

## Perlustration Terminology

Вскрытие / *vskrytiye* / Opening sealed documents, parcels, packets and packages.

Выписки / *vypiski* / Extracts. Passages of interest copied down from the messages in perlustrated letters or on postcards.

Группа вскрытия и заклейки / *Gruppa vskrytiya i zakleyki* / Opening and Resealing Group. An element of a PK. This group opened up mail for the censors and chemical analysts, and resealed it once they were done.

Группа отборки документов / *Gruppa otborki dokumentov* / Document Selections Group. An element of a PK. It served to select items from the mail stream for perlustration.

Группа политконтроля международной почтовой корреспонденции / *Gruppa politkontrolya mezhdunarodnoy pochtovoy korrespondentsii* / International Mail Political Control Group. An element of a PK. It perlustrated 100% of in- and outbound international mail, whether ordinary, registered or declared-value.

Группа политконтроля телеграфной корреспонденции / *Gruppa politkontrolya telegrafnoy korrespondentsii* / Telegraphic Correspondence Political Control Group. An element of a PK. It surveilled 100% of international telegrams, and also read domestic telegrams in response to tasking from operational departments.

Группа просмотра бандеролей / *Gruppa prosmotra banderoley* / Wrapper Examination Group, an element of a PK.

Группа читки внутренней корреспонденции / *Gruppa chitki vnutrenney korrespondentsii* / Domestic Mail Reading Group. An element of a PK.

Документ / *dokument* / “Document.” A euphemism designed to mask the objects of perlustration: ordinary and registered letters, money orders and letters, airmail letters and telegrams.

Заклейка / *zakleyka* / Resealing, or closing. The final step in the perlustration process before the item was returned to the mail stream.

Карточный учет / *kartochnyy uchet* / Card file. The PKs opened up one of these on every individual whose correspondence contained something suspicious.

Кисточка / *kistochka* / A thick-bristled brush used to apply the glue upon resealing an envelope.

Клапан / *klapan* / Flap. The flap on the reverse of an envelope, almost always the target of the openers.

Контрольно-инспекторская группа / *kontrol'no-inspektorskaya gruppа* / Control-and-inspection group. A group that would make the rounds of various PKs and military censorship establishments, checking on the work of the management and staff.

Контрольный номер / *kontrol'nyu nomer* / Control number. The personal identification number assigned to each worker, supervisor and chief within a PK.

Косточка / *kostochka* / A device made of bone or wood, in the shape of a short stick or knitting needle, used to pry open the flaps of an envelope.

Оперативные отделы / *operativnyye otdely* / Operational departments, e.g., those entities engaged in intelligence gathering through agent networks, counter-intelligence operations, and so forth. They were the ones who drew up the watch lists for the political controllers. Departments are subordinate to directorates (q.v.).

Оперативные управления / *operativnyye upravleniya* / Operational directorates. Directorates, (also main directorates) are subordinated to a commissariat or ministry. Those involved in operations were the intelligence-gathering and counter-intelligence entities, the ones that provided watch lists to the PKs.

Оперуполномоченный (a contraction of оперативный уполномоченный / *operupolnomochennyu* / Security officer.<sup>1</sup> In police work, the term can mean detective or investigator, but in a PK context, “security officer” is much closer to the duties performed.

Паспорт / *pasport* / “Passport.” Essentially an internal “waybill” or inventory list of documents (q.v.) that accompanied the actual items given to an opener/closer, chemical analyst or political controller along with the mail or telegrams to be checked. This way, the opener/analyst/censor accounted for his or her daily output.

Перлюстрация / *perlyustratsiya* / Perlustration. The clandestine surveillance of and reporting on mail and telegrams, whether official, commercial or private, international or domestic.

ПК (политконтроль / политический контроль / PK, political control. May refer to the organization that perlustrated mail and telegrams, or political control in general.

Разработка / *razrabotka* / Development. If an individual were being “developed,” it meant that the operational side of the secret police was attempting to work up a case against that person. Once the case was fully developed, the individual could either be charged with a crime or crime, convicted and incarcerated (or executed), or the threat of that could be used to turn the individual into an agent or a snitch working for the secret police. The material intercepted by the PKs allowed the secret police to “spot” targets, after which their correspondence was closely monitored to trace the progress (or lack thereof) of the development. An individual in the process of being developed was termed a разрабатываемое лицо.

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<sup>1</sup> The definition is from Rossi, Jacques, *The GULAG Handbook*, New York, 1989.

Сводка / *svodka* / Summary. A form of report issued on a regular basis and compiled from perillustrated “documents.” It always covered a variety of topics, often according to a template.

Списки (sing. список) / *spiski* / Lists, watch lists. Supplied by operational directorates and departments (q.v.) of the secret police.

Тайнопись / *tainopis'* / Secret writing. Secret writing can be in a number of forms, ranging from chemical compounds that disappear after application to microdots.

Химическая группа / *khimicheskaya gruppy* / Chemical Group. That part of a PK that applied chemical reagents to envelopes, enclosures and postcards in an attempt to raise secret writing (q.v.)

Химическая обработка / *khimicheskaya obrabotka* / Chemical processing. The range of procedures applied by the Chemical Group to raise various kinds of secret writing. (See also chemical inspection.)

Химический контроль / *khimicheskiy kontrol'* / Chemical inspection. Much the same thing as chemical processing (q.v.).

Читка / *chitka* / Reading, whether of letters, telegrams or “documents.”

Штамповщик / *shtampovshchik* / stamper. An individual in the PK who applied the “postmarks” to the documents that were being released back to the mail stream.