

ignated to become the next prime minister.

The primary victim of the scandal, aside from Takeshita himself, is former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, who has refused to testify before the Diet on his ties to Recruit, thus prompting an opposition boycott of parliamentary deliberations. Japanese sources now expect that Nakasone will be indicted, or at least hauled in for questioning by the prosecution. Nakasone is known in Japan for his "right-wing" nationalism, but is also considered the linchpin of the U.S.-Japan alliance who negotiated Japan's cooperation with the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative.

All major factional leaders of the LDP have been touched by the scandal; therefore, as reports from Tokyo now indicate, the LDP will attempt to find a new prime minister who has not been touched by the scandal, likely an elder-statesman, while it searches for a younger leader to lead the party in a national resurgence. Meanwhile, the party machinery and the government-industrial bureaucracy will maintain a policy-continuity.

The dangerous implications

Yet, in the medium term, the power that might emerge the most damaged from the bringing down of the Takeshita government is the United States.

- The attacks on the LDP have weakened the U.S.-Japan alliance. The U.S. refusal to negotiate honorably on the FSX gives impetus to those in Japan who believe that Japan "must go it alone." On April 22, for instance, Japan announced that it may develop its own anti-aircraft missile, rather than depend on U.S. technology for the \$7.58 billion project, the *Japan Economic Journal* reported. Secondly, the Commerce Department is now looking to place Japan under the Super 301 "enemy watch list" for its "unfair trading practices." Japan's concern is that under the current conditions of "Gorbymania," the United States will begin to paint its strategic ally, Japan, with the brush of the "enemy image." Does the Bush administration believe that Japan will simply take its abuse without response?

- Second, the United States is playing with the danger that Japan will no longer continue to prop up the U.S. dollar, and with it, the U.S. government. The forced ouster of Takeshita is a victory for those British-linked forces around the Mitsui *zaibatsu*, who have argued that the Bank of Japan should raise its interest rates—the first steps in withdrawing Japanese support for the dollar. The shenanigans around the FSX have, conversely, hit Mitsui's primary opponent, the Mitsubishi Corporation, which is the primary contracting partner in both the FSX and the SDI.

It would appear, therefore, that the British have succeeded in repeating the pre-World Wars I and II manipulations whereby Japan was pitted against the United States and vice versa. The results of those manipulations are as dangerous to the world's precarious strategic balance today, as they were then.

Purge of 'dead souls' sweeps Soviet plenum

by Konstantin George

The April 25 Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee plenum saw the purge of 110 people from the party's three highest bodies, out of a total membership of 301. The sweeping purge of over one-third of the Central Committee, during a time of deepening social and economic crisis throughout the Soviet empire, marks a new phase of consolidation of the power of the "Andropov Kindergarten," the Communist Party and KGB protégés of the late Yuri Andropov, including Mikhail Gorbachov and Viktor Chebrikov, the man in charge of the U.S.S.R.'s internal security apparatus.

The purge also marks a strengthening of Moscow Center at the expense of the outlying provinces of the empire. The plenum followed by two weeks the Moscow-ordered massacre of civilian demonstrators in Tbilisi, Georgia. The corpses of 120 butchered civilians, mostly women, show the future of the crisis-wracked Soviet empire under Muscovite rule.

Most of those purged were what Politburo member Vadim Medvedev branded the "dead souls," after the famous 19th-century novel of that title by Nikolai Gogol—those who had already been retired or stripped of the posts they held in party, government, and military, and were thus no longer really entitled to membership on the Central Committee. However, there were extremely important exceptions to this.

For example, the plenum also promoted 24 Central Committee candidate members to full membership.

Ten of the 22 military figures on the Central Committee were expelled. Nine of them, Marshals and Generals of the Army, were "dead souls," who had retired or had been retired from active service. One of the 10, however, Marshal of the Soviet Union Nikolai Ogarkov, was not only still active, but in the vital function of commander-in-chief of the Western Theater of War (TVD).

The facts surrounding the 71-year-old Ogarkov's removal are far from clear. What can be said with certainty, however, is that Ogarkov's school of military leadership remains. His "disciples" are in control. No other active military leader was removed, and the one military figure promoted to full membership, Gen. Col. V. V. Osipov, has been commander-in-chief of the Southwest TVD since Feb. 15, 1989, a war-time command created by Ogarkov in September 1984.

Settling accounts

What occurred on April 25 was the purge of a major component of a rapidly growing opposition to Gorbachov. The existence of such an opposition was admitted by Gor-

bachov himself in January, when he revealed that unnamed opponents had tried to "postpone shortly before it opened" the 19th Party Conference in July. He then cited opponents who had tried to stop the convening of the Sept. 30 Central Committee plenum, which expelled Andrei Gromyko and Mikhail Solomentsev from the Politburo, made Gorbachov State President, increased the political power of the KGB, and added Vadim Medvedev to the Politburo.

While "Czar" Mikhail has strengthened his own hand, many leaders of those republics and regions where nationalist unrest has boiled over in recent years, were ousted. They have not been replaced, substantially weakening the power and influence of those republics in the Communist Party's principal ruling body.

Kicked off the Central Committee on April 25 were the republic and regional party leaders removed from their local posts between the 1986 party congress and the present. These included recently deposed Georgian party leader Dzhumber Patiashvili, and the former party leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia, Kyamran Bagirov and Karen Demirchyan. Notably, the list of victims included none of the Central Committee members who lost in the March 26 "elections" to the Supreme Soviet.

It was clear from his January speech that Gorbachov was preparing to settle accounts with an opposition, and from the fervent tones he issued, he had to move fairly fast. In the Sept. 30 clean-out, Gorbachov, Chebrikov et al. had employed the tactic of moving forward the regularly scheduled October plenum by three weeks, in order to throw opposition forces off balance. This time around, a regularly scheduled plenum for late April on "ideology" questions was proclaimed in late February, and then at the last minute, the plenum's agenda was changed.

The opposition group

The first solid confirmation that the plenum had been a fight which an opposition group lost, came from Politburo member Medvedev in a press conference afterward:

"A group of Central Committee members, Central Committee candidate members, and members of the Central Auditing Commission had turned to the Politburo with the request that they be relieved of their duties, because they could no longer work so fervently for *perestroika* as is necessary. . . . It concerns their own decision taken by those involved. It was the party which had called *perestroika* into life and it will not let the initiative slip out of its hand. Therefore, comprehensive personnel changes were necessary. The decision by the Central Committee is a serious and important milestone for the policy of *perestroika*."

That the group of 110 described by Medvedev was in fact an organized faction of some sort was also indicated by Gorbachov's keynote report to the plenum.

Soviet TV showed Gorbachov reading aloud what he called the "collective request" of the 110. Gorbachov

"thanked" them and the "resolve of the Central Committee, even if I don't want to portray its work in rosy colors." Gorbachov added, "In the discussions among party members and non-party people . . . they had even proposed their own variants for a solution to this problem."

Another TV excerpt showed Gorbachov saying: "The collective request does not demand any secret vote," because they are not being expelled "for this or that reason," but rather, "they themselves wanted to resign. That's the view of the Politburo."

A Novosti wire April 26, with additional passages from Gorbachov's report, also shows the plenum to have been a settling of accounts, and indicates that Gorbachov and the Andropov Kindergarten have studied the methods employed by Josef Stalin in his drive for absolute power:

"Present-day life with its dynamic, its dimensions, and its tasks, which the Central Committee has to tackle, demands a much higher efficiency. From precisely these concerns resulted their collective motion to the Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Auditing Commission of the CPSU. . . . Therefore, the Politburo put forward the proposal that the request of the comrades be accepted."

The formula "Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Auditing Commission" is important. Such expanded plenums, with the consequent expanded voting base, were the tool employed by Stalin at key junctures in his 1927-29 drive to crush opposition. Gorbachov, with the backing of Chebrikov and the post-Sept. 30 "Andropov Kindergarten" leadership, has employed this technique to outflank, outvote, and now purge a substantial bloc of Central Committee opposition. This plenum "packing" phenomenon occurred first at the March 15-16 Central Committee plenum, and now has occurred again at the April 25 brawl.

A 1990 'extraordinary' party congress

The April 25 plenum was a milestone in the turbulent Soviet faction fights generated by the economic crises hitting the U.S.S.R. and its Eastern European satellites. What Gorbachov is *trying* to do is clear. Whether he will succeed and survive the storms to come is not. If he does, the world will have the second absolute ruler of the Bolshevik dynasty in this century, and, no matter what the outcome concerning individuals, the Gorbachov "liberal reformer" image, intended for consumption by the West, will not survive.

In all probability, the final internal showdown will occur at an "extraordinary" party congress; the 1991 party congress will be moved forward by about one year. The cumulative effect of the vast purges since 1986 is that scores of party leaders, military commanders, and some top KGB personnel hold positions entitling them to Central Committee membership—something which can only be bestowed through a party congress. The matter cannot wait until 1991, and in the storms to come, Moscow's policy responses to the convulsions gripping its empire will emerge.