

Re: Ivan Serhiyevych KHMIL'S Comment on the Memo of Ukrainian American Intellectuals to Breshnev and Co

Source: # 6 - Occasional/Source

Date: 22 Jan 1968

1. On 31 Dec 1967 at the house of Levko (Leo) MAYSTRENKO of New York, N.Y. Source had a talk with KHMIL about the a/m memo. In the middle of the New Year's party at which Khmil was together with his wife, he raised the topic first asking Source whether he had had any replies to the memo.

2. In KHMIL'S opinion the memo was "too demanding". It should have been restricted to a minimum in its desiderata. In its present form at least 50% of demands and suggestions is to be discarded at once. It is also composed as a ultimatum and Khmil did not think this was right. Moreover, what real "power" was ^{represented} by all the people that signed the memo. Even if one assumes that twice as many would have signed ~~it~~ ~~then~~ then still, this gave them no right to put forward an ultimatum.

3. Khmil indicated also that he himself and his colleagues here in New York did ^{not} approve of the fact that the memo was not given or rather addressed to them as well.

4. Khmil wanted to know whether the group that had signed the memo would like to visit the Ukraine. When Source replied that perhaps they would and on this occasion would like also to visit Pot'ma Khmil pretended he did not know what Source was talking about. He did not even "know" what was Pot'ma. When Source explained to him that he was thinking of Chernovil and other prisoners in Pot'ma, Khmil said something to the effect, "what are you talking about, are you crazy, who is going to bring you there, Kolesova perhaps or who?" As to the arrests and persecutions themselves Khmil commented that

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"little boys were playing games"... It was not however clear whom he meant by "little boys", whether the KGB or the imprisoned. He also added that all systems are getting degenerated, without exception. So had said Marx and it applied also to the Soviet system. But the main thing was that even when the superstructure ~~was getting~~ rotten the basis continued to exist in its vital and healthy form.

5. Then Khmil suggested the group should publish a magazine. He explained he was not thinking of a Kosach-like paper but "a real magazine" based on the present-day-situation in the Ukraine and on positions, for instance, of the memo. In the course of further explanations, Khmil said that its editorial staff or rather contributors should include 50% of their (Soviet Ukrainian) people and it might be called "The Polemist". Its main purpose would be to start a real discussion between Kiev and the emigration. He also promised to help the New York Group of Artists to get printed in Soviet magazines ~~xxxxxxxx~~ as he had good contacts with publishing houses ^{in Kiev}. He had friends there, and in a few months time he was going to ~~xxxx~~ return to Kiev for good. He was even willing to take some articles, or whatever material ^{there} was, with him now.