

Soviet

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH



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29 February 1984

John S...

M. Boyce 2/3
M. Young
N. Dr. H. Quinn

RBC have seen Mrs K's report - want

Keston College: Mrs Alyona Kojevnikov we pass
w/ Name (4, 1, 1, 1, 1)

With your letter of 16 January you enclosed a copy of a report on her recent trip to the Soviet Union by Mrs Alyona Kojevnikov, a staff member of Keston College. We have circulated this widely, including to our Embassy in Moscow and thought you might be interested to have a short summary of the comments of those who have read it.

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This is undoubtedly a lively, interesting and perceptive account by someone who has real insights into the Soviet mind. It is a partial view of the present situation there, and Mrs Kojevnikov does not pretend otherwise. She visited only Moscow and Leningrad and was in close contact only with the dissident and semi-dissident community.

See (7)

Inevitably, for a report based largely on the testimony of this kind there are a number of generalisations which should be treated with caution. On the subject of Soviet security preoccupations, for instance, it is worth bearing in mind that Mrs Kojevnikov visited the Soviet Union during the follow-up publicity campaign to Andropov's statement of 24 November 1983 on INF, when the Soviet media were focusing on the theme of the Western nuclear threat even more than usual. Other Western observers in Moscow have not seen evidence to suggest that "the mass of the population ... is almost paralysed with fear" (pp 3 and 4 of the report).

Nor do the Embassy's observations bear out the view that there has been an increase in the "military presence" in Moscow. They have also commented that although there may have been some tightening up to reduce the number of exemptions from military service (linked perhaps to the unfavourable demographic curve) there has been no significant increase in the number of recruits drafted.

The description of developments affecting religious dissidents is one of the most interesting parts of the report. Clearly this is an area in which Mrs Kojevnikov's

/access



access to the dissident world has given her a lot of detail, from which she has been able to create a convincing account of continuing repression and harassment.

Mrs Kojevnikov paints a fairly bleak picture of material shortages. However, as regards Moscow itself, our Embassy have commented that it does not tally with their own observations. The general view of residents is that the food supply to the capital has much improved over the last two years, with fairly plentiful (by Soviet standards) supplies of fruit, vegetables, meat and milk on sale even in the outlying districts. Outside the major cities, the situation is a good deal worse; in some towns visited by Embassy officials there has been little food for sale and in places coupon systems are said to be operating. However, availability in the shops is not the only yardstick of supply: food is sometimes distributed at places of work, a factor which outsiders cannot easily assess.

The Embassy would not agree that the overall picture is one of deteriorating supply. Russians say there are more types of goods on sale, even if they are expensive or hard to get hold of. The quality of some essential articles (e.g. shoes and clothing) remains as poor as ever - and this, rather than supply, is the main reason for the pilfering and black-marketeering in higher quality and foreign goods.

This said, Mrs Kojevnikov offers many real insights into the Soviet situation: the constant harassments of her and her friends (and the sheer numbers involved in these internal security operations); the great bravery of those who are willing to stand up and oppose the system's petty regulations; the examples of double standards and often blatant corruption, like the Armenian traders operating right under the eyes of the KGB (p 2 of the report). It adds up to a picture of a far from monochrome society and one of Byzantine complexity (and morals). It is not a complete picture, but that does not detract from the value of Mrs Kojevnikov's account. She enjoyed access to the dissident community that would not have been possible to an Embassy official or possibly even a foreign journalist. And in bearing witness to the life and state of mind of that community it is a useful contribution to our understanding of the Soviet Union.

*Yes -
R B Bone*

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

17 January 1984

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for sending to her recently the report on internal conditions in the Soviet Union. She read it with great interest. We have, as you suggested, also sent a copy to Sir Geoffrey Howe.

A. J. COLES

The Reverend Michael Bourdeaux

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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minutes.

From Michael Bourdeaux.

I have highlighted some
points.

A.S.C. 13/11.

It is fascinating
— and very
depressing.

Scale
cc Mr. Board, 10/55
for comments p.
1984, 10 DOWNING STREET



YES Sir J. Dulais
me
Mr Young P1
Liam M. Rowland
Mr. Dunsin
11/11
for advice pte
15/11/84
Mr Jenkins

From the Private Secretary

16 January, 1984

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17/11

See Reg.

SDC (6)

Keston College

As you will see from a separate letter which I have today written to Brian Fall, enclosing a record of yesterday's conversation between the Prime Minister and Mr. Shultz, reference was made during that conversation to a recent document which the Prime Minister had received from Keston College.

I now enclose a copy of that document. It was accompanied by a manuscript note from the Reverend Michael Bordeaux who described it as the best paper he had read on the Soviet Union for a long time. He asked that a copy should be passed to the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

The author of the document, Mrs. Kojevnikov, is, I understand, a staff member of Keston College.

I shall be sending a copy of the document separately to the US Embassy.

Your etc
for Col.

R. B. Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

C15 SH



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 January, 1984

You will recall that during the conversation yesterday between the Prime Minister and Mr. Shultz Mrs. Thatcher referred to a document which she had recently received from the Reverend Michael Bordeaux of Keston College. The Prime Minister promised to make a copy available to Mr. Shultz.

I now enclose this document. I understand that its author, Mrs. Kojevnikov, is a staff member at Keston College.

Incidentally, I have not specifically sought Michael Bordeaux's authority to copy it to you. I am sure he would not mind, but I should be grateful if the fact that I have done so was not revealed to him.

A.J. COLES

His Excellency Mr. Charles H. Price II

to

by Alyona Kojevnikov

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL - NOT FOR PUBLICATION

*See ref.
pp 3-5*

A group of 27 people arrived in Moscow at 10.30 pm. I was rather disconcerted to be confronted, at Gatwick airport, by a man who had been in the group on my previous visit to the USSR (June 1982) and who had been far too interested in my doings at that time. He recognized me immediately, told me that he had been to the USSR twice since June 1982 and started asking leading questions about my plans for this visit. This was a complication I had not envisaged and his subsequent behaviour makes me certain that he is one of the regular "stooges" who do the Britain-USSR run and keep an eye on what the other people in his group are doing. His name is Gerard Benson. My guess is that he is in his early 50's. He claims that he is unemployed, but does not explain how he manages to pay for all these junkets to the Soviet Union which, he says, he has visited 27 times in the past 10 years. He does not look as if he has private means and makes a point of telling people about the bedsit in which he lives. When we arrived at Sheremetyevo airport, there was nobody from "Intourist" to meet our group through some mix-up, and he immediately (and confidently) set out to confer with airport officials although his spoken Russian is absolutely appalling. The customs check was very thorough: everyone's luggage was searched with painstaking dedication. I had hoped to ease my own lot a little by placing a personal letter to the ambassador of one of the Western embassies at the very top of my suitcase. Unfortunately, the first item of luggage the customs man looked at was my large shoulder bag in which I had a small short-wave radio and a tape recorder to be passed on to certain people. He entered both items on my customs declaration and added, with ill-concealed malice, that I must take great care to ensure that I "lose" neither "for we shall be checking to ensure that you still have them with you when you leave". They did, too. Luckily, he had not thought to add the make of both items, and I managed to leave the radio in exchange for an ancient little Western short-wave transistor which had long outlived its usefulness. The tape recorder I had to bring back, unfortunately. I taped a totally fictitious account of my stay onto the cassette that was in it, and Leningrad customs must have listened to it because when the recorder was returned to me, the tape was at the end of speech, whereas I had wound it back to the beginning when I was packing to leave. When the Moscow customs official opened my case, he immediately pounced on the letter lying on top of my clothes and demanded to know what it was. As I was hoping that he would read it, and had deliberately left the envelope unsealed, I pointed out encouragingly that it was a personal letter for the gentleman named on the envelope. The customs officer hesitated (probably because I looked unperturbed), half-withdrew the letter, looked at me quickly to see my reaction, and then replaced it in the envelope without reading it. Admittedly, after this his search of the case rather less thorough than the search of my shoulder bag and made me wish I had put the radio and tape recorder in the case after all.

to the "Kosmos" hotel. A woman who spoke excellent English came bustling up to our group and asked: "Where is your leader?" "Mrs Thatcher wasn't able to come", I replied, and got a cold, uncomprehending stare for my pains. However, at that moment she spotted Benson, and hurried over to him. A minute later he joined us and said that we should board the bus just outside.

The foyer of the "Kosmos" hotel, despite the relatively late hour, was thronged with people. On closer examination, most of these appeared to be Georgians and Armenians doing "business" with the tourists, although the hotel is supposed to be (in practice if not in theory) off-limits for the local population. Certainly the outward appearance of security is much more stringent than when I stayed in this same hotel in June 1982. There are now at least 4 uniformed doormen on duty at all times (last year it was 2) and 2 uniformed militiamen outside the entrance (last year it was 1). Probably the number of plain clothes officials has also increased. Despite this, the number of "locals" doing business with foreigners is quite staggering: there was nothing like this 18 months ago. When I went downstairs to the ground floor bar with 3 of the other women in our group after unpacking, we were immediately approached by a group of 5 young Armenians who turned out to have a smattering of English and German. Their interest was obviously mercantile rather than amorous, although they went through what they obviously felt was an obligatory ritual of paying us extravagant compliments. At the same time, one could almost hear the little wheels turning in their heads as they estimated the street-value of every item of clothing on us. When they proved impervious to snubs, I told them in Russian to clear off. However, this had the reverse effect to the one intended. Obviously delighted to have established a common language, the whole group closed in around us (before that, two had done the talking while the others hung back) and pressed us to accompany them to a restaurant "where they have real Armenian food". They just wanted to "be friends", they added earnestly, and put on a good show of injured innocence when we displayed a degree of scepticism. Seeing that they could not be easily shaken off, I pointed out that they really ought not be talking to us, as the place was probably bristling with plain clothes KGB. After laughing with genuine amusement, they assured us that this was the least of their worries. "They won't touch us", they said with assurance, holding up their hands and rubbing thumb against forefinger in the universally known gesture showing that money had changed hands. I then told them that none of us had yet handed in our passports for the obligatory registration, and they immediately offered to do so for us as they "knew" the clerk on duty (the money sign again). We remained adamant, and only succeeded in getting rid of them by writing down a telephone number and saying that we would get in touch with them later if we had the chance. "Don't worry about the KGB", they assured us as they moved off in search of further business, "we can shake off any tails they might put onto you". As it happens, we never saw them again, but the two "courtesy" telephones in the foyer, from which hotel guests can phone any number in Moscow without paying, were virtually inaccessible all the

all Georgians and Armenians engaged in black marketeering: I once sat for an hour close to these phones under the guise of waiting to meet someone and listened in to their conversatuons, which were always commendably brief and to the point and ran something like this:

"Parik? Such-and-such speaking. I've got the goods. Have you got the money? Good. I'll meet you in 15 minutes at....."

The easy access they all seemed to enjoy to the hotel did not extend to the bona fide residents: whereas 18 months ago some of the doormen would let you through without your having to produce the card stating your room number, this time I had to produce my card every time and, judging by meal-time conversations, so did everyone else. Two people in the group who tried to enter the "Intourist" hotel with their "Kosmos" cards were refused entry on the basis that they were not staying at that hotel (and presumably had no business to be there). Unfortunately, neither of them challenged the doorman about this patent absurdity.

The "Beriozka" shop at the "Kosmos" was full of kitsch at even more rapacious prices than last time. Books have been reduced to a minimum - two small shelves - and consist mainly of translations of Dickens and other Western classics. There was one copy of Shukshin's short stories, which I bought as a present for one of my friends. On my last visit, books in the "Beriozka" cost less than the price embossed on the cover. Now they cost more (even allowing for the fact that this time we got 1.15 roubles to the £1.00 as against 1.32 18 months ago). When I expressed disappointment there were so few books and said that I must pay a visit to the "Beriozka" bookshop in the city, I was told that this shop was closed for redecoration and I would have to make do with the "Kosmos" stock.

On the first full day of my stay I went to a flat where a number of people were to meet me. A verbal message about my time of arrival had been conveyed some weeks earlier by another traveller. I arrived at around 11.30 a.m., and from then on people came in dribs and drabs. It would take too much time and space to recount each and every conversation at this meeting, or at subsequent meetings in other places during that week, so I shall limit myself to matters which I consider were of greatest importance and which tended to crop up in discussions, over and over again, although the people concerned were not, in many cases, connected with each other nor even moved in the same social circles.

General atmosphere: It became clear to me that there has been a drastic clamp-down overall, and this impression was affirmed by all the people I met. There is terrible depression not just in dissident circles, but generally. Everyone seems to feel that things are going to get even worse, that "something terrible" is going to happen, even though they don't know what it will be. The general mood was bad enough 18 months ago, but it was nothing by comparison with the mood and general "feel" of things now. The authorities have succeeded in whipping up an almost hysterical fear of war by the West, imminent war. Even in dissident circles this seems to have made an impact, although they tend to take official pronouncements with more than a grain

streets, the mass of the population, however, does not (or cannot) give critical appraisal to the propaganda with which it is being bombarded from morning to night on radio and television (of which more later) and is almost paralysed with fear. Dissidents stressed repeatedly, that Western Russian-language broadcasts should do much more to counter the official propaganda, especially by making specific responses to specific Soviet claims. The feeling is that Western radio is "pussy-footing" far too much, and by doing so inadvertently lends credibility to official Soviet pronouncements. "Our population is not accustomed to delicate hints on such subjects", I was told. "If the West wants to be effective, you have to lay it on the line". When I pointed out that Western stations are constrained by various provisions in their operating instructions, I was told that this is all very well for someone who knows, but the average Soviet listener to Western radio knows nothing of these rules and regulations and is conditioned by his environment to suspect something fishy as soon as he hears hints and evasions. "We have enough to do reading between the lines of the Soviet press," one person remarked, "without having to play guessing games about the true meaning behind this or that broadcast from the West".

The Soviet media, every time I watched TV or heard radio during my stay, focused almost exclusively on the Western nuclear threat. At times this reached the point of total absurdity such as on one occasion, where a domestic current affairs TV program carried a report about improved storage facilities for cattle fodder on some collective farm, and then passed on to the "peaceful labour" of our staunch kolkhozniks who are determined, at all costs, to preserve the fruits of their labour and keep the world a safe place for coming generations despite the nefarious schemes of Western warmongers. So-called "overseas" news was (in all the programs I saw) devoted exclusively to anti-nuclear demonstrations by "progressive forces" in the West and/or condemnations of American foreign policy by obscure politicians from run-down third world countries. Nevertheless, all this stultifying rubbish has not fallen on entirely arid soil; the threat of war seems to be the main topic of conversation wherever one goes "among the people". Possibly a contributing factor is the massive military presence in Moscow (and, to a slightly lesser degree, Leningrad). On my last visit I was constantly aware of the number of uniformed military around, but put it down mainly to the fact that I was seeing things with a Western eye. This time, the presence has swelled enormously: possibly there has just been a new intake, because last time most of the military seemed older: this lot is, overwhelmingly new recruits in brand-new uniforms and squeaky boots. Some of them look as if they don't shave yet. When I raised this matter at a meeting with some friends, I was told that nowadays "everyone" is being drafted once they reach the requisite age. One of the women present told me that her son, who has just turned 16, had been summoned for a medical check-up (although he is only due to be called up in 2 years time) and passed as being medically fit to do army service although he is retarded. This is a truly tragic case, because the boy has a mental development of a 10 year old and will remain so. However, he does not "look" retarded, and was passed as fit

despite all evidence produced from the school he is in (an ordinary school - she does not have the necessary "connections" to get him into a special school) that the boy is retarded. She says that she will spend the next two years desperately trying to get sufficiently weighty evidence from doctors and psychiatrists to keep him out of the army, because she fears what will happen to him there if he is drafted despite anything she can do. As treatment of recruits etc. has already been adequately documented in Soviet samizdat, I shall not repeat what I was told about it as it merely affirms the accuracy of the samizdat reports. The war in Afghanistan is an ever-present spectre for any parent; there was a great deal of conversation about this as opposed to my last visit, when I was surprised by the relative lack of interest in discussing this matter. Everyone has heard of the radio announcer who shot into prominence some months ago with his surprising "news bulletins", but, unlike Western interpretations, most people seem to feel that he was acting independently and got away with it for so long because of the sloppiness of Soviet bureaucracy which would not, of its own accord, assume that one person would dare do something like that. However, I was told of a number of media workers (and met one of them) who were immediately taken off announcing and similar jobs and relegated to back-room work in the wake of this incident. The people involved, incidentally, all have relatives (or other connections) abroad, though this had not appeared to prejudice their careers heretofore.

Dissident Activity:

Any kind of dissident activity has become almost impossible. The authorities are even more vigilant, and considerable efforts are made to stifle any form of dissent. There has been widespread harassment of people who were not, themselves, involved in dissident activity, or even formed part of any kind of dissident fringe. These days, even knowing someone on the dissident fringe is enough to bring you to the attention of the authorities. Samizdat circulation is down, and it is felt that a crippling blow has been dealt by the arrest of Shikhanovich. When I was in Moscow, nobody knew what was going to happen to him. As I was under constant and heavy surveillance from the beginning to the end of my trip it would have been unforgivably irresponsible for me to try to make any kind of contact with his relatives, but as close friends of theirs knew nothing, the family would probably be in the same position. The attempts to stem samizdat are not, according to certain indications, limited to protests, information about arrests etc. "Writing" of any unsanctioned kind appears to be proscribed. An extremely well-informed source told me about an occurrence which shows that position and rank may be no protection. I have passed this story on for investigation to a number of journalist friends, but it is worth placing on record, I feel, in this report.

Briefly, the story is as follows: On July 22 of this year, Brezhnev's friend and protégé, admiral Kholostyakov, and his wife, were beaten to death with hammers in their Moscow flat. Shortly before this, it had become known that Kholostyakov, who had known Brezhnev since his Malaya Zemlya days and who rose to such a high rank due to his personal links with Brezhnev, had been publicly rebuked for his

new leadership and bragging that he was writing a book of memoirs which would put a lot of highly-placed noses out of joint. The bodies of the admiral and his wife were found by their niece, who had come to call. The door of the flat had been left wide open. Kholostyakov's wife was dead, but he was still breathing. He died in the intensive care ward shortly after being brought to hospital without regaining consciousness. The flat was immediately sealed off, but it is known that although there was a considerable amount of money and jewellery in the flat, nothing was taken, apart from all papers and the admiral's dress-uniform jacket. A clampdown was placed on the issuing of any kind of information (i.e. details) about the whole thing apart from a bald statement about the admiral's death. Some days later two "criminals" were caught who "confessed" to killing the Kholostyakovs "to get the admiral's medals". Two days later, in a totally unexpected development, an Orthodox religious activist of many years' standing was apprehended by the KGB and accused of being the mastermind behind the attack on the Kholostyakovs. The actual killers, she was told, had indicated that it was she who set up the whole thing. Nobody could make head or tail of these accusations, because the woman in question had never met the Kholostyakovs, nor did any of her associates have the remotest links with them. Just as suddenly, the charges were dropped and the case closed two days later. Since then, she has received no further word or intimation about her supposed involvement in the crime.

Religious dissidents are under just as much pressure as the "politicals". I must stress that religious dissidents were my primary interest, and that is why this report concentrates on them: I did not really have the time or opportunity to make a special effort to gather information on the political dissent field. The known members of the Christian Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights are being subjected to constant harassment: some months ago this mainly took the form of "administrative" difficulties, but Fr Nikolai Gainov is increasingly being accused of harbouring anti-Soviet views and feels that his arrest is just a matter of time. Samizdat (and information in other forms) about the continued violations of believers' rights by the authorities continues to reach members of the Committee from all over the country albeit in greatly reduced quantity: from some of the material that does get through it is clear that this is follow-up material to information sent earlier but intercepted before it got to the addressee. Holding samizdat in one's home has become much more hazardous with the extension of house searches even to the homes of very low-profile activists. Surveillance of various kinds is on the increase: a search located two electronic bugs in one relatively "harmless" flat where I met a group of friends. Nevertheless, it was not all bad news, even though most of the religious dissidents are resigned to the fact that they have to curtail a number of their activities for the time being. Production of religious literature is going on despite a number of setbacks in recent years, but extra care is being taken to keep the locations of the presses secret and the number of people involved to the barest minimum. It is felt that the debacle with the Orthodox underground publishers of religious literature (Victor Burdakov and his circle) could have been avoided if they had not tried to do too

absolutely charming story about one of the witnesses called at Burdyug's trial and which, at the risk of digressing a little, I would like to put on record.

The witness concerned was an elderly Orthodox woman who had acted as one of the "couriers" of the finished product. She was doing this with the blessing of one of the monks at the Trinity-St Sergius monastery, who had died some time before the operation was uncovered. Upon receiving instructions to present herself as a witness at Burdyug's trial (she had been pointed out by Alexander Sidorov, who had recanted) she immediately went to her priest for advice and a blessing for the road. "Well, Darya", he told her as he blessed her, "behave as behoves a good Christian and do not retreat before the onslaught of the ungodly!" Nor did she. When she was called to the stand, the prosecutor asked her how she had first become engaged in this sort of activity.

"Well," she said calmly, "I came out of church one Sunday morning, and what did I see but a couple of young men with several sacks, and people gathered around them. So I went up to have a look, and saw that they had Bibles and prayer books. "Well", I said to myself, "fancy that!" As you know, I'm a pensioner, and I always have problems buying gifts for my friends for their birthdays and namesdays. After all, a skimpy little scarf costs three roubles in our village shop, and even then you can't get them half the time. And with my 30 roubles a month pension, this is a problem. So I said to myself - why don't I stock up on some of these? After all, they were selling the Bibles and prayer-books for a rouble apiece, when normally you can't get them at any price.... So I bought some, and asked them: do you have anything else, boys? They said that this time they didn't, but they would have more later."

At this point the prosecutor asked her why, if this was a chance meeting, the phone numbers of some of the "printers" were found written down on a piece of paper?

"Oh, that! Well, they left me one phone number, so I could ring up and ask if I needed any more Bibles, and after a while I did. But he (Burdyug) wasn't at home when I phoned, but the person who answered said he was visiting a friend, and gave me the phone number. But what do you think? When I rang that number, I was told that he had gone half an hour ago, and was visiting another friend, whose phone number they gave me, too. That's how I came to have all three numbers written down".

(The person who told me this story was present at the trial, and says that by this time the whole courtroom was having trouble keeping a straight face).

The prosecutor, however, tried again,

"When you were taken in for questioning, you signed a statement saying that you had acted as a courier in disseminating this literature, that you went periodically to the Trinity monastery where the accused passed on clandestinely-produced literature to you. How do you explain that?"

"Bless you, my dear ("milenskii")", she replied with unruffled composure. "I'm sure it's just as you say, but I really don't know. You see, I am illiterate myself, all I know is how to sign my name and write numbers. They told me to sign some papers, so I signed them. They didn't tell me what those papers had written on

The courtroom burst into spontaneous laughter, even the prosecutor and the judge. Alexander Sidorov jumped up, and asked permission to put a question to the witness. "You know that you're telling lies!" he accused her. "Why, didn't we meet on numerous occasions when I gave you books and you gave me the money from the previous batch? You know you were acting on the instructions of Father (he named the dead monk) and were perfectly well aware what you were doing!"

Darya smiled at him limpidly.

"Milen'ki", she said compassionately, "what on earth are you talking about? I've never seen you in my life - and you don't know me, either!"

Another burst of laughter, and Sidorov flung up his hands in despair before resuming his seat.

There were no further questions from anyone to this formidable little witness. She was allowed to go, secure in the knowledge that she had not, indeed, "retreated before the onslaught of the ungodly".

Surveillance:

The degree of surveillance to which I was subjected has convinced me that I have outgrown my usefulness as a "traveller" to the Soviet Union. Like Typhoid Mary, I seemed to bring trouble, in varying degrees, to just about all the people with whom I associated. The only ones which did not have any follow-up unpleasantness were a number of elderly persons whose children are friends of mine in the West. Without going into details of every occasion, I shall just mention one nasty "sample case." The first gathering I attended in Moscow consisted of about 10 people: two arrived together, the rest came separately and at different times. At about 10 p.m. the light in the flat started going on and off at intervals of several minutes. Nobody paid attention at first, thinking it was just some minor fault in the electricity supply (which leaves a great deal to be desired all over Moscow anyway). The hostess got out a few candles, and we continued. However, when the interruptions continued, the host decided to investigate, and went out onto the landing. A few minutes later he came back and told us that there were strangers standing around on the stairs and near the lift with no obvious reason, so it was fairly certain that it was "them". He had knocked on some of the neighbors' doors and ascertained that nobody else was having trouble with their lights: obviously someone was at the fuse-box downstairs. A look out of the window (this was the 9th floor of a high-rise block of flats) seemed to confirm his suspicions: two black "Volgas" parked on either side of the entrance to the building. After a quick consultation, we decided to leave in ones and twos. As soon as the first one of our group emerged, the headlights of both "Volgas" came and he had to walk through the beams. (Possibly the "operatives" were photographing?) I was last to leave with Yuri (not his real name) as I had come by taxi and had no idea how to get back to my hotel from this end of Moscow and it was the consensus of opinion that out of everyone there Yuri had the most experience in evading the KGB. We went down, accompanied by our host, who was going to act as yet another "figure" to be followed, thereby depleting the ranks of the "operatives" by at least one. Keeping my face averted from the loungers on the stairs and landing, I got into the

the lift with my two escorts, but nobody made any move to join us. Once we were outside and past the shining headlamps, the reason for ~~the~~ became quite clear; as well as the two cars parked beside the door into the block of flats, another four cars were strategically placed so that it was impossible to either reach the street (the building is set a fair way back from the main road) or to seek shelter behind any nearby building. Our host headed in one direction (later he told us that nobody made any move to follow him) and Yuri and I headed for the main road. Some distance ahead of us we saw I. and P. who had left the flat some minutes before us. ^{One car moved off to follow them as we watched} The road is a large one - four lanes divided by a strip down the centre. Two black "Volgas" were standing on the opposite side of the road, and two on our side. There is no taxi rank for miles, but a taxi with a running motor stood invitingly close, some 10 metres from the "Volgas". We turned and began to walk as briskly as the slippery, icy pavement allowed in the general direction of the metro, which is about 1 kilometre away. As we walked, Yuri said we could try to make a run for it among the blocks of flats stretching on our side of the road if the "Volgas" made no move to follow us once we had gone a hundred metres or so. However, we had not covered even half that distance when one of them revved up its engine, cruised past us, went ahead, turned at the next crossing, double back, turned back onto our side of the road again and pulled up about 20 metres behind us. Realizing that we could not shake them off, we flagged down a passing private car and paid him to take us to the metro station. The "Volga" followed us, and two operatives got out of it when we disembarked at the metro. They followed us without making any attempt to conceal themselves, but when we got on the train, one remained behind; they had obviously determined to their own satisfaction that we were not going to split up. For a while we did a little "metro hopping" (i.e. leaping out at the last moment, changing to trains, going in the opposite direction, etc.) but our "tail" was too good for us. By this time it was getting on for midnight, and we were in a part of Moscow which Yuri said he did not know at all. We got off at the next station (as did our "tail") but as there were still a lot of people travelling, managed to get on the escalator to the exit quite a bit ahead of him. Once out of the metro we ran for it, diving down alleys, turning corners, crossing roads and so forth quite at random for about 20 minutes. Eventually we fetched up in a deserted street which seemed to consist of factories or warehouses. There was not a soul in sight. We waited for a while, then set out to look for a larger road in the hope of picking up a cab or at least a private driver out

"moonlighting" to supplement his wages. We came upon such a road very soon, and started to look for a lift. I think we must have ended up quickly to the metro again, because groups of people appeared periodically from the same direction. Yuri suddenly said "here is our tail again", and pointed out a man who had stopped a little way from us and was leaning against a telephone pole, also looking as if he was waiting for a taxi (or something). I had my doubts, but being shortsighted and not having that sixth sense which seems to tell every Soviet citizen when the KGB is present, I was probably wrong and Yuri right. After what seemed like an age, an empty taxi appeared, and we flagged him down. There were no other cars in sight and, as we pulled away, the watcher at the lamp-post sprang out into the street. Yuri said that if this was our "tail" then most likely he would have stopped the next car, shown his identity book and ordered the driver to follow us. Except that there was no following car. Breathing a sigh of relief, we went as close as seemed sensible to my hotel and I urged Yuri to keep the taxi and go home in it. Unfortunately he thought this unnecessary. We parted quickly, I heading for the "Kosmos", Yuri for the metro which is across the road from the hotel. I only learned of subsequent events two days later, when I saw Yuri again. Having parted company with me, he went to the metro. The first person he saw once he reached the platform was our faithful "tail", waiting patiently on a bench. In other words, they had known all along who I was and where I would be going. From that it was easy enough to deduce that anyone escorting me would head for the nearest metro after seeing me back to the hotel. Yuri decided not to go home, as he lives at an end station on the other side of Moscow, and there are always militia on duty there at this hour to get drunks off the last trains. It would be the work of a moment for the KGB man to get the militia to detain Yuri on some pretext before he had a chance to leave the station. So Yuri decided to go and spend the night with some friends who live 3 metro stops away from the "VDNKh" stop where he boarded the train. The KGB operative got into the same carriage: by now there were fewer passengers. He disembarked when Yuri did, and followed at a distance of some 10 paces. As in all stations this one had a "militia room" near the exit. As Yuri neared it, the operative suddenly broke into a run, flung himself on Yuri from behind and started yelling at the top of his voice: "You were behaving in a hooligan manner in the metro! Come into the militia room!" Hearing these yells, two militiamen came running out. Luckily for Yuri, a group of young people had just entered the station, and they stopped and intervened, saying that there must be some mistake, as they had

seen Yuri walking towards them "when he was suddenly attacked by this Prishch, who started shouting and pulling at him". Then, instead of moving on, they remained and continued to assert that Yuri had not been doing anything and, generally, showing no disposition to leave. The two militiamen, not understanding what was going on, then rounded on the KGB man in no friendly manner and started demanding to know what he thought he was about? Taking advantage of this, Yuri said with as much dignity as he could muster that he was in a hurry, and walked out unimpeded while the militiamen took the KGB operative into their "room". Still, Yuri guessed that this was only a short respite. He had to walk two blocks then cross a large vacant lot to reach the block of flats in which his friends lived. As he walked, he shredded several bits of paper which he had on him with notes of things to tell me. When he reached the vacant lot he looked round, and saw two figures running after him: the KGB man and one of the militiamen. There was nothing for it but to run himself. He rushed into the building and, had the lift been on the ground floor, would have got away from them. As it was, the lift was somewhere up top, so he started up the stairs at a dead run. They caught him on the first floor, and flung him bodily to the ground. And here Yuri had his second piece of luck for that night: of the four doors facing onto that landing, two opened and heads poked out to see what was going on. Seeing this, Yuri immediately began to shout, knowing that the KGB prefer not to have witnesses to such activities if possible. Also, as he explained later, he knows from prior experience that it tends to overset them when a potential victim, instead of being cowed, becomes aggressive. "Why are you hounding me?" he demanded at the top of his voice. "First you attack me in the metro for no reason, and now you assault me with no provocation! Who are you and what does this mean?" Another door opened, causing the KGB man to snarl at the unwelcome witnesses that this was none of their business and they should get back inside. Yuri could hardly believe his good fortune when nobody paid the slightest heed but stayed put to see what other dramatic events might follow.

"Show me your identification", demanded the KGB man, turning back to Yuri, who countered by saying "No, you show me yours! How do I know who you are and what right you have to question me like this?" The KGB man briefly pulled out his little "book" and flashed it at Yuri without opening. "Is that enough for you?" he challenged but Yuri, buoyed up by the knowledge of all those avidly-listening witnesses, said no, it was not enough, and that he wanted to see the name and rank inscribed inside the ID book. When the KGB man (who by now had lowered

his "tone" considerably) refused, Yuri turned to the militiaman and asked if he could see his ID.

"Certainly", said the militiamen above the KGB operative's warning hiss, and handed over his ID where he was described as sergeant Abramov etc. etc. Then, to the overt discomfiture of the KGB operative, the young militiaman turned to him and said, pointing at Yuri: "Why are we following him like this, anyway?" Someone sniggered. The KGB man's assurance suddenly seemed to crumble, although Yuri says that he had not expected this at all. Taking advantage of the confusion, Yuri said that he was sick and tired of being plagued, that he was tired and unless the operative had some specific charges to bring against him on the spot, he was going home. Without waiting for an answer he turned and started up the stairs. All the way up the next two flights he expected to hear heavy feet thudding behind him and to be seized. But, incredibly, there was no pursuit. As he waited for his friends to open their door, he heard the KGB operative and the militiaman going down the stairs....

A similar incident occurred in Leningrad, with the difference that there was no dramatic pursuit: when I had parted from my escorts, they were stopped by the KGB operatives who had followed us after spending 3 hours in their "Volgas" outside a block of flats in which I had been conferring with a number of people, and asked to produce evidence of identity. All in all, quite a lot of people had to produce proof of identity before they had gone more than 20 steps after parting with me both in Moscow and Leningrad. The shadowing was really very thorough: in Leningrad KGB operatives even used to go to church with me and stand stoically through liturgies and matins!

Obviously, this made it impossible for me to meet quite a number of people I had intended to see, so the most I could do was make a phone call and try to convey by turns of phrase the fact that I was being watched, and leave it to them to decide whether they wanted me to come to them or not. It is a telling sign of the severity of the clampdown that a number of people, none of whom could be described as cowards in any way, felt it would be unwise to meet "this time". And who can blame them? I was scared stiff just about every minute of that traumatic two weeks. My only fearless day was a trip to the St Sergius-Trinity monastery where I spent the entire time in the Trinity cathedral within a few yards of the tomb housing the relics of the Saint.

Radio Stations:

I estimate that in the two weeks that I was in the Soviet Union, I had what could be termed "serious" conversations with about 50 people which

included discussion of Western Russian-language broadcasts. What surprised me was that although these were people of widely differing interests and social standing (scientists, artists, religious activists, ~~me~~ a workers, middle managers, factory workers and pensioners), dissidents and non-dissidents, the views expressed were remarkable in their similarity even though they were expressed with diverse degrees of eloquence. The essential points to emerge in these discussions were:

1. The station with the greatest number of listeners still appears to be "Voice of America". As one person said, it's "the done thing" to listen to VOA. A young artists in Moscow told me that she had gone camping this summer with a group of friends, and every radio in the campsite was quite openly tuned every day to VOA, and people made no effort to conceal it. In fact, she said you could follow a broadcast almost without a break as you walked through the camping area. Despite this, however, VOA is not considered to be totally "sympathetic" at all times for, people reason, it is presenting the views of the Soviet government's "opposition" and is probably not above resorting to somewhat biased propaganda tactics from time to time. But the "Golos" is held in affection for all that, though its lighter programs seem to be more popular than the heavier material, the presentation of which is considered to be of lower "quality" than the BBC.

2. The BBC is, without a doubt, the winner of the popularity stakes, among the intelligentsia in particular. Both in Moscow and in Leningrad two broadcasts came up for discussion time and time again: the BBC coverage of the Templeton Prize award to Solzhenitsyn, and Yuri Gligorsky's interview with the two young Soviet soldiers who went over to the Afghan guerrillas and are now (presumably) in the United States. This generated an enormous amount of interest.

Literally everyone wanted to know the circumstances in which these two soldiers landed among the Afghan guerrillas. Luckily, I read a full account of their story several days before I went to Moscow and was able to fill in the missing details.* The Templeton award attracted such great interest because there is what might be called a veritable "Solzhenitsyn cult" flourishing in the Soviet Union. In fact, on a number of occasions I was presented to people as "Solzhenitsyn's interpreter his London press-conference". I swear that several people came within an arm's length of asking me reverently if they could touch me once they had this! Anyone who maintains that Solzhenitsyn has been forgotten or is not rated highly in the Soviet Union is talking nonsense. Quite the

* Exception was taken to their being referred to as "deserters", however once I had recounted the story. This was seen as a linguistic (and ideological) lapse, very uncharacteristic of the BBC "who ought to know that this word has acquired a definite shade of meaning through official

contrary, he seems to have acquired an almost mystical aura, he is spoken of as a "true patriot", "who didn't emigrate, but had to be thrown out" (moreover, this latter sentiment was expressed quite sincerely even by people who are themselves trying to get permission to emigrate!) and great indignation and scorn was voiced about those former Soviet citizens in the West who speak out against him. Emigre squabbles, incidentally, are censured very severely and the journal "Syntaxis" was described in the most unflattering terms by those who had seen it. But this was confined to the intelligentsia: the "simpler" folk know and care nothing about emigre intrigues, nor have they ever heard of "Syntaxis": but Solzhenitsyn they do know and revere. In fact, it was quite touching that all these people, obviously assuming that because I had been Solzhenitsyn's interpreter on one occasion means that I am in constant contact with him, asked me to tell "Aleksandr Isayevich" that he is not forgotten, that they send him their deepest respects and warmest wishes for his well-being and that his work on behalf of his people will not have been done in vain.

The religious program of the BBC was again given a gratifyingly warm response, especially for the coverage given to the case of Zoya Krakhsalnikova. In this particular case the VOA coverage was given a definite "raspberry" for citing the TASS announcement about her, which omits mention of the five year exile to follow the year of confinement. "Surely", said one Moscow priest with gentle reproach, "they know that TASS is not the most reliable of sources?"

The only complaint about the BBC religious program was the coverage of the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver. However, as the objections raised (and very strongly, at that) are on specific points and addressed directly to Bishop Basil, who did the coverage, I am not including them in this report but will convey them, as requested, in a personal letter to the Bishop.

To sum up, BBC was consistently referred to as the most "reliable" and people who have been listeners for many years have remarked that in recent years the quality of the output is head and shoulders above that of VOA, Radio Liberty and Deutsche Welle (the latter was described as having "degenerated into nothingness").

3. Sadly, the response to Radio Liberty was not good, but I would qualify this immediately by adding that most of the people who were sharpest in their criticism of RL have not, on their own admission, listened to it for periods of up to three years. When I asked why this was, I was told that it was not because of the technical difficulty produced by constant jamming, but because they felt that (and I quote)

"Radio Liberty discredited itself". When I tried to dig deeper, all sorts of reasons were produced which, individually, do not seem to add to much but which cumulatively probably contributed to the emergence of an unfavourable reaction which made people feel that it was not worth the bother going to the trouble of trying to "catch" RL broadcasts. Among the reasons cited for not listening were: a) RL is "anti-Russian" b) broadcasts on Soviet themes are boring - we get enough boring material on Moscow radio without having to listen to it on jammed short waves c) choice of samizdat materials aired is not always sufficiently "actual" d) some of the programming on labour and economic questions is almost Moscow Radio rubbish e) that the literary programs have never been the same since Professor Weidle died f) that everyone knows RL has been infiltrated by KGB agents and g) that RL showed its true face when it "stopped its religious program". This final accusation rocked me a bit, and I pointed out that RL had reduced, but never completely stopped religious broadcasts. The person who made this particular objection is a dissident who has served a term in the camps for his religious activities, and my answer did not disconcert him: "Why did they cut down the programming, then?" he demanded. "Don't they know what an important issue this is to millions of people here?"

On the positive side, those who do listen to RL expressed satisfaction that on a number of crucial issues (such as the vexed question of missiles) RL seems to be making more of an effort to present an effective counter to Soviet propaganda, even though the feeling is that they could make it a bit stronger still without jeopardising credibility. The only RL staffer mentioned by name was L. Roitman, who was described by a number of regular listeners as "the best interviewer RL has on its staff". As I have been away from RL for six years, there was little I could say in response to some of the criticism for the simple reason that I am unacquainted with the content of the programs being broadcast. With regard to the religious programming, I took it upon myself to say that as far as I know RL will be expanding its religious coverage quite dramatically next year and, drawing on what I knew of the projected content, gave an outline of "coming attractions". This generated a lot of interest, because it will put RL miles ahead of all the other stations in the "religious stakes". I also took the liberty of telling those interested something about Gleb Rahr, who will be doing this programming, and whom I have known personally for many years. I think it does no harm for people to know something of the person behind the voice they hear on their radios. For old times' sake I did as much PR as I could for Radio Liberty, but I think that it will take some time for it to recover the ground it has obviously lost.

It had been my intention to try to listen to some Western broadcasts while I still had the "good" transistor with me, but I gave it up very quickly as every time I started fiddling with the dial, someone would be knocking on the door of the hotel room within a few minutes wanting to know whether it was I who had reported a dripping tap in the bathroom, asked to have some boiling water brought up, needed to have my bed made, and so forth. By the second day I decided that I was supposed to dispose of the radio, it might be wiser not to establish a daily pattern of radio listening. Moreover, I was pressed for time every day and simply could not afford to devote several hours a day to this activity.

Churches:

Outwardly, much refurbishing and renovating going on. Inwardly, according to my sources within the church, the general tightening up is felt there too: sermons to be geared to "peace" (in accordance with Party line, naturally). It was confirmed by a number of reliable sources that the Russian Orthodox Church had been promised the return of the Donskoy monastery in Moscow as a reward for "peace activities", but when it came to the crunch, they were fobbed off with the Danilovskiy monastery instead. The division between the Orthodox hierarchs and ordinary clergy is becoming even wider: one rather harsh explanation advanced for this by a Moscow priest is that the "top drawer" hierarchs such as the ones regularly seen at various international gatherings have acquired a taste for this sort of thing, and the authorities are playing along, making vague promises as to "rewards" for the church for "good behaviour", and the vladyki have swallowed the bait hook, line and sinker. As a result, they are very intolerant towards any clergy in their dioceses voicing any kind of dissatisfaction with the present status quo of the church. I tested one Western theory that one ought not criticize the hierarchs (for instance, in Western religious broadcasts), but that was laughed out of court. The reply was that bishops such as Filaret of Kiev have already compromised themselves so much in the eyes of their subordinate clergy and lay believers, that to try to smooth over any of their public statements is an insult to the intelligence of the listeners. The image of the senior hierarchy has suffered particularly since the much-bruited "peace" conference in Moscow last year, and the crime was further compounded by the shameful business of the Afghanistan resolution and the reactions to the appeal made by Ruzsk at the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver this year. [Specific objections to the way the West has "presented" the hierarchs in radio coverage of Vancouver will be detail

in a separate letter to Bishop Basil in due course.] Interest in the church continues to grow: I saw a lot of young people in the churches 18 months ago, but this time there were more. Allowing for the fact that the St Sergius monastery is a major place of pilgrimage, I was still pleasantly surprised by the number of under 30's, both men and women, who came to venerate the relics of the saint during the 3 hours I spent in the Trinity cathedral there. Some of them looked as if they had come a long way to get there.

I was told that there are growing signs of greater "courage" among the rank and file clergy, and that some have now taken to wearing their robes openly in the street and on public transport: this would have been unthinkable even two years ago. Apparently this does not provoke any public hostility - people are either sympathetic, or indifferent. The authorities are turning more attention to the parish priests and other clergy. Several weeks ago, a monk deacon (Fr Seraphim Pechatkov) was expelled from the 3rd year theological course at the Leningrad academy for helping the members of the Christian musical group "Trumpet Call" (of which more later) in their work with young drop-outs and drug-addicts in the Leningrad area. Unfortunately, I was unable to meet Fr Seraphim as he had returned to Moscow several days before I arrived in Leningrad.

The situation in the Protestant-type churches is pretty much the same as regards to relations between the senior representatives and the Soviet authorities. However, I heard a lot of grumbles about the pastors being more willing to compromise with the local authorities than they were even five years ago. The registered Baptist church in Leningrad is in particularly bad shape, as presbyter Konovalchik is totally subservient to the state authorities, and there is much discord in that church at the moment because Konovalchik has, effectively, excommunicated a number of people for "political" reasons at the behest of the local plenipotentiary for religious affairs and even preaches against these people from the pulpit, forbidding the other members of the congregation to associate with them on pain of expulsion from the church.

Messages passed to me from Pentecostals in Lithuania, and meetings with Pentecostals in Moscow show that the Pentecostal emigration drive is not letting up. The Pentecostal community in Chuguyevka intends to conduct a fast throughout January in protest against the threats of the authorities to withdraw everyone's parental rights. This is a very interesting community: it consists entirely of Pentecostals. Nobody is over 40 years of age. They live rather along the lines of the

early Christian communities, sharing all property, food, labour etc. They do not practice contraception, so there are lots of small children in every family. Some time ago they surrendered their Soviet passports in line with their demand to be allowed to emigrate to any country which would allow them to live as a community in accordance with their religious convictions. The authorities have retaliated with a threat that all the children will be removed to state institutions from such "unfit" parents. The situation is tense, and they ask for maximum Western publicity once they start their hunger strike. The men will fast the whole month, taking no solid food. The women and children (including pregnant women) will fast on certain days of each week. On the whole, the Pentecostals are much more politically aware than the Baptists, and are taking steps to "link up" with Orthodox activists and with any members of the free trade union association SKOT who are still active. The Baptists (on the whole) are still a bit chary of the Orthodox, but the Pentecostals are very willing to cooperate with them.

Food and Consumer Goods:

Despite what one hears (in the West) about the food situation having improved, I saw no evidence of it. Neither, according to the residents of Moscow and Leningrad, have they. The situation in the provinces is drastic: one person I spoke to had just been to visit relatives in Pkov, and he says that there is literally nothing to eat. The "coupon" system is in operation, but even that is a farce, because if the goods aren't there, your coupons are not worth the paper they are printed on. The shortages even made themselves felt in the hotels in which we foreigners were staying. In the "Kosmos" the English, asking for milk to put in their tea, used to get, with difficulty, about half a teacup of diluted powdered milk to share out between 4 - 6 people. The only vegetables to be served were potatoes and sauerkraut, with the occasional salted cucumber thrown in. Small pieces of carrot were occasionally to be found in soups. Fruit was served only once - a dish of tiny, half-ripe mandarins. Even in the "Beriozka" food shop in Moscow they only had these same mandarins and several bags of rather ancient, floury apples of uncertain origin.

The last year has seen the emergence of two "cheap" vodkas. The better of the two costs 4 roubles 75 kopecks a bottle, and was immediately dubbed "andropovka". The even cheaper one, which apparently only true dedicated drinkers can bring themselves to imbibe, goes under the nickname "Fershing": firstly because the shape of the bottle roughly resembles a rocket and secondly because it is said to be made from low-grade rocket fuel! However, it is unlikely that many will be

joking about "andropovka" for much longer if an incident which occurred while I was in Leningrad is any pointer. A workmate of one person I met in Leningrad (a worker from the Kirov factory) was arrested two days earlier in the so-called supermarket of his "micro-raion" when he asked for a bottle of "andropovka". A plain clothes KGB officer who was also in the queue, arrested him on the spot for "anti-Soviet statements". By the time I left Leningrad, it was still not known where the man was and what had happened to him after he was "taken away".

Vigilance by the "organs" is on the increase in every sphere of life. The girl who shared my hotel room (a student of Russian) had visited the USSR six months earlier and had met, by chance, a group of students whom she saw on three subsequent occasions before returning home. When she contacted them this time, she learned that one of them, who had escorted her back to the hotel door several times, was later taken in by the militia and beaten up so badly for "associating with a foreigner", that all his ribs were broken and he spent 2½ months in hospital. Luckily, his mother is a doctor and was able to pull some strings to get him adequate care. Instead of becoming afraid, however, these students became defiant, and met my room-mate nearly every day that I was in Leningrad. After the third such meeting, the one who had been beaten up earlier was detained again, this time by the KGB, and was kept and questioned the entire night in the "Big House" before being released with a caution. I saw him the next day and suggested that it might be better for him not to meet this girl again, but he said that he was "going to remember those broken ribs to his dying day" and had no intention of letting them railroad him, because there was no law saying that Soviet citizens cannot socialize with foreigners. That, I suppose, is one way how dissidents are formed...

Consumer goods are in just as short supply as they ever were, but I was told that now this means even trivial things such as salt-shakers are unavailable, and the black market is expanding accordingly, despite the tough measures instituted to cut down illicit trade, pilfering at work etc. The returns are just too lucrative to resist. On my last visit, hotel staff did not (as far as I know) approach the tourists with offers to buy from them (for roubles) goods available from the "Beriozk". This time, just about everyone in our group was approached, especially with requests to buy umbrellas (made in Japan) and blank "Maxell" TAPE cassettes. One waitress in the "Kosmos", we determined later, managed to acquire some 30 umbrellas by courtesy of our group. I was one of the first people she asked (because I'm Russian, I suppose), but I refused because I felt my position was precarious enough without

rendering myself liable for prosecution on charges of black-marketeering. In Leningrad several waiters asked me to get them cassettes and, as I had some money, I bought some, but refused to accept any money for them. The amount of buying and selling that goes on in these hotels is truly staggering. The staff of the "Moskva" hotel in Leningrad also supplement their incomes by providing prostitutes for the large parties of Finns who arrive every Friday night for "vodka weekends". These are really something to see: hordes of Finns, all drunk from morning till night, shouting in the hotel corridors at 3 a.m., banging on doors, breaking the furniture in their rooms and generally making thorough nuisances of themselves (especially to any woman careless enough to come within grabbing distance) have become a standard feature of life in the "Moskva" hotel from Friday until Sunday night. Payment for services rendered, I gathered from a conversation with one of the women on key duty on our floor, is usually in kind rather than money: jeans, pocket torches, tights, cosmetics. No matter how objectionable the behaviour of the Finns may be, the staff are instructed to raise no objections: nothing must be done to jeopardize the flow of money the Finns bring in. The "Beriozka" in the "Moskva" hotel stocks more alcohol than anything else. Finns who are too drunk to stand on their feet are dragged by their arms to their rooms by wooden-faced hotel staff, or are brought in slung over militiamen's shoulders like sacks of potatoes.

Miscellaneous:

1. I was told, both in Moscow and in Leningrad, that as of January, a six-day working week is being introduced. Workers in factories have already been told about this at specially-convened meetings.
2. In Leningrad I met a group of young Christians (Orthodox and Baptists) who are doing evangelism work with young drop-outs (they still call them 'hippies' there) and drug addicts. They travel widely in carrying out this work, and have been as far afield as Minsk and Ode. This was an extremely interesting meeting, because the scope of the problem is never aired in the Soviet press, and little is known generally of the drop-outs, how they live, how they are treated by the authorities, and so forth. The information I received at this meeting will be written up in a separate report.
3. A Baptist family which has been trying to emigrate for 8 years and which maintains links with people in the West had their phone cut off for 6 months several weeks ago. When they lodged an official complaint they got a letter saying that the phone was cut off because they had

"violated instruction No.74". Just what this "instruction" is was not explained.

3. Prakhmalnikova's husband had his phone cut off because, he was told, he was making "unacceptable" use of it.

4. Censorship of mail on the increase. People with no dissident connections corresponding with relatives or friends abroad ^{are} getting about one letter in three by their own estimates.

5. Several religious prisoners who are in "general regime" camps find that younger inmates (usually first offenders under the age of 25) are very interested in religion. One such prisoner has had to write up a version of the New Testament from memory, and this is currently being circulated around the camp.

6. Leningrad customs, through which we had to pass when we were leaving were even more stringent this time. My room-mate and I were immediately separated from the others and taken aside. I was given a very thorough body search. After they made me take off my boots, they even checked the soles of my feet - in case I had made notes on them, I suppose. Every seam of every item of clothing was "felt", but most attention was reserved for the few papers I had on me: map of Moscow and its metro, folders of cards of various museums (these had been given to me, and I tailored my fictitious account of my doings on tape to conform with these folders), "Beriozka" receipts, etc. The pickings were rather meagre, but they took everything away for examination nonetheless. Several more tourist groups were being "processed" at the same time (one flying back to Paris, another to Prague) so the customs area was a veritable beehive of activity. The three women searching me even apologised that I had to wait for a cabin to be freed so that they could strip me! I was rather amused to recognize one of them as having been a member of the "team" that worked me over 18 months ago.

7. On Monday 28th November, towards evening, the entire Red Square was cordoned off for no apparent reason. I was in the vicinity at the time, and heard the militia giving short shrift to anyone who tried to go into the square. No activity of any kind was going on in the square itself, but the militia ringed it like a human wall. I was later told by some of the foreign correspondents that word had got around that something was going to happen there, then at Pushkin Square, then somewhere else again. They all spent hours of fruitless cruising from one place to another without seeing anything of note.

17 Dec. 1983

Thematic appendices to follow separately

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ANDROPOV'S DEATH-BED LEGISLATION

Fear is the cornerstone of every totalitarian state, therefore, in order to ensure their further existence, totalitarian regimes must constantly invent new punitive measures until, finally, they are left with no option but undisguised terror tactics. A glance through recent issues of the Gazette of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR) draws a picture of a situation which is becoming increasingly reminiscent of Stalinist times.

For example, on 13 September 1983 (a week after the ending of the Madrid Helsinki review conference!) the Gazette published a decree with an amendment to the Criminal Code of the RSFSR. This was article 188³, the text of which is as follows:

Malicious disobedience of the orders given by administrative personnel of a penal-reform establishment.

"The malicious disobedience of orders given by administrative personnel of a penal-reform establishment, or any other form of opposing the administration by an individual serving a term of punishment in an institution for those deprived of liberty, if said individual has, in the course of a year been transferred to solitary confinement or transferred to prison for violating regime conditions, -

shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a period of up to 3 years.

The same actions carried out by an especially dangerous recidivist or an individual sentenced for a serious crime, -

shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a period from 1 to 5 years. "

This amendment went into force of law on 1 October 1983.

Until that time, the rearrest of prisoners after their release from camps and prisons necessarily involved bringing new charges, conducting new trials, etc. Now that the Criminal Code has been enriched by article 188³ the matter becomes considerably easier for the authorities. The prisoner need only be accused of "violating the regime" a few times, and his sentence can be prolonged by years without his being released.

On 11 January 1984 the ailing Andropov signed a number of new decrees. As well as appointing "comrade Sizenko E.I. to the post of minister for the meat and dairy industry," there are also several amendments to the Criminal Code. In the section dealing with crimes against the state. One of these, article 76¹ concerns:

"The passing, or collection with intent of passing to foreign organizations or their representatives of economic, technical, scientific or other "official use only information" by a person to whom this information was entrusted in the course of his duties, ^{or} which he learned by any other means".

The punishment is up to 3 years' deprivation of freedom. The wording of this article is not so much vague, as all-embracing. For example, an outraged shopper may discover stocks of food hidden in a supposedly empty shop (economic information), defective refrigeration equipment (scientific and technical information) is abused by the manager of the shop (other information), moreover, he comes across all this information not as a member of a "people's control" inspection group (work) but because he pushed his way into the shop despite the protests of the serving staff (other means). That evening, he might go and visit some friends and there encounter a

Bulgarian art critic who has been posted on assignment to the USSR by his Academy of Sciences (representative of a foreign organization) - and note, this article means any foreign organization - and, over a glass of vodka tells the foreign visitor about his highly upsetting day's experiences i.e. passes on to him the information he has collected.

Note also, that it is not publication or the use of "official use only information" by sinister "foreign organizations" that is a necessary condition for a crime to be considered committed: it will be so considered should the Bulgarian visitor prove timid (or zealous) and inform "the comrades in plain clothes" about his conversation.

Obviously, the above example is an exercise in the absurd, but it is easy to envisage a much more serious scenario, the more so that the nature of "official use only information" is nowhere defined. For example, is passing on information about a sentence brought down at a trial held behind closed doors "official use only information"? Or does that already constitute a "state secret"? What about lists of names of prisoners in this or that camp or prison? What about the ecological crisis and food shortages? Or statistics on crime, drug-addiction, suicide - in a word, all those things which are never mentioned on the pages of the Soviet press?

This article is clearly aimed at stifling any exchange of information whatsoever and is a clear violation of the guarantees of the Helsinki Agreements and other international legislation which is binding on the signatory states and which, in accord with international practice, must supercede national legislation should the two conflict.

Simultaneously with the above, another amendment went into law: this time to the frequently invoked article 70 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR ("anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda"). Full of repressive potential, it is a fitting note for the last weeks of the temporal life of the former head of the KGB.

Previously this article had consisted of two parts. First offenders were liable to a sentence of deprivation of freedom for a period of 6 months to 7 years with or without additional (internal) exile for a period of 2 to 5 years. Subsequent offences under this article raised the sentence to deprivation of freedom for a period of 3 to 10 years, with or without additional exile for 2 to 5 years. As of 1 February 1984 the article has been expanded to include:

" Actions carried out with the use of moneys or other material goods received from foreign organizations or from persons acting in the interests of such organizations".

The punishment or this additional infringement can bring the sentence up to 10 years' deprivation of freedom with or without additional exile for 5 years. In other words, material aid of any kind from abroad can be considered an aggravating circumstance in the crime. It could be extended to cover even something as trivial as receiving a pair of Western jeans. (N.B. material aid is going to be very hard to get through anyway as of 1 August 1984. The Soviet agency handling parcels with duty prepaid for addressees in the USSR (Vneshposyltorg) has officially served notice that from that date no more duty prepaid parcels will be allowed into the Soviet Union).

Please note: Compiled by Alyona for staff info only, not for publication! The article numbers cited are all as they appear in the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, and will have other numbers in the Codes of the other republics.

26 April 1984

MAB from AK

I learned yesterday evening that the Soviet Union will not, as of 1 August, accept any more parcels sent through Western companies (such as those used by ARC) where duty is prepaid: written notification of this will reach the companies concerned within the next few days. The measure extends to such organizations in all Western countries, not just the U.K.

This means that the only way left to send parcels will be on an individual basis, through the post, with the recipient paying all duties upon receipt. In practice, this will mean no parcels, because you know yourself what monstrous duties are levied for the most simple things. It also means that one will no longer be able to use fictitious names as senders, because if the parcel is returned, it would be to a non-existent person, whereas earlier they were returned to the despatching company for handing over to the "sender".

Effectively, this will mean no parcels to dissidents (or anyone else, for that matter!) I do not see what could be done to counter this, for the companies involved are really ad hoc creations resulting from the unnatural situation in the USSR, and it is unlikely that this measure by the Soviets could be interpreted as a breach of international trade or postal agreements.

Sending money with travellers so that X or Y could pay the duty upon receipt of a parcel from the West could also be very chancy: apart from the fact that this would involve very large sums, it could also place the Soviet citizen in question in a very dicey situation because of the recent amendment to the "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" article of the Criminal Code.

It seems to me that a further tightening up is on the way, and we'll have to watch events with extra care. For instance, I saw in the papers the other day that Chebrikov has been made a marshal: this is the first time since Beria that the chairman of the KGB has also held marshal's rank. I don't like the implications....