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KHRUSHCHEV OF THE UKRAINE (II)

Semichastny and Union Republic Cadres

The identification of V.E. Semichastny as head of the CC Department of Party Organs,¹ provides fresh evidence that the process of placement and promotion of former members of Khrushchev's Ukrainian machine has not yet run its course.² In fact, since the transfer of the former first secretary of the Komsomol to the post vacated in December by his predecessor, A.N. Shelepin, now Chairman of the Committee for State Security,³ followed shortly after the start of the post XXI Congress reshuffle of Party cadres, the rejuvenation of leadership demanded by Khrushchev and Kirichenko in their Congress speeches may now send a younger generation of Ukrainian apparatchiki even more rapidly to the forefront in Party and State positions throughout the country.

As a result of the appointment of Semichastny, two key cadre jobs in the Central Committee secretariat are occupied by functionaries who served their apprenticeship under Khrushchev in the Ukraine. Since the comparable post for the RSFSR has been held by V.M. Churayev since 1956,⁴ the former Komsomol chief has, almost certainly, been given the responsibilities for the Union Republics. Churayev, it is interesting to note, was a deputy chief of the CC Department for Party, Komsomol and Trade Union Organs in 1952 when A. Aristov was, for a short period - between the XIX Party Congress and the death of Stalin - the head of this department. At this time there is circumstantial evidence,⁵ at least, to support the hypothesis that Khrushchev, after his removal from responsibility for agriculture because of the agrogorod campaign, had been charged with the direction of cadres, a transfer which placed him in the favorable position he was subsequently able to exploit so thoroughly. Again executing cadre duties for the RSFSR⁶ as a CC secretary (and Presidium member) Aristov - without any known Ukrainian or Moscow background - remains an important exception among the cogs in Khrushchev's machine. The other secretary (and Presidium member) to whom presumably supervisory powers over cadre policy have been entrusted is A.I. Kirichenko,⁷ the best known of Khrushchev's proteges. Although his appearance as representative of the Party leadership at the recently concluded convocation of chiefs of State Security is not definitive proof that the apparatchik whose service in war and peace under Khrushchev extends over nearly two decades has also acquired a decisive voice in the control of the secret police, it should be a reminder that Khrushchev does not consider the obsequious pledge of allegiance by the "Soviet Chekists"⁸ to the head of the Party and State as empty verbiage. In 1959 Kirichenko and Semichastny for the Union Republics, Aristov and Churayev for the RSFSR have been designated to implement a basic Party policy directive

from which Khrushchev has not deviated in word or deed for 40 years:

"The Party is responsible for everything. Whether it is Army work, Chekist work, economic work, Soviet work - all is subordinate to the Party leadership and if anyone thinks otherwise that means he is no Bolshevik."9

In their search for appartchiki for whom this Bolshevik concept is an unchallenged dogma, the Communist Party of the Ukraine will continue to be

"one of the most important sources for the movement of cadres into the reserve of the Central Committee of the CPSU".

These words, cited from an unpublished 1955 dissertation in the Academy of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the CPSU10 have been fully substantiated by the course of events during Khrushchev's rise to power; they are not likely to be reversed in the next period of his rule, no matter how completely its autocratic character eliminates the final vestiges of oligarchical control noted in the study appended below. More than for those of any other single group in the Party leadership - central committee and regional secretaries - the powers and the prestige of the "Ukrainians" are derived from the person and policies of Nikita Sergeevich. From total dependence inevitably follows total subservience; the dialectics of Party power have already reduced the apparatchiki who "saved" Khrushchev in 1957 to sycophants in 1959 whose own sentiments have found their pathos-drenched expression in the words of a Ukrainian poet:

"Today I would like to mention the name of one man, the Communist-Leninist, who during that difficult and fearful time always marched with the people. We saw him on destroyed bridges on the Don, in the trenches of Stalingrad, and on the charred wasteland of Poltava.

"In a Dnepr valley village still burning after its recapture from the Germans, I saw him, a grey haired and wise man, gathering together old men, women, and girls to plan how to sow the first hectares and where to obtain wheat for sowing. When our army liberated Kiev, he, together with Vatutin, went to the Shevchenko Monument, took off his grey cap, bowed with a troubled brow, and said: 'Father Taras, what have they done to our Ukraine?'

"I saw the hands of this good and wise man pin flags on a map of the Ukraine to mark our bloody battles and the victories of our armies. Today these hands are pinning the gold Order of Lenin on the breast of the Ukraine. Honor and glory and a deep bow to you, dear Nikita Sergeyevich, for your warm and cordial love for the Ukraine- for our people!"11

FOOTNOTES

¹Pravda, 26 May 1959; See Background Information, 27 March, 1959, "Names in the News (VIII) - Accent on Youth" for biographical data on Semichastny. Pravda, 22 April had listed Semichastny only as "head of a CC Department."

²For previous papers on this key organizational feature of Khrushchev's rise to power see the following series:

Khrushchev and the Presidium
Khrushchev and Company

Khrushchev of the Ukraine
Khrushchev and the Secretariat

³See Background Information, "Analysis of Shelepin's Appointment", 26 December 1958.

⁴See below, p. 1 and footnote p. 4.

⁵See Background Information, Khrushchev and Company, 31 May 1958.

⁶Since the transfer of N. Belyaev to Kazakhstan, Aristov has been deputy Chairman - under Khrushchev - of the CC Buro for the RSFSR. (Sovetskaya Rossiya, 28 December 1958).

⁷Note for example, his speech at the XXI Party Congress and his presence - together with Aristov and Churayev at the Moscow oblast penary session which removed I. Kapitonov and N.F. Ignatov from the Party Buro. See Background Information, "Names in the News, V", 7 March 1959

VI, 14 March 1959

⁸Pravda, 18 May 1959.

⁹N.S. Khrushchev, speech to XV Party Congress (CP Ukraine), Kolhospnyk Ukrainy, 20 May 1944; quoted from J.A. Armstrong, The Soviet Bureaucratic Elite, (New York), F. Praeger, 1959, p. 145.

¹⁰Quoted by J.A. Armstrong, op. cit., p. 148, footnote p. 151; see below, pp. 1,4.

¹¹Speech by Poet Andriy Malysenko at a joint session of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet Presidium, Communist Party Central Committee and Council of Ministers on May 11, 1959 in Kiev. (Kiev Ukrainian Regional Service, May 12, 1959.)

The Soviet Bureaucratic Elite
A Case Study of the Ukrainian Apparatus
 by John A. Armstrong
 Frederick A. Praeger, New York
 pp. 146-151

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...A major difficulty in estimating the role of the personal groupings in the Soviet system arises from the fact that they, like the institutional structures, tend to form pyramids with apexes beyond the Ukraine. The apex of each pyramid has been a major leader such as Andrei Zhdanov, Lavrenti Beria, and Georgi Malenkov; the pattern of associations leading to this patron lies in large part outside the scope of this study. Consequently, great caution has been exercised in speculating on the relation of the detectable cross-institutional groupings to personal power groups.

Because of his long career at the head of the Ukrainian apparatus, the followers of Nikita Khrushchev form a much more clearly discernible group. To a very important degree this apparatus as a whole has formed the base of Khrushchev's rapidly increasing power. Within the apparatus, however, it is possible to detect differences among segments and among individuals in degree of adherence to Khrushchev. Some suggestions along this line have been made earlier, especially in regard to the police machine and the Donbas managers. Within the Party-state apparatus itself, it seems clear that Khrushchev's closest associates are those who rose to positions of major importance while he was first secretary in the Ukraine. This applies especially to those who attained important posts after the war. Since the time when Khrushchev became First Secretary of the CPSU in April, 1953, and especially since the resignation of Malenkov as Premier in January 1955, an increasing number of officials who rose to importance in the Ukrainian apparatus under Khrushchev have been transferred to major posts in other parts of the Soviet Union. The most prominent (all elected candidates or full members of the Central Committee of the CPSU at the Twentieth Congress) are the following:

- V.M. Churaev, director of the Party Organs Section of the newly-formed Bureau of the CPSU for the Russian Republic - a key post for controlling the vast apparatus of this Russian Republic, now for the first time being treated as a unit of Party organization. Churaev had been a major obkom secretary and later he was deputy director of the major staff agency in the Ukrainian Party. +
- A.I. Kirichenko, Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU.
- L.R. Korniets, Minister of Grain Products of the USSR, formerly a major figure in the Ukrainian Council of Ministers.
- R.A. Rudenko, Procurator of the USSR, formerly in the corresponding post in the Ukraine.
- A.P. Rudakov, apparently in a major industrial direction post, formerly director of the Heavy Manufacturing Section of the Central Committee of the KPU.

+See last footnote, page 4.

- A.A. Epishev, Ambassador to Rumania, formerly first Secretary of Odessa Obkom.
- A.P. Kirilenko, first secretary of Sverdlovsk obkom, a major Siberian industrial area, formerly first secretary of Dnepropetrovsk obkom.
- M.M. Stakhurskii, first secretary of Kharbarovsk Krai (Far East), formerly first secretary of Poltava obkom.
- V.S. Markov, first secretary of Orel obkom (European RSFSR), formerly first secretary of several Ukrainian obkoms.

A number of Khrushchev's former associates in the Ukraine, though transferred somewhat earlier, were elected to the Central Committee of the CPSU for the first time in 1956:

- V.P. Mzhavanadze, first secretary of the Georgian SSR, formerly a major Soviet Army political officer in Kiev.
- V.V. Matskevich, Minister of Agriculture of the USSR, formerly in the corresponding Ukrainian post.
- A.I. Struev, first secretary of Molotov obkom, a major Ural industrial center, formerly first secretary of Stalino obkom. Now deputy Chairman of the RSFSR Council of Minister
- V.E. Semichastny, Secretary of the Komsomol of the USSR, formerly in the corresponding post in the Ukraine.
- G.V. Eniutin, first secretary of Kamensk obkom (European RSFSR), formerly first secretary of Zaporozh'e obkom. Now chairman of the USSR Commission for Soviet Control

Khrushchev's use of the Ukrainian apparatus as a basis for extending his domination over wider spheres of the Soviet bureaucracy is clearly suggested by the highly unusual number of major transfers since 1954. This development is implicitly recognized by a Soviet analysis, which says that the KPU has become "one of the most important sources for the movement of cadres into the reserve of the Central Com. of the CPSU", citing as examples some of the officials listed above.³ Taken together with the fact that nine members and six candidates of the Central Committee of the CPSU elected in 1956 were drawn from officials serving at the time in the Ukraine (as compared to four and five respectively in 1952), the rapid increase in importance of officials drawn from the Ukrainian apparatus is apparent.⁴

It would be incorrect to assume that the significance of the increase of importance of the Ukrainian apparatus is limited to the enhancement of Khrushchev's personal power, important as Ukrainian officials doubtless were in Khrushchev's victory in 1957. As was pointed out earlier in this study, during Stalin's lifetime the Ukrainian apparatus, together with apparatuses in some other republics, was distinguished from the CPSU Central organization by the regularity of its operations. At times this regularity appeared through direct stress on adherence to rules in the routine work of the Party. More important was the regular convocation of Party assemblies called for in the Party regulations but ignored

In the CPSU during most of Stalin's rule subsequent to the Great Purge, Party Congresses were somewhat more frequent in the Ukraine. Much more important was the comparative frequency of Ukrainian Central Committee sessions. The Central Committee of the KPU met about four times a year - approximately as often as required by the Party rules. There was, of course, no dissent on policy matters, but a large proportion of the membership was present and spoke on the topics considered.

All of these features indicate that "collective leadership" had some meaning in the Ukraine even before Stalin's death; the principle itself was occasionally emphasized. There is no reason to attribute this circumstance to any anti-dictatorial tendencies of Khrushchev and his successors as first secretaries, or even to the assertive qualities of other important officials. Quite as likely Stalin deliberately encouraged some measure of collective rule in the Ukraine in order to prevent his extremely important region from falling under the domination of a single proconsul, who might have used it as the base for opposition to the director. The importance of the Ukrainian obkom secretaries in comparison to the Republic Party leadership also contributed to dissemination of power.

Whatever the reasons for the peculiarities of Ukrainian apparatus operation before 1953 as compared to other segments of the Soviet apparatus, they did tend toward the oligarchic, as contrasted to the autocratic, system of rule. In the years since Stalin's death a similar development has taken place in the USSR as a whole, but for quite different reasons. As early as September, 1954, an important Party publication, apparently strongly under Khrushchev's influence, sharply criticized irregularity of Party meetings during the war period.⁵ At the Twentieth Congress, when Khrushchev had become still more powerful, the failure to hold regular Party meetings formed a major theme in the denunciation of the "cult of personality." The special interest of the territorial apparatus in stressing this theme became obvious when the Party journal Kommunist pointed out that local Party organizations, unlike the central agencies, had held regular meetings in which "collective leadership" was exercised even under Stalin's dictatorship.⁶ By emphasizing its role as a refuge for Leninist purity in a period of general degeneration of Party practice, the territorial apparatus was, in effect, asserting its claim to be the guide in present party operations.

The simultaneous stress on regularity of Party operations and the rise in influence of officials who had made their careers in the Ukrainian apparatus does not appear to be entirely coincidental. Probably the most important reasons why the present oligarchy has preferred Khrushchev as leader are his quality as a representative Party boss, his relatively advanced age, (which may lessen his desire for absolute authority), and, of course, his ability as a "politician" in the popular sense of the word. It is also conceivable that the "collective leadership" is familiar with Khrushchev's record of regular operation of the Ukrainian Party and is consequently reassured that he will not hinder the development of oligarchic forms of rule.

It is more probable that the attitudes and experience of the Ukrainian elite members, developed over a long period of years, enable them to fit more smoothly into the present oligarchic system than can many prominent officials from other segments of the apparatus in the USSR. Officials with experience in the Ukraine can also use it as a working model for operating as an oligarchy on all-Union scale. To the extent that these factors are present, the increase in importance of the Ukrainian apparatus elite means a strengthening of oligarchic control of the USSR.

³I.T. Pinegin, "Rabota KP Ukrainy po osushchestvleniiu reshenii partii o podboire, rasstanovke i vospitanii rukovodiashchikh partiinykh i sovetskikh kadrov v poslevoennyi period (1946-55 gg.)" (The Work of the Communist Party of the Ukraine in Carrying out the Decisions of the Party concerning the Post-War Period 1946-55), an unpublished dissertation for obtaining the academic degree of candidate of historical sciences in the Academy of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Moscow, 1955, p. 114. It is interesting to note that this dissertation was completed in an institute of the Central Committee of the CPSU, rather than in a Ukrainian school.

⁴Other officials who rose to prominence in the Ukraine include I.A. Serov, head of the Soviet police; L.I. Brezhnev, now Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, who had however attained a major all-Union position before Stalin's death; L.R. Melnikov, who has remained in a secondary post since his demotion in 1953; and the coal mining specialists, A.F. Zasiadko and A.N. Zademidko.

⁵I. Slepov, Mestnye partiinye organy: Lektsii pročitannye v Vyshei Partiinoi Shkole pri TsK KPSS, Kafedra Partiinogo Stroitel'stva (Local Party Organs: Lectures delivered in the higher Party School of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Department of Party Structure) (Moscow: Vyshaia Partiinaia Shkola pri TsK KPSS, 1954), p. 19.

⁶"Za tvorcheskuiu razrabotku istorii KPSS" (For Creative Reworking of the History of the CPSU), Kommunist, No. 10, July, 1956, p. 23.

⁺CHURAEV, Viktor Mikhailovich. In 1948 first secretary, Kharkov Oblast Party Committee; elected member, CC, Ukraine CP, at 16th Congress, Jan. 1949; elected deputy, USSR Supreme Soviet, March 1950 and March 1954; in 1952 deputy head, Party, Trade Union and Komsomol Organs Department, CC, CPSU; since 1956 head, Party Organs for RSFSR Department, CC, CPSU; voting delegate and elected Secretariat member, 20th Congress of CPSU, Feb. 1956; elected candidate member, CC, CPSU at 20th Congress; Feb. 1956 became member of newly created Bureau for RSFSR, CC, CPSU.