

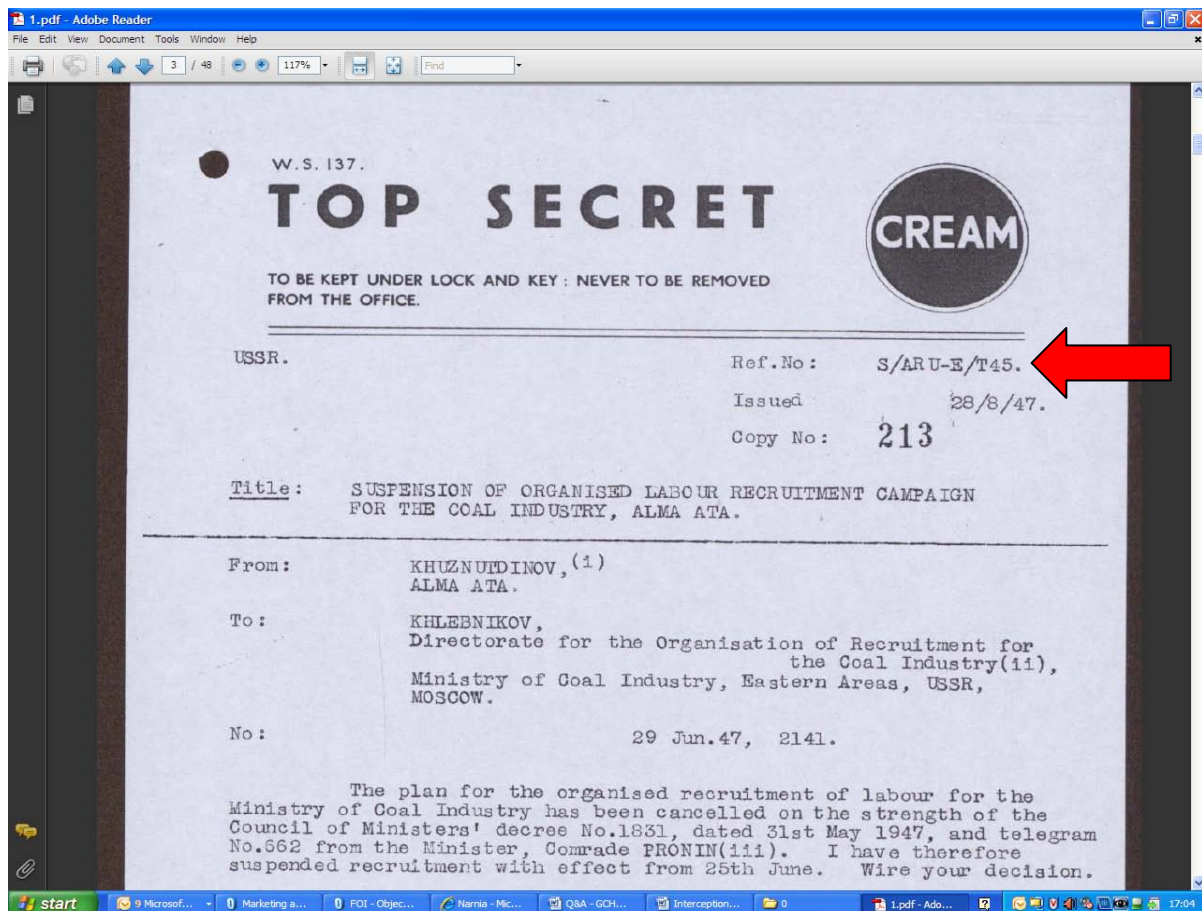
Highlights Guide

This document contains details of how to navigate through the newly released files from GCHQ.

Section 1 - offers an overview of the **UKUSA Agreement**.

Section 2 - provides a list of recurrent themes from intercepted communication reports found in the **Soviet Block Report** files.

Section 3 – lists the **Soviet Block Report** files. Key stories are listed in chronological order as they appear in each file using the unique reference number which appears at the top right hand side of each report as marker: for example see arrow below, **T45**.



Section 4 - provides a timeline of events in Soviet Russia between 1945 and 1949 and immediately following the formalisation of the the UKUSA Agreement.

1. UKUSA agreement - HW80/4

(HW80/1-3 and 5-11 comprise amendments to agreement)

The 10-page, Top Secret British-U.S Communication Intelligence Agreement was signed on 5 March 1946 and committed both nations to sharing intelligence with each other, continuing a practice which had begun during the Second World War. Later referred to as the 'UKUSA Agreement' the document lays out the terms of the deal which formed the basis for signals intelligence co-operation between the two countries throughout the Cold War. The agreement was later extended to cover Canada, Australia and New Zealand and this is covered in other files in the HW80 series.

2. Recurrent themes from the Soviet Block Reports

The intercepted communications picked up by GCHQ that feature in the HW75 files vary enormously in scope and cover private conversations and correspondence among Soviet citizens, military personnel, Communist Party officials and religious leaders in the period 1946-1949. Together they helped analysts build up a detailed picture of what life was like in the USSR at the time. These files are 'end-product' reports, having been translated and analysed by staff at GCHQ.

Military/Intelligence

The bulk of the intercepts comprise of thousands of individual communications relating to the military capability, mobilisation plans, morale and technical capacity of the Soviet armed forces and the industry which supported them. Together they form an important picture of military build-up in the early years of the Cold War.

The important place occupied by the military in Soviet society is illustrated by various intercepts including **HW75/184 – T382** which reveals Soviet legislation giving security of tenancy to the families of war casualties and **T384** which details changes in jurisdiction over cases of desertion from the defence industries from military tribunals to People's Courts.

In **HW75/182 - T330** a secret radio telephone conversation is picked up between two high-ranking military officials who refer to the appointment of General Chuprov as Chief of Aviation of the MVD (Ministry for Internal Affairs), USSR. In **HW75/195 – T626** we read that Colonel Inozemtsev, a former deputy head of Dal'stroj, MVD, is to be the subject of a court of enquiry. There are reports of a "stormy meeting" taking place and one person says, ominously: "of the Moscow representatives nothing remains but a wet spot".

Even military officials were sometimes frustrated by the bureaucracy of the Soviet state, in **HW75/188 – T484** a Soviet Major says he can be "patient no longer", as his son, who had been "fouly killed", was yet to receive justice.

The war-readiness of the population is illustrated by an intercept which picks up a mother saying: "I am afraid of leaving the kids here. What about a war, all of a sudden?"(**HW75/192 - T571**)

Political repression and censorship

The intercepts reveal the myriad ways in which the Soviet state encroached upon the lives of its citizens and include examples of the political repression which was a feature of the Stalinist era. One file (**HW75/188 - T487**) lists folksongs in Dal'stroj which have been banned on the grounds that they were "inartistic and trivial". Songs such as "Why do you destroy me, you foolish woman", were popular with the peasantry but not the authorities and were forbidden.

In another communication the Kazakh Communist Party reports crime statistics for its area back to Moscow (**HW75/178 – T262**). The crimes listed include 'anti-party activities', 'concealment of social origin' and 'desertion from the Soviet army'.

One file (**HW75/167- E/T54**) details the story of two Soviet professors engaged in cancer research who have been accused of divulging details of their research to the Americans and are accused of "servility to foreign ways of life". Members of the Frunze Komsomol condemn the "anti-patriotic" actions of the professors.

Citizens of the Soviet Union were sometimes encouraged to inform on fellow members of the community as illustrated by a file in which a Communist party member is falsely incriminated by a local cooperative organisation in Yakut who apparently "created a criminal case based on false documents and forgeries". As a result of the "unheard of mockery" created by the case, the unfortunate plaintiff's father died from heart failure (**HW75/178 – T262**).

Life in the Soviet Union

The files contain various references to disease and ill-health, often as a result of food shortages. One file mentions measures being taken to prevent infected grain from getting into the food chain (**HW75/167 – ET/46**) while others report outbreaks of a fatal disease (**HW75/184 – T386**) and plague (**HW75/178 – T267**).

One file reports a "widespread sickness" among all kinds of animals and reports that "vets are unable to cope" (**HW75/184-T378**) while a poignant file refers to the widow of Sergo Ordzhonikidze, a member of Stalin's inner circle, who says she is living in "poor circumstances" and her child is "sick" (**HW75/205 – T751**).

Many of the intercepts deal with complaints and concerns about the food supply and indeed the Soviet Union was hit by a famine in 1946-48 which may have killed as many as a million people in Russia and the Ukraine. One file (**HW75/167 – T205**) refers to plans to sell un-rationed bread while another (**HW75/185 – T413**) laments the failure of supplies to reach Dagestan, including 14,000 decalitres of the vodka allocation.

Stalin

The intercepts also pick up communications surrounding Stalin's 70th birthday celebrations in December 1948. In one communication (**HW75/205 – T797**) Patriarch Alexis, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, says that special prayers and singing will take place in all of Moscow's churches for the "preservation and long-life of our state and its leader".

Another message contains details of a local protest against the non-acceptance by the authorities of a new airfield built in honour of "comrade Stalin's 70th birthday". The writer complains that their most recent newspaper is months old, while mail and

goods are piling up waiting to be transported and there is no gunpowder available for the start of the 'fur-trading' season. **(HW75/205 - T765)**

The files also contain personal messages addressed to Stalin including a message of condolence upon the death Andrej Aleksandrovich Zhdanov, chairman of the Soviet Union from 1946 to 1947, who is described in the intercept as "a faithful pupil and companion in arms of the Great Stalin" **(HW75/184 – T385)**

Industry and agriculture

The HW75 files also build up a picture of the state of Soviet agriculture and industry in the immediate post-war period. Agricultural workers in Kamchatka complain to Comrade Molotov that they have failed to receive living accommodation, cattle, seeds and fodder, four years after their resettlement in the region **(HW75/178 – T256)**. The next file, **T257**, refers to the re-settlement of 6,000 families directed to work for the Yakutsk timber trust.

The unsatisfactory progress being made at a gas construction site is referred to in **HW75/185 – T410** and is blamed on "hooliganism" and low morale. Those who did work could be honoured with the title of "Hero of Socialist Labour" **(HW75/208 – T788)**.

There are reports of disasters, natural and otherwise. The director of a Turkmen fishing station is removed from his post after the foundering of the sailing fleet and the deaths of several fisherman and collective farmers **(HW75/192 – T483)** while another file refers to the mass transfer of cattle from the Yakutiya region due to the destruction of grasslands by locusts. Another file reports an earthquake in South Sakhalin **(HW75/188 – T473)** and one simply refers to "a natural calamity" **(HW75/205 - T763)**

Economy

The introduction of a raft of cost-cutting measures **(HW75/182 – T337 to T345)** reveal something of the state of Soviet finances in 1948, just three years after the most devastating, and expensive, war in its history.

Austerity measures introduced at the time and picked up by GCHQ include reducing pensions and grants, scaling back incapacity payments for those unable to work, reducing the cost of social insurance and abolishing a range of previously free services including tramcar journeys, electrical power and gas, and the use of communal baths for personal washing and laundry.

In perhaps further evidence of economic decline, one file refers to "a large surplus of bicycles and motor bicycles" and an official is ordered to "press the sale of motor cars...to all citizens irrespective of their place of residence or social standing" **(HW75/192 T559)**.

Crime

Hard times can breed crime, even in the Soviet Union with the threat of the Gulag (government agency which administered one of the Soviet penal labour camp systems) as punishment. One file refers to a request for extra guards to prevent theft from warehouses – "Cases of theft are becoming more and more numerous", complains an official **(HW75/208 – T787)**. Another communication refers to transport

difficulties which have prevented the movement of thousands of tons of goods. Thirteen motor vehicles are sent to help carry the goods but an official is warned to ensure they are not stolen “under the cloak of requisitioning.” (HW75/184 – T377)

3. Soviet Block Reports – HW75

HW75/167

T46 - Measures to prevent grain infected with septic tonsillitis from getting into the food chain.

T205 - Reference to bakeries getting prepared to sell un-rationed bread.

T54 - Details of two professors engaged in cancer research who allegedly divulged details of their research to the Americans and were accused of “cringing and servility to foreign ways of life”. “Members of the Frunze Komsomol Active, condemn, with indignation the anti-state and anti-patriotic actions of Klyueva and Roskin”

HW75/178

T256 – Agricultural workers resettled in Kamchatka appeal to Comrade Molotov for reestablishment of their rights: “for the last four years we have somehow failed to receive living accommodation, cattle, seeds, and fodder”

T257 – Arrangement for settlement of 6,000 families directed to work for Yakutsk timber trust, USSR

T262 – Complaint that a party member was falsely incriminated by a local cooperative organisation in Yakut who “created a criminal case based on false documents and forgeries” it goes on to say that as a “consequence of this arbitrary behaviour and unheard of mockery” his father died of heart failure.

T267 – Outbreak of plague in Bashkir

HW75/182

T329 – Reference to despatches of cement for a task of “special importance” in the USSR. “I am warning you of your personal responsibility for the execution of this task, report to me daily”.

T330 – Transcript of a radio telephone conversation which makes reference to a secret decree about the appointment of General Chuprov as Chief of Aviation of the MVD (Ministry for Internal Affairs), USSR

T333 – The Kazakh Communist Party lists crime statistics for the central committee in Moscow. The ‘crimes’ reported include anti-party and anti-state activities, desertion from the Soviet army, disruption of party life, concealment of social origin and breach of party and state discipline

T337 – Reference to a Soviet decree ordering a reduction in pensions for employed pensioners

T338 – Reference to a Soviet decree ordering a reduction of grants to workers employed outside their localities

T339 – Soviet decree concerning the scale of payments for temporary incapacity to work

T342 – Reduction in the budget estimate for social insurance in Kirgiz SSR (Soviet Socialist Republic)

T343 – Introduction of new tariffs for commercial services in the USSR. It includes a list of free services to be abolished including tramcar journeys, electrical power, gas and use of communal baths for personal washing and laundry

T344 – Reference to a Soviet decree ordering the curtailment of awards for scientific, technical and other workers

T345 – Soviet measures concerning the collection of arrears of taxes and levies for the population

HW75/184

T377 – Reference to transport difficulties which mean that thousands of tons of goods have not been moved. “The matter is urgent”, says one official. A number of motor vehicles are to be sent and the official is warned to make sure they are not stolen “under the cloak of requisitioning”

T378 – Reports of widespread sickness among all kinds of animals – “Vets are unable to cope”

T382 – Soviet legislation giving security of tenancy to the families of war casualties

T384 – Changes in jurisdiction over cases of desertion from defence industries in the USSR from military tribunals to People’s Courts

T385 – Message of condolence sent to Stalin on the death of Andrej Aleksandrovich Zhdanov, former chairman of the Soviet Union. “We are stricken with unbounded affliction by the heavy loss to our party and the Soviet people of Zhdanov, a faithful pupil and companion in arms of the Great Stalin”

T386 – Outbreak of Form 100 (type of disease) in Kazakh and Uzbek SSRs (Soviet Socialist Republics), it describes “four fatal cases”

HW75/185

T410 – Reference to unsatisfactory progress of work on a gas construction site blaming “hooliganism” and low morale

T413 – Failure of supplies to reach Dagestan: “of the vodka allocation of 17,000 decalitres only 3,000 have been received”

HW75/188

T471 – Soviet citizen privately advises another not to sell furs

T472 – Soviet citizen privately advises another to sell their coat

T473 – Reports of earthquakes in South Sakhalin

T483 – Director of Turkmen fishing station is removed from his post in connection to the foundering of the sailing fleet and the deaths of several fishermen and collective farmers

T484 – The impatience of a Soviet Major – “I can be patient no longer. I have been and wish to remain an honest and useful member of our Communist society”. His son was “fouly killed” but had yet to receive justice

T487 – Describes the banning of “pseudo, inartistic and trivial folksongs” in Dal’stroj. It lists the banned songs including “Why do you destroy me, you foolish woman”; “The moon has turned red” and “My mother once sent me to gather white mushrooms” which were popular with the peasantry and working classes but not the authorities who ordered them be removed from the repertoire

HW75/192

T552 – Census of individuals up to the age of 18 ordered in USSR (Jan 1948)

T556 – A Polish citizen’s request to the authorities in Moscow for the release of her daughter

T559 – Describes a “large surplus of bicycles and motor bicycles”. An official is ordered to “press the sale of motor cars” and to “sell to all citizens irrespective of their place of residence or social standing”

T571 – Evidence of the state of mind of a private citizen in USSR – “I am afraid of leaving the kids here. What about a war, all of a sudden?”

HW75/195

T620 – Reference to a railway echelon of Jewish settlers halted at Irkutsk

T623 – Reference to the loss of identity documents by a Soviet citizen

T626 – Colonel Inozemtsev, former deputy head of Dal’Stroj, MVD, is to be subject of a court of enquiry. This file reports a “stormy meeting” and says ominously “of the Moscow representatives nothing remains but a wet spot”

HW75/205

T748 – Mass transfer of cattle in Yakutiya region due to the destruction of grasslands by locusts

T751 – The widow of Sergo Ordzhonikidze, a former member of Stalin's inner circle, is mentioned. "We live in poor circumstances. The child is sick. Please help", she says.

T763 – Reference to a natural calamity

T765 – Reports local protests against the non-acceptance of a new airfield built to honour Stalin's 70th birthday. It describes the build up of goods and mail waiting to be transported. "There is no gunpowder for the 'fur-trading' season".

HW75/208

T787 – Request for increased guards to prevent theft from warehouses. "Cases of theft are becoming more and more numerous"

T788 – Telegram saying: "Congratulations on being awarded the title of Hero of Socialist Labour"

T797 – Special prayers and congratulations are offered by the Russian Orthodox Church for Stalin's 70th birthday. Patriarch Alexis says: "Solemn prayers for the preservation and long-life of our State and its leader will be sung... in all churches in Moscow"

4. Soviet Union timeline 1945-1949

1945

February

- Alexius I elected Patriarch of Moscow
- Meeting of Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt at Yalta Conference. Europe is divided up into spheres of influence between the USSR, USA and the UK

May

- Nazis surrender, USSR take Berlin

July

- Potsdam conference

August

- Soviet invasion of Manchuria
- Fourth Five-Year plan announced (1946-1950) Famine kills one million people in Russia and Ukraine (1946)

September

- United States ends Lend-Lease programme

1946

February

- Red Army is renamed Soviet Army

March

- Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' speech

August

- Andrei Zhdanov, head of Soviet cultural policy, attacks Zoshchenko and Soviet composers

September

- Private farm plots abolished

1947

September

- Cominform founded in order to coordinate Communist parties under Soviet control

December

- End of rationing, currency reformed

1948

February

- Czechoslovakia joins Soviet block

June

- Start of Berlin blockade, USSR blocks access to West Berlin
- Yugoslavia expelled from Cominform

August

- Zhdanov dies of a heart attack

1949

January

- Comecon founded - an economic alliance of communist countries

May

- Berlin blockade lifted

August

- Soviets detonate their first atomic bomb

December

- Stalin's 70th birthday
- Khrushchev becomes Moscow Party boss