

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 42-48

NEW YORK  
8 May 1978

# The Shadrin Affair A Double Agent Doubt

By Tad Szulc

"... Shadrin disappeared after United States intelligence senselessly thrust him into the role of double agent

It was through a stunning succession of blunders, carelessness, and inexcusable acts of intelligence greed spanning a sixteen-year period that the United States lost its most valuable Russian military defector. The missing man is believed to be either dead or incarcerated in the Soviet Union.

There are still questions which probably never will be satisfactorily answered, but all indications are that the man known as Nicholas George Shadrin was kidnapped by the Soviets through the fault of American intelligence agencies. There is little reason to believe that he redefected voluntarily, that he was killed by the CIA (as the Russians have insinuated), or that, tired of being a pawn for both sides, he decided to create a new life for himself somewhere in the world.

Shadrin disappeared in Vienna in December 1975, after United States intelligence had senselessly thrust him into the immensely dangerous role of a double agent working with the KGB, the Soviet secret service. He vanished under circumstances that make it clear that he was cruelly used by his superiors as bait for the Russians. Spies, after all, are expendable when they become a problem.

That Shadrin, a gregarious, intelligent, onetime Soviet Baltic-fleet destroyer commander, was recruited by the CIA in 1959, and had not simply fled to the West to marry the woman he loved—as alleged at the time by him and the United States government—was a closely guarded secret, until now, and it sheds wholly new light on his covert relations with the American intelligence establishment.

It explains why he agreed to serve as a double agent under extremely bizarre and controversial conditions, and it may also help to explain the strange behavior, after his disappearance, of two succeeding administrations, their unwillingness to open secret intelligence files on him to his wife and her lawyer in their search for the truth, and the glaring inconsistencies encountered during a private investigation of the Shadrin case.

Defectors are one of the most sensitive subjects in intelligence operations, after all, and neither the administration on the highest level nor senior intelligence officers are prepared to discuss various theories surrounding the Shadrin case. (This reluctance was further enhanced by the defection last month of Arkady N. Shevchenko, the Soviet diplomat who served as undersecretary general of the United Nations in New York. Shevchenko is the greatest diplomatic intelligence prize ever won by the United States.)

At first, Shadrin was worth his weight in gold to the United States. At the time when the Soviet Union launched a major buildup of its navy, the information brought by Shadrin was crucial to the United States Navy. After he outlived his usefulness, however, he was transformed into a double agent to satisfy the insatiable appetite of American intelligence. If it were not for this greed, Shadrin would be living tranquilly in the United States today, like other Soviet defectors.

His name originally was Nikolai Fedorovich Artamonov, but on orders, after his arrival in the United States, he changed it to Shadrin—after the hero

of the Russian Revolution (a point-chant-marine captain). It was a pointless deception, because he testified as Artamonov in an open session of the House Committee on Un-American Activities in September 1960, and the audience included a Soviet diplomat busily taking notes. Afterward, no effort was made to conceal his real identity, and Shadrin was the nearest thing to a public figure in intelligence circles. This was the first major blunder and led to all the others.

Nobody, it seems, wishes to delve into intelligence secrets that could cause considerable embarrassment to the United States. Full disclosure could, for example, highlight the sixteen years of blunders surrounding Shadrin's activities in this country and abroad, methods employed by American intelligence, and conflicts involving the CIA, the FBI, and the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency.

Shadrin was not a run-of-the-mill spy or defector: He had high-level acquaintances and friendships in American intelligence, which made him a vulnerable figure.

One friend was Admiral Rufus L. Taylor, who, as director of naval intelligence, was his boss during the time the Russian ex-officer served as a special consultant to the navy. And Admiral Stansfield Turner, for example, got to know Shadrin sufficiently well to write him "Dear Nick" letters (Shadrin had lectured at the Naval War Col-

*Mystery men: CIA files yielded these photographs of KGB agents Oleg Kozlov (left) and Mikhail Kuryshev (center), possibly the last men to see Shadrin (right) alive.*