

Mother Russia by Konstantin George

Czar Mikhail's Russification drive

When the Communist Party chief hails the "Russian soldier-liberator," non-Russian nationalities, beware!

Not a day passes these days without Western newspapers hailing Soviet leader Gorbachov as a "reformer" and "liberalizer." Yet, as his recent statements during a tour of the Soviet Baltic republics of Latvia and Estonia document, the real Gorbachov represents the "Russian Party" chauvinist elite of the Soviet *Nomenklatura*.

On Feb. 19, Gorbachov addressed the Latvian Communist Party leadership in the capital city of Riga. The speech hailed "the Russian" as the historical "soldier-liberator" of the Baltic states, and was fully quoted in all Soviet newspapers of Feb. 20. To avoid wrecking Gorbachov's image, no Western newspaper published the following passage:

"We know the real history of czarist Russia; we have our own views and evaluations, based on a scientific Marxist analysis. . . . In the memory of our peoples, what's constantly being kept alive and passed on from generation to generation, is, that repeatedly in the course of many centuries, the Russian soldier-liberator came to help the Baltic grain-growers and fishermen to defend their native soil against profanity and servitude, and against foreign conquerors."

Latvia and Estonia were independent states until 1940, when they were (as a result of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact) invaded and brutally reincorporated into the Russian Empire.

The Baltic states have never recovered from the mass executions and deportations conducted under Stalin. To this day, the number of Latvians

and Estonians in their respective "republics" has yet to reach the population level recorded in the 1935 census. By the 1979 census, Latvians comprised only 53% of the population of their "own" republic—a result, in part, of the postwar policy of massive forced settlement of Russians in the Baltic regions. Given the accelerated immigration of Russians into Latvia and Estonia during the 1980s, and the extremely low birth rates among Latvians and Estonians, by 1990 Latvia will join Kazakhstan as the second non-slavic "republic" having a slavic majority, and may well follow Kazakhstan in having a Russian installed as Communist Party boss.

In October 1985, Gorbachov candidly told the French Communist Party newspaper *L'Humanité* that his top concern was the low birthrate among Russians. It was only a matter of time before the "Russian Party" elite began calling for "solutions" to the "problem" of the population explosion and resistance to Russification among the Muslims of Soviet Central Asia. After the December 1986 riots in Kazakhstan, triggered when Gorbachov installed a Russian to rule there, there emerged a racist side to Gorbachov's *glasnost* (openness) campaign that the Western media would prefer to ignore. The Russian media began to proclaim that the U.S.S.R. has too many Muslims.

In January 1987, the Soviet news agency TASS announced that measures would be taken to lower the birthrate in Muslim Tadjikistan, border-

ing on Afghanistan and China. The Tadjiks have the highest birthrate in the Soviet Union. This marks the first time in Soviet history that a policy of stopping a nationality's population growth has been proclaimed. The move against the Tadjiks is the start of a drive against the other high-birthrate Muslim nationalities in Central Asia. The latest news available from Kazakhstan confirms this.

Pravda of Feb. 11 denounced the Kazakhstan media for an "exaggerated emphasis" on Kazakh "national culture and language," and for encouraging "national egoism and anti-Russian resentments." Newspapers in Alma Atá, the Kazakh capital, were accused of reporting only about persons with Kazakh names, and publishing pictures mostly of Kazakhs.

The *Pravda* article contained the first Soviet denunciation of the high Kazakh birthrate. Two Kazakh magazines were attacked for publishing articles in December 1986 hailing the high birthrate, and for predicting that Kazakhs would become the republic's majority by the year 2000.

Following Gorbachov's Baltic tour, the campaign against non-Russian nationalism has been extended further. The latest example is the Soviet Republic of Moldavia, (until 1940, the Romanian province of Bessarabia), another Hitler-Stalin Pact addition to the Russian Empire. Moldavian party boss Semyon Grossu, at the just-concluded Moldavian Komsomol (party youth) congress, delivered a harsh attack against Moldavian nationalism, now affecting "above all" the youth, who are "falling victim to enemy propaganda." Grossu was brought in to rule Moldavia under the late General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, and has been, along with the Moldavian party leadership as a whole, the object of personal denunciations from Moscow.