

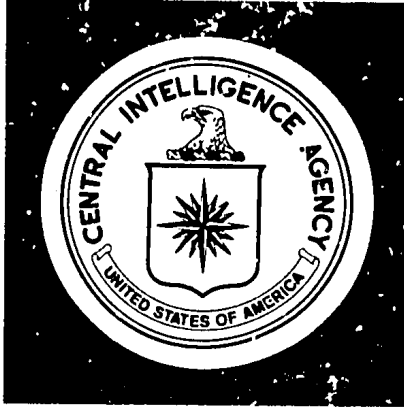
Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/06/21 :
CIA-RDP85T00875R001000070

SECRET

Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/06/21 :
CIA-RDP85T00875R001000070

~~Secret~~

25X1



Weekly Review

Special Report

Detente and the Stirring of Soviet Dissidence

~~Secret~~

25X1

November 15, 1974

Copy **Nº 649**

Page Denied



LAURENTE AND THE STIRRING
OF SOVIET DISSIDENCE

SECRET



25X1

∩

25X1

Socialist realism is an artistically creative method whose guiding principle is the truthful, historically concrete presentation of reality in its revolutionary development, and whose most important task is the communist education of the masses.

The Great Soviet Encyclopedia,
(second edition, 1957; Vol. 40, p. 180)

The lie can pit itself against much in this world, but not against art.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Summary

The Soviet leadership is faced with a long-standing problem that is entering a new and more difficult phase—how to gain the advantages of better relations with the West without eroding its control over Soviet society. It appreciates the tangible, material benefits and a greater sense of legitimacy and prestige derived from detente, but recognizes that any moves to increase personal and cultural freedom would cause strains in the closed Soviet society. All levels of the Soviet body politic are aware of this conflict, and a variety of groups outside the power structure—intellectuals, minorities, active dissidents, and political prisoners—sense a new opportunity in the recently announced link between an easing of Soviet emigration procedures and US trade policy toward Moscow to press for a more general relaxation of domestic policies.

SECRET

Civil Rights Focus on Emigration

Some Soviet dissidents, certainly over-optimistically, read the price the regime has paid for US trade concessions as the "opening of the floodgates." Despite the lack of reporting on the subject by Soviet media, the public is becoming aware of the substance of the letters dated October 18, exchanged between Secretary Kissinger and Senator Jackson, and the White House clarifying statement, tying the emigration issue to passage of the trade reform bill, which would grant most favored nation status to Moscow. Only three days before the US announcement, Brezhnev publicly reiterated for the record the line that it is impermissible to set conditions for detente. Despite this disclaimer, the negotiations on emigration are certainly seen by all Soviet citizens, not just Jews, as an unprecedented concession in an area of hitherto sacrosanct domestic policy.

The right to freedom of movement within the USSR and, above all, the right to emigrate, have been goals shared by all, not just Jewish, dissidents. Some, at least, go further and consider the core of a general civil rights guarantee for all Soviet citizens.

is this view and its consequences that the regime is apparently intent on curbing and correcting, although at what cost is still unclear. The problem must still be a matter of debate within the leadership. This would explain some of the recent signs of contradictory policies in domestic cultural affairs and the seesaw Soviet posture on freedom of movement issues at the European Security Conference.

Signs of Conservative Retrenchment

The leadership's concern over the potentially corrosive effect of detente-generated popular expectations on its domestic controls is perhaps most readily apparent in the nationwide ideological vigilance campaign that got under way late this summer. Heralded by the Central Committee's generally critical assessment in late August of party ideological work in the Belorussian Republic, the pervasive campaign has been striking out mainly at "consumerism," nation-

alism, religion, and other bourgeois "ills." The drive is designed to improve the technical and ideological expertise of party workers, to reinvigorate the propaganda apparatus at all levels, and to restore popular faith in the curative powers of Marxism-Leninism. It is thus the most conspicuous sign that a significant relaxation of domestic policy is not imminent. Party conservatives probably see the campaign as a major tool for promoting their views; when articles of faith are at issue, moderation can be labeled a vice.

Heaping praise on a period characterized by cultural repression is another way open to conservatives intent on frustrating any change in domestic policy. An editorial in *Pravda* on the 10th anniversary of Khrushchev's ouster, for example, praised Brezhnev's stewardship over a period of "collective" rule and denigrated Khrushchev's more freewheeling style. In the symbol-studded world of Soviet internal politics, *Pravda* was also criticizing the relatively liberal cultural policy of the Khrushchev era.

More significantly, the sensitive issue of Soviet historical interpretation of Stalin and his rule has again reappeared after a hiatus of many years. Under Khrushchev, censuring Stalin became a symbolic advocacy of a change in the status quo; now even limited praise of Stalin has become a symbol of retrenchment. This weather vane is closely watched by both establishment and dissident cultural elements. The recently announced publication of a revised version of Marshal Zhukov's memoirs is thus another significant negative sign. The book, which as yet is unavailable in the West, modifies a chapter in the original version that questioned Stalin's wartime leadership.

Stemming directly from the ideological campaign are several recent appointments of veteran ideologists to important and long-vacant posts in the party's central propaganda apparatus. Conservatives and cultural hard liners have been recently appointed to the chief editorship of the Central Committee's journal *Kommunist* and of the embattled, but hitherto still relatively liberal, literary journal *Novy Mir*.



Water truck disrupts Moscow art show on September 15

The most dramatic sign of bold conservative action occurred on September 15, when bulldozers and water cannon were used to disrupt an attempt by Moscow's unconventional artists to stage an open air exhibit. Although the artists received permission to hold a public show two weeks later—and did so—many of them have subsequently reported that they have been subjected to increased official harassment. Some have been charged with "parasitism," i.e., failure to hold gainful employment, and one was pressed to sign an affidavit renouncing any intention to organize or participate in similar future exhibits. Moreover, an article in the Moscow party organization's daily on October 17 indirectly praised the ideological work of the district in which the disruption of the initial show occurred. The message seemed to be that the original decision to prevent the exhibit was correct, even if the methods used were excessive, and that the subsequent permission to hold the show should not be regarded as precedent setting.

The only statement on this issue so far by a member of the leadership came on November 10

when President Podgorny said that "the slightest departure from our principles is inadmissible in any kind of art." Speaking on the 150th anniversary of Moscow's Maly theater, Podgorny tied his warning against any deviation from socialist realism to the ideological campaign by adding that art must be used to combat "apolitical, consumer psychology."

The conservatives' jealous defense of domestic controls and stonewalling on cultural issues are inevitably reflected in their opposition to eased emigration procedures. There are sporadic but continuing reports of harassment of Jewish activists and of Jews who have declared their intention to emigrate. Since the US Congress has not yet passed the trade bill, the Soviet regime probably does not regard these actions as a breach of the US-Soviet understanding. A number of Soviet Jews, however, have already made that charge in public statements.

Moreover, isolated reports of continued harassment of non-Jewish would-be emigrants by Soviet officials are intensifying fears among

non-Jewish dissidents in Moscow that the regime is determined to restrict any easing of emigration to Jews, despite the non-exclusive wording of the Kissinger-Jackson letters.

The Other Side of the Ledger

Along with these signs of intent to preserve the status quo are others suggesting something less than total inflexibility in the Kremlin.

One such sign came on September 2, when a monument for Khrushchev's grave—a bust of the former leader by maverick sculptor Ernst Neizvestny—was unveiled at Moscow's Novodevichy Cemetery. The sculptor, a Jew, began work on the monument at the request of the Khrushchev family soon after the leader's death in 1971. Permission to install it was withheld, however, until mid-April of this year; Neizvestny claimed that the decision was conveyed to him by a person close to Brezhnev.

The unveiling of the monument was probably seen by Moscow's unconventional artists as evidence of a partial rehabilitation of Khrushchev and of official acceptance of Neizvestny's own unconventional work. They may have been encouraged by this to try to stage the open air art show, hoping the move also signaled a shift in the direction of the more relaxed cultural policies of the Khrushchev era. Although the attempt itself was a fiasco, the dissidents were no doubt heartened by the confusion in the Moscow city bureaucracy following the disruption of the show, signs of high-level intervention, and the successful staging of the second exhibit. Moreover, in early October the party chief of the Moscow district in which the initial disruption occurred was ousted—evidently as a scapegoat—and sent into diplomatic exile as ambassador to Hanoi. On October 4, a deputy editor of *Pravda* privately apologized to a US embassy officer for the manhandling of US correspondents during the aborted art show.

In the midst of these events the daily paper of the Communist Youth League on September 17 published what could only have been viewed as an implicit defense of Khrushchev's rewriting



Sergei Khrushchev viewing the newly unveiled monument for the grave of his father

of Stalinist history. The reviewer of Ivan Stadnyuk's *War*, a novel glorifying Stalin's wartime leadership, rebuked the author for glossing over Stalin's errors and failing to take into account "the clear assessments of our historical science." This was the first positive endorsement of Khrushchev's rewriting of Stalinist history to appear in years. Whether the review was a stimulus or a response to the apparently pro-Stalin revision of the Zhukov memoirs is a moot point; it is the re-emergence of the symbolic debate between advocates and opponents of the status quo that is significant.

Another series of positive signs, contrasting with the continued harassment of individual Jewish would-be-emigrants, has been the selective but markedly more lenient posture toward the Jewish community in Moscow. For example, the public religious observances of the holiday of Simchas Torah in October proceeded without the customary harassment in front of the Moscow synagogue by the police.

Another case in point is the unusual course of the trial of Viktor Polsky, a prominent Jewish activist. Polsky was charged with having struck a

girl with his automobile. The victim is the daughter of a man identified in 1972 as a ranking official of the USSR Procuracy. Polsky contended that the girl had leaped in front of his car in a suicide attempt. Polsky, a physicist, lost his job soon after he applied for emigration and claimed he had been "hounded" because of his desire to emigrate. At the trial, however, a physician who treated the girl after the accident appeared "unexpectedly" to testify in Polsky's defense, an ambulance driver corroborated Polsky's account of the incident, and the defense attorney—a Jew—successfully undercut the testimony of prosecution witnesses, including that of the girl's father. Moreover, prominent Moscow dissidents, among them the wife of Andrey Sakharov, and several Western correspondents were admitted to the courtroom. Polsky was found guilty only of negligence, was sentenced to pay a nominal fine, and was released.

These examples of leniency suggest that at least some elements of Soviet officialdom have been instructed to try to avoid adverse Western publicity, especially while the trade legislation is still pending in the US Congress. This interpretation is reinforced by the failure of Moscow police



Unconventional art show on the outskirts of Moscow on September 29

to arrest three young Jews who on October 29 demonstrated in the streets for the right to emigrate to Israel. It was the first such demonstration since the announcement of the US-Soviet emigration understanding.

An Uncertain Prognosis

The conflicting signs in Soviet policy in the area of human rights suggest that the leadership is still debating the issue of greater flexibility, Podgorny's remarks on November 11 notwithstanding. Podgorny, generally identified with cultural conservatives, clearly does not have the last word on cultural policy.

The leadership's discussion almost certainly hinges on the price, i.e., the benefits accruing from detente, being right. Recent events also show how vulnerable the regime's domestic practices are to Western publicity, and both the leadership and the dissidents are well aware of this.

Kremlin advocates of detente may believe that some relaxation of domestic controls will deflect adverse publicity and help the Soviets in other areas of East-West negotiations. They may fear that if incidents like the art show are handled piecemeal, the energies of the leadership as a whole will be sapped, and latent divisions on other policy issues could rise to the surface.

The leadership will be concerned that evidence that it was not adhering to its bargain with the US on emigration would be viewed by influential segments of Western political opinion as casting doubt on Soviet good faith in other detente-related negotiations. The leaders are probably not of one mind in their assessment of what the West would regard as non-adherence, but they are almost certainly agreed that they must try to limit the domestic impact of the emigration accord as much as possible. In the short term, they will probably test US determination to insist on the terms of the agreement. The longer trend



An example of socialist realism, raised to the heroic scale, is this monument in the heart of Donetsk honoring the coal miners of the Don Basin. Similar massive statuary, featuring muscular workers and peasants, dots the Soviet landscape.



Religious services conducted in Moscow's central synagogue

could be toward some easing of internal conditions, providing the relaxation appears to the public as the regime's own decision and not—as in the case of the art show—an embarrassed response to internal and external pressure.

This will not be an easy task. So far, the generally fragmented nature of Soviet dissidence has been an asset to the regime. The dissidents, though often vocal, are numerically insignificant, and the Soviet masses are generally apathetic and unsympathetic. Although the dissidents are spread thin over the political spectrum, and frequently divided on both goals and methods, they are united—as were their historical predecessors—in their desire to gain the right to voice unorthodox views. They are united in viewing the foreign press as a pulpit without which their voices would now be ignored. And they all support the right to emigration—despite the ambiguous feelings arising from the traditional Russian attachment to the motherland. Some dissidents,

like the democratic group clustered around Andrey Sakharov, support emigration as a matter of principle; others, such as the authoritarian Russian nationalists, frequently favor it for anti-Semitic reasons.

The emigration issue is also likely to embolden Soviet dissidents to test the limits of the regime's flexibility on other matters. Sakharov has announced that the hunger strike he claims occurred in several Soviet labor camps on October 30 will become an annual event. Moscow's unconventional artists have announced plans to stage a second, indoor, public exhibit of their work in December. Their colleagues in Leningrad are pressing authorities there to permit a similar public show. All concerned probably view the coming months as a test of both Soviet and Western attitudes, and the dissidents may anticipate a period in which they have a new weapon—Western attention to the emigration agreement—to advance their cause.

25X1 25X1

Special Report

- 8 -

November 15, 1974

SECRET