

# Soviet military men rise in party apparatus

by Rachel Douglas

The transfer of two generals, from their posts as political officers for the Soviet military to the heart of the Communist Party Central Committee apparatus, has greatly enhanced Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov's control over the process of perestroika restructuring in the Soviet Union. As *EIR* has documented from the start, the reform was the brainchild of Ogarkov; he elaborated the Soviet doctrine of war economy, which perestroika has brought to life.

So out-of-the-ordinary are these latest personnel shifts, that some Western experts failed to realize what had happened, when they saw I.A. Larin and N. Shlyaga identified in the Soviet press as, respectively, first deputy chief of department and chief of a section in the powerful Central Committee Department of Administrative Organs. Until their recent assignments, these men were always named with their military ranks: General Lieutenant Larin was chief of the political directorate in the Leningrad Military District from early 1985 until some time in 1987, while General Lieutenant Shlyaga had been chief of the political directorate of the Central Group of Forces (in Czechoslovakia) since 1985 and before that also served in the Leningrad Military District.

The Leningrad Military District and the Central Group of Forces come under High Command West, one of the wartime theater commands established according to Ogarkov's design. The commander-in-chief of High Command West, on the front line facing NATO, is Marshal Ogarkov himself.

We suppose politicians in the West who are ga-ga over the great reformer, Mikhail S. Gorbachov, will have to call the shift of Larin and Shlyaga a successful case of forcing Moscow to make cuts in its military for the sake of the civilian sector! The wiser course is to see what it reveals about what is masked by Gorbachov's smile.

The arrival of the military officers at the Central Committee staff transpired under the auspices of Central Committee Secretary and Politburo strongman Yegor K. Ligachov, who in December 1987 asserted that the Politburo had assigned him to "lead . . . [and] organize the work of the Secretariat." The Central Committee Secretariat, which runs the CC departments and nationwide political machine of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, has historically been run by the general secretary—today, Gorbachov. But while Gorbachov was off writing his book on perestroika during the summer and dazzling Washington in December, the trika of Ligachov, Ogarkov, and KGB boss Viktor M. Chebri-

kov strengthened its grip on power.

The appointment of General Larin and General Shlyaga appears to have happened in September, while Gorbachov was away on his book-writing vacation.

## Who is Yegor Ligachov?

Journalists covering Moscow have adopted the uninformative tag "conservative" for Ligachov. In fact, the most striking aspect of Ligachov's biography is his linkage to the Soviet military-industrial complex, throughout his career.

This background is shared by most of the men promoted, alongside Gorbachov, from the moment ex-KGB chief Yuri Andropov entered the Secretariat in 1982, as its number two man behind the moribund Leonid Brezhnev. Among those who became Central Committee secretaries after that were Nikolai I. Ryzhkov (now prime minister of the U.S.S.R. and a Politburo member), former director of the country's premier machine tool plant; Lev Zaikov (now on the Politburo), who directed a defense-related electronics firm in Leningrad in the 1970s; and Nikolai Slyunkov, the former Byelorussian party chief and central planning official, who has ties to the defense industry.

Ligachov received a technical engineering degree from the Ordzhonikidze Aviation Institute in Moscow in 1943. Then his career unfolded in Novosibirsk, first as an engineer and then as party official. From 1959 to 1961, soon after the establishment of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences transformed Novosibirsk into the country's major center for scientific and military crash projects, Ligachov was first secretary of the Novosibirsk Obkom (regional party committee).

After a 1961-65 stint in the CC Propaganda and Organizational Party Work departments in Moscow, which coincided with Andropov's tenure in the CC apparatus, Ligachov returned to Siberia, not to Novosibirsk, but as first secretary of the neighboring Tomsk Obkom. In that capacity he was also a member of the military council of the Siberian Military District. His colleague there, Siberian Military District Commander Gen. Col. N.I. Popov, went on in 1984 to command the Turkestan Military District, an important staging ground for the war in Afghanistan.

Andropov summoned Ligachov to Moscow in April 1983, to take charge of the CC Organizational Party Work Department and run the post-Brezhnev party purges. At least by the time of the 27th Party Congress, in early 1986, he had been brought onto the Defense Council of the U.S.S.R., the shadowy organization that groups the top military and political leadership of the U.S.S.R.

Ligachov has often identified himself with the favorite causes of proponents of Great Russian chauvinism, loosely known as the Russian Party. It is the duty of the party to "safeguard national sacred things," he said in March 1986, and "those who are raising their voices in alarm to save the architectural appearance of our famous ancient cities are absolutely right."