

Who Was Assassin's Target?

MOSCOW (AP) — A youth described by the Foreign Ministry as mentally deranged fired several pistol shots yesterday at a motorcade honoring the four newest space heroes and carrying two Soviet leaders.

A chauffeur and an escort riding a motorcycle were wounded.

Cosmonaut Georg Beregovoy, whose flight in Soyuz 3 last October blazed the way for the successful space link-up by the four last week, was cut on the neck by flying glass as a bullet struck the driver of his limousine.

There was speculation that the youth was aiming at Communist party chief Leonid I. Brezhnev and President Nikolai V. Podgorny, riding in a closed car behind. But the Foreign Ministry today in announcing the incident nearly 24 hours after it happened refused to confirm this.

The leaders were several cars behind Beregovoy's limousine.

The youth was grabbed by spectators and immediately arrested by the police. The Foreign Ministry refused to identify him or give a possible motive.

It seemed clear, however, that the youth was not aiming at the cosmonauts who rode Soyuz 4 and Soyuz 5 into orbit and achieved the world's first manned linkup and transfer of men from one spaceship to the other.

The four, Vladimir Shatalov, Boris Volynov, Alexei

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Yeliseyev and Yevgeny Khru-
nov, were standing in the
back of an open car. The
closed limousine carrying
Beregovoy was the second car
behind that of the four, who
would have been easy targets.

The reluctance of the For-
eign Ministry and other offi-
cial channels to elaborate on
the case gave rise to specula-
tion that there was more to
the incident than was immedi-
ately made public.

Firearms are strictly con-
trolled in the Soviet Union and
assassination attempts on
public figures here have not
been heard of for years.

The last known violence in
the Kremlin area occurred in
June, 1967, when a man car-
rying a homemade bomb was
blown up near Lenin's Tomb.
He was officially reported to
have been a criminal.

The shooting incident was
kept secret for nearly 24 hours
despite the presence of more
than 1,000 spectators at this
climactic point in the parade
near the Kremlin's Borovitsky
Gate.

The news came to light
when an unofficial Soviet
source with close government
contacts told some Western
reporters about it today.

A Foreign Ministry spokes-
man, confronted with the un-
official version, said, "The
facts as you have them took
place." He described the gun-
man as a "schizophrenic."

The Foreign Ministry
spokesman refused to discuss
the case further. A brief re-
port by the official news agen-
cy Tass later said only that
shots were fired at the car in
which Beregovoy and other
cosmonauts from earlier
flights were riding.

It was possible that officials
suppressed news of the shoot-
ing until the day after the pa-
rade, to avoid ruining the
triumphant ceremonies.

The four cosmonauts re-
mained unruffled by the inci-
dent. They went through the
ceremonies in the Kremlin
Palace of Congresses main
stage and showed no sign of
injury.

It was recalled that during
the televised Kremlin cerem-
onies, a messenger handed
notes to Brezhnev and Yuri
Andropov, chairman of the
KGB, the state security com-
mittee.

As Podgorny was pinning
medals on the four cosmo-
nauts, Andropov handed a
note to Brezhnev, who read it
with a serious expression.

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