

## Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

### Soviets flustered over Hitler-Stalin queries

High-level Soviet officials who led a delegation of 240 Russians to the week-long symposium at the Chautauqua, New York retreat at the end of August failed the *glasnost* (candor) test when confronted with a demand that they repudiate the Hitler-Stalin Pact during their visit here.

To the surprise of thousands of mostly liberal Americans who jammed into Chautauqua to participate in the "U.S.-Soviet dialogue," the Soviets defended the pact that Stalin signed with Hitler on Aug. 23, 1939—their agreement to divide up the sovereign territory lying between them for invasion and subjugation. Thereafter, the Soviets supplied tons of grain and other vital supplies to the Nazi war effort for over two years, until the Nazis launched "Operation Barbarossa" to the East.

Just as the Soviet delegation was attempting to sell its new deception policy of *glasnost*, at Chautauqua, mass demonstrations broke out in the capitals of all three Baltic states this Aug. 23, the 48th anniversary of the Hitler-Stalin treaty.

A couple of days later, a delegation of Americans sympathetic to the Baltic demonstrators showed up at Chautauqua to leaflet copies of a statement drafted by U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, entitled, "Moscow Says: Hitler-Stalin Pact Still Lawful." LaRouche's point of departure was a recent Soviet news service (TASS) release defending the Hitler-Stalin treaty.

The presence of the leafleters, however, created pandemonium at the sleepy retreat, where organizers intended the result of the conference to be nothing but "good vibes."

Top-level Soviets appearing at a human rights seminar at the conference with hundreds present, were asked whether they would repudiate TASS's defense of the treaty. The Soviets on the panel included Alexander Sukharev, minister of justice and secretary-general of the association of Soviet lawyers, and Larisa Navhinskaya, senior researcher at the Institute for Crime Prevention.

First trying to ignore the question, Navhinskaya then growled, "There was no pact. You have misunderstood. There was something between Hitler and Roosevelt, and Stalin got caught in the middle."

Outside the seminar, a leafleter was passing the LaRouche statement to 15 Soviet officials, accompanied by about 30 translators and aides. He asked one, Boris Shukov, a city planner from Moscow, whether he would renounce the Pact. The leafletting and the question created such a ruckus that people inside the seminar began pouring out to find out what was going on.

Shukov pretended he didn't understand the question. When asked again, he became agitated and tried to slip away. However, he was prevented by the crowd that had begun to pack in around him.

An American translator pleaded, "He is not a political official. He is only a city planner." But he was too late: Shukov blurted out, "Why, we denounced this long ago."

"Are you saying that it is official Soviet policy that the Hitler-Stalin Pact has been renounced?" The American translator panicked and yelled at Shukov, "Just say no!"

Moments later, Col. Gen. Nikolai Chervov of the Soviet Defense Min-

istry, happened on the scene. Although he had been speaking English while walking up, when asked about the Hitler-Stalin treaty, he suddenly reverted to Russian. Pressed, however, he said, "I am not authorized by the government to answer that question."

"Sure, you can answer it. You're in the United States now. We want to know whether the *glasnost* policy is real or not."

At that point, an American organizer of the conference forced himself in between Chervov and the leafleter, yelling, "I'm going to get you arrested. You're destroying the spirit of the conference."

By this time, Soviet officials were hiding their name tags and slipping away.

### Treaty defended in Washington, too

The defense of the Hitler-Stalin Pact continued when the Soviet delegation from the Chautauqua meeting stopped over in Washington, D.C.

This reporter confronted Deputy Foreign Affairs Secretary Vladimir Petrovsky with the question before the Washington press corps Sept. 1. Members of the Soviet delegation present began mumbling to one another when they heard the question.

"We have a different understanding of the historical circumstances than you," Petrovsky snorted, and would say no more. "Will the demonstrations in the Baltic states be allowed to continue?" he was asked. "We have certain rules," he snapped. His *glasnost* had clearly worn very thin.

Petrovsky was among those leading Soviet officials named in a recent Italian news account as a descendant of the 19th-century Russian czarist nobility. When I asked about this, he denied it.