

State-sponsored poison timeline

■ **1957:** Radioactive thallium used in failed KGB attempt to poison Soviet defector **Nikolai Khokhlov** at anti-communist conference in Germany

■ **1978: Georgi Markov**, Bulgarian journalist with BBC World Service, dies in London after being injected with ricin poison from tip of an umbrella

■ **Apr 2002:** Russian secret services use poison to kill Chechen warlord, **Omar ibn-Khattab**. He dies within five minutes of opening letter said to be written by his mother

■ **Oct:** Russian special forces use unidentified narcotic gas to subdue Chechen terrorists during Moscow's Nord Ost Theatre siege. Gas kills 42 terrorists and 127 of 850 hostages

■ **Jun 2003: Yuri Shchekochikhin**, Russian journalist and member of Duma (parliament), dies within days from unidentified poison while investigating corruption scandal involving high-ranking intelligence officials



■ **Sep 2004:** U.S.-born Russian journalist **Anna Politkovskaya** – well known for her opposition to Chechen conflict and **Vladimir Putin's** administration – falls seriously ill after drinking a glass of water during a flight to Rostov-on-Don, while covering Beslan school siege. Politkovskaya is shot dead in an apparent contract killing in Moscow in October 2006

■ **Sep:** Ukrainian opposition leader (now president) **Viktor Yushchenko** is hospitalised suffering stomach pains – soon a mask of lesions and blisters disfigure his face. Examinations by laboratories in Britain, Austria, the Netherlands and Germany confirm that he has been poisoned with dioxins

■ **Nov 23, 2006: Alexander Litvinenko** (pictured), former Russian spy dies in London, three weeks after being poisoned by radioactive substance. Litvinenko has been a fierce critic of President Putin