



BATTEN IN BRUSSELS

THE MURDER OF ALEXANDER LITVINENKO

"They killed him because he sought to show them as they really are . . . grubby criminals in it for the money."

JUST over a year ago Alexander Litvinenko was murdered in London in an act of state-sponsored terrorism. His murder could only have been sanctioned at the highest level of the Russian political establishment. 97% of Polonium 210, the substance used to kill him, is manufactured in Sarov in Russia. It is strictly controlled and by its nature can be traced straight back to its source, even to the batch in which it was manufactured. The finger of suspicion points straight back to the Kremlin. If President Putin did not give the order to kill Mr. Litvinenko he certainly knows who did. The British authorities have requested the extradition of one man only, Andrei Lugovoy. But this was not the act of an individual: a team of operatives was responsible for what was a complex operation.

I first met Alexander Litvinenko in March 2006. He described how he had been a KGB and then an FSB officer involved in counter-terrorism and combating organised crime before being forced to flee Russia after trying to expose the criminal nature of the FSB leadership. He told me how, following the collapse of communism, the FSB (the renamed KGB) had transformed itself into a criminal organisation taking control of the Russian economy. My particular reason for meeting him stemmed from my interest in those members of Europe's political establishment who were active Soviet sympathisers or KGB agents during the cold-war and who still hold positions of influence or office.

He made allegations to me concerning Romano Prodi, Prime Minister of Italy, and former President of the European Commission. He told me that just before he was forced to flee Russia in 2000 he consulted his friend and colleague, General Anatoly Trofimov, former Deputy Director of the FSB. General Trofimov particularly advised him against seeking asylum in Italy or Germany as former KGB agents occupied high positions in those countries - and that relations with many such agents had been restored after 1996. General Trofimov had told

him that Mr. Prodi had been a KGB agent of some kind. General Trofimov, who had a reputation for being incorruptible, was murdered in 2003, allowing Alexander to name him as his source.

Alexander went on to tell me that after being granted political asylum in Britain he had made a full statement to the Mitrokhin Commission in Italy which was investigating KGB infiltration into Italian politics. I later verified this with Senator Paolo Guzzanti and Mario Scaramella of the Commission who confirmed that he had made the same allegations to them. With Alexander's full approval I then made two speeches in the European Parliament in April 2006 repeating his allegations about Mr. Prodi and calling for an official enquiry.

My calls for an official enquiry were ignored and I failed to gain sufficient support from MEPs to instigate an enquiry. Vladimir Bukovsky suggested that we hold an unofficial meeting in the Parliament in October 2006 to which all MEPs and the press would be invited. Unfortunately this had to be postponed when one of the corroborating witnesses declined to attend. At the time I thought this was understandable because these men risked their lives by speaking out.

Just how true this was became plain when news broke in early November that Mr. Litvinenko had been poisoned with Plutonium 210. Being super-fit, it took him three weeks to die. As we now know it was administered via a cup of tea during a meeting of Russian businessmen in a London hotel. While he was dying I had two telephone conversations with Mario Scaramella, who was concerned that he too might be contaminated. He assured me he was only too willing to speak to the British police, which he later did at length, only to be arrested on trumped-up charges on his return to Italy on Christmas Eve 2006. He spent the next six months languishing in prison and is now kept under house arrest and not allowed to communicate with the outside world.

So why did the Russians kill

Alexander Litvinenko? Contrary to some reports he was not a 'spy'. As he himself said, he had no state secrets to reveal even if he wanted to. What he did have was expert knowledge about terrorism and organised crime. At our first meeting he gave me a copy of his co-authored book, *Blowing up Russia: Terror from within*, in which, with forensic detail, he describes how the FSB were caught red-handed trying to blow up an apartment block in Ryazan in order to blame it on Chechen terrorists. He also wrote articles and gave interviews detailing the criminal activities of senior FSB men. They killed him because he sought to show them as they really are: not daring glamorous intelligence officers from a James Bond story but grubby criminals in it for the money. He shamed them by telling the truth about them, and that is why they killed him.

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SITES FOR YOUR EYES

SAFESPEED

We were sad to learn that Paul Smith, founder of SafeSpeed, died in December 2007, aged just 52.

Paul joined the Association of British Drivers in May 2001, rapidly becoming an active campaigner and founding his SafeSpeed website in the same year.

Paul believed road safety should be based upon properly collected evidence, not the contrived statistics promoted by the government.

He said that "British road safety was the best in the world. Now it is institutionally incompetent at the highest level."

www.safespeed.org.uk
www.abd.org.uk