

## Mother Russia by EIR Staff

### Pamyat, and the limits of perestroika

*The Russian chauvinist group has come under fire in Izvestia, which warns that Gorbachov's restructuring must defend itself against "excesses."*

**T**he head of Russia's anti-Semitic and chauvinistic Pamyat ("Memory") Society, D.C. Vasiliev, has drawn international attention for his recent ravings, in an interview to the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*, about the "Jewish parasites" who are allegedly out to destroy "Great Russia." According to Vasiliev, the group has at least 20,000 active members, and is growing rapidly (see EIR, March 11, 1988, pp. 60-61).

Pamyat's rise is becoming a subject of controversy in the Soviet Union. It has grown under the protection of the KGB, which has done nothing to stop it. The Communist Party daily *Pravda* in a recent article dismissed it as an insignificant group of no more than 15 diehard adherents. But on Feb. 27, the government daily *Izvestia* featured an article by Pavel Gutiontov, denouncing the society, linking it to recent nationalist unrest, and warning that Gorbachov's perestroika must not be allowed to get out of hand.

We publish here a summary of *Izvestia's* article.

Gutiontov reports the existence of an 11-page Pamyat "Appeal to Patriots of All Countries and Nations," for the reinstatement of two Pamyat leaders who were kicked out of the Communist Party. The appeal addresses Soviet Army servicemen, the interior ministry, KGB workers. It states, "We should not be afraid of violence."

*Izvestia* describes the society's anti-Semitic coloration, and says that

Pamyat has sued the Soviet newspaper *Sovetskaya Kultura* in court. "In general, it is hard to imagine anything more likely to play into the hands of our ideological adversaries (real, not imagined) than the events arranged in the Sverdlovsky People's Court by people calling themselves 'implacable fighters against Zionism.'"

Clinical analysis of Pamyat writings has been carried out. *Sovetskaya Kultura* sought scientific opinions from the U.S.A. and Canada Institute and from the Israel department of the Institute of Oriental Studies. "Through dozens of pages of typescript, the authors of the opinions scrupulously enumerated distortions and misquotations, drastically changing the sense of the original; uncritical utilization of Western propaganda literature; juggling of facts. . . . The experts noticed in [Pamyat ideologue] V. Begun's books a whole series of textual similarities with no less a work than the bible of German fascism, 'Mein Kampf.'"

*Izvestia* links Pamyat to the nationalities question:

"For too long we were full of rosy optimism ('the Soviet person drinks in internationalism with his mother's milk'), but it turns out that it was naive to count wholly on 'milk' alone. This was confirmed quite clearly by the events in Kazakhstan, Yakutia, and the Baltic region.

"Unfortunately, Pamyat is not simply a little group of hysterical women, although it would, of course,

be far more reassuring to pretend it was. All the same, it is better to acknowledge in sober terms that it arose from fairly serious causes, social and economic, and that Pamyat expresses the sentiments of a certain (albeit small, I am sure) group of the population, in particular those who, among other things, find it hard to handle the reassessment of what were regarded only yesterday as immutable truths, who are plunged into confusion and even panic by this reassessment. Life now raises many unpleasant questions for us all, questions to which it is both difficult and painful to find the answers. That is why the Pamyat volunteers seize on the soothing idea of 'enemy machinations.' It is so easy to attribute every ill to them. . . . That is an exceptionally dangerous idea."

Back in June, Gutiontov says, *Izvestia* published an article on the group. "We thought it was only a matter of a group of irresponsible babblers and were convinced that the vulnerability of their 'positions' was obvious to everyone. Time has shown that we are not dealing simply with people who are excessively concerned to gain popularity for themselves. . . . No, we are dealing with an attempt to give a quite specific ideological coloring to the times we live in. Pamyat is quite consciously playing with very dangerous things. And unfortunately, as we have seen, even certain scientists, writers and representatives of the intelligentsia are prepared to indulge it."

Perestroika, concludes Gutiontov, "must know how to defend itself, and perhaps we should not practice on extremists and provocateurs, whatever garb they don, our sense of tolerance toward another person's opinion. . . . As has been said: Lies cannot be regarded as a *viewpoint* or deliberate slander as an *opinion*. Yet Pamyat is constantly carrying out this elementary substitution of concepts."