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Trends in Communist Media

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S U P P L E M E N T

AGITPROP PERSONNEL SHIFT COINCIDED WITH ZARODOV ARTICLE

SUSLOV SUPERVISES ELECTION OF NEW ACADEMY OF SCIENCES LEADERSHIP

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AGITPROP PERSONNEL SHIFT COINCIDED WITH ZARODOV ARTICLE

Evidence of a personnel shift last summer in the CPSU Central Committee's top ideological organ, Agitprop, at the same time as Moscow's stand on international communist strategy appeared to be hardening, suggests that there may have been some connection between the two developments.

The most conspicuous benchmark for the ideological hardening was the appearance in PRAVDA on 6 August of an article by PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM Chief Editor Konstantin Zarodov, advocating a militant strategy by communist parties in the West--a position clearly at odds with Moscow's earlier proclaimed policy of encouraging broad alliances with moderate parties for limited "democratic" goals. At approximately the same time G.L. Smirnov, first deputy head of Agitprop (and, in effect, its acting chief) was apparently removed, judging by the cessation of references to him in the Soviet press from mid-summer. Moreover, the inference that some shakeup was occurring was given credence by the identification in PRAVDA on 27 November of a new deputy head of Agitprop--longtime Chelyabinsk oblast ideology secretary M.F. Nenashev.

In the absence of any explanation from the regime, the reasons for Smirnov's apparent removal can only be surmised. His activities over the past year, however, clearly earned him the enmity of powerful conservative figures in the regime, and it seems a good guess that he fell victim to some retaliation on their part. If so, this would suggest that conservative forces have gained increased influence in the regime--a hypothesis which would help to account for the apparent hardening of Soviet policy on ideological issues as well.

Smirnov was appointed a deputy head of Agitprop in late 1969 and promoted to first deputy head in mid-1974.* This promotion coincided with the beginning of a nationwide ideological campaign based on a June 1974 Central Committee decree on Moscow's Bauman Institute and an August 1974 decree on Belorussian ideological work. Smirnov appeared to play a key role in this campaign. He headed the spring 1974 investigation of ideological work in Belorussia that led to the decree rebuking Belorussia for

* Smirnov's promotion to first deputy meant he was acting chief of Agitprop. The post of chief has been vacant since V.I. Stepakov was fired in mid-1970. First deputy head A.N. Yakovlev had been acting chief until his removal in early 1973.

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ideological shortcomings. He also attended the 1 July 1974 Moscow City Party Committee plenum which discussed shortcomings pointed out by the Bauman decree. Within days he was promoted to first deputy head.* His prominence in helping to embarrass the Belorussian and Moscow city party organizations may have earned him the enmity of such leading hardliners as Belorussian First Secretary P.M. Masherov, Moscow city First Secretary V.V. Grishin, and Moscow city ideology Secretary V.N. Yagodkin. During the 1974 campaign Smirnov's immediate boss, ideology Secretary Demichev, was demoted to culture minister and dropped from the Central Committee Secretariat in late 1974, presumably because of laxness on ideological issues.

Smirnov appeared in public regularly during the first half of 1975, but his name disappeared from the press after July. His last identification as first deputy head of Agitprop was in the 28 June 1975 IZVESTIYA, and the last known appearance of his name in the press was as author of an article on ideological work in the July QUESTIONS OF CPSU HISTORY.

* See the Supplementary Article, "New Moscow Ideological Drive Appears to Undercut Detente Foes," in the 13 November 1974 TRENDS.

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SUSLOV SUPERVISES ELECTION OF NEW ACADEMY OF SCIENCES LEADERSHIP

In a blatant show of party authority over the quasi-autonomous USSR Academy of Sciences, CPSU Politburo member Mikhail Suslov appeared before a meeting of the Academy on 25 November and announced the party's choice of a new president. According to the 26 November PRAVDA, Suslov declared that the Central Committee had carefully studied the candidates for president and, "relying on the advice of scholars . . . we came to the common opinion" that Central Committee member A.P. Aleksandrov would be a "worthy" candidate. This was the second open party intervention in the affairs of the Academy this year, the first being Suslov's appearance before the Academy on 19 May 1975 to announce the resignation of ailing President M.V. Keldysh and the postponement of the then scheduled elections until later in the year.

Despite the party's intervention, the personnel changes resulting from the election do not appear to have changed noticeably the political complexion of the presidium. Nor was there any sign of a move to expel dissident scientist Andrey Sakharov from the academy, or to retaliate against academy leaders who had failed to sign the recent letter condemning Sakharov. Elderly physicist Aleksandrov, director of the Kurchatov Atomic Energy Institute, was probably acceptable to other scientists as well as to the party leadership. He is one of only four academicians who are both full Central Committee members and physical scientists: the others are 62-year-old Deputy Premier V.A. Kirillin, 57-year-old Ukrainian Academy of Sciences President B. Ye. Paton, and Aleksandrov's predecessor, 64-year-old M.V. Keldysh, who retired because of ill health last May.

Aleksandrov's orthodoxy was demonstrated when he signed the recent letter condemning fellow academician Sakharov, although he had not signed the 1973 letter attacking Sakharov. Aleksandrov, at 72, is one of the oldest academy leaders--only six of the other 42 presidium members are older--and his selection avoids a choice among younger candidates who might stay in office for several four-year terms. In contrast, former President Keldysh was only 50 years old when elected president in 1961, and he served 14 years.

The new academy presidium elected two days later included two new vice presidents--Geology Minister and Central Committee candidate member A.V. Sidorenko, and Siberian computer specialist G.I. Marchuk--and nine other new members. There was no discrimination shown against those who failed to sign the recent letter against Sakharov.

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Among them were Yu. A. Ovchinnikov, who was reelected vice president, L.M. Brekhovskikh and M.A. Styrikovich, who were reelected presidium members and academic secretaries of their departments, and the stubbornly unorthodox, 81-year-old P.L. Kapitsa, who was reelected a member of the presidium.

There was no apparent attempt to pack the academy's leadership with conservatives or party representatives. Liberal economist A.M. Rumyantsev was dropped, but this was balanced by removal of the 74-year-old neo-Stalinist philosopher F.V. Konstantinov as presidium member and academic secretary of the department of philosophy and law. Moderate philosopher A.G. Yegorov, director of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, replaced Konstantinov as supervisor of the field of philosophy and law, while moderate economist N.N. Inozemtsev, director of the Institute of World Economics and International Relations, replaced Rumyantsev.

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