

Munich, 9 March 1963 (Non-Target Communist Area Analysis Department, USSR--cz)

The USSR Minister of Agriculture, K. G. Pysin, has been released from his post "in connection with his transfer to other work", Radio Moscow announced (8 March 1963). There is little doubt that the continued stagnation in Soviet agriculture and the ever widening gap between performance and the goals of the Seven Year Plan prompted the action, although the Ministry is no longer responsible for the administration of agriculture but concentrates on research, education, and the extension of technology and science into agriculture. The power now lies with the bureau of the CC, CPSU, for agriculture and its chief, V. I. Polyakov.

Pysin, who made a smashing record as an agricultural apparatchik as first secretary of the Altai Territory (1954-1961), is the third Khrushchev appointee who failed in the arduous job as agricultural overlord. Following hard on the dismissals of ranking party officials in the key virgin lands republic of Kazakhstan this winter, the changing of the guard at the Ministry of Agriculture is yet another exhibit that agriculture is the burial ground for the ambitious party activist.

The new appointee is virtually unknown, Ivan P. Volovchenko (46 years), for the past 12 years director of the Sovkhoz Petrovsky, Lipetsk oblast, in the Central Black Earth region near Voronezh. He is neither a member nor a candidate member of the CC, CPSU, but is a deputy of the Supreme Soviet. The elevation of a little-known official to a top post follows the unusual cadre pattern recently established in the Middle Asian Bureau case and in Kazakhstan. Why the successful and willing obkom secretaries in the Volga and north Caucasian regions were passed by is a mystery. However, the new Minister made his reputation as an up-from-the-ranks practical farm director who achieved results in boosting labor productivity and cutting production costs on his single assignment as a

(MORE)

sovkhoz leader. The selection may denote greater stress on the practical side of agricultural science, even at the education and scientific level at which the Ministry operates. The influence of Lysenko seems obviously apparent.

The tenure of office among the holders of the USSR Ministry of Agriculture post follow:

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| I. Benediktov  | 1945-1955 |
| V. Matskevich  | 1956-1959 |
| M. Olshansky   | 1960-1961 |
| K. Pysin       | 1961-1963 |
| I. Volovshenko | 1963-     |

The instability of office is clearly associated with the decline in agricultural output following the record harvest of 1958 and its subsequent stagnancy. Unless the direction can be reversed--which appears almost wholly improbable--the new appointee will follow the path of his predecessors.

BH 1230