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SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

Source: Victor V. Berezin

Date: 22 October, 1964

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Berezin came to the ^{with the low} M & R apartment for dinner. The visit was arranged a week earlier, when M & R first met B at Columbia Univ. He was at the apartment from 7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m.

General characteristics

B is very polite and definitely may be termed Kulturnyi. He apologized for being five minutes late, he apologized for eating a lot of bread with his meal, he even asked every time whether he could have a cigarette, although they were placed around the room, and he was asked several times to help himself. His table manners were impeccable, unlike those of some of his countrymen, his age.

Additional background info.

When war broke out (between the USSR and Germany), B was in Moscow, but after the air attacks started, B, then only 11 years old, was sent by his parents to his grandmother in the village. B's father was badly wounded in the war, and spent eight months in a hospital.

B could not attend school during the war, because the nearest one was two miles away "and you know, Russian winters, oh, very cold, snow." After the war, in 1947 there was great famine, worse than during the war, so B got a job, and attended the 11-year-school in the evenings.

He was married at 20, then joined the army for a little more than three years. He was in a service corps -- driving cars and

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SECRET

trucks, and for two months his group was attached to the artillery -- cleaning the big guns. *He ended up a sergeant.*

After his military service, B enrolled in the University of Moscow's journalism faculty for five years. His son was born when he was in the army. B misses his 10-year-old son, more than his wife.

He was impressed by M & R's apartments (2½ rooms), because he said, in Moscow, five of them live in a little smaller one. The five are: his parents, his wife and child, and himself.

When B worked for a year in Krasnoyarsk (150 rubles a month, plus a "fee" for every article and news item he wrote), B could not bring his wife with him, because the newspaper let him have only one very small room, "and that only after two months." The first two months there he lived with a friend.

B is a ~~member~~ ^{member} of the Com. Party, but he was almost embarrassed when he said it. Here's how the conversation developed:

B: I also worked in Virgin Lands. (He worked there in 1958 driving a combine, during summer vacations from University).

R: Oh, then you're a Komsomolets.

B: No, no, I'm not, ah, there were many students, not only Komsomoltsi in the Virgin Lands.

M: But you are a Komsomolets.

B: I was ... and then I wasn't, ah...

M: Tell, are you a member of Communist Party.

B: Yes, ... you see, I was a member of Komsomol, then when I was 25, I had to leave it. Only active members can stay in Komsomol longer. I wasn't active ... laughed.

SECRET

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B: I also worked in Virgin Lands. (He worked there in 1958 driving a combine, during summer vacations from University).

R: Oh, then you're a Komsomolists.

B: No, no, I'm not, ah, there were many students, not only Komsomolists in the Virgin Lands.

M: But you are a Komsomolists.

B: I was ... and then I wasn't, ah...

M: Well, are you a member of Communist Party.

B: Yes, ... you see, I was a member of Komsomol, then when I was 25, I had to leave it. Only active members can stay in Komsomol longer. I wasn't active. (laughed).

Then B explained, that he joined the Party three years ago.

Both M & R tried to talk about this in a way, that as far as they were concerned, there was nothing wrong with belonging to the CP. R showed genuine interest in the mechanics of joining the Party, and asked whether it wasn't true that a person just cannot join when he wants to, that he has to be asked to join, or approved by the party first.

B: Oh, no, you have to be a good student, and I was, I was studying well, and my character was sound (he smiled), so I became a member.

All through this B sounded very apologetic, almost trying to say that he joined the party purely out of convenience.

B is often critical of things in the Soviet Union, but he hasn't as yet said anything ~~about~~ against the US, other than that the prices here are higher than in the USSR. (The 150 rubles Amer. students get in Moscow is more than the \$180 we get here because a meal there is 55 kopecks and here -- \$1.20. Movies there are also a fraction of the American in admittance price, and similarly with books.)

B. emphasized several times that he did not like the fact that Adzhubey was fired from Izvestia. (B was eager to talk about the changes in Soviet leadership, but he, of course did not know any more than the average reader of the NY Times). B knew Adzhubey personally, because A is an alumnus of the journalism faculty of Moscow U. and he used to come back every year on May 5, Press Day, to celebrate and drink with the boys.

Berezin 44444

SECRET

"Adzhubey is like you and me. He's friendly. When he was with the journalism students he was like one of them."

B also approved of the changes of style in Izvestia, which he considers purely the work of Adzhubey. He expressed concern that now that A is gone, the newspaper will revert to its old dull style.

American cigarettes are better than the best Soviet ones, though he likes to smoke the Makhorka about once or twice a year.

There aren't any good cigarette lighters in the Soviet Union. They only make one kind, and it's no good. (B bought himself here a Zippo-type lighter, made in Japan, for 69 cents. He also wears an American rain coat. When asked whether the raincoat was Soviet, B laughed, and said "No, no, it's American" as if to say, "Don't be silly, they don't make them like this in USSR.")

He said he is not allowed to go beyond 25 miles from New York, without first notifying the State Dept. four days in advance.

R told him that of course he can. All he has to do is to get on a bus or train, and go, no one will stop him. But B said he would not do it.

He says that even if he went anywhere here, he could not tell a Navy ship from a merchant marine one. "But I know, I know, that Norfolk, Norfolk, is an important military navy base."

R said he knows it, because he can read it in any American magazine or newspaper, and B agreed that this is so.

SECRET

Berezin 55553

B goes to the Soviet UN Mission in New York quite often. He can buy cigarettes there for 26 cents a pack, and said that one of his friends bought ~~for~~ a ~~new~~ Soviet wristwatch, the finest, called "Wimpel" there for \$20.

This Saturday (Oct. 24) all four students and most of the staff from the UN Mission are going to Philadelphia, to sightsee.

A story related by B:

One of Khrushchev's sons was a pilot during the War. He was killed. His wife then left their young daughter, and took up with another man. The Khrushchev's took in the daughter ~~and she~~ to live with them. This daughter (K's granddaughter) was in the journalism faculty with B. While at university, the daughter married another student, from the faculty of economics. The Khrushchevs were very angry, and Nina Petrovna was to have said, "If you don't want to take our advice, then we don't want to know you." For a time, the young couple lived very poorly -- only on their student stipends. But later the Khrushchevs and the young couple were reconciled.

The daughter-in-law (the girl's mother), could not forgive herself for severing her relations with the Khrushchevs, after Nikita Bergeyevich came to power.