

RADIO FREE EUROPE

Research

COMMUNIST AREA

(column below)

Brezhnev's Ranking

Kiev Portraits

1. Brezhnev
2. Kosygin
3. Podgorny

- USSR: Party
- 7 November 1967

MORE SLIPPAGE FOR SHELEPIN?

In dealing with closed societies, photographic interpretation can occasionally be almost as significant in political affairs as in aerial reconnaissance. Pravda Ukrainy (3rd October 1967) published a most unusual photograph of portraits of the eleven full members of the Politburo, arranged in what appears to be the current order of precedence, around a central portrait of Lenin.

The portraits formed the background to a view of the Politburo leaders on the reviewing stand at the parade after the "Dnieper" manoeuvres. The parade was held in Kiev, and that may be the reason why neither Pravda nor Izvestia published this particular photograph. But another reason might be that the order of the portraits gives a different ranking to certain Politburo members as compared with that given by Brezhnev in his speech to the 23rd Congress.¹

To the right of Lenin the leaders portrayed are Brezhnev, Podgorny, Kirilenko, Shelest, Polyansky and Pelshe, in that order. To the left of Lenin they are Kosygin, Suslov, Voronov, Mazurov and Shelepin.

The order of precedence shown by this arrangement (left-hand column below) can be compared with the order as given by Brezhnev at the 23rd Congress (right-hand

1) Moscow Radio, 8 April 1966.

column below):

COMMUNIST AREA

Kiev Portraits

Brezhnev's listing

1. Brezhnev
2. Kosygin
3. Podgorny
4. Suslov
5. Kirilenko
6. Voronov
7. Shelest
8. Mazurov
9. Polyansky
10. Shelepin
11. Pelshe

1. Brezhnev
2. Kosygin
3. Podgorny
4. Suslov
5. Voronov
6. Kirilenko
7. Shelepin
8. Mazurov
9. Polyansky
10. Shelest
11. Pelshe

Unless one is to assume that the Kiev order was purely random, which seems most improbable, the juxtaposition shows only one major change -- the fall of Shelepin from 7th to 10th place, accompanied by the rise of Shelest from 10th to 7th. It might be argued that Shelest's apparent promotion is solely due to the fact that this line-up was hung in Kiev, his seat of power, but that would not explain why Shelepin seems to have fallen below both Mazurov and Polyansky.

The indications are, therefore, that Shelepin has now moved down in the Politburo, and the likelihood is that this apparent demotion took place at the September Plenum of the C.C., CPSU, which deprived him of his Secretaryship after he had been appointed to the much less influential post of Chairman of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions in July this year.

r.r.g.