

# **‘The Shadows of Staraya Square’: The Central Committee Apparatus as a Soviet ‘Deep State’**

“Layers and Connections of the Political”

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## Abstract

The Party Organs Department for the Union Republics, the most important department within the Apparatus, was the conduit for the communication and transmission of Moscow's instructions with responsibility for supervising the communist parties in the Soviet Republics. This department's activities can tell us a great deal about how the Soviet Communist Party's Apparatus operated in the Khrushchev era. The Department for Union Republics fell under the control of conservative hardliners within the Kremlin leadership in the late 1950s who used it to replace regional leaders who were increasingly promoting a nationalist agenda in a wave of purges over a thirty-month period between 1958 and 1961. These purges were designed to remove local leaders promoting a nationalist agenda and to confront centrifugal tendencies within the Party's republican branches. The Department manipulated Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's opinion about the threat of nationalism in the Soviet periphery. In this paper, I argue that the Apparatus was acting as a Soviet 'Deep State', working to achieve its own objectives and explain how the Department played the pivotal role in executing purges in ten Republics between 1958 and 1961, which had serious consequences for Khrushchev's rule and the balance of centre-periphery relations in the USSR.

## Author information

**Michael Loader** received his PhD in the History of the Soviet Union from King's College London in 2015 with a thesis entitled 'The Thaw in Soviet Latvia: National Politics 1953-1959'. He has held Postdoctoral Fellowships at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow and the Institute of Russian and Eurasian Studies at Uppsala University. He is currently a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow at the Department of Central and East European Studies at the University of Glasgow and is also the Assistant Editor of the Journal of Baltic Studies. His research interests include the workings of the Soviet Communist Party, nationality politics, centre-periphery relations and the Soviet Baltic. His publications have appeared in Europe-Asia Studies, Nationalities Papers, the Slavonic and East European Review and the Journal of Baltic Studies.

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**Friday, 18 June** - Session 8 - **14,00-16,00 CET (Webex)** - APH Forum for young scholars on "Institutions"

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