

Party Conference did not help Gorbachov

by Konstantin George

Contrary to most Western media, the Soviet Party Conference which began in Moscow on June 28 marked a stinging defeat for Mikhail Gorbachov. The conference certified the removal of the general secretary from exercising any real power, by passing a resolution on establishing a "new" presidency, under which Gorbachov will be kicked upstairs into that new post. The conference also marked a resounding victory for the hardline, Russian chauvinist party majority, exemplified by, among others, the boss of the Central Committee Secretariat, Politburo member Yegor Ligachov.

Ligachov's speech on the concluding day of the conference, July 1, spelled out who really holds the power in the Soviet leadership. Gorbachov was selected for his post in March 1985, Ligachov said, "thanks to the firmly taken decision" by "myself," KGB boss Viktor Chebrikov, and Politburo members Mikhail Solomentsev and Andrei Gromyko. Ligachov and Chebrikov were not even Politburo members at the time. The implication: "We put you in, therefore we can knock you out."

Ligachov's speech was repeatedly interrupted with what *Pravda* termed "prolonged applause," whereas Gorbachov's closing speech on the same day received only "applause."

The conference revealed how little power Gorbachov actually has, by defeating his proposal for the new post of President. On July 5, the Soviet press, following a Politburo meeting of the day before, published the proposals adopted by the conference. The conference indeed had passed a proposal creating a third chamber of parliament, the Congress of People's Deputies, and agreed that this "standing chamber" would "elect a new President," roughly as Gorbachov had proposed in his opening speech to the conference. However, the *substance* of what Gorbachov had proposed, namely that the new President also be chairman of the National Defense Council and have broad powers concerning foreign policy and defense, was *rejected*.

The economic crisis

The real issues of the party conference, however, were not matters of personality, but rather, the economic crisis of the Soviet bloc and the U.S.S.R., and the urgent need to adopt measures now to deal with the crisis. *EIR* stressed this point in our coverage of the conference last issue. The over-

whelming majority of speeches at the conference were a catalogue of statements demanding that measures be taken to stop the worst food and consumer goods shortages in decades, to turn around the collapse in living and health standards, and to establish rigid autarchy (including "food self-sufficiency," i.e., to eliminate large-scale food imports from the West) as soon as possible.

The intersection of this crisis with the political faction fight was highlighted by the fact that Ligachov, in his capacity as head of the Central Committee Secretariat, was confirmed to be in overall charge of economic policy.

Three days after the conference, on July 4, the Politburo convened for an emergency discussion on the economic crisis. That meeting produced an announcement that a Central Committee Plenum to deal with the economic crisis would be held "at the end of July," with a bare three weeks' notice. Several commissions were announced, each consisting of leading members of the Politburo and Central Committee Secretariat, to draft measures to deal with the economic mess, for submission to the plenum.

The next day, July 5, a meeting of prime ministers of the Comecon countries was opened in Prague, Czechoslovakia. As Radio Moscow reported, the meeting was ordered to "discuss the urgent question of increasing socialist economic integration." "Increasing socialist economist integration" is Russian jargon for 1) increasing bloc autarchy, and 2) increasing the rate of looting of the satellites by Russia through such new "qualitative" means as "direct links between enterprises" in the satellite countries and the U.S.S.R., and increased "joint projects" on Soviet soil, where the Comecon "partners" contribute half the cost.

Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov's speech to the gathering confirmed what *EIR* has repeatedly underscored: the drive for increased bloc autarchy. Ryzhkov angrily reported that trade within the Comecon has stagnated at "an intolerably low level," recording only a 4% increase since 1985, and that the heavy increase demanded by Moscow cannot occur without introducing increased "socialist economic integration," through such means as "direct links between enterprises."

For the Soviet goals to materialize, new policies sharply curtailing the Western creditors' looting of Eastern Europe are required, leading to a sharp reduction in East-West trade by the satellites. Such a shift can be expected in the coming months.

Russian chauvinism rides high

Another theme used by the Western media to portray a false picture of the Soviet Party Conference, was the nationality question. The Russian Empire is being hit with explosions of unrest from the populations of the Captive Nations; but the dynamic that emerged from the conference regarding the "nationalities question" was not what the TV commentators of the West portray. The conference, coming right on

the heels of the June celebrations of the Millennium of the Russian Church, marked a new high point in the rising tide of Russian nationalism.

Crucial passages of Ligachov's speech dealing with this matter were never reported in the West, even though they could be read in the pages of *Pravda*. Using the language of Stalin, Ligachov denounced the liberals, such as ousted Moscow party chief Boris Yeltsin, for giving aid "to the enemy abroad," denounced the *glasnost* campaign in the Soviet media for portraying only the negative features of the Stalin era, telling the delegates that in the 1930s and 1940s "what heroic things our people did, despite the cult of personality." Most significant of all, Ligachov announced his endorsement of the conference speech given by Yuri Bondarev, head of the Russian Republic Writers Union, and an ultra-chauvinist.

Bondarev's speech, reprinted in *Pravda*, was a harangue against the *glasnost* euphoria in the Soviet press, which is "demolishing, destroying, and tearing down into latrine holes everything that lived before, the past, our national things that are sacred; the country's sacrifices for the Fatherland War, our cultural traditions, effacing from consciousness the people's memory, faith, and hope. This press is erecting an ugly monument to our ignorance . . . which is going to be remembered in shame and damnation. . . . What had been called 'Fatherland' and 'Patriotism' now call forth invective, and today are called 'chauvinism' and 'the Black Hundreds.' " This was followed by a litany of examples of what one hears today from Soviet media representatives, whom, using the same term as the Russian chauvinist Pamyat Society, he denounced as "extremists."

"When I read in our press that the Russians never had any territory of their own, that veterans of labor and the war are emerging as 'potential enemies of *perestroika*.' . . . When I hear that such magazines as *Nash Sovremenik* and *Molodaya Gvardiya* [two Russian chauvinist and anti-Semitic monthlies] are promoting hatred . . . that stability is the 'worst thing that can exist (so, they mean that the healthy thing is to break down the economy and culture into chaos). . . . When I read that 'fascism appeared first in Russia at the beginning of this century' and not in Italy, and when I hear that [Nazi collaborator] General Vlasov 'fought against Stalin' and not against the Soviet people, [this signifies] emptying the souls of our youth with anarchy and empty sensations, foreign fashions, and cheap demagogical games." *Pravda* reported that these remarks were received with "thunderous applause."

Bondarev praised as shining examples for the youth the "village prose" Russian nationalist writers, naming Valentin Rasputin, and also *Molodaya Gvardiya's* chief editor, Anatoli Ivanov, and the Pamyat-member icon painter, Ilya Glazunov. This trend-setting speech, which stopped just short of endorsing Pamyat by name, never made it into the Western media's censorship of the Soviet media's censorship of the closed conference.

Eastern Mediterranean region on fire

by Thierry Lalevée

The July 11 terrorist bloodbath aboard the Greek *City of Poros* cruiser, which killed nine and left dozens badly wounded, is a very serious warning that not only Greece, but the entire Eastern Mediterranean region, has been targeted for immediate destabilization.

The atrocity followed a June 18 assassination attempt against Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Özal, and the June 28 assassination of the local representative of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, Capt. William Nordeen, in Athens by the "November 17" organization.

Since the beginning of the year, Greece has witnessed dozens of violent terrorist actions, starting with a failed Jan. 21 attempt to assassinate the representative of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, George Caros, also claimed by "November 17." This was followed on March 1 by the assassination of a leading industrialist, Alexandros Aphanassiatis, a series of bombings of U.S. servicemen's night clubs, and the sabotage of Turkish diplomatic cars, among others.

As of this writing, the terrorist spree has been claimed by a variety of organizations, from the ubiquitous "Islamic Jihad," which promised "more to come," to the shadowy "Organization of Palestinian Martyrs," which claimed to have hit U.S. servicemen and "Zionist spies." The situation became even more confused when Washington said it thought that "any Iranian connection was unlikely." Clearly, Washington doesn't want anything to spoil its negotiations with Teheran. Instead, the State Department suggested that the terrorists may have wanted to take some hostages to secure the release of one Muhammad Rashid, arrested in Athens on May 30, who went on trial on July 13. Then, it was said that Washington considered the Abu Nidal track plausible, or even blamed the shadowy "Colonel Hawary."

Hence, so far there is neither a clearly defined claim, nor any serious explanation of the aim of the atrocity. More mysterious still is the fact that two accomplices of the terrorists died a few hours before, when their car blew up. Was it an accident, or were they killed preemptively? By whom?

Pending further clarification, the Greek authorities should concentrate on the obvious, that the operation had no other aim than to provoke a bloodbath for its own sake. They can also concentrate on the networks that are known to be active within Greece as logistical support. This especially includes the Libyan's People's Bureau.

A few days before the attack, *EIR's Middle East Insider*