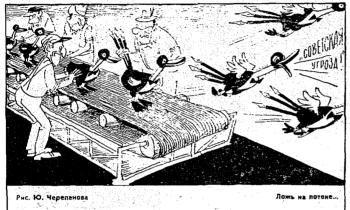
Slow and limited unfolding

sion of events and then answered questions for reporters. The press conference had been televised and Ogarkov used large maps and diagrams to illustrate his remarks. New releases containing his full statement were issued by Soviet embassies around the world.

This, then, was the first full-scale official Soviet response to Western charges of infamy. It is worth noting that the counter-attack came from the military and not from Andropov; but the gist of Ogarkov's message differed little from earlier official statements: the flight had been on a spy mission and its "termination" had been proper. In keeping with previous practices, the daily cartoon portrayed a "western centre of disinformation expanding the psychological war against socialist countries." The birds flying off the "assembly line" are quacking "Soviet threat!"



All subsequent stories in Pravda and Izvestiia (and caricature) have merely confirmed everything printed up to September 10. The fact that there were 269 people on board the aircraft was reported in the Soviet Russian national newspaper, Sovetskaia Rossiia (September 9) and two days later Pravda went so far as to intimate that American citizens had been among the victims of the "provocation" which caused Soviet pilots to "terminate" the flight. But both notices were almost in passing and were so buried within a barrage of anti-American invective that a reader would have to be especially astute to recognize them as jarring notes in the by-then patented Soviet version of events. The widely-quoted suggestions by Soviet delegates (including Pravda's own Chief Editor, Victor Grigor'evich Afanas'ev) to various meetings outside of the USSR to the effect that the destruction of the plane had been an error in judgment have not even been hinted at in the Soviet media.

Belief-systems versus facts — there and here

Does this mean only that the Soviet government afraid of admitting mistakes and of telling the truth to public? Perhaps; but such reporting is also a product belief-system. Accusations which strike Western reader ludicrous may not seem so far-fetched to Soviet edito writers and their audience. By way of explanation, let recall observations published nearly a quarter of a cent ago by an American social psychologist who visited Soviet Union in 1960, one month after the U2 inciden

The American professor, who spoke Russian fluer took advantage of his stay in Moscow to undertake w ranging talks with Soviet citizens with whom he struck conversations in parks, on the street, in restaurants or the metro. From these discussions, he came to what were him startling conclusions, that is, that "the Russians' Ìn torted picture of us was curiously similar to our view of them - a mirror image." Almost all of the images which view and other Americans had of the Soviet Union in 1960nd that that it was aggressive; that the government exploited romin deceived people; that the mass of people were not sym We thetic to the regime; that Russians could not be trust bin and that their policy "verged on madness" - were alm the exactly the impression that the ordinary Soviet citizen thei of Americans and their government. Moreover, the visit ave Urie Bronfenbrenner of Cornell, found to his amazeme rela that the great majority of people to whom he spoke dem fou strated a genuine pride in the accomplishments of the the system and were convinced that communism was the wa inte of the future. Whatever the merits or weaknesses of Bro Ôν fenbrenner's findings, his conclusions about the tender of most distant observers of societies other than their de Rrin to assimilate new perceptions to old ones, or readily day, believe evidence for viewpoints already held, warrient a sitie recollection.

The U2 incident, in fact, marked the first occasion le Car which many United States citizens realized that their other in government was capable of systematically lying to them for d the Soviet case, however, the media and government trehind ment of the KAL affair will not have the same consequence. With few exceptions, the conditioned arcure isolated Soviet reader will assume the version it reads to ian will accurate, and will pay little attention to rumors or forebone H broadcasting to the contrary. He or she will accept car iffere ture as fact and Lenin's warning of 1921 will continue rante have as much validity for the Soviet media and public a journ did over sixty years ago.

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