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USSR - Gerd von Doemming).

According to latest reports, for the first time a leading member of the Soviet scientific community, Z.A. Medvedev, was arrested and is now being held in a mental hospital in Kaluga. As yet unconfirmed, the cause of his detention is reported to be due to his recent protest against postal censorship.

Zhores Aleksandrovich Medvedev (born ca. 1925) gained prominence early in the 1960s when, as head of the laboratory of molecular radio biology at the Institute of Medical Radiobiology of the USSR Academy of Sciences in Obninsk, co-authored an article with V. Kirpichnikov attacking not only a theory of genetics, but a dictatorial political system as well. (1) The direct attack was aimed at Trofim Lysenko and his school of thought on genetics, the only school of thought permitted since a decision taken in 1948, which held that heredity can be changed by environmental factors. The indirect attack, however, was against the inflexibility of a political system that allows only its own interpretation of every aspect of life. The authors demanded that the "...attempts to limit the development of Soviet biology to the narrow frame of only one approach must be decisively discarded." Having noted the faults of imposing a single approach on biology and the Lysenko approach in particular, the authors ask the pertinent question: "How did it happen that in our country the development of contemporary genetics was held back for a long time? Why did we give the capitalist countries a great and productive segment of the scientific front for such a prolonged period of time under the pretext that classical genetics was -- a bourgeois science?" The answer to this,

(1) "Perspektivy Sovetskoi Genetik," Neva, No. 3, 1963, pp. 165-175.

the authors, is "very simple." "All this could take place only under the conditions of perversion which took place during the period of the cult of personality. [Stalin was mentioned by name in the beginning of the article as Lysenko's patron-gvdl]. The attempt of several learned men to isolate Soviet biology from world science -- this was the harmful vestige of the cult of personality, an alientation from reality, a fear to openly and honestly recognize and correct past mistakes."

Although the authors were themselves attacked by the President of the Soviet Agricultural Academy, Medvedev held his post until approximately January, 1968, during which time he also weathered the Western publication of the uncorrected version of his book "The Rise and Fall of T. Lysenko" by a Russian emigre organization. (2)

Aside from his reported protest against postal censorship, his only other known written protest has appeared very recently in the 11th issue of the underground journal The Chronicle of Current Events, dated 31 December 1969. The direct object of his attack, the expulsion of A.I. Solzhenitsyn from the Writers' Union, was far removed from the field of genetics and this time it was not the tyranny of the past that was criticized but the tyranny of the present. In this "Open Letter," dated 21 November,,he says:

'Solzhenitsyn was expelled because of his talent as a writer, his humanism, his creative depiction and analysis of reality had overstepped the boundaries of the Ryazan region and were beyond the control of the department of the Ryazan regional party committee.'

To the charge that Solzhenitsyn's works were ideologically harmful, he wrote:

'The publication of A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich was approved by the Praesidium of the Central Committee of

(2) The corrected version has since been published in English translation by Columbia University.

the Soviet Communist Party. This story was acclaimed by the whole of the Soviet press and nominated for a Lenin prize. Why then are you now hurling abuse even at this story? It means that your "ideological standpoint" has changed, and not that of Solzhenitsyn. It means that the instructions to Glavlit [the censorship] have changed, and not the writer's creative style. The expulsion of Solzhenitsyn from the Soviet Writers' Union grieves me as an indication of deeply regrettable changes in the way of running the union and in the standpoint of those circles which are accustomed to consider the Union as merely a branch of the Ideological Commission. The expulsion of Solzhenitsyn is a unique event. It came about as the logical result of the new line of cautious repressions directed against the intelligentsia with the aim of instilling into them the inertia of fear, the same fear that Stalin and his obedient minions created, who did not shrink from the destruction of millions of innocent citizens.' (3)

His latest protest document appears in the last issue of the Chronicle appearing in the West. In a new book entitled International Collaboration of Scholars and National Borders he advances the idea of integration of the cultural forces of the world, an idea which is similar to the convergence idea of Sakharov. In this work he notes the loss which a country suffers when it is isolated from foreign learned circles. He states:

Not the imposition of fear and repression, but honest international collaboration of countries and people, within the framework of international legal norms, - this is the realistic way out of that situation which limits the freedom of creativity in which our country now finds itself.

Although this attack is certainly scathing, Medvedev's arrest on Friday is six months removed from the appearance of this letter. Was it in reaction to other protests that he has made about which we know nothing? Or was this arrest an attempt to silence the protest movement in the Soviet scientific

(3) Quoted from the English translation of this issue by P. Reddaway.

community in general, in which Medvedev's twin brother, Roy A. Medvedev, is an active participant? We may never learn the exact reason, but if the latter it is, the attempt has failed. Telegrams protesting Medvedev's arrest have already been reported to have been sent by the Academicians Pytor Kapitsa, Andrei Sakharov and Vladimir Engelhardt as well as the well-known former editor of the progressive journal Novy Mir, Alexander Tvardovsky. (4)

Summary: This paper gives a brief account of Zhores A. Medvedev, the first leading member of the Soviet scientific community to be arrested, and of his protest activity prior to his arrest on 29 May 1970.

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