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One of the CIA's private press contacts was a suspected Soviet spy

Agency's long suspicion of the New York Times' Tad Szulc wasn't enough to keep him off their covert press pool

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As previously discussed, senior CIA analyst Ray Cline [covertly accumulated a number of press contacts](#) whom he provided information to in order to 'improve rapport,

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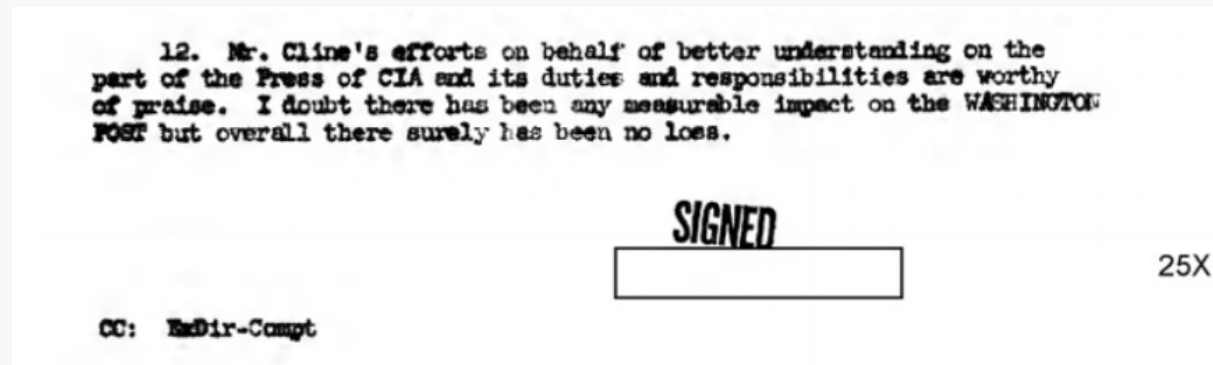


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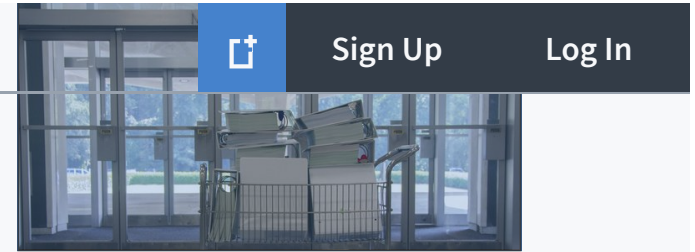
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understanding and the Agency's public image.' While some of the people on the list were well credentialed and had pasts or futures associated with the U.S. Intelligence Community, documents reveal that at least one of the press contacts briefed by Ray Cline was a suspected foreign agent.

This makes the final note of the memo praising Cline's press contacts ironic and questionable, at best.



While the memo describes some of his contacts with other members of the press, it provides no information about his contacts with [Tad Szulc](#) beyond the fact that they happened. However, according to [declassified CIA documents](#), it's known that Szulc was a suspected foreign agent, who was not only collecting information for the Soviets or the Cubans, but part of an active measures campaign designed to sabotage AMTRUNK, "one of the most important anti-Castro operations." In the mid-1970s, one senior CIA officer noted that "a Soviet agent could not be more beneficial to the Soviets and the Communist cause than Szulc has been."



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Emma Best sent this request to the [Central Intelligence Agency of the United States of America](#)

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Of interest is the fact that on the heels of the aforementioned recruitment attempts, (between 1960 and 1962, to split the CASTRO regime), came a request to CIA from the State Department, in early 1963, for an operation to do just that. Proposal for the operation was made to Mr. Hurwitch by Tad SZULC. It appears that pressure was exerted on CIA to support the activity and it became the AMTRUNK Operation. (See the separate memorandum on the AMTRUNK Operation.) In view of SZULC's involvement, this could have been a political action operation (by the Soviets/Cubans) against the U.S.G./CIA.

Szulc had been suspected of being a foreign agent since the year after he came to the United States. It wasn't until eleven years later, however, that he brought himself to CIA's attention. In 1959, he presented himself to the Agency in Santiago, Chile and falsely claimed to have been cleared, requesting contacts with an Agency representative. Szulc was so persistent and seen as so dangerous that a widespread warning was issued through the Agency.

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2. SZULC has been under suspicion as a hostile foreign agent since 1948 when the FBI reported (apparently from a [//] source) that he was a Communist. He brought himself to the attention of CIA in August 1959 in Santiago, Chile by claiming (falsely) to be "cleared" and requesting contact with an Agency representative. This was the first of many such incidents in Latin America, and resulted in a warning to all Latin American Stations to beware of SZULC and his efforts to interview Agency personnel. It also resulted in continuing watch of his movements and activities because they represented a threat to the cover of Agency personnel. By 1960 his reputation was so widespread that several different CIA officers called for an investigation that would clear up "once and for all" his suspected connections with a hostile intelligence service. He was in frequent contact with Communist Party leaders and functionaries throughout Latin America, constantly sought out and elicited information from U.S. Embassy officers,

Despite decades of interest and focus on Szulc's "anti-Agency activities," as late as the 1970s CIA was unable to clear up the status of Szulc's foreign connections. None of this, it seems, stopped Cline from briefing Szulc.

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3. Although the suspicions have increased, and SZULC's ~~anti-Agency activities have become much more serious and~~ blatant in the 1970's, it has not been possible to clear up any of the suspicions about his motives or his possible connections with a foreign intelligence service. There have been numerous reviews of his files and the interest in his activities has extended from the case officer level to the DCI. In fact, it is not possible to come to any clear conclusion about this man, and the notes below are simply illustrative of the kinds of things that keep the suspicions alive. It is important to note that SZULC's activities can be explained by the combination of his personality, ambition, and the demands on an investigative reporter for the NYT. He is an aggressive, insensitive, and persistent journalist with the family connections (Ambassador Wiley) and ability to develop the kinds of contacts appropriate to a successful correspondent for a paper like the NYT.

Despite his early anti-Communist leanings, the Agency noted that he had become increasingly critical of the Agency. The essential allegations, however, had been there from the beginning. In 1948, a number of sources indicated to the FBI that Szulc had been dispatched by Polish intelligence agencies. The Agency also believed that Szulc's marriage had been arranged and performed for the sole purpose of granting him permanent residency in the United States.

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a. The 1948 FBI report that SZULC was involved in supplying the Polish Legation in Rio with information from his personal contacts and from Ambassador John C. Wiley has been repeated in various versions throughout SZULC's file. The FBI has found similar allegations made by other sources who knew SZULC at that time. In addition, several sources have mentioned SZULC's relations with his cousin, Ignacy SACHS, who was the Press Attache in the Polish Embassy in 1947 and 1948, although there is no indication that SACHS had intelligence connections.

b. SZULC's marriage to the daughter of the American manager of the English language newspaper in Rio de Janeiro, the Herald, lasted only until SZULC had permanent residence in the U.S. and appears to have been carried through for that purpose.

While Szulc was eventually given an official Agency contact, it wasn't Ray Cline but rather Albert Davies.

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j. SZULC persistently sought a continuing contact with an Agency representative in Washington shortly after he arrived until it was granted in December 1962. The first contact was with Albert C. DAVIES (Lt. Col. on military detail to CIA - Cuba), and was arranged at the behest of Colonel GROGAN, the Assistant to the Director, on SZULC's request.

Szulc's next official contact was similarly not Ray Cline but rather Alfonso Rodriguez. Based on his provided statement, Rodriguez was unsure of what to make of Szulc.

1. The Agency officer, Alfonso RODRIGUEZ, who maintained official contact with SZULC in 1963 and 1964 said in July 1964:

"The special friendship and mutual admiration society that has existed between Tad SZULC, Jorge VOLSKY, and Manuel RAY and the JURE is not something that is transparent or easily explained. This alliance may be something unholy and Machiavellian; I just do not know, but I can find no evidence to prove it."

While the Agency acknowledged that the evidence that Szulc was a foreign agent is limited, and aside from statements from confidential sources largely circumstantial.

However circumstantial the evidence, Szulc was under suspicion and his contacts with Cline appear to have been unsanctioned. Cline had been carrying out his clandestine



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press contacts since 1957, and only one entry in the memo is listed as official. The official contact was with Alsop and not Szulc, casting further doubt on whether Cline's contacts were sanctioned. Given the security and counterintelligence risk, the concerns were real.

If he were a foreign agent, then Szulc's aid to the Soviets was considerable. He [broke the story of the Bay of Pigs invasion](#), and according to later CIA reports information which was withheld by his editors at the *New York Times* soon found its way to the Soviets. Other circumstantial but extremely suspicious correlations are brought up by the Agency. Szulc's daughter, Nicole, had apparently aided Philip Agee in his research for [Inside the Company: A CIA Diary](#). Understandably, the Agency wondered if Szulc hadn't helped his daughter in her research.

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s. In, Inside the Company: A CIA Diary, Philip AGEE credits SZULC's daughter, Nicole, for having "obtained vital research materials in New York and Washington, D.C." There is reason to believe, particularly in view of the extreme views Tad SZULC has manifested in the past two years, that he may have aided his daughter in her "research."

SUMMATION

The case against Tad SZULC as a foreign agent is weak. However, his most recent activities are entirely consonant with the view that he has already served the Soviets well-and can

end his career as an overt propagandist taking advantage of the current furor over the CIA to do the greatest possible damage. The current paralysis of all anti-Communist action by the Agency attests to the effectiveness of AGEE, SZULC, the Soviets, et al. || ?

^B
NOTE: (See attachment from a highly sensitive source. Any use of the SECRET/SENSITIVE attachment requires C/CI approval.) The source reported that Nicole, while working with the DGI in Cuba to expose the Agency, said that except for her father, her whole family were "fascists." She said that her father quit the NYT because of the restrictive editorial policy and he wished to write according to his beliefs.

A FOIA request has been filed to learn more about Cline's [contacts with members of the press](#), including Tad Szulc. In the meantime, you can read Cline's memo below.



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