

## The Allynson's of East Bentleigh.

The last file of Vladimir Petrov. This is a story that I completed two years ago. It is a Cold War story, however, it was at the centre of Australian history and had ramifications till the end of the Cold War.

The year 2012 marked 10 years since the last chapter of the 'Petrov Affair'. On July 19<sup>th</sup> 2002, Evodika, Petrov died in Hospital and with her ended the most exiting Cold War story in Australian history.

The events of the 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> April 1954 are well documented in Australian Political and Cold War history. The Soviet Diplomat, Vladimir Petrov was persuaded to defect, by the agents of the Australian spy agency A.S.I.O (Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation), then directed by Col. Charles Spry. When two Soviet security agents dragged his wife Evodika Petrov to the plane at Mascot Airport (now Kingsford-Smith airport Sydney) and then, as she was snatched back, by Federal police, from the plane at Darwin Airport, it became one of the most dramatic events of the 1950s in Australia.

Vladimir Mickalovick Petrov was born Afanasy Mikhaylovich Shorokhov in 1914 in the village of Larikha, in Serbia. As a Soviet intelligence officer for the MDV (soon after to be called the KGB) he was sent to the USSR Embassy in Canberra as the third secretary in 1951. With him was his wife Evodika, who had also worked for the MDV, They married in 1940 when they were both posted to Sweden. Evodika Petrov was born on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1914 in Ilpki, south of Moscow.

After 1954 to hide from the KGB, both the Petrov's were renamed with the alias "Allynson". The 'Petrov's' were held in a safe house in Palm Beach, Sydney with A.S.I.O agents, who took notes of his time as a spymaster in Australia. The Soviet Union made it clear what they had in store for him if they managed to find him.

One of those agents was Michael Thwaites who, ghost wrote Petrov's memoirs as a Soviet agent and, published them as "Empire of Fear" in 1956. The Publication of the book was held up until the end of the Royal Commission on the 'Petrov Affair'.

After a short stay in a safe house, in Sandringham, Victoria, with £5000 as part of his defection and money from the book sales, and their new alias, Sven and Maria Allynson were able to purchase and move into a cream brick house in Parkmore Road, East Bentleigh. They both became Australian citizens and settled down into life in suburban Melbourne. He enjoyed life in East Bentleigh, following Australian Rules football, and the pastimes of duck shooting, fishing, and drinking.

Sven (Vladimir) gained employment at Ilford films, then situated at Ferntree Gully Road, Waverley, developing and printing film. As a spymaster he had developed film. This was one of the methods the Soviet Union used to transfer orders and information.

Maria (Evodika) worked as a typist and company secretary at William Adams tractors. Evodika was a regular customer of the butcher and grocery stores in Mackie Road, East Bentleigh. It was clear at the time to neighbours and other locals who the Allynson's were and this was also confirmed by the appearance of dark cars from A.S.I.O and the Federal police cruising up and down Parkmore Road at all hours. The 'D Notice' that protected them from the Press was lifted in

1982. When the Police could not get there to help with Newspaper reporters, Evodika would use a gate in a neighbour's fence to evade them.

Members of The Victorian Police, from East Bentleigh (then in East Boundary Road), were also regular visitors to the Petrov house. Not only were they called because of nosey Newspapermen but because of Vladimir's depression. In 1967 he commented "no friends, no future, I wish I was dead. No one could dream of our misery". As he got older it was not an uncommon sight, in Parkmore Road, to have Vladimir fall down drunk in the front yard and once over the fence. The Police were called to help him back into the house.

The defection also had an effect on their families back in Russia, Vladimir's father, who also worked for the MDV, was relieved of his duties and died three years later. At the time of the defection Evodika was reluctant to stay because of her family. She feared for what had happened to her mother and sister and was unable to make contact with them until 1960, with the help of the Red Cross. In 1990 Evodika's sister, Tamara, was able to migrate with her family to Australia.

Vladimir became harder to look after and ended up in a nursing home in Brighton, and, since the 'D Notice' had been dropped many years before by the Federal Government, this fact was reported by the Sun Newspaper.

As the Cold War and the Soviet Union became forgotten so was Vladimir Petrov. When he died on June 14<sup>th</sup> 1991 at Royal Park Hospital, Parkville, it was the only other time he would be mentioned again. Evodika at the age of 82 died in 2002 after surgery on her back, her ashes were claimed from the Springvale crematorium.

Her plaque says

**"in loving memory of Maria Anna Allinson**

**8. 3. 1914 – 19. 7. 2002**

**deep sorrow in our hearts eternal memories of nieces, your sister, nephew, nieces and friends".**

By Jim Dale 2012