

## The Washington Merry-Go-Round

# CIA Eavesdrops on Kremlin Chiefs

By Jack Anderson

The Central Intelligence Agency has been eavesdropping, incredibly, on the most private conversations of Kremlin and other world leaders.

For obvious security reasons, we can't give a clue as to how it's done. But we can state categorically that, for years, the CIA has been able to listen to the kingpins of the Kremlin banter, bicker and backbite among themselves.

A competent source, with access to the transcripts of the private Kremlin conversations, tells us that the Soviet leaders gossip about one another and complain about their ailments like old maids.

It is evident from the conversations that Leonid Brezhnev, the party chief, sometimes drinks too much vodka and suffers from hangovers. Premier Kosygin, however, is in poor health, and his complaints are more authentic.

One of their favorite pastimes is visiting a private clinic to get their aches soothed. Like fat capitalists at the end of a hard day in their plush suites, the Kremlin chiefs stop by for steam baths, rubdowns and other physical therapy.

Brezhnev, in a typical conversation, might grump about

his back pains and announce he's going to have Olga give him a massage. "Olga Oh ho!" President Nikolai Podgorny might chortle, as if he is quite familiar with the masseuse.

### Mao Close Up

Like the Kremlin crowd, the Red Chinese leaders are far less forbidding in private than they appear to the world. The mighty Mao Tse-tung, his appointed successor Lin Biao and Premier Chou En-lai are tired, old revolutionaries slowed down by the ravages of age.

Mao shares Brezhnev's taste for good food, strong drink and a woman's touch. But he is less grumpy and grim than the Soviet leader. There's an avuncular affability about Mao, and he has an infectious laugh.

But at 77, he walks slowly, though erectly, with his left arm dangling strangely. The CIA concluded from a careful study of film shots that Mao's eyes are dim from age. He seems unable to recognize old comrades until they are face to face.

The CIA has also caught the old fox using a ringer to stand in for him at long, dreary public parades. But it was the real Mao who made that publicized plunge in the Yangtze a couple years ago. The picture

of his moon face bobbing above the waves was carefully scrutinized by the CIA, which concluded after measuring his ears and other facial features that the swimmer was no double.

Pictures of world leaders routinely are blown up and studied by CIA doctors for clues to their health. Their behavior is also analyzed by CIA psychiatrists and psychologists.

Footnote: One of the CIA's greatest triumphs, heretofore untold, was fishing out some of the late Premier Nikita Khrushchev's excrement before it was flushed down the toilet. The great bathroom caper was pulled during his 1959 state visit to the U.S. The filched feces was eagerly analyzed by CIA medics who concluded that Khrushchev then was in excellent health for a man of his age and rotundity.

### Strong-Arm Tactics

One of the most notorious regimes in the American labor movement may be near its end.

Pete Weber, the strongman, \$136,000 a-year boss of the Operating Engineers in New Jersey, has gone to jail for extortion. His brother Ed, who ran for his job, has been beaten by Larry Cahill, an honest, veteran union man.

But there is life in the old Weber machine yet. Cahill's supporters were subjected to bullyboy tactics to coerce them going along with Ed Weber.

Cars with Cahill bumper stickers had their tires slashed and windows broken. Three Cahill men were beaten up. Others were laid off work by pro-Weber union foremen. Even the ballots were deceptively designed so that Cahill supporters would mark their ballots for Ed Weber.

Nevertheless, the challenger squeaked home by 149 votes. The count is official and final under the union constitution. But the Weber men are now trying to arrange a "recount". It would be carried out of course, by pro-Weber incumbent officers.

The man who could stop all this is the Engineer's international union President Hunter Wharton. Reached by telephone while eating lunch at La Chatelaine, a swanky Washington restaurant, Wharton made it clear he is still unwilling to buck the Weber crowd.

He claimed he had no official knowledge of Cahill's upset win. "We're not doing anything either way," he said. "We're not in the middle of it one way or another."

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