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WHY IT COULDN'T BE THE

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KGB.....

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Perhaps the most plausible of all explanations so far offered of the origins of the Khrushchev memoirs is that which traces it to the KGB. It has everything. There is the factual evidence of the meeting between staff members of "Time-Life" concerned with the production of the memoirs and Victor Louis, the KGB's "fixer" who has repeatedly planted Soviet material on the West. There is the KGB's sinister image, which makes it easy to blame anything underhand or mysterious that emanates from the Soviet Union on that baleful organisation. There is, finally, the motive, indeed a whole series of motives which, if not individually convincing, are impressive by sheer weight of numbers. Also, the people who do accept the view that much of the material is not genuine Khrushchev have to account for it in some way, and it is much easier to blame it on the KGB than on the CIA.

The role played by Victor Louis leaves no doubt that the KGB did have a part in the operation but this does not mean that it was responsible for the whole book. The memoirs contain just too much material which goes against everything that the KGB stands for. The KGB is the inner fastness of the Soviet police state, a huge organisation with tentacles stretching into every area of Soviet life. Like every bureaucracy, it has a vested interest in its own self-preservation, which, in this case, means also the preservation of Stalinist aspects of the Soviet system. It attracts to its ranks some of the most conservative and authoritarian elements of Soviet society, who find within it the scope for indulging in Stalinist vices that is being gradually restricted in other areas of activity. Therefore the greatest threat they face, as individuals and as an institution, is anti-Stalinism.

Yet whatever else may be said of the Khrushchev memoirs, no one could deny that the thrust of the book is wholly and sharply anti-Stalinist. In the words of Edward Crankshaw's introduction, "The chief concern of the person, or persons, responsible for releasing these reminiscences to the West—it certainly appears to be one of Khrushchev's chief concerns—was to counter the current attempts to rehabilitate Stalin."

The anti-Stalinist emphasis of the memoirs is so obvious that it has been stressed by virtually every reviewer. Khrushchev's occasional asides that pay tribute to Stalin do nothing to weaken this impression. They merely serve to show up his own inconsistency, and may be presumed to have

been inserted by the forger in an attempt to discredit Khrushchev and, with him, the still surviving members of the Soviet leadership, for the reasons discussed in the previous article.

But if anti-Stalinism was the "chief concern" of the people responsible for the memoirs, it could not have been the KGB. Anti-Stalinism is certainly the chief concern of the "infernal opposition" in Russia, but no one has seriously suggested that this inchoate and unorganised group of loosely connected individuals is responsible for the memoirs (and if anybody were to suggest it, this would again point to a forgery rather than to Khrushchev).

Anti-Stalinism is, on the other hand, the chief concern of the Western propaganda organisations—and that means primarily American organisations—which seek to influence the formation of public opinion in the Soviet Union from outside. Vast amounts of money are spent on their activities, for reasons with which few people in the West would quarrel. Most of us recognise Stalinism as an evil, and we have good reason to fear that its revival in Russia in any form, or the arrival of neo-Stalinism, would not only do much damage to the people of the Soviet Union but might well plunge the world back to the darkest days of the Cold War—or worse.

In that sense, therefore, the Western propaganda organisations which use their resources to reinforce the anti-Stalinist trends that already exist naturally in the Soviet Union—and that are often suppressed by the KGB—are working, ultimately, for the benefit both of the Soviet people and of the West, in the common interest of both.

This is where the CIA comes in. In so far as anti-Stalinism in the Soviet Union is ultimately a factor for the maintenance of peace, the CIA would see it as one of its functions to foster this by every means available to it—and, sometimes, to create the means, when these are not available.

Apart from the book's broadly anti-Stalinist directions, perhaps the most consistent and emphatic political theme raised in the memoirs is that of the need for an open society in Russia. The variations on this theme go so far beyond anything that Khrushchev could conceivably advocate without being accused at the same time of wishing to overthrow the Soviet system as to suggest that much of this material must have been inserted by the forgers.

It is even more certain that the KGB would not have sent out for

publication in the West, and for retransmission back to Russia, this powerful demand that the Soviet Union should throw open its borders. One of the KGB's chief functions is to keep the borders closed, and the Soviet people hemmed in, on the grounds that any extensive lifting of travel restrictions might promote the free circulation of political ideas that would rapidly lead to the overthrow of the existing system.

The theme of open borders is developed in the book at every conceivable opportunity, starting from a talk with Tito, who "intrigued" Khrushchev with the story that Yugoslavs were "free" to go abroad as and when they wished, and ending with Khrushchev's own bold proposition, when talking about Eastern Europe, "You cannot herd people into paradise with threats and then post soldiers at the gates."

Khrushchev, the man who authorised the building of the Berlin wall and who boasted about it, concedes a little too readily the claim that this shows a "defect" of the system—in the words a Western propagandist might use—although he also says that it is a necessary and a temporary defect. "Unfortunately," he further admits, "the German Democratic Republic—and not only the GDR—has yet to reach a level of moral and material development where competition with the West is possible."

Not only the GDR? To say, in effect, that the Soviet Union is not only materially but also "morally" behind the West, as he is made to say, and that this is why the borders are kept closed, is something that neither Khrushchev nor the KGB could be imagined as saying. The remark is, indeed, vaguely reminiscent of a point he once made in a public speech, but here, as elsewhere, the forger's licence appears to have greatly extended Khrushchev's original meaning.

He builds up to a crescendo, at the end of the book, with the ringing declaration, "It's incredible to me that after 50 years of Soviet power, paradise should be kept under lock and key."

"Let them live where they want," he announces, when talking about the wish of Vladimir Ashkenazy, the pianist, to live abroad. But he goes further, much further: "I think the time has come to give every Soviet citizen that choice."