
U.S.S.R. Central Committee Meeting

Gromyko hails West's anti-nuclear movement

by Rachel Douglas

When the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party June 14 and 15 held its first two-day plenum since the days of Nikita Khrushchev on ideology, party chief Yuri Andropov and Central Committee Secretary Konstantin Chernenko took up a problem which has faced the Politburo for years: how to motivate the population for a stronger economic push. "Competition" with the United States has been given a new urgency by President Reagan's March 23 announcement of his commitment to develop advanced Ballistic Missile Defense technologies—which would reverse America's economic and cultural decline.

"The battle of ideas on the international scene is going on without respite," said Chernenko. The party must "mobilize the spiritual energy of the population and raise their labor and social activities," he announced; this would determine "the pace of our advancement and . . . the strengthening of the country's defense capability."

After the plenum, Andropov secured his second national leadership post—chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the nominal Soviet parliament. It took Andropov's predecessor Leonid Brezhnev 13 years to lay hands on this title. There to bless Andropov's elevation were the shady figures of Russian Orthodox Church representatives, present as they had been for the coronations for the tsars, but never before for a Soviet President.

The 11-man Politburo was kept at that small size, providing tight, consolidated leadership of the massive propaganda drive that Chernenko and Andropov outlined.

When Andropov spoke on the concluding day of the plenum, it was to say that "an unprecedented sharpening of the struggle between the two world social systems has taken place."

At the Supreme Soviet meeting, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko laid out Moscow's international priorities. Foremost is the defeat of President Reagan, who has upset the Russian vision of Moscow's surviving the ultimate world

crisis to prevail as the "Third Rome" of Russian Orthodox Church myth. Gromyko made a big point of the Soviet campaign "to conclude an international treaty on the nondeployment of weapons of any kind in outer space," which would outlaw space-based anti-ballistic-missile (ABM) defense systems.

Gromyko complained that the U.S. government had not responded to a Soviet proposal to "let Soviet and American scientists, specialists in the field, get together and discuss the possible implications of establishing a large-scale ABM system." The White House June 17 hinted that the response to this bid would be to seek talks that would not be a propaganda forum for pseudo-scientific denunciations of beam weapons; the White House said, "We are interested in talking to the Soviet Union regarding the implications of the new defensive technologies which both sides are developing. . . . There are a number of possible existing forums for such discussion. We are considering how best to engage the Soviets on this issue; thus it would be inappropriate to say more at this time."

'Nuclear capabilities for us, not them'

In the first endorsement from such a high-ranking Soviet spokesman of the neo-fascist "greens" in the West, Gromyko hailed not only the "peace" movement, but the anti-nuclear movement in general. "The anti-nuclear and anti-war movement that has arisen in the West is a kind of a popular referendum," he said.

While Gromyko praised the anti-nuclear movement in the West, Yuri Andropov told the plenum that the U.S.S.R. should have all the nuclear power it can get. He called for a "dramatic change" in technologies in many branches of the Soviet economy, including the use of "the latest atomic reactors," and then controlled thermonuclear fusion power, in the energy sector. "Computers and robots . . . flexible technology allowing for quick and effective readjustment of production . . . machines, mechanisms, and technologies for today and tomorrow" are on the agenda of the "single scientific-technical policy" of the Soviet Union.

Seeking further formulas to unplug the gears of the Soviet economy, Andropov talked about "a system of organizational, economic and moral measures" to force managers to accept new technologies. Andropov also spoke of an overhaul of Soviet education, since "the formation of a person begins from the early years of his life."

The call to arms for a progressive technological approach to bolster the motherland were made side by side with "spiritual" genuflections. Many of the catch-phrases used by Chernenko—"the struggle between the new and the old," "workers' self-management," and "labor discipline"—allude especially to pilot projects in social policy carried out in Gaider Aliyev's Azerbaijan Republic, where party, state, scientific—and religious—institutions were integrated. Chernenko also took Soviet scientists to task for an "arm-chair" attitude.