

Inside the Soviet garrison state: Everything goes for the war buildup

by Rachel Douglas and Clifford Gaddy

The May 1984 conference of Komsomol (Communist Youth League) secretaries in the Armed Forces was treated as an occasion of national significance in the U.S.S.R., out of all proportion to its "protocol" ranking as an event. The party Politburo and the top leadership of the military turned out for a rally that can be understood as a keynote for the war mobilization of the Soviet Union.

In his May 28 speech to the conference, party chief Konstantin Chernenko exhorted Soviet youth to "hate" the enemies of the Soviet *Rodina*—"Motherland." Chernenko's xenophobic rhetoric served to underline the increasingly spartan character of the Soviet system, in what the country's leaders insist is a pre-war period. Far-reaching changes in the school system—the virtual abandonment of general education in favor of military and vocational training—and purges in the economic apparatus further document the shift now under way.

Chernenko's predecessor, Yuri Andropov, disappeared from public view on Aug. 18, 1983, just two weeks before KAL Flight 007 was shot down over Sakhalin Island. On Feb. 10, 1984, he was pronounced dead and Chernenko installed in his place—first as party General Secretary, and then in April as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (President). Party hack Chernenko, revived from political near-oblivion, came to the pinnacle of the Soviet hierarchy as a man bereft of the kind of base that would allow him to take independent action—just the figurehead needed by the military during the looming strategic confrontation with the West.

After the disappearance of Andropov and the KAL 007 shooting, the Soviet High Command stepped forward publicly as the real leadership of the country. The officers of the General Staff—Chief of Staff Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, 1st Deputy Chief of Staff Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, and Col. Gen. Nikolai Chervov, who heads the General Staff's department for treaties and legal matters (the post Ogarkov held when he was the General Staff's case officer for SALT, in the early 1970s)—appeared repeatedly at press conferences to present national policy on everything from the destruction of KAL 007 to arms control. They spoke on their own authority, with no party watchdogs to stand guard over their political orthodoxy. Military publications played up the importance of *yedionachaliye*, or "one-man-command," which

in Soviet parlance denotes the ultimate authority of the military commander to take critical decisions, free of party interference.

So Chernenko came to power with the imprimatur of the marshals. The military press resurrected his dubious military career—as a member of the bloody-handed secret service border troops during the Great Purges of the 1930s—to build him up as a straight-shooting, tough man of the hour. Addressing the Komsomol leaders, Chernenko dutifully spelled out the military's program of spartan "patriotic" education of Soviet youth, while Marshals Ogarkov, Ustinov, and Kulikov looked on in approval:

Our Army Komsomol keeps sacred and adds to the wonderful traditions of its fathers. Substantial proof of this lies in the internationalist duty fulfilled with honor today by Komsomol servicemen. . . .

Our Army is strong not only in its modern equipment and good training but also in being charged with ideological awareness and in its lofty moral and political spirit. . . .

As we move toward a notable jubilee—the 40th anniversary of the Soviet people's victory in the Great Patriotic War—work in military-political education must be undertaken more widely. With even more insistence, *feelings must be nurtured in young people of love for the Motherland and hatred for its enemies*, of lofty political and class vigilance, and of constant readiness to carry out great deeds.

Following this line of policy, the Kremlin has imposed severe restrictions on contact between Soviet citizens and foreigners. In February, government decrees made the disclosure of statistics or other information related to the Soviet economy a crime equivalent to the disclosure of military secrets; punishment is death. Then in May, with the Soviet decision not to participate in the Olympic Games in Los Angeles, came an upsurge of xenophobic propaganda. Practically every U.S. diplomat is a spy bent on subversion of the Soviet Motherland, Russians are being told, while the KGB works overtime to entrap diplomats and foreign military personnel so as to "prove" the case. The KGB-linked weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta* outdid itself on Aug. 8, with

a feature comparing the 1984 Olympics in "Reagan's Los Angeles" to the 1936 games in "Hitler's Berlin."

Chernenko's speech and such propaganda may seem absurd, but they are deadly serious in their purpose: to mobilize the U.S.S.R. for war. So are recent developments in other vital areas, education, and the economy.

Spartan education

On Jan. 4, 1984, the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party promulgated draft "Guidelines for the Reform of the General Education and Vocational School." This far-reaching reform will make the U.S.S.R. a full-fledged garrison state on the model of ancient Sparta. Students are to be forced into the work force at an earlier age, with only a small minority admitted to the universities. Rigorous military training, including field exercises and attendance at militarized summer camps, is instituted across the board.

The party commission that drafted the reform was headed by Chernenko, but the idea of a reform came from the military. In his 1982 book, *Always Ready to Defend the Fatherland*, Marshal Ogarkov emphasized the importance of educating young people for the needs of defense. He called for: 1) an expansion of elementary military training in schools, 2) sports activities with military significance, 3) upgrading Russian language training, and 4) instilling patriotism in youth.

Each of these four points is incorporated in the 1984 school reform legislation, in addition to other measures for the spartanization of Soviet schools by the virtual abolition of general education. The existing general education secondary schools are to be merged with vocational schools, leading ultimately to universal vocational training for young people. The school entrance age will be lowered from seven years to six, making it possible to move teenagers into the work force at an earlier age. In order to facilitate this, the current ban on child labor in the Soviet Union is being lifted.

Colonel S. Konobeyev, deputy head of the Defense Ministry's program for military training in schools, pushed for an even more radical militarization of the schools than originally proposed. In a Feb. 1 article in the military daily *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*), he proposed the following additional steps: every Soviet school should have a vice-principal in charge of military training of pupils; a 50% increase in the hours devoted to elementary military training; six full days of military field exercises for each pupil in the final two grades of high school; a program of summer "defense-sport" camps for youngsters of 15 and over; a 30% salary hike for military instructors in the schools; each school in the Soviet Union to have its own armory, weapons storeroom, firing range, drill fields, and other facilities, built by the students themselves; tracking of students into a particular branch of the Armed Forces already in their school years.

Soviet officials of course know that the vocational tracking of students, sustained for any length of time, will undermine the country's scientific power in the next generation.

They would not be instituting such measures, were their perspective not the short-term mobilization of resources for a final showdown.

The war economy

EIR has reported, especially in our April 10, 1984 cover story, "The Soviet economy: Everything goes for war," how the entire Soviet economy has been harnessed to the military build-up. Again, the guidelines of the policy were defined by Marshal Ogarkov in his *Always Ready to Defend the Fatherland*: "In the interests of raising the defense capacity of the country, it is more necessary than ever before that the mobilization of the Armed Forces be coordinated with the national economy as a whole, especially in the use of human resources, transport, communications, and energy, and in ensuring the reliability and viability of the entire vast economic mechanism of the country."

In the party journal *Kommunist* in 1981, Ogarkov proposed the World War II-era State Defense Committee as a model of centralization. In recent months, the Soviet press carried praise for wartime economic chief N. A. Voznesenskii and the late Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin, recollected as one of the main organizers of Soviet industry during the war, in order to drive the point home to Soviet economic managers at all levels.

Purges have swept the Soviet economic apparatus. Pravda's front-page editorial last Feb. 24 threatened the dismissal of any academic economists whose work was "fruitless," i.e., who cannot or will not follow the military's policy for the economy. On Aug. 5, after similar press warnings to economic managers, Ukrainian Communist Party chief Vladimir Shcherbitskii wrote in *Pravda*, that in the case of the Ukraine, one out of five factory-level party organizers in the Ukraine has been dumped.

Several personnel shifts in 1983 also pointed to the increasing militarization of the economy, starting with decisive sectors; top managers from the missile- and bomb-building ministries were transferred to pivotal posts in nuclear power, transport, and the machine tool industry.

In the transport sector, under the guidance of First Deputy Prime Minister and Politburo member Geidar Aliyev, the Soviets have launched several new military-related projects. In addition to a redoubled effort to complete the Baikal-Amur Mainline, the second Transsiberian Railroad, the Soviets are upgrading their rail links into Eastern Europe, especially Poland. At the end of 1983, the Soviet monthly *Foreign Trade* reported the completion of a 300-mile long Soviet-Polish railroad, which it said was "the largest transport project built in Poland in the postwar period." In November 1983, the Soviets announced the start of construction on a ferry service linking the U.S.S.R. with East Germany across the Baltic Sea, circumventing Poland; this is the same route used by masses of Soviet troops who were lifted into East Germany across the Baltic by air and sea during the huge Soviet maneuvers of July 1984.