

The new Soviet Central Committee and Politburo

The 26th Soviet Communist Party Congress made no changes in the 14-member ruling Politburo or its 8 alternate members, despite the high average age of the full members: 70 years. But advances by career associates and even family members of General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, below the Politburo level, demonstrated the control Brezhnev continues to exert over the party.

The Politburo is the executive of the larger national party leadership group, the Central Committee (CC). Future Politburo members will most probably be drawn from the Central Committee. The turnover in the CC, which went up to 319 members from 256, reflects policy priorities associated with the new members' jobs.

Brezhnev's foreign policy aide, A. Aleksandrov-Agentov, was promoted to full member of the CC. Two more of his personal aides, A. I. Blatov and V. I. Golikov, became CC alternates, as did his doctor.

Yuri Brezhnev, the First Deputy Foreign Trade Minister and son of the general secretary, joined the CC as an alternate. The party chief in Brezhnev's home city of Dnepropetrovsk, vaulted to full CC membership, one of a few municipal party officials on the CC.

Brezhnev's gains encompassed the state security organizations as well. The only CC promotions among officers of the KGB, the security agency whose foreign affairs sections have often sabotaged Brezhnev's foreign policy, were First Deputy Chairman S. K. Tsvigun and two deputy chairmen, G. K. Tsinev and V. M. Chebrkof, known as Brezhnev's watchdogs in the KGB. All three rose to full CC status. From the Interior Ministry (police), First Deputy Chairman Yu. M. Churbanov, Brezhnev's son-in-law, became a CC alternate.

Industry promotions

Eleven officials heading or working in a national industrial ministry came onto the CC and 12 became alternates, most of them taking the seat of a retired or deceased predecessor, with important exceptions.

Not only did Minister of the Defense Industry P. V. Finogenov take the CC seat of his deceased predecessor, but First Deputy Defense Industry Minister L. A. Voronin became a full member as well. The party official for the defense industry, CC department chief I.D. Serbin, died on the eve of the party congress and

was immediately replaced as a CC alternate member by his deputy, I. F. Dmitriyev. The CC contingent from Gosplan, the state central planning organization, was increased by two men, and Gosbank (state bank) chief V. S. Alkhimov became an alternate.

Other Central Committee additions from government who were not merely filling a vacated seat included the chiefs of vital energy industries: the ministers of Power Machine Building and of the Natural Gas Industry, as well as the Automotive Industry minister, became full CC members. The minister of Fertilizers, heading a new government division, is a CC alternate.

Party apparat boosted

The addition of 11 military officers, among them two admirals and several important military district commanders (those for Central Asia and the Transbaikalian District near the Chinese border, for instance), maintained the military's CC representation at 7 percent of the combined CC and alternate membership.

Most of the promotions from regional party organizations were to replace their predecessors. The appointment of several new CC members and alternates from the provincial and municipal party organizations of Leningrad, however, pointed to a possible growth in stature for Grigorii Romanov, the Leningrad party organization First Secretary. At 56 the second-youngest full member of the Politburo, Romanov is bound to figure in the eventual leadership succession.

There was also an apparent decision to raise the authority of the Central Committee's own apparat, especially the sections dealing with the national economy, to increase central control of the economy through the party. There was a net gain of 17 CC members and alternates from within the CC apparat, bringing this contingent to over 10 percent of the total CC membership. Among those promoted were nine department chiefs and deputy chiefs who had served since the 1960s without CC status, including officials from the departments of construction, transport and communications, heavy industry, and other departments.

IMEMO, International Section

Despite the assertion of Brezhnev's control over the congress and over policy, the source of the destabilization track of Soviet foreign policy remains well-ensconced in the Central Committee. V. V. Zagladin and G. I. Chernyayev, subordinates of CC Secretary Boris Ponomarev in the CC International Department for relations with communists in the West and the Third World, rose to full CC membership. So did think-tankers G. A. Arbatov and N. N. Inozemtsev, who respectively head the U.S.A.-Canada Institute and the Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO).