

The summit over, Moscow drops facade

by Konstantin George

The summit is over, and the Russian leadership has wasted no time in dropping the facade of both friendliness toward the West and "internal harmony" at home. The ruling *Nomenklatura*, three weeks before the June 28 Soviet All-Party Congress, has begun preparing the tough anti-Western policy shifts of the coming period. Those preparations have been timed by design to coincide with the Russian Orthodox Church's Millennium celebrations.

Reagan departed Moscow on June 2. On June 4, Yegor Ligachov, the Politburo's ideological czar, issued a very tough attack against Western liberals, echoing the Stalin of the 1930s, proclaiming the coming repeat of the 1927-34 transformation from Bukharinite "deals" with the West, to an autarchy-based war build-up. The coming period, Ligachov stressed, will see "an intensification of the class struggle" inside the Soviet bloc, and no fulfillment of Western expectations of a "market economy" in the Soviet bloc.

One humorous sidelight of the speech was that the *Times* of London, which had been proclaiming the political "death" of Ligachov during the April-May period, had to run a headline June 6, "Ligachov bounces back. . ." It ought rather have read, "*Times* bounces back. . ."

At his post-summit press conference, Mikhail Gorbachov praised one Vladimir Mezentsev, a state radio correspondent on Sakhalin Island in the Far East, as a shining example of glasnost. In May, Mezentsev had authored a radio broadcast attacking the local party leadership for "incompetence" and for rigging delegate elections to the June congress. The broadcast led to the removal of Sakhalin party secretary Tret'yakov. But Mezentsev was summoned to Moscow by the Soviet State Committee for TV and Radio (Gosteleradio) the same day as his radio broadcast, and soon afterward, was fired. That fact was concealed from the media, and from Gorbachov, too! Only after Gorbachov's press conference, on June 6, did the weekly *Argumenty i Fakty* announce that Mezentsev had been sacked. The same *Argumenty i Fakty* in late April had published a KGB bulletin blaming Western intelligence services for destabilizing the Soviet Union.

An individual enjoying the public praise of the general secretary is fired in disgrace for having gone too far with glasnost, by a state body headed by a mere Central Committee member? It is just one more demonstration that, when it

comes to power over internal affairs, Mikhail Gorbachov has none.

The policy shift

The emerging Soviet policy shift has been forced by the economic breakdown crisis afflicting Eastern Europe and a resulting growing economic crisis inside the U.S.S.R. itself. The policy line of Ligachov's speech against deals with the West corresponds to the line emerging in May with the satellite leaderships in Eastern Europe. We can cite two examples.

Right after the summit, an "Internal Circular" by Czech intelligence, titled "Enemies of Socialism," began circulating among leading party cadre. It listed three categories of "enemy operations": 1) dissident groups, such as "Charter 77," were labeled "run by foreign imperialist agents"; 2) the "activities of the Catholic Church" in Czechoslovakia, with Czech Primate Cardinal Tomasek attacked by name; 3) the "social milieu" of 500,000 party members purged after 1968. Czechoslovakia's new leader, Milos Jakes, elected general secretary in December, had run that mass purge.

The same line was announced by Romania's Nicolae Ceausescu at a May 3 Politburo meeting. Ceausescu attacked "the emergence of all kinds of ideas, confusions, and displays of insufficient confidence in the forces of socialism. . . . In my view, rightist deviation represents the main danger at the present stage, and it can gravely harm the building of socialism. . . . In the given situation, we must intensify the ideological struggle, both internally and internationally." The announcement of Soviet President Andrei Gromyko's May 10 arrival was printed alongside this statement.

At a state dinner for Gromyko, Ceausescu declared that Romania "greatly appreciated" the Soviet achievements of the 1930s and 1940s, "completing the socialist revolution in such a short period of time," becoming a "great industrial power," and "playing the decisive role" in the "war against fascism." "Romanians" therefore "find it hard to understand those 'voices' that are trying to throw doubt on those facts."

Two days earlier, Radio Moscow had broadcast in Romanian, an anti-Stalin commentary by Fyodor Burlatsky, journalist for *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, and a very close confidant of Gorbachov. One month later, Burlatsky, at the Moscow city party plenum (June 3-4) which elected 319 delegates to the All-Party Conference, failed to win election, although only two days previously, he had shared a podium with Gorbachov at a Kremlin meeting with "international peace activists."

During the Gromyko visit, the Romanian media listed Romania's "demands" on the Soviet Union: 1) increased Romanian participation in energy and raw material projects on Soviet territory; 2) increased Soviet imports of Romanian industrial goods; 3) increased Soviet inputs of technology to further reduce Romania's imports from the West; 4) joint Soviet-Romanian production of a wide range of industrial goods.