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Russian Independent Radio Station Sued for 'Smearing the Memory' of KGB General

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Cadets of the KGB Moscow Higher Frontier Guards Command Academy mark the 55th anniversary of the October Revolution. November 7, 1972. **Lev Polikashin / RIA Novosti / CC-BY-SA 3.0**

The granddaughter of a KGB general is suing the independent radio station Ekho Moskvy and a historian who appeared on air for "smearing the memory of her grandfather," according to an announcement posted on Twitter by the station's chief editor, Alexey Venediktov.

On July 14, during a broadcast of the show "Diletantes," host Vitaly Dymarsky and historian Boris Sokolov discussed the release of a secret journal allegedly written and hidden by Ivan Serov, who was a prominent leader of the USSR's security and intelligence agencies from the late 1930s until the mid-1960s.

During the show, Sokolov questioned the diary's authenticity, suggesting that it might have been manufactured and "discovered," as part of a publicity effort to improve the KGB's image

in Russian society. On air, the historian said, "There's a bigger idea at play here: rehabilitating Serov, and showing that he wasn't this executioner, but that he actually did a lot of great work for the state."

"Notes From a Suitcase: Secret Journal of a KGB Chairman, Found 25 Years After His Death" is a book based on documents unearthed during the remodeling of a garage at Serov's old dacha. The pages were allegedly discovered inside the walls.

The diary, which features descriptions of classified government work and secret meetings with top-ranking authorities (including Joseph Stalin), would have constituted a capital offense during the Second World War.

"It's not by chance that none of the heads of the security agencies of this era left behind memoirs," writes Rossiyskaya Gazeta, the government's daily newspaper of record. "In this sense, Serov's notes are a unique document."

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