

## Editor's Note

This issue begins with an article by Douglas Selvage analyzing the Soviet and East German disinformation campaign in the 1980s regarding the origin and nature of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that causes the disease known as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). This is the second part of a two-part article (the first part was published in the Fall 2019 issue of the JCWS). In 1983 the Soviet State Security Committee (KGB) began spreading false rumors worldwide that HIV and AIDS originated not from diseased monkeys in Africa but from biological weapons experiments supposedly being carried out by U.S. military scientists at Fort Detrick in Maryland. Those rumors were baseless, but over the next several years the KGB aggressively tried to disseminate them around the world using a variety of deceptive tactics. In the first part of the article, Selvage explained how the KGB enlisted the East German Ministry for State Security (Stasi) in the mid-1980s to expand the disinformation campaign. In that article, Selvage focused on the 1985–1986 period, whereas in this part he covers 1987–1989, when the Stasi took on an ever more important role in the disinformation effort, going well beyond the more limited activities it pursued earlier. Selvage's two-part discussion is especially timely in light of the Russian and Chinese disinformation that has accompanied the global COVID-19 pandemic of 2020–2021. In effect, Russian and Chinese intelligence agencies in 2020 picked up where the KGB and Stasi had left off some three decades earlier.

The next article, by Bent Boel, is one of two centenary articles pertaining to the great Soviet physicist and human rights activist Andrei Sakharov, who was born 100 years ago, in May 1921. Boel discusses how the International Sakharov Hearings held from 1975 to 1985 affected the larger context of the Cold War. The hearings began in Copenhagen in 1975 and resumed in Rome in 1977 and Washington, DC, in 1979. After a four-year hiatus connected in part with the Soviet regime's decision in early 1980 to exile Sakharov to Gorky after he condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979, the hearings resumed in Lisbon in 1983 at a time of acute superpower tension. The final round of the International Sakharov Hearings was held in London in 1985. The hearings were initiated as a way for citizens to hold accountable the governments that signed the Helsinki Final Act in August 1975 after some two years of negotiations under the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The CSCE agreements contained provisions relating to, among other things, human rights and increased contacts, and the goal of the Sakharov Hearings was to shed light on the human rights situation in the USSR and evaluate the Soviet government's record in fulfilling (or violating) the obligations it had taken on through CSCE. Boel shows how the hearings evolved over the decade in which they took place, amid major fluctuations in the Cold War. The hearings, he concludes, were an example

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of how citizens' initiatives could bring pressure to bear on the two superpowers at various junctures of the Cold War—over Vietnam in the case of the United States in the late 1960s, and over human rights in the case of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries.

The next article, by Barbara Martin, discusses the differing views among Soviet human rights dissidents regarding East-West détente and the role of the West in pushing the Soviet Union to curb its violations of basic human rights. The dissidents supported both human rights and East-West détente, but after 1968 they diverged in their views of the role of the West. Many, such as Andrei Sakharov, no longer believed that the Soviet system under Leonid Brezhnev could be democratically reformed. They urged Western governments to link détente and East-West trade with Soviet respect for human rights. By contrast, a few Soviet dissidents who still had faith in the Soviet system even after the August 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, such as Roy Medvedev, argued that détente should take priority and that linkage between the two was undesirable. Not until after Mikhail Gorbachev embarked on far-reaching liberalization and democratization in the USSR in the late 1980s, along with fundamental improvements in East-West relations that ended the Cold War, was the debate clearly resolved in favor of Sakharov's position.

The next article, by Étienne Forestier-Peyrat, discusses how the make-up of the Soviet state, with ethnically based union-republics, affected Soviet foreign policy (and vice versa) during the first two decades of the Cold War, when the decolonization of European overseas empires was proceeding apace. Playing down the oppressive centralization of the Soviet ethnofederal system, officials in Moscow sought to promote the arrangements in the USSR as models to be emulated by newly independent Third World countries. Yet, even as Soviet representatives made vigorous efforts to showcase the structures in the USSR, their own government was coming under criticism in the West and elsewhere for pursuing “colonial” and “imperialist” policies toward East-Central European countries and the Soviet union-republics outside the Russian Republic. Under Nikita Khrushchev, attempts to reform the links between the central Soviet regime and the union-republics, overseen by a committee chaired by Khrushchev's close aide Anastas Mikoyan, took account of the external criticism as well as complaints at home, though in the end little of substance changed. Forestier-Peyrat explores the interaction between Soviet foreign policy considerations and the domestic debates within the USSR against the backdrop of the Cold War.

The next article, by Alsu Tagirova, recounts the efforts by Soviet and Chinese officials from 1969 to 1978 to resolve their border disputes. In the 1950s the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (PRC) had been staunchly allied against the United States, but by the end of the decade the two Communist great powers had split angrily apart. In March and August 1969, the conflict between the two had sparked fierce armed clashes along their border, leading to fears that a wider war might ensue. The negotiations that began at high levels in September 1969 and continued until 1978 were designed to prevent further violence and resolve the border differences, but ultimately the talks produced no concrete movement toward a settlement. International

events and domestic political changes (especially the deaths of the Chinese leaders Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in 1976) buffeted the talks, and Tagirova shows that after a rocky start amid deep suspicion on both sides, the talks served mostly as a vehicle for the two countries to strengthen their international positions. Of particular importance was the increasingly close relationship between the PRC and the United States, culminating in a quasi-alliance against the Soviet Union by the late 1970s, with intelligence sharing and eventually weapons sales from the United States to China.

The issue includes a forum on a recently published book, *Stalin and the Fate of Europe: The Postwar Struggle for Sovereignty*, by Norman M. Naimark. We enlisted three experts to provide commentaries on the book, and we are publishing the commentaries seriatim along with a reply from Naimark.

The issue ends with ten shorter book reviews.