, *The Petrov Affair: Politics and Espionage* (Sydney, 1987), xi–xii.
7. See, for example Manne, *The Petrov Affair*; Jack Waterford, "A Labor Myth?" in *Australia's First Cold War, 1945-1959, Volume II: Better Dead than Red*, ed. Ann Curthoys and John Merritt (Sydney, 1987), 99–119; John Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties: Private Sentiment and Political Culture in Menzies' Australia* (Sydney, 2000), 121–35.
8. See, for example, Meredith Burgmann, ed., *Dirty Secrets: Our ASIO Files* (Sydney, 2014); Mark Aarons, *The Family File* (Melbourne, 2010).
9. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London, 1991), 202. This article's approach is also informed by Foucault's ideas on governmentality and state power functioning via "capillary" circuits, see Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works 1954–84*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (London, 2020), 206–20.
10. See, for example, the 1996 special issue of *The Journal of Modern History* on denunciation in surveillance societies edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately; Barbara Miller, *Narratives of Guilt and Compliance in Unified Germany: Stasi Informers and Their Impact on Society* (London, 2014); Cristina Plamadela, "Dossiersurveillance in Communist Romania: Collaboration with the Securitate, 1945-1989," in *Making Surveillance States: Transnational Histories*, ed. Robert Heynen and Emily van der Meulen (Toronto, 2019), 215–36.
11. See, for example, Katherine Verdery, *My Life as a Spy: Investigations in a Secret Police File* (Durham, 2018); Christabelle Sethna and Steve Hewitt, *Just Watch Us: RCMP Surveillance of the Women's Liberation Movement in Cold War Canada* (Montreal, 2018); Evan Smith, "When the Personal Became Too Political: ASIO and the Monitoring of the Women's Liberation Movement of Australia," *Australian Feminist Studies* 33, no. 95

(2018): 45–60; James Smith, *British Writers and MI5 Surveillance, 1930–1960* (Cambridge, 2013).

12. Important exceptions include Philip Deery, “‘Dear Mr. Brown’: Migrants, Security and the Cold War,” *History Australia* 2, no. 2 (2005): 40.1–40.12; Evan Smith and Anastasia Dukova, “ASIO and the Monitoring of Irish Republicans in Australia during the ‘Troubles’,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 66, no. 2 (2020), 251–70.

13. Ebony Nilsson, “On the Left: The Russian Social Club in Early Cold War Sydney,” *Australian Historical Studies* 50, no. 1 (2019): 68; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *White Russians, Red Peril: A Cold War History of Migration to Australia* (Melbourne, 2021), 205.

14. NAA: A6122, 2799, “Russian Social Club NSW Volume 1”: J. Baker Report, July 9, 1951, f. 104.

15. Michael Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story* (Melbourne, 1955), 65.

16. Flinders University Library, Special Collections, Evatt Collection (hereafter FEC): CDROM 20 (Petrov Affair Miscellaneous Folder), Patricia Bialoguski, “I Married a Spy,” Unpublished Memoir, 48; Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story*, 23–4.

17. NAA: A6119, 3635, “Bialoguski, Michael Volume 1 (Operation Fairmile)”: Interview with Mr. W. Barnwell, January 7, 1952, f. 44; FEC: CDROM 20, Bialoguski, “I Married a Spy,” 64.

18. NAA: A6119, 3635: Interview with Mr. W. Barnwell, January 7, 1952, f. 44.

19. NAA: A6119, 1 REFERENCE COPY, “BIALOGUSKI Michael Volume 1”: Senior Section Officer (SSO) B1, Notes in response to urgent request from Mr. [Redacted], September 27, 1951, f. 21.

20. NAA: A6225, 1, “I married a secret agent by Patricia Bialoguski”: Patricia Bialoguski, “I Married a Secret Agent Part Four,” *Daily Telegraph*, June 4, 1955, 10; NAA: A6119, 2644, “Doctor Michael BIALOGUSKI—Volume 3a”: “Libel Action: Suicide Threat Alleged,” 1961, f. 127.

21. FEC: CDROM 20, Bialoguski, “I Married a Spy,” 62.

22. MGM: Metro–Goldwyn–Mayer Pictures, the film studio. FEC: CDROM 20, Cydia [Lydia] Mokras, “Cloak and Beggar,” Extract from Unpublished Memoir, 4.

23. NAA: A6119, 3635: J.M. Gilmour Report, March 27, 1952, f. 261-3; NAA: A6122, 2799: J. Baker Report, July 9, 1951, f. 104.

24. Understanding the reality of life under surveillance did not preclude enjoyment of spy fiction: Soviet authorities fretted over the release of James Bond novels and films, and Sherlock Holmes’ surging popularity among Soviet citizens. See Julie Fedor, *Russia and the Cult of State Security: The Chekist Tradition, from Lenin to Putin* (New York, 2011), 39–40.

25. NAA: A6119, 3635: J. M. Gilmour Report, December 21, 1951, f. 23–4.

26. NAA: A6119, 192, “JANOVSKI, Lidia Mokras [Lidia Mokras nee Janovskii]”: Statement by Lidia Mokras, June 10, 1954, f. 56.

27. Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford, 2012), 42–3; Benjamin Tromly, *Cold War Exiles and the CIA: Plotting to Free Russia* (Oxford, 2019), 37–8.

28. Jayne Persian, *Beautiful Balts: From Displaced Persons to New Australians* (Sydney, 2017), 100–1; Ruth Balint, “‘To reunite the dispersed family’: War, Displacement and Migration in the Tracing Files of the Australian Red Cross,” *History Australia* 12, no. 2 (2015): 133–4.

29. NAA: A6119, 1 REFERENCE COPY: J.M. Gilmour Report, October 4, 1951, f. 19; NAA: A6119, 3635: R. Gamble Report for Regional Director (RD) NSW, December 19, 1951, f. 19–20.

30. Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story*, 48.

31. Bialoguski denied actually engaging in solicitation, but his womanizing behavior was well-known. NAA: A6119, 3635: J.M. Gilmour Report, March 24, 1952, f. 255; R. Gamble Report, December 19, 1951, f. 14.

32. David Horner, *The Spy Catchers: The Official History of ASIO, 1949-1963, Volume 1* (Sydney, 2014), 322.

33. NAA: A6122, 2037, “History of ASIO by Bob Swan—Volume 6”: f. 16; NAA: A6119, 2/REFERENCE COPY, “Bialoguski, Michael Dr. Vol. 2”: Michael Bialoguski, “How I Weaned Petrov from Communism,” *Saturday Evening Post*, August 1955, 18; W.H. Barnwell to Deputy Director, July 1, 1955, f. 95.

34. NAA: A6119, 2644: C.C.F. Spry to M. Bialoguski, July 1958, f. 17.

35. NAA: A6119, 4/REFERENCE COPY, “BIALOGUSKI, Michael”: [Redacted] to [Redacted], June 18, 1953, f. 29; Horner, *The Spy Catchers*, 162; 567.

36. NAA: A6119, 3635: J.M. Gilmour Report, April 2, 1952, f. 274.

37. NAA: A6119, 2/REFERENCE COPY: W.H. Barnwell to Deputy Director, July 1, 1955, f. 95; NAA: A6119, 3635: J.M. Gilmour Report, April 2, 1952, f. 272–4.

38. Horner, *The Spy Catchers*, 348.

39. Michael Bialoguski quoted in Nicholas Whitlam and John Stubbs, *Nest of Traitors: The Petrov Affair* (Brisbane, 1974), 56; NAA: A6122, 2037: f. 17.

40. For example, in the Petrov operation ASIO also employed an Australian doctor, believing his “characteristically Australian manner (as opposed to Bialoguski’s more conspiratorial Eastern European manner)” would be more effective. Horner, *The Spy Catchers*, 328.

41. The National Archives, United Kingdom (hereafter TNA), Vladimir Mikhailovitch PETROV/Evdokia Alexeyevna PETROVA: Russian, KV 2/3439: Telegram from Security Liaison Officer (SLO) Australia to Security Service Head Office, December 21, 1953 and Extract from SLO Australia to Security Intelligence Far East (SIFE), July 15, 1953; NAA: A6122, 2037: f. 18; NAA: A6119, 2649, “Doctor Michael BIALOGUSKI—Miscellaneous Papers—Volume 3”: See, for example, recordings from Spools No. 3, 7, 10, 11, 19, 78, 86, and 87, February–March 1954, f. 43–50; 54.

42. David McKnight, *Australia’s Spies and Their Secrets* (Sydney, 1994), 61; Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story*, 120.

43. NAA: A6119, 3635: J.M. Gilmour Report, May 6, 1952, f. 343.

44. Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story*, 69; NAA: A6225, 1: Patricia Bialoguski, “I Married a Secret Agent Part Seven,” *Daily Telegraph*, June 7, 1955, 11. TNA KV 2/3439, NAA: A6119, 2649 and NAA: A6119, 3635 confirm that Bialoguski was under surveillance but appear based on phone interception and a small amount of field surveillance.

45. FEC: Petrov Affair: Miscellaneous (c), George Marue, “Keep Your Mouth Shut—Or Else!,” Unpublished Memoir, 10.

46. FEC: Marue, “Keep Your Mouth Shut,” 11–12.

47. NAA: A6119, 5105, "BIELSKI, Jerzy Stefan Volume 1": DG ASIO to RD NSW, February 6, 1953, f. 10; Director B1 Report for Acting DG ASIO, July 4, 1955, f. 38.
48. FEC: Marue, "Keep Your Mouth Shut," 5; NAA: A6119, 5105: DG ASIO to RD Victoria, February 3, 1953, f. 9.
49. Whitlam and Stubbs, *Nest of Traitors*, 5.
50. Whitlam and Stubbs, *Nest of Traitors*, 5; Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story*, 11-12; 14-18; NAA: A6119, 1 REFERENCE COPY: ASIO Report, Bialoguski Michael, undated, f. 31-2.
51. Lydia Mokras (Janovski), "Cloak and Beggar," (complete manuscript of unpublished memoir, undated, c. late-1950s), Private Collection, 11-15; 17-32.
52. NAA: A6119, 4715, "MOKRAS, Lydia (nee Janovski) Volume 2": Lidia Janovski Statement, September 25, 1958, f. 23-5.
53. FEC: CDROM 20, Mokras, "Cloak and Beggar," 9; 19; 26.
54. NAA: A6119, 3635: J.M. Gilmour Report, March 3, 1952, f. 203-4.
55. See reports in NAA: A6119, 192.
56. FEC: Marue, "Keep Your Mouth Shut," 2.
57. Diane Armstrong, "The Spy Who Knew Too Much," *The Weekend Australian*, April 11-12, 1987; Arolsen Archives: International Tracing Service, 1.1.5. Buchenwald Concentration Camp, Individual Files (male) - Concentration Camp Buchenwald, 01010503 oS. Marue was an Auschwitz survivor and his Underground story appears plausible (if perhaps embellished), but his postwar story is difficult to verify. British intelligence later reported no trace of him in their files (NAA: A6119, 5105: E.G. Bruderer, British Intelligence Organisation (Germany), to E.V. Wiggins, Australian Embassy Cologne, March 11, 1954, f. 20).
58. Manne, *The Petrov Affair*, 16; 36; NAA: A6122, 2036, "History of ASIO by Bob Swan—Volume 5": f. 204; Horner, *The Spy Catchers*, 322-7. Marue's claims became mired in the Petrov Affair's political controversy and it is difficult to extricate the incident from this without his ASIO file, which has not yet been released.
59. NAA: A6119, 5105: Report by [Redacted] for D.A. McDermott, Senior Security Officer at The Hague, January 11, 1956, f. 63.
60. NAA: A6122, 2036: f. 203; FEC: Marue, "Keep Your Mouth Shut," 13.
61. FEC: Marue, "Keep Your Mouth Shut," 6-7.
62. FEC: Marue, "Keep Your Mouth Shut," 8.
63. Horner, *The Spy Catchers*, 162.
64. Some anti-communist Soviet migrants were taken more seriously, like the international Russian organization NTS (*Narodno-trudovoy soyuz rossiysskikh solidaristov*). On its relationship with ASIO see Horner, *The Spy Catchers*, 483-4, and with the CIA see Tromly, *Cold War Exiles and the CIA*, 169-191.
65. NAA: A6119, 3635: J.M. Gilmour Reports on April 2, 10 and 29, 1952, f. 276, 299-302, 324-5.
66. Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story*, 64-5.
67. NAA: A6119, 3635: J.M. Gilmour Reports on February 7 and 18, 1952, f. 143-4, 169-72.

68. Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story*, 69.
69. NAA: A6119, 3635: G.R. Richards, RD NSW, Memo for ASIO HQ, April 18, 1952, f. 318.
70. NAA: A6119, 4715: C.C.F. Spry to Attorney-General's Department, January 27, 1959, f. 47.
71. NAA: A6119, 3635: J.M. Gilmour Report, April 2, 1952, f. 272.
72. Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story*, 78; National Library of Australia (hereafter NLA): Evdokia Alexeevna Petrova interviewed by Robert Manne [sound recording], Session Two, June 28, 1996, Melbourne.
73. NAA: A6119, 192: Notes re Interview with Mr. V.M. Petrov at the Safe House between 2.30pm-4.30pm on April 18, 1955, f. 92-3.
74. FEC: CDROM 20, Mokras, "Cloak and Beggar," 24-5.
75. FEC: CDROM 20, Mokras, "Cloak and Beggar," 21.
76. FEC: CDROM 20, Mokras, "Cloak and Beggar," 27.
77. NAA: A6122, 2037: f. 17.
78. NAA: A6119, 192: L. Mokras Statement, June 10, 1954, f. 52.
79. Apart from the Soviets, Mokras was also friendly with Czech officials conducting espionage. See, for example, NAA: A6119, 4716, "Mokras, Lydia (nee Janovski) Volume 3": Intercept Reports January 19-20, February 20-21, and March 27-28, 1961, f. 83; 105; 122.
80. Nilsson, "On the Left," 71; Fitzpatrick, *White Russians, Red Peril*, 205.
81. Nilsson, "On the Left," 77-8.
82. "Russian Spy Ring in Australia: Soviet Diplomat in Canberra Reveals Details," *Sydney Morning Herald*, April 14, 1954, 1.
83. NAA: A6119, 6324, "HOROWITZ, Jacob (aka Kuba) Volume 1": Assessment for Principal Section Officer (PSO) B1, June 26, 1957, f. 84.
84. NAA: A6119, 6324: J. Baker Report, May 26, 1950, f. 6; J. Baker Report, May 26, 1950, f. 7; J. Baker Report, September 11, 1950, f. 16; J. Baker Report, October 23, 1950, f. 18.
85. NAA: A6119, 1 REFERENCE COPY: SSO & Field Officer (FO) to Deputy Director General (DDG) Ops, April 4, 1955, f. 116.
86. NLA MS 7748, *Michael Bialoguski Diaries 1953-1984*: Diary Entry, July 20, 1954.
87. NLA MS 7748: Diary Entry, August 14, 1954.
88. NAA: A6119, 2/REFERENCE COPY: File Note, Bialoguski (Dr.), July 7, 1955, f. 134b.
89. FEC: Marue, "Keep Your Mouth Shut," 15.
90. FEC: Marue, "Keep Your Mouth Shut," 16.
91. NLA MS 7748: Diary Entries, July 18, July 28, and August 4, 1954.
92. Manne, *The Petrov Affair*, 126.
93. NAA: A6225, 1: Patricia Bialoguski, "I Married a Secret Agent Part Eleven," *Daily Telegraph*, June 11, 1955, 12.

94. NLA MS 7748: Diary Entry, July 19, 1954.
95. NLA MS 7748: Diary Entries, July 28 and August 4, 1954.
96. Horner, *The Spy Catchers*, 349.
97. Manne, *The Petrov Affair*, 155–7.
98. “Man’s Pose as Friend of Russia,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 10, 1954, 1.
99. The club was mentioned only as the location where witnesses met Soviet officials. *Report of the Royal Commission on Espionage* (Canberra, 1955), 28; 266; 282.
100. NLA MS 7748: Diary Entry, September 27, 1954.
101. Whitlam and Stubbs, *Nest of Traitors*, 56.
102. NAA: A6122, 2022, “History of ASIO by Bob Swan—Volume 1”: f. 78; NLA MS 7748: Diary Entry, October 5, 1954; NAA: A6119, 2648, “Doctor Michael BIALOGUSKI—Miscellaneous Papers—Volume 2”: J. M. Gilmour to Director, June 23, 1958, f. 65; Kevin Mafferson to Dr M Bialoguski, April 28, 1961, f. 139; J. M. Gilmour to A/Director, May 8, 1961, f. 140.
103. Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story*, 1–3; NLA MS 7748: Diary Entry, September 27, 1954.
104. NLA MS 7748: Diary Entry, October 29, 1954.
105. Manne, *The Petrov Affair*, 162. Marue planned to approach Labor leader H.V. Evatt’s circle.
106. Hansard, House of Representatives, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Bill 1956, Second Reading, Speech by Clyde Cameron, October 31, 1956. <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22hansard80%2Fhansardr80%2F1956-10-31%2F0168%22>
107. FEC: Marue, “Keep Your Mouth Shut,” 17.
108. NAA: A6122, 2036: f. 204; NLA MS 7748: Diary Entry, October 1, 1954.
109. Hansard, Speech by Clyde Cameron, October 31, 1956.
110. NLA MS 7748: Diary Entry, September 16, 1954. Hyman was likely a member of the Sydney Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and Anti-Semitism.
111. Horner, *The Spy Catchers*, 464.
112. NLA MS 7748: Diary Entry, October 3, 1954.
113. ASIO tried to cultivate this impression in its surveillance of the Communist Party, see Horner, *The Spy Catchers*, 189–90, and during Operation Boomerang, see NAA: A6122, 2036: Activities of ASIO 1955–62, f. 95–8.
114. FEC: Marue, “Keep Your Mouth Shut,” 3–4; 9; 19; 21. He would self-publish the memoir thirty years later, as *Escapes and Escapades* (Adelaide, 1987).
115. NAA: A6119, 2644: J. Gilmour Report to Director, June 4, 1958, f. 15; NAA: A6119, 2648: J.M. Gilmour to Director, March 17, 1958, f. 6.
116. NAA: A6119, 2/REFERENCE COPY: Notes by Mr. Geoffrey Yeend, June 6, 1955, f. 20.
117. NAA: A6119, 325 REFERENCE COPY, “Doctor Michael BIALOGUSKI—Volume 3”: “Dr. Bialoguski’s Alimony Payments Reduced,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, August 9, 1957, f. 19; New South Wales State Archives (hereafter NSWSA): Supreme Court of NSW, Matrimonial Causes Division; NRS-13495, Divorce and matrimonial

cause case papers, 1873–1987, NRS-13495-21-338-4105/1952, Divorce Papers Agnes Patricia Bialoguski—Michael Bialoguski, 1952–57.

118. NAA: A6119, 2647, “Doctor Michael BIALOGUSKI—Miscellaneous Papers—Volume 1”: Telephone Message from [Redacted] to J.M. Gilmour, August 2, 1957, f. 40; J.M. Gilmour Report to Director, August 1, 1957, f. 39; J.M. Gilmour Report to Director, August 8, 1957, f. 42.

119. NAA: A6119, 2/REFERENCE COPY: M. Bialoguski to Sir Eric Harrison, December 12, 1955, f. 174–5; NAA: A6119, 2644: Michael Bialoguski, “Security Urged to Warn Public,” 1956, f. 32; NAA: A6119, 2646, “Doctor Michael BIALOGUSKI—Volume 4”: Report by [Redacted] for Assistant Director (AD) B2, June 12, 1964, f. 54.

120. NAA: A6119, 2645, “Doctor Michael Bialoguski—Volume 3b”: Michael Bialoguski, “Dr Bialoguski’s Warning,” *Sun Herald*, November 4, 1956, f. 7.

121. Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story*, 42; 48.

122. NAA: A6119, 1 REFERENCE COPY: Michael Bialoguski, “Russian Club welcomed their secret foe,” *The Herald*, June 4, 1955, f. 139.

123. NAA: A6119, 6324: Senior Field Officer (SFO) Interview Report, October 13, 1959, f. 183.

124. NAA: A6119, 6324: Assessment for PSO B1, June 26, 1957, f. 82.

125. NAA: A6126, 1414, “BINETSKY, Boris Nicholas”: Report No. 33470, March 24, 1959, f. 73.

126. NAA: A6126, 1414: Report on Interview with Boris Nicholaevich Binetsky, March 28, 1955, f. 33–6.

127. NAA: A6126, 1414: Notes on Interview with George Nicholas Binetsky, March 29, 1955, f. 41.

128. Nilsson, “On the Left,” 77–8.

129. Bialoguski, *The Petrov Story*, 65. Interestingly, Petrov had not told ASIO (NAA: A6122, 2800, “Russian Social Club NSW—Volume 2”: V.M. Petrov statement regarding Alexander DUKIN, September 23, 1954, f. 31–2).

130. NAA: A6119, 7043, “DUKIN, Alexander Volume 1”: Report No. 5304/65, October 29, 1965, f. 70; NAA: A6122, 2802, “Russian Social Club NSW Volume 4”: Report No. 282/62, July 11, 1962, f. 100; Report No. 51960, April 19, 1962, f. 42. Without ASIO’s confirmation it’s near impossible to determine if Dukin worked for them, but there’s fragmentary evidence, see Ebony Nilsson, “The ‘Enemy Within’: Left-wing Soviet Displaced Persons in Australia,” (PhD Diss., University of Sydney, 2020), 137–8.

131. NAA: A6122, 2036: f. 98.

132. Horner, *The Spy Catchers*, 467–9.

133. FEC: CDROM 20, Mokras, “Cloak and Beggar,” 27; 29.

134. FEC: CDROM 20, Mokras, “Cloak and Beggar,” 27; NAA: A6119, 6324: SFO Interview Report, October 13, 1959, f. 183.

135. NAA: A6119, 4717, “MOKRAS, Lydia (nee Janovski) Volume 4”: Senior Officer (SO) Aliens to Officer in Charge (OIC) Aliens, July 10, 1968, f. 92–3.

136. See, for example, NAA: A6119, 4715: Report No. 39169, November 16, 1959, f. 108; NAA: A6119, 4716: Intercept Report, August 2, 1960, f. 17.

137. FEC: CDROM 20, Mokras, "Cloak and Beggar," 6.
138. NAA: A6119, 2646: Intercept Report No. [Redacted], April 12, 1961, f. 6; FEC: CDROM 20, Mokras, "Cloak and Beggar," 29.
139. NSWSA: Theatres and Public Halls Branch, NRS-15318, Files relating to licences for theatres and public halls, 1895–1992, [17/3620.1]-17/3620.1[DUP2], Russian Social Club, Sydney, 1940–76: A. J. Mackenzie to Officer in Charge of Police, January 5, 1966; NAA: A6122, 2818, "Russian Social Club NSW Volume 10": SFO B2 to B2, March 19, 1969, f. 159.
140. Nilsson, "The 'Enemy Within,'" 251; John Blaxland, *The Protest Years: The Official History of ASIO, 1963-1975, Volume II* (Sydney, 2015), 224.
141. Fitzpatrick, *White Russians, Red Peril*, 221–2.