

Brezhnev's Visit



Raab

As Brezhnev prepares to come to America—and perhaps to California—it is instructive to look at an article on the Jews which was published in *Pravda*, the official voice of his regime. To give you the flavor, the article accuses the “Zionists” of being directly involved in the Nazi slaughter of Jews, in “a dirty alliance with the Hitlerites . . . The tragedy of Babi Yar remains forever not only the embodiment of the cannibalism of the Hitlerites, but also the ineradicable shame of their accomplices and followers, the Zionists.”

As the old Russian joke goes: *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, the names of the two leading Soviet newspapers, mean *Truth* and *Beauty*—and one can expect to find neither truth in *Beauty* nor beauty in *Truth*. In this case the lack of truth is particularly ugly—and is designed to bolster every available anti-Semitic impulse among the Russian people.

But the main theme is of more substantive interest. The title of the article is “Anti-Sovietism—the Profession of the Zionists.” It says: “Zionism serves as one of the weapons of imperialism in its global struggle and subversive political struggle against the USSR and the entire world socialist system. The basic content of the policies of present-day Zionism is bellicose chauvinism, anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism.”

And so on and so forth. We know, of course, who the “Zionists” are, for *Pravda's* purposes: all of us, including any remaining members of the American Council for Judaism. We're all part of the capitalist-imperialist-Israeli conspiracy against the Soviet Union.

One purpose of this Soviet logic is to so intertwine the issues of Soviet Jewry and of Israel, that they seem a single piece of Jewish chicanery rather than a couple of pieces of Soviet chicanery. It's a global variation of an old Russian trick. And it's worked before.

It comes at a time when American opinion may be sliding in an adverse direction with respect to Israel. Either the energy crisis in the U.S. is real, or it is being exaggerated by the oil companies for political purposes. In either case, the pressure is on the U.S. to make greater accommodation to the Arab nations. (One hopes that the Israeli scientists are hard at work devising a practical source of energy which will reduce the world's dependence on decomposed fossils).

At the same time, Watergate and its aftermath may be having an effect on the U.S. game plan, which Nixon and Kissinger seemed to be pulling off: coexistence among the great powers based on a muscular balance of power. This Metternichean scheme, among other things, promised to maintain some stability in the Middle East, at least in the short range. But, some rotten foundations having been revealed, the Administration's entire structure of leadership seems to be tottering. It is symptomatic that Senator Fulbright's attack on Israel and on America's Middle East policy was renewed vigorously last week.

This tangled web requires some energetic unskewing. First of all, every effort must be made not to let the logic of the *Pravda* article prevail within our own country. It is a seductive logic, given the current Brezhnev siren call of both Peace and Profit. And the Jews generally—Soviet, Israeli and American Jews—can emerge as the villains if the *Pravda* logic sways public opinion. That is one reason why the attempt must be made to separate the issues.

The issue of Soviet Jewry, for example, must be isolated as a humanitarian issue for that reason. Otherwise it can be made to appear that American Jews are manufacturing and using a Soviet Jewry issue just to harrass the Soviet Union, for other purposes. And the issue of Soviet Jewry must be isolated, no less, for its own sake: lest it get lost, along with Soviet Jewry. And the question of Most-Favored-Nation status for the Soviet Union remains an important point around which to make this issue explicit.

That is why the organized Jewish community of San Francisco, Marin and the Peninsula is engaged in a special effort to keep all public officials and opinion-makers in this area informed about the separate and serious status of the Soviet Jewry problem. It will take not just noise, in this case, but some thoughtful and persistent educational strategy to steer American opinion away from the *Pravda* logic.

SAN FRANCISCO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY