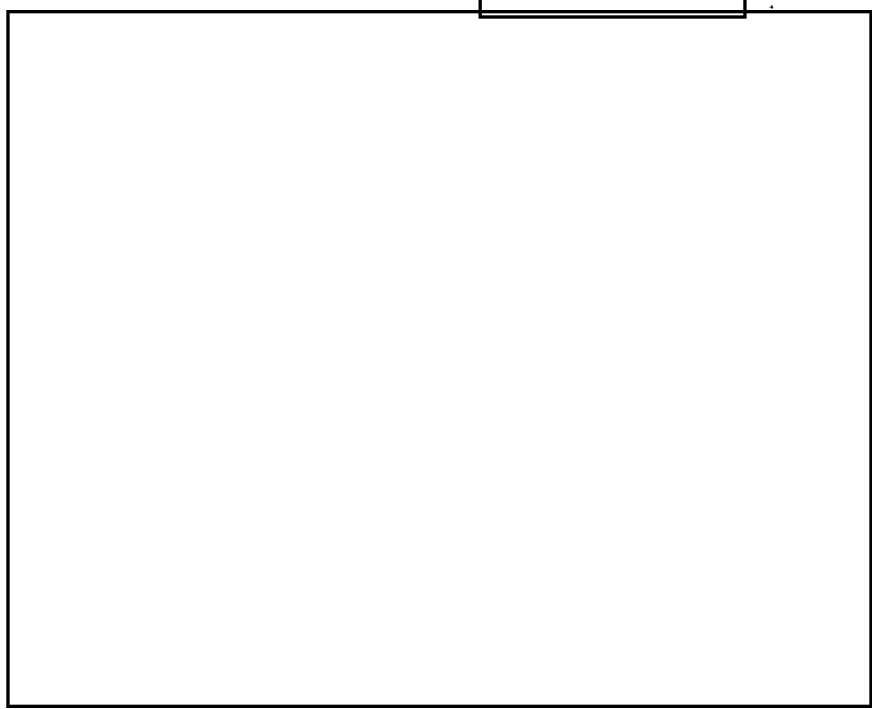


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Secret



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence Memorandum

SOVIET REACTIONARIES: HATING JEWS AND LOVING STALIN

Secret

18 March 1971
No. 1274/71

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
18 March 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

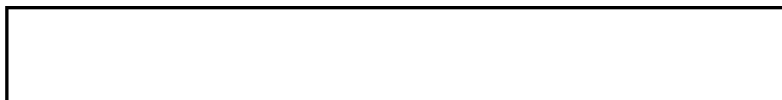
Soviet Reactionaries: Hating Jews and Loving Stalin

Introduction

The "liberal" end of the Soviet political spectrum, whatever real weight it carries, has been relatively visible to the West for several years. Soviet liberals have turned to the West for inspiration and aid, and their cause has attracted attention, often born of hope, from many in the West. This paper portrays some aspects of the opposite end of the spectrum. Soviet reactionaries have little interest in publicizing their views before Western audiences, but recently they have said and written enough to provide a rather complete model of political thought of an extremist type against which more commonly held opinion in the USSR can be measured. The reported political ties and activities of the ultra-conservatives, moreover, shed light on some of the motives in the decision-making process within the Politburo. The policies that emerge from this process help to identify the limits imposed on the Soviet leaders by the need for consensus in the Kremlin.

Anti-Semitism, before and after the Revolution, has been a conservative force at three levels of national life: the popular, the political, and the philosophical. It was endemic to the Russian masses before the Revolution and has hardly been shed by their descendants, the new proletariat class and ruling elite of the Soviet Union. The Tsars pandered to anti-Semitism as a convenient outlet for

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popular frustrations; Stalin turned to it with more frequency after he had completed his transformations of society and was intent on freezing the mold. Anti-Semitism has also been part of the recurring question of the country's politicians and intellectuals: "Whither Russia?" Three historical influences easily converge here: the Slavophile insistence on the unique character of the Russian people that must be preserved if Moscow is to fulfill its destiny as a third Rome, Stalin's revival of Great Russian nationalism and his intolerance of foreign variations to Soviet Communist doctrine, and the view of Jews not only as foreigners but also as bearers of an essentially Western Weltanschauung that threatens the foundations of Russian society. In today's world these attitudes are sharpened by the position of China and Israel vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. China complements the West by offering a more Eastern alternative to post-Stalin Communism in the USSR, while Israel gives world Jewry a state focus and stands as a military threat to Soviet interests in the Middle East.

Study of four recent developments in Soviet politics helps to reveal the dynamic nature of these issues. To be examined are a set of decisions on literary themes and political appointments taken by the Politburo in July 1970, the activities of Soviet Stalinists in Czechoslovakia, the views of Soviet officials involved in Mideast affairs, and another set of Politburo decisions taken in December concerning the trial of alleged Jewish hijackers in Leningrad. In all these cases, our information is fragmentary and disconnected. Taken together, however, the data form a pattern that presents a composite picture of reactionary opinion in the USSR and the current extent and limits of its influence.

July Leadership Decisions

1. Several months of tension in the Kremlin came to a climax in July 1970 as Soviet leaders actively jockeyed for position and finally were forced to make some difficult decisions on the future course of party and state affairs. The issues

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revolved around the scheduling of the overdue party congress and the shape of the new five-year plan. Events of the period indicated that Premier Kosygin's position was being eroded, and rumors predicted his retirement at the July session of the new Supreme Soviet. At the same time, one of Kosygin's first deputy premiers, Polyansky, was engaged in abetting an anti-Semitic and Stalinist push in cultural affairs [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Personnel matters at lower levels were up for decision before the congress, and one of the most startling appointments was the assignment of Leningrad Oblast party first secretary, V. S. Tolstikov, as ambassador to Peking.

2. During a Central Committee plenum on 2-3 July General Secretary Brezhnev announced a five-year agricultural program that represented a victory for Polyansky's agricultural interests. The decision to postpone the Party Congress was apparently made by the Politburo between this plenum and the one on 12 July which announced that the Congress would be held in 1971 and that Brezhnev and Premier Kosygin would be reporters at the Congress.

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3. It was also at this time [REDACTED] that the Politburo stepped into a controversy over two reactionary novels by Ivan Shevtsov published in early 1970. The novels enthusiastically endorsed Stalin's leadership, justified the bloodshed of collectivization and the purges, glorified the working class while vilifying liberal intellectuals as dupes of the West--all to the drumbeat of blatant anti-Semitism. [REDACTED]

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A resolution was passed censuring the writings of Shevtsov, the works of several other authors, and an interview by Foreign Trade Minister Patolichev that extolled Stalin too directly and

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On 12 July Pravda ran a scathing review of Shevtsov's novels damning them as "ideologically corrupt and artistically worthless." This has been the only direct result of the resolution, however, and neither the reactionary writers nor Polyansky has visibly suffered from its adoption. Sensitivity to the question of anti-Semitism was nevertheless betrayed in the elevation of a Jew with meager party credentials to become first secretary of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast party committee in Birobidzhan on 24 July.

4. This appointment, related changes among provincial party leaders, and the choice of envoys to China may also have been agreed upon by the leadership in mid-July. News services reported on 14 July that according to "authoritative sources" Deputy Foreign Minister Ilichev would replace his colleague Kuznetsov as chief negotiator at the border talks in Peking. A Soviet journalist reported on 28 July that Tolstikov was under consideration for the ambassadorship, and on 5 August news services quoting "Communist sources" reported that China had agreed to his appointment.

5. Various explanations have been advanced for Tolstikov's banishment to Peking in spite of the fact that it has long been evident that he was no favorite with the majority of the collective leadership. [Redacted] implied [Redacted]

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[Redacted] that Tolstikov's assignment was connected with Moscow's unhappiness over the Leningrad trials of Jews and the attendant publicity. [Redacted] claimed that the case had been stirred up by Tolstikov in an attempt to make a name for himself. The affair did receive unusual and prompt publicity when Leningradskaya Pravda, the local Leningrad newspaper, reported

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the attempted hijacking and the arrests on 16 June, the day after the events. Not only were most of those arrested at the airport Jews, but the incident was used as a pretext for rounding up members of Jewish circles in Leningrad, Riga, Kaliningrad, Kishinev, and Odessa. Clearly, some authorities--and not only those in Leningrad--were preparing a wide crackdown on Jewish activists.

6. Tolstikov has displayed neo-Stalinist tendencies at least in the spheres of culture and law and order. It is possible that he had been, in addition, exhibiting another quality of a neo-Stalinist--a critical attitude toward past handling of relations with China. His assignment may have had the double purpose of sparing his government from his criticism and educating him to the realities of affairs with China. Criticism of policy toward China would have been a particular irritant to Suslov, who had carried the main burden of articulating the Soviet case against China. It was Suslov who presided over the installation in Leningrad of Tolstikov's successor, second secretary G.V. Romanov, on 16 September.

7. In retrospect, it seems likely that the Politburo's decision to send Tolstikov abroad was made concurrently with its censure of excessively Stalinist themes in literature that had received encouragement from Polyansky. The anti-Semitism of much of the literature censured and the arrests of Jews in Tolstikov's bailiwick the preceding month provide a suggestive common thread.

8. It is also noteworthy that these events coincided with the solidification of Kosygin's position in the leadership. Kosygin--a moderate in cultural affairs, the one leader publicly identified with the launching of the Peking border talks, and the one Soviet leader who has addressed a Soviet audience on the impermissibility of anti-Semitism--had suffered a number of setbacks in the spring of 1970. These included the triumph of the agricultural lobby, the decision to rework the new five-year plan, Brezhnev's intrusion in the affairs of

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the Council of Ministers, and a rash of rumors in Moscow and abroad that Kosygin would retire with the convening of the newly elected Supreme Soviet. Polyansky, as one of his two First Deputies, was (and is) a natural contender for Kosygin's position. In announcing the Congress and Kosygin as one of the reporters, the Central Committee plenum on 13 July established his tenure at least until March 1971. Kosygin and his entire government were re-elected at the Supreme Soviet on 14-15 July.

9. In sum, the evidence suggests that the Politburo in mid-July, along with other business, gave attention to the growing manifestations of a Stalinist and anti-Semitic strain in public life. The moderates led by Suslov were able to deal a tactical reversal to this development and its apparent sponsors, including Polyansky and Tolstikov. Kosygin, who appeared to be tottering a bit, was able to right himself.

Soviet Reactionaries Abroad

10. Soviet reactionaries abroad, particularly those in Czechoslovakia and the Middle East, have been more accessible to Western observers than their counterparts in the Soviet Union. They have kept in contact with Stalinist elements in Slovakia, espousing a thoroughly dogmatic line and trying to encourage anti-Semitism in order to reinforce the contention that the "counterrevolution" of 1968 was the work of "imperialism and international Zionism."

11. A main figure in this activity has been Nikolay Starikov, third secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Prague. On 18 November, Starikov reportedly presented awards to seven factory workers who had drafted a letter published in Pravda in July 1968 protesting the policy of Dubcek. Speaking later that day to a group of about 40 ultraconservative Czechoslovak Communists, Starikov charged that Khrushchev's attack on Stalin in 1956 was ultimately responsible for the difficulties of Communism in

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Eastern Europe during the last 14 years. Events since 1956 have vindicated Stalin's policy he said; therefore, if the strength of Communism is to be restored, the "poison of Khrushchevism" must be destroyed at the 24th Party Congress in March and the offending aspects of the 20th Congress repudiated. Once this is accomplished, according to Starikov, it will be possible to restore unity with China and within the international Communist movement.

12. The Soviet hand in propagating anti-Semitic themes in Czechoslovakia is also revealed in the December publication by the Slovak Pravda publishing house in Bratislava of Beware: Zionism. The book--written by two Soviets, Yuri Ivanov and Ye. Yevseyev, who has been described as a "paranoic anti-Semite"--is a vicious attack on Zionism for anti-Soviet activity and for instigation of the Czechoslovak reforms.

13. The "new" book is actually a revised version of Ivanov's book bearing the same title that was first published in the USSR in March 1969 and then reissued in May 1970 by Politizdat in a press run of 200,000--significantly larger than the 1969 edition. The May edition, like the recent Slovak one, was updated and included a more direct implication of Zionism in the Czechoslovak reforms as well as in events in Hungary in 1956 and the Polish "spring" of 1968. The publication of the book in Czechoslovakia coincides with increasing exhortation in the Soviet Union on the need for vigilance and anti-Zionist propaganda. The Czechoslovaks themselves seem to be conducting a similar, albeit less virulent, campaign, probably under the influence of the Soviets. Although no direct links between both Ivanov and Yevseyev and any major political figure in the Soviet Union are apparent, the highly laudatory review which Ivanov's book received from Sovetskaya Rossiya, which is reportedly responsive to Politburo member Polyansky, suggests the possibility that Ivanov, like Shevtsov, may have his support.

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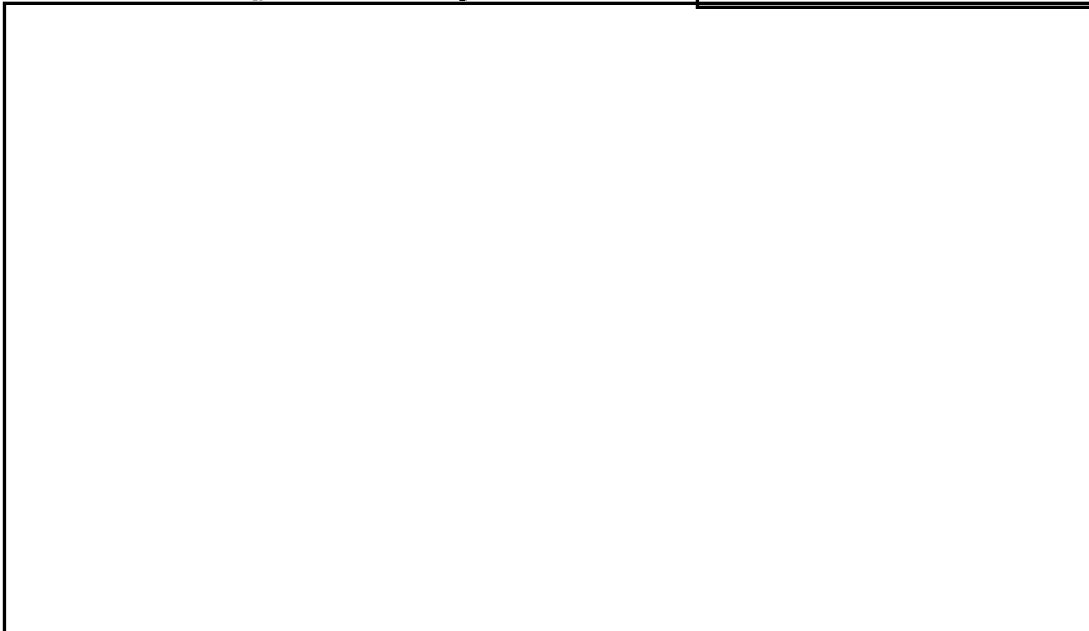
The Middle East Experts: Specialists in Anti-Semitism

14. Anti-Semitic sentiments also seem to be prevalent among Soviet officials involved in Middle East affairs. Preoccupation with Israel apparently leads them to magnify what they see as related dangers, including the challenge of "international Zionism," the supranational loyalties of Soviet Jews, and the less than total commitment of the Russian people to fighting Israel and foreign influences. Stalinism flourished under a siege mentality, and the evident insecurity felt by some officials dealing with the Middle East makes them also susceptible to a Stalinist analysis of Soviet problems.

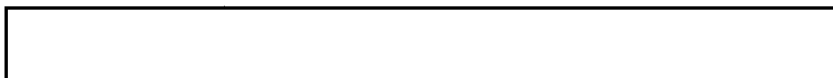
15. It is not surprising, therefore, that such officials have taken to the ideas of the author Ivanov. Ivanov himself is assigned to the Israeli desk in the Middle East Section of the Central Committee's International Department. Yevseyev, who now works for Problems of Peace and Socialism, an international Communist journal published in Prague, was formerly a Soviet diplomat in Cairo (1961-64). Prior to assuming his present position he was on the Lebanese desk in the Middle East Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



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In January 1971, the Western press

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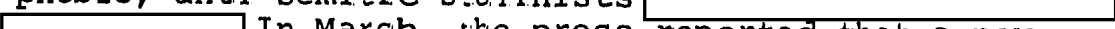




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reported the existence of the Za Rodinu (For the Fatherland) Society, allegedly composed of xenophobic, anti-Semitic Stalinists

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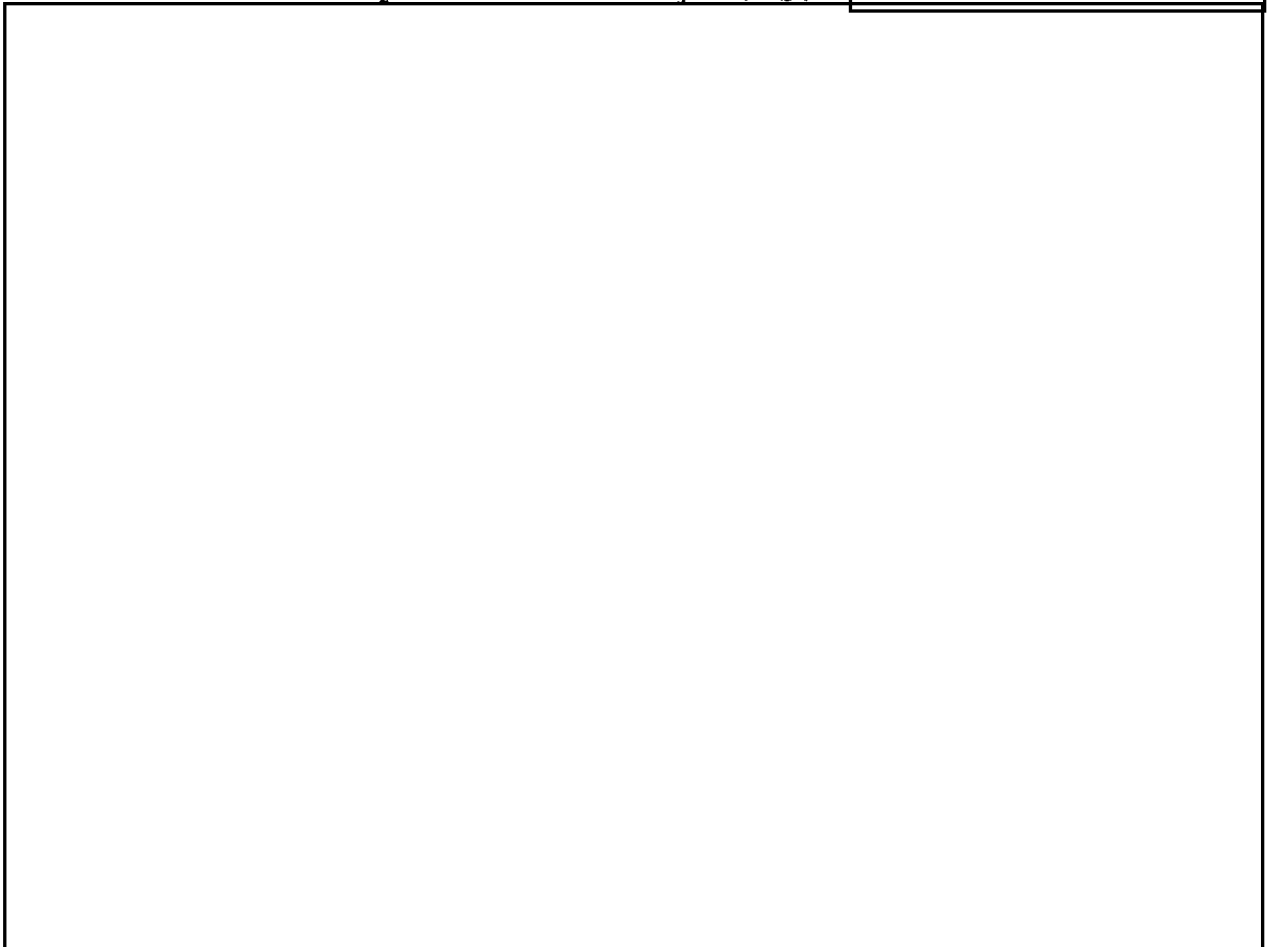
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 In March, the press reported that a new samizdat (underground) journal, Veche, described as nationalistic, anti-Semitic and Slavophile (anti-Western) was being published. The journal's stated purpose is to root out Trotskyism and cosmopolitanism in Soviet life. Both terms have strong anti-Semitic overtones reminiscent of the Stalin era. Although the relationship between these anti-Semitic elements is unclear, a striking coincidence of views is evident. Veche, for example, contained an article by an unnamed author who  deplores the "architectural rape" of Moscow by Jews. 

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December Leadership Decisions

21. In late December, the "Jewish question" came back to haunt the Politburo. On this occasion, however, it was not the novels of an obscure writer that resurrected the issue, but Western reaction to the Leningrad trial of Soviet Jews, who allegedly attempted to hijack a Soviet aircraft in June. The Soviet response to vehement Western denunciations, some of which came from important Communist parties, was a retreat from the tough position taken by the authorities earlier.

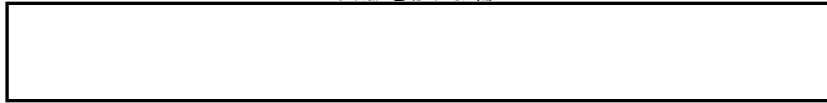
22. Whatever the relationship of the arrests to Tolstikov's change in assignment, the new ambassador's departure from Leningrad had not stopped plans for prosecution either of the alleged hijackers or of those Jews accused more ominously of "anti-Soviet activity." The prosecution's course did not run smoothly. The trials reportedly were scheduled to begin in October but were delayed until mid-December. The secrecy of the trial, the severity of the verdict--including two death sentences--and underground rumors that the whole affair was staged combined to produce a wave of adverse publicity in the West. The imminence of the second-level trials of Jews arrested at the same time on charges of "anti-Soviet activity" lent added impetus to the Western protests against what were branded as manifestations of anti-Semitism. The severity of the Western denunciations and the criticism of the Communist parties

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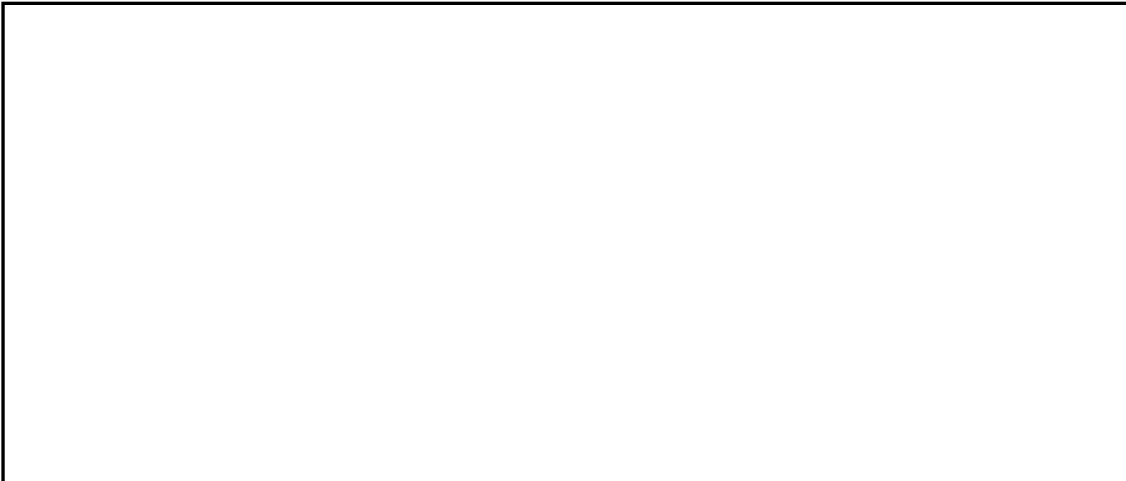


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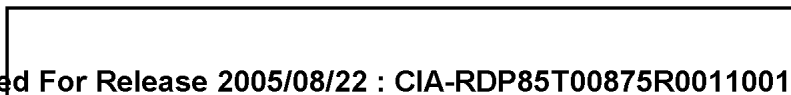
in Great Britain, France and Italy were apparently unexpected in Moscow and resulted in a rapid about face on the Leningrad affair.

23. On 28 December, only four days after the court handed down its verdict, it was already rumored that an appeal would be heard on 30 December. The rumor initially seemed somewhat improbable, because the normal appeal process in the Soviet Union takes several weeks. But on 30 December the Supreme Court did in fact hear the appeal and the following day commuted the death sentences and reduced several prison sentences. The sensitivity of the issue, the speed with which the appeal was heard, and the reversal of the lower court's decision suggest that the new Soviet attitude was the result of a Politburo decision reached sometime between 25 and 30 December.

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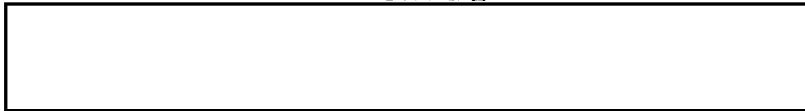
25. The decision to reverse the death sentences and the subsequent delays in prosecution of the other Leningrad Jews arrested last June were probably related to the coming Party Congress and, perhaps in some degree, to the policy adopted on the Jarring mission. The agitation among foreign Communists over the trials threatened to create unnecessary inter-party friction while plans for the Moscow conclave were being made. Moreover, the emotional storm the trials raised in Israel and among her sympathizers would probably have compounded the problems facing the Jarring mission and would have detracted from the "reasonable" public image the Soviets had decided they and the Egyptians should present in



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the Middle East. These factors are in addition to what must have been a basic desire to counteract the domestic impact of the affair which, with its numerous arrests in several cities, almost certainly aroused fears in some quarters that another witch hunt, reminiscent of the Doctors' Plot and the anti-cosmopolitan campaign, was in the wings. Similar considerations may have been a factor in the regime's decision to allow several groups of the most outspoken Jewish activists to emigrate to Israel in the early months of 1971.

The Weight of the Stalinists

26. The issues of Stalinism and Khrushchevism, orthodoxy and revisionism, and accommodation with China and/or the West define basic cleavages in Soviet political life. Shevtsov, Starikov [redacted] probably represent the far left of the spectrum of Soviet political opinion. Their views are distinguished even from most conservative political expression by both their extremism and their logical consistency. Unity of the socialist community is to be re-established not by China's disavowing Maoism, but by the Soviet Union's repudiating Khrushchevism and returning to the orthodox path trod by Stalin. Such a course would demand intense vigilance toward the West, liquidation of Zionist elements in the Soviet Union as the bearers of Western influences and revisionism, and elimination of the Israeli threat to Arab and Soviet interests in the Middle East.

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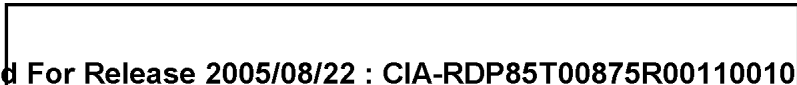
27. This program is less important for the number of people who embrace it as a whole than for its definition of an ultimate position on one side of political debate in the Soviet Union. Against this model Soviet political opinion in general can be measured and divided according to the degree of correspondence or divergence. In this sense, Shevtsov, Starikov [redacted] represent zealous advocates for what is probably a large conservative constituency in the Soviet Union whose members themselves, either individually or corporately, rarely reach such extreme or consistent views on all questions.

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[redacted] Starikov's activities

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must receive sanction from fairly high levels in the party apparatus. Given the strength of conservative impulses in the Soviet Union, a Politburo member like Polyansky undoubtedly finds it politic to patronize Shevtsov's efforts, and there are other indications that on some issues his sympathies lie in this direction. This does not mean, however, that Polyansky buys Shevtsov's program wholesale or would be eager to enact it in all respects.

28. The program, in fact, is a logical extension of the general policies of the regime since 1964. The current leadership has presided over a steady but controlled rehabilitation of Stalin and his heritage, a repudiation of Khrushchev's innovations, ruthless measures to preserve uniformity and unity in the Communist movement, and a growing commitment to the Arabs in the Middle East. It has thus fostered a climate that is not only congenial to conservatives but also stimulates the zealots among them to try to push these policies to their ultimate conclusion. The fact that these extremes have been deliberately avoided by the collective leadership leaves it open to the charge, even from the ambitious among its own numbers, that it is not pursuing its policies with enough vigor and to their logical end. It may not be unreasonable to ascribe such views to Tolstikov, whose position had long given him claim to a seat at the summit in Moscow, and to Polyansky, who assuredly covets the title of his boss, Kosygin.

29. Polyansky got no more than the tip of a finger singed in the Shevtsov affair last summer. Since then the dogmatists have tightened their grip on cultural policy, and reactionaries in art are riding high. Polyansky and his agricultural interests remain the biggest winners in the allocations sweepstakes under the new five-year plan.

30. In addition, the impending Party Congress, with its possibilities for readjustment of the party line and realignment of the political hierarchy, has undoubtedly been a stimulant to the activity of the ultra-conservatives, as well as to other political elements. The statements by Starikov [REDACTED]

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on the role of the 24th Congress, however, appear to be not much more than expressions of their own fervent hopes for its outcome. In reality, the conservative and moderate forces at the top seem so evenly balanced as to make any predictions that the Congress will veer one way or another highly suspect.

Moderates Have Final Say

31. Most telling are the decisions taken by the Politburo in July and December when it was faced with the escalating consequences of conservative initiatives. On both occasions the collective sought to rein in the extremists, and in December the leaders, moved by a variety of personal rivalries, domestic policy concerns, and foreign policy considerations, in unaccustomed fashion reversed public decisions.

32. That Suslov should be a key figure on the side of moderation is readily explained by his responsibility for ideology and the international movement, areas where extremism threatens to wreak havoc. It was Suslov who enunciated, at a Comintern anniversary on 25 March 1969, the rationale for working with Social Democracy--that is, a stance Westward instead of Eastward--and criticized Stalin in this regard. On such a rationale is built Moscow's treating with Bonn that has been such a prominent part of Soviet foreign policy during the past year. This attitude has long been shared by Kosygin.

33. In the past year Brezhnev's public stature has grown, and if the trend continues, he is likely to dominate at least the platform at the Congress. He has appeared very comfortable with the conservative drift of policy under his regime. Nevertheless, in policy matters he is still playing the moderator and seems careful to apportion his support to all factions. Two of his aides, G. E. Tsukanov and A. Ye. Bovin, reportedly worked hard to bring Shevtsov under censure. Having agreed to that, however, Brezhnev is reported to have turned aside the petitions for redress of a liberal playwright, Mikhail Shatrov, who had suffered at the hands of conservatives in the spring of 1970. In foreign policy,

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Brezhnev has identified himself with the Soviet - West German treaty and portrayed it as a major accomplishment of the regime.

34. In short, the bust now erected above Stalin's grave is no sure sign that the Party Congress is about to re-install his remains in the Mausoleum. Agitation from reactionary quarters reveals the present conservative cast of political argument in the Soviet Union and the strength and expectations of one political faction as it looks forward to the Congress. Its triumph, however, would require a convulsion among the ruling collective. Decisions taken by the Politburo and the policies it is pursuing indicate the limits placed on the Soviet leaders' scope for policy initiatives. The consensus in the Kremlin continues to be tested, but there are no good signs that it is about to yield to reactionary extremes.

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