

Chairman of the KGB Yuri Andropov's memorandum to the Politburo.
December 29, 1975

Recently the bourgeois propaganda has been actively using the well-known statements of the leaders of the French and Italian Communist parties concerning the Soviet democracy, rights and freedoms of the citizens, and the interdiction of the activities of the anti-Soviet elements in their subversive work targeted against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Materials on this issue broadcast by the western radio stations become known to a wide circle of Soviet citizens, who express their confusion regarding such a position taken by the leadership of the Communist parties of France and Italy.

At the same time, the "special" views of the leaders of these parties lead to the increase in the activity of the hostile elements like Sakharov, Medvedev, and some others. They see in such views an expression of the "commonality" with their own position in the issue of "civil rights," "persecution of dissenters," and so on. According to our intelligence information, Sakharov recently said, "Marche's open action would not have been possible without the activity of the democrats." Medvedev stated in his inner circle, "The position of the Italian Communists reflects our opinions and beliefs." The fact that the wife of the notorious anti-Soviet [activist] Plushch wrote [a letter] to G. Marche, in which she especially emphasized that "Plushch shares many of G. Marche's views," is characteristic as well. Solzhenytsyn also used similar references in his anti-state activities.

The problem, which emerges in connection with the statements of some leaders of the Communist Parties of France and Italy, beside the ideological and theoretical aspect, also has a practical side, related to ensuring security of the Soviet state.

In this case, [our] friends obviously gave in faced with the propaganda pressure of the opponent. The thesis put forth by "Humanite" that in the conditions of socialism those, who "assert their disagreement with the system established by the majority," should be given freedom of action, objectively serves the enemies of socialism in their efforts to create a legal opposition in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and to undermine the leading role of the Communist and workers' parties.

Special services and the ideological centers of imperialism make every effort to slight the Soviet laws, to present them as old, dogmatic, and not appropriate to the spirit of international documents, specifically, the "Declaration of Human Rights." Anti-social elements inside our country cling to those claims. Unfortunately, the notorious statements regarding democratic freedoms under socialism, which appeared in the Communist press of France and Italy, speak to each other. In this case, they ignore the real conditions of class struggle in the current period, and underestimate the subversive activities of global imperialism and its agents.

Those comrades, who make such statements, do not want to see the fact that even in the conditions of developed socialism, notwithstanding its monolithic character and the

political unity of the society, anti-Soviet expressions could still exist to a smaller or larger extent, even after the events in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Our information shows the aspiration of the special services and ideological centers of the opponent to unite all the actions of the hostile elements of all shades. Especially active work is conducted with the purpose to create an anti-Soviet underground publishing organ, which would be designed to serve as an organizational center.

In their subversive activity against the Soviet Union the enemies count on those elements, who due to their past belonging to the exploiting classes, and the politically harmful and criminal activities, could chose the road of anti-Soviet struggle. In our country those elements are former KARATEL' and other assistants of the Fascist occupiers, Vlasov's troops, participants of the bandit armed underground in the Ukraine, in the Baltics, in Belorussia, in several regions of the Central Asia and Northern Caucasus, nationalist and other elements hostile to the Soviet regime. These people number in hundreds of thousands. Many of them have ISKUPIT' their guilt, and are now working honestly; however, there are such [people] in that sphere, who even now never misses a chance to inflict harm on the Soviet society, and who in certain conditions would take up open struggle, even an armed one.

The state security organs are undertaking measures to study the situation within the circles mentioned above and to monitor the actions of the people, who are developing anti-Soviet designs. Guided by the requirements of the Soviet laws, the KGB decisively disrupts the most dangerous crimes against the state.

As far as the measures of criminal persecution regarding the so-called "dissidents," which is how they refer in the West to the individuals, whose actions fall under the purview of articles 70 (anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda) and 190 (I) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federal Soviet Socialist Republic (dissemination of allegations known to be untrue, which POROCHIT the Soviet regime), the numbers here look as follows. In the period beginning in 1967 (Article 190 (I) was introduced in 1966) through 1975, the total of 1583 persons were sentenced under the articles named above. In the preceding period of nine years (1958-1966), the number of persons sentenced for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda was 3,448. By the way, in 1958, i.e., during the period, which is often referred to in the West as "the period of liberalization," during which N. S. Khrushchev made his statement about the absence of "facts of bringing people to court for political crimes" (January 27, 1959), 1,416 persons were sentenced under Article 70, i.e. almost the same number as in the entire period of the last nine years.

By the state of affairs on 20 December 1975, 860 persons are serving sentences in the labor correction institutions for especially grave crimes against state; among those, only 261, who are kept in two labor correction colonies, were convicted for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.

The occurring drop in the numbers of crimes against the state represents the result of the further strengthening of the moral and political unity of the Soviet society, the Soviet

people's dedication to the cause of socialism, and of the decisive disruption of anti-Soviet actions of the hostile elements.

In accordance with the directives of the XXIV Congress of the party and the CC CPSU, the state security organs are emphasizing the preventive and prophylactic work to prevent crimes against the state. During the period of 1971-1974, the total 63,108 persons were subject to the prophylactic work. In the same period, and only by the prophylactic methods, the activity of 1,839 anti-Soviet groups was disrupted at the formative stage. Prophylactic measures remain the main method of the organs' work.

Along with the prophylactic measures, operative and other measures short of criminal persecution have been and continue to be used. We were able to disrupt a number of groups of nationalist, revisionist, and other anti-Soviet character at a very early stage. Compromising of the leaders who inspired anti-social manifestations made it possible to prevent undesired consequences in several regions of the country. Such measures as stripping certain persons of their Soviet citizenship and exiling them abroad (Solzhenytsin, Chalidze, Maksimov, Krasin, Litvinov, Yesenin-Volpin and other) have proven to be effective as well. The permission for many extremists to emigrate from the Soviet Union to Israel also helped improve the operative situation.

At the same time, it would be impossible now to refrain from criminal persecution of the persons acting against the Soviet regime, because it would lead to the increase in the extremely grave crimes against the state and anti-social manifestations. Our experience shows that the activities of the "dissidents," which was initially limited to anti-Soviet propaganda, subsequently, in a number of cases, assumed such dangerous forms as terrorist actions, organized underground with the purpose of overthrowing the Soviet regime, establishing ties with foreign special services engaged in espionage, and others.

From the discussion above, it is clear that refraining from active counteraction against the politically harmful actions of the "dissidents" and other hostile elements, as the French and Italian comrades would want us to do, could lead to the most serious negative consequences. It seems to us that one cannot make principal concessions in this issue, because they would inevitably lead to additional demands unacceptable to us.

Everything stated above confirms the correctness of the line of our party for the decisive struggle for "protecting the Soviet society from actions of the hostile elements." In accordance with this [line], the state security organs will continue to disrupt decisively all kinds of anti-Soviet activity in the territory of our country. It would be expedient to implement the approach of a reasonable combination of the prophylactic and other operative-ChK measures with the measures of criminal persecution in those cases where it is necessary.

The KGB will keep a strict watch not to allow the so-called "dissidents" to create an organized anti-Soviet underground and to conduct anti-Soviet activities, including the ones "from the legal positions" (Sakharov's "committee for the defense of human rights,"

“Amnesty International group,” organizing meetings with certain political goals and the like).

It would be desirable to conduct appropriate conversations with the French and Italian comrades at an appropriate moment, in the course of which we should explain to them that the struggle against the so-called “dissidents” for us represents not an abstract question about democracy in general, but a vitally important necessity of defending the security of the Soviet state. Our measures to disrupt the activities of the “dissidents” and other anti-Soviet elements do not have any kind of “massive” character, but affect only certain individuals, who did not stop their activities even after appropriate official warnings. These measures are grounded in respect for the socialist legality, and exist in complete accordance with Lenin’s directives of development of the socialist democracy. When undertaking especially acute actions, we take into consideration the interests of [our] friends, who work in the conditions of bourgeois-democratic states, as far as it is possible.

In connection with the fact that the statements of the French and Italian comrades on the issue of democratic freedoms under socialism lead to concern among the Soviet people, it appears expedient to show the superiority of the Soviet state and society, the genuinely popular character of the Soviet democracy, and the vital interest of the working people of our country in unconditional respect for the laws, which grant the most extensive social and political rights to the Soviet citizens, more extensively in our propaganda. We should make a special emphasis on the fact that the Soviet Constitution presupposes the use of such rights and freedoms, including the freedom of speech and associations, only “in accordance with the interests of working people and for the purpose of strengthening of the socialist regime.” It is precisely on this class basis, in full accordance with the law, that the disruption of the anti-socialist activities of the “dissidents” is conducted. They are not convicted for “dissident thinking,” but for active criminal activities and subversive actions against the socialist regime. To stress that the antisocial actions of the hostile elements are connected with the influence of bourgeois propaganda, and with organized subversive activities of the imperialist special services and the anti-Soviet centers (Yakir, Dzyuba, Krasin and others have admitted such connections publicly).

To show that the real socialism represents the realization of Lenin’s ideas about the functioning and the role of the state in the period of building communism. To explain the essence of measures aimed at the defense of the achievements of socialism. To emphasize a special responsibility of the fraternal ruling parties for the future of the society and the state.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR STATE SECURITY.

[SIGNATURE]

ANDROPOV

Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive