
Gorbachov's Purges

A clean sweep of party and government

Since Mikhail Gorbachov took over in March 1985, a purge has swept the Soviet bureaucracy. It picked up where Gorbachov's patron and predecessor but one, ex-KGB head Yuri Andropov, left off. The changes chiefly affect the leadership of the economy and of the party's "organizational" apparatus—the people who carry out the purge.

Government ministries

Ministry of Power and Electrification (March 23). A.I. Maiorets replaced Pyotr Neporozhnyi, who was forced into retirement after 23 years in charge of the industry.

Ministry of the Electrical Equipment Industry (May 7). Maiorets was succeeded by his deputy, Gennadi Voronovskii, formerly an official at the Elektrosila power equipment plant in Leningrad.

Ministry of Transport Construction (May 7). Vladimir Brezhnev, 53, replaced 76-year-old Ivan Sosnov.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (July 1). Eduard Shevardnadze succeeded Andrei Gromyko.

Ministry of Ferrous Metallurgy (July 5). Serafim Kolkov replaced Ivan Kazanets, who had survived 20 years in office, despite numerous criticisms.

Ministry of Light Industry (July 6). Vladimir Klyuyev, a party official from Ivanovo, northwest of Moscow, replaced another 20-year man, Nikolai Tarasov.

Ministry of the Construction Materials Industry (July 15). Sergei Voenushkin took over from Aleksei Yashin, who was heavily attacked in the press.

Ministry of Industrial Construction (July 15). A.N. Shchepetilnikov, formerly a construction official in the Ukraine, relieved Aleksandr Tokarev, who held this post for 18 years. The ministry builds facilities for the chemical and petroleum industries.

Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education (July 16). Gennadi Yagodin, rector of the Mendeleev Chemical-Technical Institute, relieved V.P. Yelyutin, who had presided over the ministry since 1954.

Ministry of Construction, Road and Municipal Machine-Building (Aug. 2). Yevgenii Varnachev, head of the Sverdlovsk machine-tool plant, Uralmash, replaced Vitalii Chudin, who retired at the age of 56.

New Politburo members (4 of total 13)

Yegor K. Ligachov (April 23). Central Committee secretary for party organizational matters—Gorbachov's chief hatchet-man. Ligachov was an engineer in the aircraft industry, before a party career in Siberia.

Nikolai I. Ryzhkov (April 23). Central Committee secretary for economic matters, Ryzhkov hails from Sverdlovsk in the Urals. He was formerly First Deputy Minister of Heavy and Transport Machine Building and deputy chairman of the State Planning Commission (Gosplan).

Viktor M. Chebrikov (April 23). Chairman of the KGB.

Eduard Shevardnadze (July 1). A police official and then party chief in Soviet Georgia, his economic experiments there featured party-led coordinating councils on science and technology, and streamlining of the bureaucracy.

New Central Committee secretaries

Viktor P. Nikonov (April 23). Gorbachov's appointee for agriculture.

Boris N. Yeltsin (July 1). A former construction engineer, Yeltsin came to Moscow in April 1985, from Ryzhkov's home town of Sverdlovsk, to take over the Central Committee Construction Department.

Lev N. Zaikov (July 1). Before rising in the Leningrad party organization, Zaikov was the director of a defense-related electronics firm.

New Central Committee department chiefs

Construction Department (April). B.N. Yeltsin.

Machine Building Department (May). A.I. Volskii replaced Vasilii Frolov, who ran the section for 26 years.

Organizational Party Work (June). Georgii P. Razumovskii came to Moscow from Krasnodar to take over this section, when its prior chief, Ligachov, joined the Politburo.

Propaganda Department (July). Aleksandr N. Yakovlev is the new chief. As ambassador to Canada and head of the foreign policy think tank IMEMO, his pronouncements on geopolitics already earned him a reputation as a "Russian Kissinger."

Trade and Consumer Services (July). Nikolai A. Stashenkov replaced 20-year department chief Yakov Kabkov.

Regional party committees

Since March, there are new first secretaries in 23 of the 158 provincial (*obkom*) and territorial (*kraikom*) committees: in the Russian Republic—Amur, Ivanovo, Kalinin, Kemerovo, Kirov, Krasnodar, Kurgan, Leningrad, Orel, Saratov, Sverdlovsk, Tambov, Tula, Vologda; in Byelorussia—Gomel, Minsk; in Kazakhstan—Chimkent; in Kirghizia—Issyk-Kul; in Latvia—Riga; in Turkmenistan—Mary; in Uzbekistan—Andizhan, Dzhizak, Surkhan-Darya. That is not to mention a dozen other ranking party officials replaced, at the Union Republic level.