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# Did KGB Help to Sell K's Memoirs?

Start with the assumption that those recollections of former Russian Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev are being published here on authority, or with the acquiescence, of the KGB or some other Soviet agency.

That is where the expert Kremlinologists start. It is, in fact, the principal point of agreement with respect to the Khrushchev reminiscences which are now being published in four installments in Life magazine.

In the intelligence community it is generally accepted that such materials purportedly from Khrushchev, who is now sequestered as a nonperson by the present Kremlin leaders, could not have found their way into a mass publication magazine here without some official connivance.

TRUE, BOOKS by top Russian authors, some highly critical of Soviet leadership, have been published outside Russia without sanction and much to the consternation of the KGB. Generally, however, those books have gone through the self-publishing process. That is, the author has circulated a copy, which has been copied and the copies copied, until the book is in wide underground circulation and a clandestine copy is rather easily obtainable.

That is not true of the Khrushchev recollections, which are to appear later in book form. Khrushchev has officially denied passing any memoirs along. Yet Life apparently negotiated for materials on which the book is based in the luxurious Hotel d'Angleterre in Copenhagen and was satisfied as to their authenticity.

PRESUMING a semi-sanction by some segment of the Soviet establishment, analysts here are, of course,

very interested in the Life installments. Why were the reminiscences made available for publication now? What message was intended by whatever authority made publication possible?

Involvement of the agency, KGB (and perhaps KGB's often publicized "disinformation" bureau), is suggested by the role of the shadowy Russian journalist, Victor Louis, in the arrangement. He is a correspondent in Moscow for the London Evening News, and he is believed to have worked for the KGB on other occasions.

Louis was reported to be in Copenhagen at the time of the negotiations for the Khrushchev materials. There is evidence to indicate that he was, in fact, the salesman in the deal, but the circumstances surrounding the transaction are obscure.

There is no lack of theories as to why some Kremlin leaders wanted to publicize views attributed to Khrushchev. It is suggested, for example, that some Soviet leaders want to turn back the "rehabilitation" of Josef Stalin, which has been slowly progressing under the present regime, and were glad to circulate certain grisly Khrushchev recollections about the World War II dictator.

ACCORDING TO another hypothesis, some Soviet leaders wanted to publicize the Khrushchev recollections—and bring them to a halt—before Khrushchev could record, in detail, his version of the events which led to his own fall from power in October 1964. A third theory is that Khrushchev had been authorized to start preparing a memoir by authorities who later changed their minds and simply wanted to stop the project.

There has even been speculation that KGB assembled and sold the materials simply to augment that agency's supply of dollars, hard currency necessary for operations elsewhere and very difficult to obtain within The Soviet bureaucracy. In the absence of hard information, however, none of these theories has been generally accepted as an expert consensus.

In his official denial, which was apparently issued while Khrushchev was hospitalized and under observation for a heart ailment, the former premier declared the accounts of the publication of his memoirs were a "fabrication." The statement did not quite say that he had never prepared any such material.

Analysts would also like to have much more information on the channels by which the Khrushchev reminiscences got out of Russia. Who made the initial contract? What was the persuasive evidence as to the authenticity of the material?

That sort of data is apparently known only to a few officials in the Time-Life organization, where the whole venture was secret and referred to as "the Jones Project."