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Ligachev on Glasnost and Perestroika

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Introduction

General Secretary Mikhail S. Gorbachev's bold program of economic and political reform makes it difficult for Western students of the USSR to conceptualize the rapidly changing regime with much assurance. Gorbachev's initial program seemed relatively easy to understand; his overriding stress on economic modernization seemed to be the logical extension of the program begun by General Secretary Andropov in 1982-1984. However, Gorbachev subsequently launched a series of fundamental political reforms which cannot be easily explained with the formulations designed to analyze the USSR in the past. Gorbachev's vigorous support for more open discussion of virtually all aspects of public policy, both past and present, his efforts to restore internal democracy in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), to revive the CPSU's dynamism by recasting the relationship between its full-time officials and its rank and file, his attempt to extend the authority of soviets at both the central and local level and simultaneously broaden his own authority as an indirectly elected President of the Supreme Soviet can hardly be integrated under a single formula.

Since the beginning of this process, Gorbachev has been involved in an ongoing debate with other party leaders over the desirability, legitimacy, and implications of various aspects of the reform program. By all accounts, Ye. Ligachev, the veteran party official who has served as a Secretary of the Central Committee (CC) of the CPSU since 1983, a member of the Politburo since 1985 and as Chairman of the Secretariat's newly formed Commission on Agricultural Policy since the fall of 1988, has been a major participant in this debate. Indeed, the *glasnost* (openness) fostered by the General Secretary has either encouraged or obliged Ligachev to express his views on many (but not all) elements of the reform program with considerable frequency and frankness. Unfortunately, while it is possible to determine the major elements of Ligachev's ideological orientation from his public comments, the continued secrecy of political

life at the apex of the CPSU makes it difficult to determine the range and scope of his authority in the leadership, the impact of his views on the development of policy, or the extent to which his views are endorsed by other members of the leadership or the party as a whole. *Glasnost* has led to an unprecedented public discussion of policy in the press, but it has not yet been applied to the workings of the apex of the CPSU. As a result, the rare public references to leading party officials' actual responsibilities do not provide a firm basis for determining the division of labor and authority between Ligachev and other party leaders. *Pravda's* summaries of Politburo meetings merely outline the topics considered in general terms while the Secretariat meets in secret. Although *Pravda's* coverage of the periodic conferences sponsored by the CC CPSU do reveal leading officials' *interests* to a far greater extent than in the past, these meetings and the plenums of the CC CPSU remain secret.

Despite these immense difficulties in penetrating the political life of the CPSU's leadership, many Western analysts of the USSR have written with confidence about Ligachev's authority, labeling him either as "the party's ideologist," the CPSU's "second secretary," or the "number two man in the Kremlin." While the appeal of such labels is fully comprehensible, their widespread use conveys greater surety than can be constructed on the basis of existing information. More importantly, these labels seem to be based on the presumption that earlier patterns of leadership conflict and divisions of labor persist under the Gorbachev regime. As a result, their uncritical use may help to disguise changes in Ligachev's own position in a political system which is in itself clearly in a period of significant transition.

The characterization of Ligachev as the "party's ideologist" seems based on the presumption that Ligachev acts as a modern day M.A. Suslov, ostensibly defending orthodox Marxist-Leninist formulations in every sphere of public policy. This implicit parallel is misleading on a number of grounds. First and foremost, Ligachev is hardly the only leading official to make "ideological" statements since General Secretary Gorbachev has

acted as the CPSU's leading "ideologist" since 1985. His repeated attacks on orthodox theory and practice not only have set the tone and direction of political discourse, but also have led to a fundamental redefinition of the meaning of "socialism." Furthermore, other leading party officials such as A. Yakovlev, have not only commented frequently and extensively on "ideological" issues but also seem to have shared authority in a rather ill-defined fashion with Ligachev on such matters.

Finally, the implicit parallel with Suslov incorrectly implies that Ligachev supports "orthodox" positions on every issue. While he has repeatedly criticized the cultural liberalization fostered by *glasnost*, has pointed to the dangers implicit in the effort to provide an unvarnished version of the USSR's troubled history, and has criticized undue reliance on market mechanisms, he has repeatedly and publicly endorsed many components of the Gorbachev program including the "democratization" of public life. Moreover, he has clearly endorsed policies to benefit the Soviet consumer, supported Gorbachev's views on agricultural reform, and championed a definition of party officials' responsibilities similar to the position advanced by the arch-reformer N. S. Khrushchev in the 1950s.

The characterization of Ligachev as the "second secretary" and as the "number two man in the Kremlin" tends to convey a far greater sense of precision about his role and authority than seems warranted by our limited knowledge. The term "second secretary" has been used by Western analysts to describe the position of very different officials working in strikingly different political environments. A. Zhdanov under Stalin in the 1940s, F. Kozlov under Khrushchev in the early 1960s, and M. Gorbachev under Chernenko in the mid-1980s have all been defined as "second secretaries" despite the immense variation in their relationships to the General (or First) Secretary and their respective responsibilities. At times the term "second secretary" has been used to refer to the Secretary of the CC CPSU responsible for personnel management, but even this definition may be inappropriate for Ligachev at various stages in his career. Although he was most likely responsible for "work with cadres" in

1983-1985, public sources suggest that he was increasingly obliged to share authority over personnel with other officials in ill-defined fashion during Gorbachev's reign.

Ligachev's dramatic revelation in December 1987 that he served as the "chairman" of the Secretariat of the CC CPSU obviously reinforced the widely accepted view that he was the "number two man" in the leadership. However, the political meaning of this claim is particularly unclear for a variety of reasons. The significant overlap in personnel between Politburo and Secretariat may reduce the importance of such a position, and the assertion itself reveals nothing about the relationship between the "chairman" and other Secretaries with more clearly defined functional responsibilities. Finally, the recent assertion by A. Yakovlev that this position rotates among Secretaries and that Ligachev no longer holds it may make the entire question moot.¹

Rather than presume that Ligachev's public commentaries reflect his position as an unchanging "second in command" in the leadership, this study attempts to demonstrate the evolution of his ideological orientation and the changes in his authority at the apex of the system by examining his public statements and published evidence of his various activities. These materials suggest that Ligachev's ideological orientation is more complex than generally believed, that it is an amalgam of "orthodox" and "reformist" positions in different areas of policy, and that his authority in the leadership has been ill-defined, unstable, and in considerable flux.

Over the last five years Ligachev has spoken publicly on a wide variety of cultural and ideological matters, on the reform of education, the Kom-somol, personnel management within the CPSU, rail transport, the oil and gas industry, nationality questions, foreign affairs (to a far lesser extent) and has participated in conferences sponsored by the CC CPSU on an even broader range of issues. The broad scope of his comments and activities reflects his extraordinarily wide-ranging career as a party official as well as his response to Gorbachev's own shifting definition of *perestroika* (restructuring). It is not sufficiently recognized that Ligachev had *two* dis-

tinct careers within the party apparatus before he was brought into Secretariat in 1983. This gave him vast experience in the two major components of party officials' activity — "internal" party work (often referred to as "political" or "party political" work) which incorporates the selection, recruitment, education, assignment, and monitoring of party members who staff the state administration, and "economic" work — the supervision of the branch-ministerial system of economic administration at the local level.

Ligachev focused on "political" work for two decades: from 1944 until 1964. He began his career as an official in the Komsomol in 1944 in Novosibirsk, was promoted into the cultural apparatus in the early 1950s, and served as an *oblast* committee (*obkom*) secretary (probably for cultural and educational affairs) in Novosibirsk in the 1959-1961 period.² In the 1960s, Ligachev was promoted into the party's central apparatus to serve on the ill-fated Central Committee Bureau for the Russian republic (RSFSR), a body established by first Secretary N. S. Khrushchev in 1956 to extend his authority over the party organizations in the RSFSR.³ Ligachev served as a deputy director in the Bureau's agitprop department, which was evidently responsible for all ideological work in the RSFSR, and then as a deputy director in the Bureau's own party organs department, which shared responsibility for personnel management with the CC Secretariat's organizational-party work department in some unknown fashion.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that Ligachev was regarded as a supporter of Khrushchev by the Brezhnev-Kosygin leadership. With the dissolution of the Bureau for the RSFSR in 1965, Ligachev began his second career as a party official as the first secretary of the Tomsk *obkom*. As the party leader of a major industrial and energy-rich region in Western Siberia, Ligachev was clearly obliged to deal not only with "political" matters but also with a wide variety of industrial and agricultural problems. After twenty years dealing with "internal" party work and eighteen years supervising a far wider range of activities in the Tomsk region, Ligachev

had accumulated extraordinarily vast experience analogous to Gorbachev's own experience in Stavropol. It is therefore not surprising that he regarded himself as competent to comment on a wide range of party policies in the 1980s.

Ligachev's career in the Secretariat of the CC CPSU falls into a series of distinct periods. From late 1983 until the spring of 1985, he served as the Secretary responsible for personnel management under General Secretaries Andropov and Chernenko. His ideological pronouncements during this period seemed to provide the basis for much of his criticism of various elements of *perestroika*. In particular, Ligachev's concern over the nefarious impact of "imperialist" ideology and "bourgeois" values on life in the USSR and on the morale of Soviet citizens seemed to underpin many of his subsequent attacks on both cultural liberalization and on attempts to provide a more honest appraisal of the USSR's past.

In April 1985, as General Secretary Gorbachev launched his program of reform, Ligachev was named directly to the Politburo. Until early 1987 he seemed to debate with Gorbachev by providing a running commentary on many of the General Secretary's major pronouncements. While public sources suggest that Ligachev was obliged to share his authority in personnel management and cultural matters with other leading officials, his selection to present the report in November 1986 on the anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution testified to his vast authority within the leadership.

In January 1987, Gorbachev launched a second, more radical phase of *perestroika* with a sharp and detailed critique of Stalinist theory and practice. Ligachev responded by increased criticism of cultural liberalization and of those who sought to provide an accurate picture of the Stalinist regime. But these declarations seemed to limit Ligachev's access to the press; his comments were published less frequently throughout most of 1987 and he was evidently obliged to share the podium on cultural and ideological matters with other Secretaries of the CC CPSU.

But Ligachev's position shifted dramatically in the year from October 1987 to October 1988. First of all, the abrupt demotion of B. Yelstin, the volatile first secretary of the Moscow city committee (*gorkom*) and candidate member of the Politburo in October/November 1987, seemed to bolster Ligachev's status in the leadership. In December 1987, he announced that he was the "chairman" of the Secretariat and seemed to regain authority over personnel; in early 1988, he emerged as the leadership's most authoritative spokesman on educational reform. However, his apparent identification (if not involvement) with *Sovetskaia Rossiia*'s publication of a savage attack on *perestroika* in March 1988 forced him into uncharacteristic silence in the months before the 19th Conference of the CPSU in June 1988. But Gorbachev's report to the June Conference, which called for a radical change in party officials' role and function and a vast extension of Soviet authority, evidently prompted Ligachev to emerge as the champion of party officials in his remarks at the Conference and during Gorbachev's vacation in August 1988. In late September 1988, Ligachev was named the chairman of the Secretariat's new commission on agriculture. Before attempting to determine the significance of this dramatic change in Ligachev's position, it is essential to examine the various phases of his career in the Secretariat in greater detail.

1983-1985

In the spring of 1983 General Secretary Andropov named Ligachev the director of the Secretariat's organizational-party work department. While the exact functions of this department are not completely clear, Western specialists agree that it has a key role in personnel management and is directly responsible for the supervision of trade unions, the Komsomol, and local Soviet activities.⁴ Ligachev quickly emerged as an important figure in Andropov's effort to make the party's officials the driving force

within the CPSU. One of the first steps of this campaign was a CC decree (July 1983) which sharply assailed party officials in Saratov (and by implication in other regions as well) for their lackluster leadership in every sphere of party activity. Ligachev was dispatched to Saratov to urge local officials to provide more vigorous direction in industry, agriculture, education and cultural affairs, and to implement the 1983 decree providing for broader worker participation in management at the enterprise level.⁵

At the same time, the Andropov regime sought to revitalize the party's "ideological work" by focusing on the ostensible "intense ideological struggle" between the socialist and imperialist worlds. In July 1983, the CC urged local agitprop officials to devote far greater attention to the positive aspects of life in the USSR and to the evils of modern capitalism with its exploitation, racism, and oppression.⁶ While it is impossible to determine Ligachev's role in the development of the leadership's position on this question, his subsequent public comments revealed that he found these themes to be particularly congenial. Ligachev continued to discuss the party's "ideological work" in these terms throughout the first years of the Gorbachev regime.

Whatever his personal views on "ideological" issues during this period, Ligachev clearly emerged as the leadership's chief personnel officer during the last months of the Andropov regime. In mid-December 1983 he was dispatched to Ulianovsk to supervise changes in the local party leadership,⁷ and later that month he was named a Secretary without giving up his position as director of the organizational-party work department. His focus on personnel management was evident in his rare public pronouncements. In his election address in February 1984, for example, Ligachev characterized cadre management as the *key* to the restoration of party officials' leadership capacity, insisting that more effective assessment of cadres' "political, moral, and work-related capacities," an improvement in their "style of work," more effective verification, self-criticism, and a broadened sense of responsibility would restore the party's dynamism.⁸

In the immediate aftermath of Andropov's death in February 1984, Ligachev briefly seemed to broaden his own authority in the new leadership. General Secretary Chernenko's evident inability or unwillingness to fill the vacancies in the Secretariat created by the deaths of senior officials seemed to allow the remaining Secretaries to extend their own areas of activity. Whatever the reasons, in the spring of 1984 Ligachev seemed to gain some ill-defined authority in dealing with economic matters, delivering the opening address to a CC-sponsored conference on the USSR's foreign economic relations for key party and governmental officials.⁹ But Ligachev did not emerge as a major participant in the leadership's ongoing discussion of internal economic development. While he did participate in a CC-sponsored conference on capital construction with the other CC Secretaries (Gorbachev, Romanov, Kapitonov, and Ryzhkov),¹⁰ he did not attend two other important conferences — a convocation of the directors of local economic departments chaired by Ryzhkov and a discussion of consumer goods production led by CC Secretary I. V. Kapitonov.¹¹

In fact, after this brief involvement in the discussion of economic policy, Ligachev focused on "internal" party work for the duration of the Chernenko regime. Ligachev's first major public report, an address in June 1984 to the Central Committee's Academy of Social Sciences (the CPSU's leading training school for specialists in "ideological" and "organizational" work), did little more than praise the new leadership and reiterate the formulations characteristic of the party's chief personnel officer. While he implied that the new leadership might be more "demanding" towards personnel than its predecessor, he merely reiterated the orthodox formulations on the improvements of organizational work and personnel management.¹²

Ligachev was also evidently given responsibility for improving the Young Communist League (Komsomol) as well. General Secretary Chernenko, who had spent the bulk of his career as an "ideological" specialist, continued the Andropov regime's efforts to revive the Komsomol as a

source of inspiration and direction for Soviet youth and as a training ground for new party members.

Ligachev's public report on the party's policy toward the Komsomol, which was published in *Kommunist*, proved to be strikingly orthodox and unimaginative. He emphasized the Komsomol's vital importance for the future of the CPSU, warning that any "independence" from the party's direction only served the interests of the "class enemy" in light of the intense "ideological struggle" between socialism and imperialism. While Ligachev insisted that the CPSU's policy toward Soviet youth was based on a thorough analysis of changing social processes and ideological developments among Soviet youth, his own analysis was filled with orthodox euphemisms and banalities. He insisted that generational conflict in the USSR had been precluded by Soviet youth's enthusiastic support and acceptance of the regime's values, and attributed the isolated instances of passivity, lack of discipline and "individualism" to the impact of the ever-present imperialist efforts to subvert Soviet society.

His recommendations to improve the Komsomol's effectiveness were both uninspired and uninspiring. He merely urged local party officials to give more attention to Komsomol activities, to involve Komsomol members more directly in efforts to fulfill the five year plans, to improve education in Soviet patriotism and military-patriotic education to assure support for service in the armed forces.¹³

In the very last months of the Chernenko regime, there was some slight but significant evidence of differences between Secretary Ligachev and Secretary Gorbachev. Western analysts have concluded that Gorbachev had acquired immense responsibilities under General Secretary Chernenko — one reliable biographical guide claims that by 1984-85, Gorbachev was responsible for ideology, culture, world communist affairs, the economy, and personnel management.¹⁴ Whatever the exact extent of Gorbachev's responsibilities in the Secretariat, he was selected to present the keynote report on "ideological work" to a CC conference in December 1984. Gorbachev's report was a puzzling amalgam. On the one hand, he

did not seem to move beyond the orthodoxies of the Chernenko regime in his discussion of "ideological work," emphasizing the need to cultivate loyalty to the regime in the context of fierce "ideological struggle." On the other hand, Gorbachev provided a striking preview of his subsequent demands for rapid acceleration of economic and technological progress, for a dramatic improvement in the people's standard of living, and the use of *glasnost* to restore society's faith in the CPSU and its leadership by exposing shortcomings in the system as a whole.¹⁵

While Ligachev did not address the CC conference on ideological work, his subsequent public comments seemed to indicate that he differed from Gorbachev. Writing in *Pravda* in early February 1985, Ligachev explicitly endorsed Gorbachev's orthodox definition of "ideological work," but he did *not* second Gorbachev's conception of *glasnost* as an instrument to expose the system's shortcomings and bolster the CPSU's status within society as a whole.¹⁶

Whatever the extent of disagreement between Secretaries Gorbachev and Ligachev, Chernenko's death and Gorbachev's selection as General Secretary in March 1985 clearly bolstered Ligachev's authority in the new leadership. Since the success of Gorbachev's program of reform was dependent upon control over personnel, Ligachev's support and cooperation was vital to the new General Secretary. In April 1985, Ligachev was named directly to the Politburo (without going through the traditional candidate stage) to join Gorbachev and Romanov as the only Secretaries of the CC CPSU on the Politburo.¹⁷

1985-1987

Differences in orientation between Ligachev and Gorbachev appeared shortly after Gorbachev outlined his program of reform in his reports to the CC CPSU plenum in April 1985 and to a CC-sponsored conference on the scientific-technological revolution in June. In his report to the CC

CPSU in April, Gorbachev defined the party's primary objective as the acceleration of social-economic development on the basis of the "scientific-technological revolution," a formulation which had been endorsed by Gorbachev's immediate predecessors (particularly by General Secretary Andropov). In fact, Gorbachev's initial emphasis on improved social discipline, and reform of the economic administration did not seem to move beyond the objectives of the Andropov regime. Nor did Gorbachev seem to demonstrate any innovative approach to personnel management; his initial insistence that cadres show greater initiative and responsibility was hardly original. However, his overt plea for *glasnost* to assure that party officials at all levels responded to criticism and his insistence that the mass media adopt a new role in the analysis of events, raising problems, and providing explicit suggestions for their solution, was a significant break with the orthodox view of the media as a means to mobilize the population around the regime's goals.¹⁸

In the weeks before the June CC conference on the scientific-technological revolution, there was a significant shift in Ligachev's position in the leadership. On June 4, 1985, *Pravda* announced that Ligachev had been replaced as director of the organizational-party work by G. P. Razumovskii, a veteran specialist on agriculture and party official from Krasnodar, the region adjacent to Gorbachev's native Stavropol. While some Western observers have interpreted this shift as marking Ligachev's emergence as a powerful "second secretary,"¹⁹ it is important to emphasize that Ligachev thereby lost direct control over personnel management to an official who was probably a close ally of the General Secretary. While this shift was appropriate for Ligachev's promotion to the Politburo in April, it also probably weakened his previous control over personnel.

There were other indications of differences between Gorbachev and Ligachev throughout the month. In mid-June Gorbachev addressed the CC conference on the scientific-technological revolution in strikingly technocratic terms. He urged all party officials to work towards intensive rather than extensive economic development, the effective use of existing

resources, the re-equipment of Soviet industry, accelerated technological development in each enterprise, and to subordinate all "ideological work" to the acceleration of technological progress.²⁰

Public sources reveal some differences between Ligachev and Gorbachev over this address. First of all, Ligachev did not appear at the CC conference on the media's handling of Gorbachev's report on the scientific-technological revolution which was led by CC Secretaries Ryzhkov and Zimyanin.²¹ Most significant, at the end of the month Ligachev seemed to criticize Gorbachev's apparent indifference to "theoretical" issues²² and his technocratic stance. In an address to the CC's Academy of Social Sciences, Ligachev declared that the CPSU was "the party of Marxism-Leninism" as well as the "party of the scientific technological revolution,"²³ called for more comprehensive "party-political education" for the many economic specialists who now served as party and soviet officials, and stressed his fundamental opposition to the introduction of any type of "market socialism" under the rubric of economic reform.

Whatever the significance of these differences, Ligachev's status in the leadership improved dramatically immediately after the sudden and unexplained dismissal of G. Romanov from the Secretariat and Politburo in early July 1985.²⁴ Ligachev was named to replace Gorbachev as the chairman of the foreign affairs commission of the Supreme Soviet,²⁵ and he presided over the meeting of the Leningrad party organization which approved the promotion of its first secretary L. N. Zaikov to replace Romanov as a CC Secretary.²⁶

Later that month, Ligachev was evidently sufficiently influential to address important economic matters as well. He opened a CC-sponsored conference on capital construction in the oil and gas industry in Western Siberia,²⁷ a field in which he had evidently gained genuine expertise as first secretary of the Tomsk *obkom*. And at the end of the month, Ligachev gave the major report to a CC convocation of local party officials (second secretaries and directors of the local organizational-party work departments) on preparations for internal party elections. Ligachev

devoted considerable attention to internal party matters but he also evidently felt free to discuss a far wider range of policies as well. While Ligachev warmly endorsed Gorbachev's report to the CC CPSU in April 1985 for outlining a program of fundamental reform, he also seemed to differ with the General Secretary over the fundamental question of the range and nature of party officials' role in the state's economic administration. Gorbachev's initial calls for reform of the administration of the economy did not really discuss party officials' role in any direct fashion. In fact, he did not really deal with this question in public until his report on behalf of the CC CPSU to the 27th Congress of the CPSU in March 1986, when he spoke out vigorously against local party officials' excessive intervention in economic administration.

Ligachev, in contrast, evidently supported a more interventionist role for local party officials, an orientation which was often characteristic of *obkom* first secretaries responsible for regional economic development. Indeed, Ligachev's position on this issue may have been an outgrowth of his extensive experience as first secretary of the Tomsk *obkom*. Ligachev now argued that party officials should be evaluated on the basis of their effectiveness in guiding the economy, accelerated technological progress, and the quality of production. Moreover, Ligachev seemed to give particular attention to local party officials' economic responsibilities by singling out two vital economic problems (in a report ostensibly designed to provide guidance on "internal" party matters) demanding local party intervention - rail transport (which he portrayed as a particularly troublesome bottleneck), and the production of animal fodder (which he discussed in surprising detail.)²⁸

While Ligachev was evidently free to address a wide range of important issues, his capacity to impose his views on the party as a whole was evidently being undermined by the General Secretary. In particular, in the fall of 1985 there was a significant change in the Secretariat which was probably designed to limit Ligachev's authority over ideological questions. On September 5, 1985, *Pravda* reported that A. Yakovlev, who had al-

ready emerged as one of Gorbachev's key advisers on foreign policy and a close ally of the General Secretary, was the director of the Secretariat's propaganda department. Most importantly, Yakovlev replaced the more orthodox B. I. Stukalin, who was probably an ally of Ligachev's, having served with him in the agitprop department of the Bureau of the RSFSR in the 1960s.²⁹ Although Yakovlev did not play a *public* role on ideological and cultural questions until after his promotion to Secretary of the CC CPSU at the 27th Congress of the CPSU in 1986, his organizational control over the propaganda department must have limited Ligachev's ability to provide unambiguous leadership on ideological matters.

Whatever the exact significance of Yakovlev's promotion, the differences between Gorbachev and Ligachev seemed to become more pronounced as Gorbachev broadened the range and scope of *perestroika*. Gorbachev's report to the CC CPSU plenum in October 1985, which discussed the new draft party program, changes in the party's rules, and a long-range plan for economic development, moved beyond his earlier focus on the acceleration of economic progress to emphasize three inter-related objectives: (1) the development and implementation of a massive "social" policy to improve the state's existing services to the population; (2) the broadening of workers' and peasants' responsibility in the work place; and (3) the use of appropriate publicity at all levels to expose the numerous problems and bottlenecks from below and drive officials to search for effective solutions. Gorbachev now insisted that progress depended on the regime's capacity to unleash individuals' energies, that this was itself dependent on its capacity to combine economic acceleration with an improved standard of living and greater participation by workers and peasants.

Gorbachev did not explicitly discuss party officials' priorities in his report, but he did seem to imply that the revival of the party's leadership capacity demanded renewed attention to the CPSU's "internal work" rather than to the supervision of the state's administration of the economy. Gorbachev urged officials to broaden internal party democracy and

provide effective "political leadership." While Gorbachev did not at this juncture discuss the meaning of this term, it had traditionally been utilized by party leaders to warn local party officials against excessive interference in the state's "economic" activities. Indeed, Gorbachev's discussion of proposed changes in the CPSU's statutes did stress the need to foster the autonomy and independence of both state and local Soviet structures.³⁰

Immediately after the CC CPSU plenum, Ligachev addressed a CC convocation of media officials and directors of creative unions to discuss the propagation of the three programmatic documents. While the selection of Ligachev to provide this briefing reflected his growth of status after Romanov's dismissal in July 1985,³¹ the public handling of Ligachev's report seemed to indicate an authoritative effort to limit his status. While the full text of his report was published in *Kommunist* along with the documents which were to be submitted to the 27th Congress for approval, his report was not identified as his report to the CC conference. This may have been designed to avoid the impression that he was *the* supervisor of media and cultural affairs.

Whatever the reason for this rather odd treatment of Ligachev's report, his analysis of the programmatic documents combined orthodox and reformist formulations. Ligachev clearly endorsed Gorbachev's program for the acceleration of economic progress, but he gave only qualified support to the General Secretary's conception of *glasnost*. In particular, he balanced his support for the media's exposure of inequities and failures with considerable emphasis on its role in the campaign against drunkenness and its support for labor and social discipline. Indeed, Ligachev reaffirmed the orthodox conception of the mass media as the regime's major instrument for mobilizing the society around the targets of the five-year plan, fostering Soviet patriotism, demonstrating the superiority of socialism, exposing the horrors of capitalism and denouncing all inroads of "alien bourgeois ideology."³² Nor did Ligachev endorse Gorbachev's implication that party officials should provide "political leadership" for party members in the state structure rather than intervene

in economic administration. Ligachev's discussion of changes in the party rules pointedly avoided any reference to the need to broaden the autonomy of state and soviet structures.³³

In the months between the CC CPSU plenum of October 1985 and the 27th Congress of the CPSU in March 1986, Ligachev obviously felt free to address a wide range of cultural and economic issues. In late October he participated in a CC conference dealing with ministries' ostensible failure to develop auxiliary agriculture with sufficient dispatch³⁴ and in late November he addressed the party organization in the Ministry of Television and Radio with his characteristic mixture of orthodox and reformist formulations. He did criticize the level of "ideological work" of previous regimes but without particular sharpness,³⁵ and applauded the media's exposure of shortcomings. However, he refused to use the term *glasnost* in his discussion, and called for more effective discussion of the advantages of socialism and the inequities of capitalism.³⁶ In early December he addressed a CC conference on the development of the agro-industrial complex³⁷ and later that month covered a wide range of issues in an address to the Baku party organization. Ligachev defined the regime's emphasis on accelerated economic development as a "breakthrough" in both theory and practice, lauded the vast improvements made since Gorbachev's selection as General Secretary, called for specific improvements in the local oil industry, commented on particular agricultural developments, and praised the *glasnost* to be found in the party's cadre policy.³⁸

In January 1986, *Pravda* reported that Ligachev and Ponomarev, the director of the Secretariat's International Department, had met with the leaders of the Yemeni Socialist Party in Moscow to discuss the perplexing sudden outbreak of civil war in the Yemeni Republic.³⁹ At the same time, Ligachev became involved in the new leadership's efforts to improve the entire educational system, presenting the main report to a CC-sponsored conference of republican party secretaries and Ministers of Education. *Pravda's* summary indicated that Ligachev had urged educational reform

to accelerate technological progress and to improve Marxist-Leninist education.⁴⁰ Ligachev also became more active in Politburo involvement in foreign affairs. In late January he attended a dinner for visiting Italian CP leaders⁴¹ and in early February he was sent to Cuba to represent the CPSU at the Cuban party's Congress.⁴²

The 27th Congress in March 1986 revealed a wide range of differences between Gorbachev and Ligachev. In his report on behalf of the CC CPSU, Gorbachev discussed party officials' role far more explicitly than he had in the past; he now insisted that party officials should provide "political leadership" to the party members who manned the state structure, and insisted that state administrators be granted far greater autonomy and freedom from party officials' "usurpation." B. Yeltsin, the first secretary of the Moscow *gorkom* and a candidate member of the Politburo since early 1986, carried Gorbachev's definition to its logical extreme with a sharp assault on the Secretariat's interference in the state's administration of the economy as well as its personnel management. Although Yeltsin did not criticize Ligachev directly, his sharp criticism of the Secretariat's personnel management was probably directed at Ligachev's administration of personnel in the mid-1980s. Ligachev, for his part, refused to respond to Yeltsin's assault on the Secretariat, failed to endorse Gorbachev's views of party officials' responsibilities, and now explicitly presented his reservations about the implications of *glasnost*.

Gorbachev sought to dramatize the importance of party officials' "political leadership" in a variety of ways. He not only stressed the party's "political ideological and organizational," rather than its "economic" activities,⁴³ but he sought to draw a line between the formulation and implementation of public policy. He insisted that "the party" (the euphemism often used by the CPSU's leaders to refer to its leading core of full-time officials) would provide "political leadership" by formulating the "major objectives" in all spheres of activity, by focusing on the selection, assignment, and supervision [*kontrol*] of personnel throughout the system, and by granting a wide range of choice and autonomy to all ad-

ministrative organs, labor collectives, and economic officials in the solution of concrete social and economic problems.⁴⁴

Furthermore, Gorbachev explicitly assailed the continued confusion of functions between "party committees" (the CPSU leaders' euphemism for the full-time officials who direct local committees) on the one hand, and state and soviet organs on the other. While he overtly recognized that it was not always easy to draw a clear line between the party officials' necessary supervision of plan fulfillment and other objectives and the sins of "usurpation" and "petty tutelage," he insisted that party officials were obliged to foster the independence of state administrators under their supervision.⁴⁵ Indeed, the resolution on the CC CPSU report passed by the Congress explicitly condemned such confusion of functions between party officials and state agencies.

At the same time Gorbachev sought to revitalize the party as a whole by giving particular emphasis to the various elements of "internal work." He called for the restoration of internal party democracy, urged party members to engage in far more extensive criticism and self-criticism, to demonstrate candor and openness in the discussion of plans and decisions, and to show far more humaneness and modesty in dealing with others. In sum, he argued that the society's faith in the CPSU would be restored only if each party member really acted on the basis of the party's demanding rules.

Gorbachev's discussion of "ideological work" reflected this desire to restore the society's faith in both individual party members and the party as a whole. He explicitly repudiated the concept of the party's infallibility, was sharply critical of the continued tendency to address the country's pressing problems in euphemistic fashion, and stressed the overriding significance of "unity of word and action" in dealing with the difficulties. While he did condemn the inroads of "bourgeois" ideology, he also broke with his predecessors by warning against overestimating its disruptive influence.⁴⁶

B. Yeltsin's commentary on the CC CPSU report not only enthusiastically endorsed Gorbachev's call for *glasnost* and a more humane orientation within the party, but carried Gorbachev's criticism of party officials to its logical conclusion. Yeltsin charged that "party agencies" had become so absorbed with economic issues that they had lost their capacity for "political leadership" and assailed the Secretariat of the CC CPSU in these terms. He claimed that the Secretariat's departments had become so similar in structure to the ministries that they duplicated the coordinating activities of Gosplan and the Council of Ministers and made Secretariat officials forget "what real party work was like."⁴⁷

Yeltsin singled out the organizational-party work department for particularly sharp criticism. He charged that it had become so engrossed in economic problems that it had neglected its mandate to manage personnel and therefore had permitted the "degeneration of cadres" in many regional party organizations which had led to a series of economic disasters. Yeltsin demanded a complete reform of the Secretariat's organization to meet the "new conditions" of the Gorbachev regime. Yeltsin did not attack Ligachev by name, but it seems likely that his sharp attack on the organizational-party work department was aimed at the Secretary who had been directly responsible for personnel management before Gorbachev became General Secretary.

Whatever the target of Yeltsin's attack, Ligachev's comment on the report of the CC CPSU did not accept the view that party officials had become so absorbed with economic matters that they had forgotten the meaning of "real party work." In fact, Ligachev refused to endorse the distinction between "political" and "economic" activities which was at the heart of Gorbachev's efforts to revitalize the CPSU around "internal" party matters. Instead, Ligachev emphasized the "unity" of the "ideological-theoretical, organizational, and the entire practical work of the party,"⁴⁸ a formulation which clearly implied that party officials should be concerned with every sector of Soviet life. Nor did Ligachev fully endorse Gorbachev's definition of *perestroika*. While the General Secretary

repeatedly characterized his program of reform as a sharp break with the past theory and practice, Ligachev seemed to play down the originality of *perestroika* by insisting that it embodied the CPSU's "accumulated experience" (as well as being a response to "new" problems and demands) and by characterizing Gorbachev's ideological innovations as rooted in Marxism-Leninism.⁴⁹

Ligachev also disagreed with the General Secretary in his discussion of the various components of the party's "ideological work." Gorbachev had argued repeatedly in the first year in office that the party's "ideological workers" had consistently ignored the reality of life in the USSR, but Ligachev refused to endorse this negative appraisal. Instead, Ligachev gave particular stress to the need for more effective "theoretical education" of party members, an area which Gorbachev had consistently ignored in light of his increasingly obvious desire to break with the orthodoxies embodied in these internal educational programs and to redefine the very nature of "socialism" in the USSR.

Nor did Ligachev accept Gorbachev's increased stress on *glasnost* as a major instrument in unmasking difficulties at all levels and driving the entire society forward. Ligachev pointedly balanced his praise for the media's exposure of shortcomings with emphasis on its positive portrayal of Soviet reality and explicit criticism of *Pravda* for going too far in its exposure of "shortcomings" in Soviet life.⁵⁰ At the same time, Ligachev seemed to emerge as a vigorous supporter of the revival of Russian nationalist sentiment which flourished in a variety of forms under the rubric of *glasnost*. Ligachev asserted that the party "highly values and supports" the upsurge in patriotic feeling and the interest in the history of the "fatherland."⁵¹

While it is obviously impossible to determine the impact of these differences between Ligachev and Gorbachev on Ligachev's position in the leadership, the 27th Congress did approve changes in the Secretariat which *may* have limited Ligachev's authority in both personnel management and in the supervision of propaganda. G. R. Razumovskii, the direc-

tor of the organizational-party work department since June 1985, and an increasingly outspoken supporter of Gorbachev's program of reform, was named a CC Secretary at the Congress.⁵² This promotion probably indicated that he had acquired a broader role in personnel management. While public sources do not provide any indication of the division of labor between Razumovskii and Ligachev, they do indicate that Ligachev no longer spoke publicly on general questions of personnel management or supervised personnel shifts at the local levels as in the past.

At the same time, A. N. Yakovlev, who had been named director of the Secretariat's propaganda department sometime in the fall of 1985,⁵³ was also named a CC Secretary at the Congress.⁵⁴ Henceforth, Secretaries Ligachev and Yakovlev seemed to share responsibility for cultural and ideological questions in some uneasy fashion. Both Secretaries subsequently often appeared together for Gorbachev's briefings on the role of the mass media and other related issues.⁵⁵

In the immediate aftermath of the 27th Congress, Ligachev seemed to toy with the possibility of a larger role in the supervision of agriculture. In late March 1986, a joint decree of the CC CPSU and the Council of Ministers had called for the introduction of full self-financing throughout the agro-industrial complex and in early April Ligachev provided both the opening and closing reports at a CC conference on the subject. Ligachev's comments (which were never published in full as far as can be determined) seemed to focus primarily on the assignment of well-trained professionals and the importance of PPO leadership in each unit, but it is impossible to determine the significance of his remarks from *Pravda's* summary.⁵⁶

Whatever the reason for Ligachev's brief incursions into agricultural matters, he vigorously returned to cultural policy in the spring of 1986. In late April both Ligachev and Yakovlev represented the Secretariat at a CC conference of leading figures in the USSR's theatre,⁵⁷ but the public coverage of their activities seemed to indicate that Ligachev was to be regarded as the more authoritative.⁵⁸ Ligachev now openly assailed the

cultural liberalization which had been fostered by the regime's policy of *glasnost*. He strongly endorsed the concept of a "balanced" portrayal of Soviet reality traditionally demanded by orthodox definitions of "socialist realism" and was openly scornful of the exposés of Soviet life which had appeared in a number of recently produced plays. Ligachev lashed out at these "one-sided" portrayals of Soviet life, insisting that any criticism had to be "creative, constructive, permeated with social optimism, faith in the power of the party and people."⁵⁹ He assailed Soviet playwrights for their ostensible failure to portray appropriate positive heroes, and called for more attention to the struggle against alcoholism, against "bourgeois ideology" and the exposure of the horrors of capitalism as well as the difficulties in the USSR.⁶⁰

The Chernobyl disaster temporarily turned Ligachev's attention away from cultural affairs. In early May he was dispatched to Chernobyl, along with Chairman of the Council of Ministers Ryzhkov and the first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist party Shcherbitskii, to investigate the nuclear plant disaster,⁶¹ and later that month he once again dealt with problems of alternative technologies in the oil and gas industry.⁶²

Ligachev seemed to lose his authoritative position in regard to cultural policies while involved with these pressing problems; he did not, for example, attend a CC conference in early June on the reform of the local press which was led by Secretary Yakovlev.⁶³ However, he seemed to recover his authority very rapidly; he delivered the major report to a CC conference on the regime's policy toward alcohol abuse⁶⁴ and he reappeared with Secretary Yakovlev at Gorbachev's discussion with leading writers shortly thereafter.⁶⁵ At this juncture, Ligachev evidently became more involved in the regime's effort to reform higher education; in late June he provided the keynote report to a CC conference of educational officials. *Pravda's* summary of this report showed that Ligachev grafted orthodox and reformist formulations together. On the one hand, he called for an extension of autonomy to local "educational collectives" in keeping with the "deepening of democracy" in the society as a whole. On the other

hand, he reiterated the orthodox position that the cultivation of a Marxist-Leninist world view and a "class approach" to all historical developments should be the "pivot" of educational activities.⁶⁶

While Ligachev had clearly recovered his power in regard to cultural policy, he did not yet enjoy similar authority in the discussion of important economic policy. At least, he did not participate in a series of important CC conferences on a range of economic issues in August 1986.⁸⁷ Whatever the reason for his absence from these meetings, his views on the nature and scope of *perestroika* were now given wide coverage. For example, his address to a CC conference of directors of the social science departments at higher educational institutions in September 1986⁶⁸ was republished in both *Pravda* and *Kommunist*. In his report Ligachev continued the effort, begun in his remarks at the 27th Congress, to qualify the General Secretary's critique of Soviet reality.

Ligachev sought to portray *perestroika* as the outgrowth of existing theory and practice by asserting that Marxism-Leninism was the basis for *all* party activity and by representing the 27th Congress' extraordinary call for further democratization, the extension of criticism and self-criticism, and *glasnost* as the product of the Marxist-Leninist dialectic in action rather than as a basic new departure in the CPSU's activity.⁶⁹ Ligachev linked this general endorsement of reform with shrill warnings about the ideological threats to Soviet society from abroad. He was particularly distressed about Soviet specialists' ostensible loss of pride over the quality of Soviet products and their "craze" for imported goods of all sorts and was very sharp in his assault on Western popular culture's threat to orthodox values among the young. He fulminated against students' "inadequate" knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, against the insidious combination of nationalist ideology and religious belief ostensibly fostered by Islamic, Uniate, and Catholic clergy within the USSR. Furthermore, he warned against the "misuse" of *glasnost* for "selfish purposes," a formulation which implied that there should be limits to free expression within the USSR.⁷⁰

Ligachev seemed to reach the height of his authority during the last months of 1986. He was selected to give the report on the anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, he participated in CC conferences dealing with *both* economic and cultural questions, and seemed to regain his previous ascendancy over Secretary Yakovlev. While the reason for this is obscure, it may have been related to temporary setbacks for the General Secretary in foreign affairs. In particular, the failure of the summit conference in October 1986 to resolve the question of arms reduction seemed to slow the General Secretary's drive for reform.

Whatever the exact reason, Ligachev was selected to give the annual report marking the anniversary of the revolution in November. As in the past, Ligachev qualified his general endorsement of the major elements of *perestroika* with orthodox formulations. For example, he balanced his support for *glasnost* as vital for the country's further democratization with particular stress on Soviet citizens' obligations and responsibilities and on the social limits to the enjoyment of individual rights.

At the same time, Ligachev defined the superiority of socialism over capitalism in strikingly orthodox terms, asserting that socialism with its collectivism, optimism, and mutual aid had long since surpassed capitalism with its exploitation, its class antagonisms and social oppression. Ligachev gave a warm tribute to the USSR's ostensible success in economic and social planning, in improving national income and providing housing, welfare, education and participation in social affairs to all citizens of the USSR. Finally, Ligachev's discussion of international politics included a number of orthodox formulations. While he recognized the overriding need to avoid conflict between the USA and the USSR, praised Gorbachev's efforts to achieve significant disarmament, and the cooperation which led to the summit conference in Iceland, he also criticized the American government for its ostensible efforts to regain strategic superiority and its commitment to the SDI. Moreover, he *seemed* to imply that Gorbachev's foreign policy team tended to ignore the significance of worldwide "social progress" in its efforts to prevent nuclear war and had

been "naive" to expect a breakthrough in arms control at the summit conference.⁷¹

In the months between the celebration of the Bolshevik revolution and the CC CPSU plenum in January 1987, Ligachev emerged as an extraordinarily busy official, participating in CC conferences on a wide range of economic and cultural policies. In early November he addressed a CC conference on problems of labor discipline and the regime's policy on alcohol abuse,⁷² in mid-November, Ligachev traveled to Finland where he called for the creation of a nuclear free zone in Northern Europe.⁷³ In early December Ligachev seemed to demonstrate his revived authority in cultural matters at a CC-sponsored conference on the theatre and on the activity of creative unions. While Gorbachev gave the major report, Ligachev also spoke at the conference but Yakovlev did not.⁷⁴ Ligachev also participated in a year-end conference on plan fulfillment which Yakovlev did not attend,⁷⁵ and in early January 1987 he attended a CC-sponsored conference on improving relations between the USSR and the DRV.⁷⁶ In mid-January Ligachev seemed to emerge again as the regime's leading spokesman on problems of rail transport, urging a conference of local party officials to create special "operations groups" to cope with perennial bottlenecks.⁷⁷ Finally, on the eve of the January 1987 plenum, he also made a major report to a CC-sponsored conference on agriculture. While V. P. Nikonov, the Central Committee Secretary responsible for agriculture, gave the major report, Ligachev provided a detailed discussion of the application of economic methods to the agro-industrial complex.⁷⁸

1987-1988

General Secretary Gorbachev's report to the CC CPSU meeting in January 1987 on personnel management marked a vital turning point in the entire process of *perestroika*. Gorbachev not only called for the elec-

tion of local party officials by local party committees rather than their appointment from above, but also provided a critique of the USSR's entire social-political order which moved far beyond the strictures of his report to the 27th Congress in March 1986. After admitting that the obstacles to reform were far more deeply rooted than originally imagined, Gorbachev, while not mentioning Stalin by name, launched a fundamental assault on the entire theory and practice of the Stalinist system.⁷⁹

Gorbachev now attributed his predecessors' wide ranging errors to their failure to discard the definition of socialism formed in the 1930s and 1940s with its "absolutist" approach to the institutions created at that time, and its "oversimplified" conception of virtually every problem and policy.⁸⁰ Theoretical rigidity, argued Gorbachev, had made it impossible to eliminate outmoded methods of economic administration, had produced incorrect approaches to property, resistance to cooperatives, errors in respect to auxiliary farming, failures in planning, an underestimation of economic levers and methods, and failures to introduce socialist democracy. Furthermore, Gorbachev charged that the previous regimes' failure to improve the standard of living, to prevent the growth of social dislocation, consumerism, corruption, and their indifference to social questions had produced a massive gap between the world of everyday reality and the world of "phony well-being."⁸¹

Gorbachev now argued that a new emphasis on "political leadership" would make party officials more responsive to the social implications of economic policy and more aware of the social needs of Soviet citizens. He claimed (as Yeltsin had charged at the 27th Congress) that party officials' excessive intervention in economic administration had seriously distorted the management of personnel. In particular, in the assessment and assignment of cadres far too much emphasis had been given to their technical knowledge while essential leadership qualities, such as the "breadth of insight" moral principle, and the capacity to persuade people to act had been overlooked. He declared:

It is essential to recognize honestly and directly that this technocratic "administrative pressure" style of work has done considerable harm to party affairs, particularly in regard to work with people which is the main element in the work of the party.⁸²

While Gorbachev recognized that party officials' overly zealous intervention in economic administration reflected the rigidities of the economic administrative system, he insisted that the coming economic reform would eliminate party officials' temptation to engage in "usurpation" and free them to deal with the wide-ranging social and economic needs of Soviet citizens.

While the CC CPSU evidently did not endorse Gorbachev's "suggestion" that local party officials be elected by local party committees rather than appointed from above, it did approve some important leadership changes which may have influenced Ligachev's relative position at the apex of the system. M. V. Zimyanin, the orthodox CC Secretary reportedly responsible for internal propaganda since the mid-1970s, was retired and Yakovlev was promoted to candidate membership in the Politburo.⁸³ It seems possible that the retirement of an orthodox ideologist from the Secretariat and Yakovlev's promotion may have diminished Ligachev's relative authority over questions of propaganda, and restored a relative balance between Ligachev and Yakovlev. Indeed, shortly after the CC plenum *both* Secretaries attended Gorbachev's briefing to media officials on the meeting.⁸⁴

But Gorbachev's briefing also revealed that his analysis of Soviet reality was *not* shared by all members of the CC CPSU. Gorbachev now indirectly acknowledged that at least some CC members believed that massive criticism of Soviet reality without recognition of the USSR's positive achievements sapped faith in the system as a whole.⁸⁵

Shortly after this briefing, Ligachev expressed his own views on the CC CPSU meeting of January 1987. Most importantly, Ligachev seemed to endorse Gorbachev's general conclusion that political reform was essential for accelerating economic development, accepting the view that *glas-*

nost, democratization of "party, state and social life," improvement of the system of "socialist self-government and election" and democratization of the work place were vital to the implementation of *perestroika*. In fact, Ligachev explicitly declared "Democracy and *glasnost* are both the prerequisite and outcome of *perestroika*."⁸⁶ But Ligachev was silent about the election of the CPSU's officials and he was clearly not enthusiastic about Gorbachev's dramatic criticism of the past, noting merely that the plenum had "extended" the analysis provided by the 27th Congress without any further elaboration.⁸⁷

In fact, Ligachev now began to speak out directly against what he regarded as the "one-sided" portrayal of the USSR which was stimulated by the General Secretary's own unmistakable assault on past policies. For example, in late February Ligachev told a conference of television officials that Soviet media should emphasize the positive aspects of Soviet life and expose "bourgeois" propaganda as well as vigorously criticize existing shortcomings in the USSR.⁸⁸ In March Ligachev told a gathering of the intelligentsia in Saratov that it was inappropriate to "criticize everything," reminded them that fine works of art and literature had been produced even during the period of "stagnation" and once again lauded the triumphs of revolution, socialist construction, and World War II.⁸⁹ In a second address in Saratov Ligachev strongly endorsed the concept of state guidance of Soviet cultural life, reemphasized the overriding importance of the "ideological content" of literary and artistic works, and derided the widespread enthusiasm shown for literary works "previously unknown to the general public."⁹⁰

Ligachev also spoke out against the increasingly critical analysis of the USSR's past. He told a CC conference of radio and television officials in late March that the seventy years of the USSR's development was a "triumph of socialism," and that the country had become a "world leader" as a result of Bolshevik rule.⁹¹ While he endorsed an "honest and candid look backward," he opposed the portrayal of the USSR's experience as a "chain

of mistakes and disappointments," and reiterated his earlier insistence on dramatizing the superiority of socialism over capitalism.⁹²

Ligachev's doubts about the criticism of the Soviet past did not seem to bolster his authority in the leadership. In fact, in the spring of 1987 he seemed to lose the predominant position which he had enjoyed before the CC CPSU plenum in January 1987. In particular, in early April Secretary Yakovlev (rather than Ligachev) gave the major report to a CC conference for media officials in which he vigorously endorsed Gorbachev's analysis of early 1987 and his insistence on overcoming the opposition to *perestroika*.⁹³ Nor did Ligachev participate in a CC conference on retraining party officials which was addressed by L. N. Zaikov and by Secretary G. P. Razumovskii.⁹⁴

While Ligachev did seem to play an important role at a conference on the Komsomol in mid-April⁹⁵ and was sent to Hungary sometime later that month,⁹⁶ published sources seemed to indicate that his authority over ideological issues and personnel policy had diminished. In particular, in May 1987 *Kommunist* published lengthy and detailed reports by Secretaries Yakovlev and Razumovskii which implied that they enjoyed considerable authority in these two critical areas. *Kommunist* No. 8 (approved for publication May 12, 1987) published Yakovlev's report to the Presidium of the Academy Sciences on reforming the social sciences and *Kommunist* No. 9 (approved for publication May 21, 1987) published Razumovskii's report to the CC conference on the retraining of party cadres in April 1987.

In this context, Ligachev seemed to turn to other spheres of activity. In late May he participated in the leadership's discussions with representatives of the Vietnamese Communist Party⁹⁷ and shortly thereafter launched a CC conference on consumer goods and services with a vigorous plea for greater concern with these sectors of the economy. Ligachev now argued that shortages of goods and services deprived the population of economic incentives and thus helped to slow economic growth. Moreover, he now insisted that the USSR's capacity to improve

consumer welfare was a vital "test" of the overall differences between socialism and capitalism.⁹⁸ A few days later, at a CC conference on the agro-industrial complex, Ligachev called for the construction of more agricultural storage facilities.⁹⁹

Pravda's summary of these reports suggests that Ligachev was unwilling to endorse the program of political reform outlined by Gorbachev at the CC CPSU meeting in January.¹⁰⁰ While such evidence is clearly inconclusive, this reluctance to endorse political change was far more evident in Ligachev's addresses in the republic of Georgia in June 1987. His commentary on proposed reforms in higher education seemed to focus exclusively on the subject at hand¹⁰¹ and his discussion of economic development dealt with the economic components of *perestroika*, the campaign against alcoholism and drugs while seemingly ignoring political reform.¹⁰²

In late June the CC CPSU convened to discuss and approve the leadership's proposed reform of economic management. Gorbachev prefaced his discussion of economic reform with an assessment of the progress of *perestroika*, now claiming that the CC CPSU meeting of January 1987 had bolstered popular support for reform, and had kindled an immense surge of "spiritual activity," interest in the arts and sciences and in the country's past. Gorbachev also recognized that some CPSU leaders had opposed his critique of Soviet reality and had urged a renewal of centralized pressure to overcome various problems and difficulties, but he insisted that only further "democratization" at all levels could overcome the "bureaucratic efforts" to freeze the process of renovation.¹⁰³

Gorbachev's proposals for reform of the state's management of the economy seemed to reflect his desire to free local enterprise leaders from the excessive interference of local party officialdom and to grant them far greater autonomy in the fulfillment of the demands of the five-year plans. The reform not only sought to make enterprises self-financing but also to allow them to conduct their activities on the basis of "horizontal" agreements with other enterprises and state agencies. Gorbachev did not refer to the role of local party agencies and officials in this reform and with

good reason. Genuine autonomy for enterprises and the encouragement of horizontal relationships between them would clearly place limits on the local party officials' traditional role as *the* coordinators of local economic activity. It seems highly doubtful that local party officials with a long tradition of intervention in economic management would be enthusiastic about these reforms.

Ligachev did not comment on the reform at the time, but in light of his previous support for party officials' intervention in all sectors of Soviet life, it is at least possible that he had doubts about a reform which granted so much authority to enterprise leaders and seemed to reduce, at least on the surface, the economic responsibilities of local party bosses. While his view on this reform at the time remains unknown, the CC CPSU meeting of June did approve an important personnel change which may have influenced Ligachev's standing in the leadership. In particular, in June the CC CPSU approved the promotion of Yakovlev to full membership in the Politburo, a change in rank which formally placed him at the same level as Ligachev.¹⁰⁴

Whatever the exact relationship between Yakovlev and Ligachev, Ligachev now spoke out increasingly against the cultural liberalization which had accelerated since 1985. In an extensive discussion with the editors of *Sovetskaia Kul'tura* in July 1987, Ligachev provided a strikingly orthodox critique of what he regarded as the "excesses" produced by the loosening of central control over cultural life. He energetically defended the concept of party and state direction of the country's cultural life, emphasized the "ideological content" of artists' work and assailed the "scum and garbage" surfacing in mass culture. He explicitly sided with more orthodox writers (who themselves had condemned the increased reluctance of writers to even refer to the CPSU), and attacked literary critics for their retreat from socialist realism. He insisted that the growing democratization of society had not eliminated the need for a literature with a coherent "class content" and realist orientation, called for greater attention to the best in Russian and Soviet literature, assailed the editors' growing apoliti-

cal orientation and insisted that they give more attention to leadership views on cultural questions. Finally, he called for a "constructive openness" which clearly implied that he regarded unfettered discussions as destructive of the system as a whole.¹⁰⁵

In early August 1987, Gorbachev disappeared from public view until early October. During this extraordinary retreat from leadership, the critics of *perestroika* expressed their views with great energy. With the approach of the 70th anniversary of the revolution, the discussion of the Stalinist past had become increasingly heated and intense and Ligachev dealt with this controversial question in his remarks to a Moscow conference on education in late August 1987. Ligachev now insisted that the 20th Congress of the CPSU had already dealt with the "cult of personality" and declared that the 1930s had not only brought industrialization and collectivization to the USSR, but had carried the country to the heights of achievement in culture, education and other areas. He even claimed that the "majority" of those who had suffered repression had remained "true to socialism." Ligachev also sought to provide a more balanced appraisal of the Brezhnev/Kosygin regime, noting that he had enjoyed a "great life" in the 1960s and 1970s in Western Siberia despite the obvious failure to cope adequately with the system's problems.¹⁰⁶

Ligachev repeated his call for a more "balanced" appraisal of Soviet reality at a CC conference in September 1987 on the forthcoming 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. While he praised the media for supporting reform and increased democratization, he also underlined its responsibility to provide a positive view of Soviet life and to show proper "respect" for the accomplishments of the past. In the process, he criticized the editors of leading journals for their "one-sided approach to democracy" which led them to censor views which they regarded as insufficiently critical of past and present.¹⁰⁷

After this expression of support for the critics of *glasnost*, Ligachev's views on "ideological" issues did not appear in print until February 1988 when he reported to the CC CPSU on proposed reforms of higher educa-

tion. It is impossible to determine whether or not Ligachev was temporarily muzzled by his colleagues or simply decided to avoid such controversial matters. Whatever the case, during the next four months, although Ligachev continued to participate in the CC's ongoing conferences on a variety of issues, his own distinctive voice was temporarily muted.

Immediately after making these comments, Ligachev turned again to questions of energy and culture. In mid-September, he opened a CC conference on proposals to conserve oil resources by shifting road transport to the use of natural gas. In his report on the subject, Ligachev noted that such a shift would not only help to cope with the USSR's energy problems but would also help to improve the quality of air in Soviet cities.¹⁰⁸ In early October, he presided over a CC conference on the construction of additional cultural facilities, insisting that they were as significant for local communities as the construction of housing, hospitals, and other local projects.¹⁰⁹

Nor was Ligachev's silence on "ideological" matters broken by B. Yeltsin's extraordinary outburst at the CC CPSU meeting of October 1987. The official announcement of the CC meeting (which dealt with the upcoming anniversary of the revolution) reported that both Ligachev and Yeltsin, among others, had addressed the meeting, but did not reveal the content of their remarks.¹¹⁰ But in the aftermath of the CC CPSU meeting, Ligachev evidently became involved in the politics of the Moscow party organization. In late October he warmly endorsed the extension of cooperative activity to improve Muscovites' standard of living¹¹¹ and he participated in the meeting of the Moscow *gorkom* in November 1987 which replaced Yeltsin with Zaikov.¹¹²

Whatever the exact nature of Yeltsin's reported criticism of Ligachev at the CC CPSU meeting in October, General Secretary Gorbachev refused to discuss it in his own rather brutal denunciation of Yeltsin in November. Gorbachev revealed that Yeltsin had attacked individual members of the Politburo and Secretariat, had charged that the Secretariat had not supported his efforts to improve the Muscovites'

standard of living, that *perestroika* had not yet brought concrete benefits to the Soviet people. Gorbachev derided this accusation and sharply criticized Yeltsin's ostensible deficiencies as a local party leader, his personal ambitions, his confused and contradictory comments at the CC CPSU, and his failure to heed warnings about his behavior. Gorbachev accused Yeltsin of reverting to the discredited dictatorial style of leadership in constantly shaking up the Moscow party organization, charging him with "pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric" and "pseudo-determination" in his efforts to improve the Muscovites' lot.¹¹³

Shortly after the Moscow *gorkom* had replaced Yeltsin with Zaikov, Ligachev participated in a CC conference on democratization and radical reform in late November¹¹⁴ and was sent to France to represent the CPSU at the Congress of the Communist Party of France the following month. In a rather lengthy interview in *Le Monde*, which has never been published in the USSR, Ligachev revealed that he was the virtual chairman of the Secretariat, organizing its work at the direction and behest of the Politburo, chaired by the General Secretary. Ligachev repeatedly stressed his full agreement with Gorbachev, emphasized his own support for *glasnost* and *perestroika*, democratization and defined radical economic reform as the essence of the reform program.¹¹⁵

At the same time, Ligachev clearly revealed his reservations. While he declared that there were no limits to *glasnost* other than the protection of state secrets, he emphasized that criticism had to be constructive, that the aim of the criticism was not exposure *per se* but the determination of shortcomings and the means to eliminate them, and he continued to portray the reform program as an outgrowth of past developments rather than as a radical break with the past. While he acknowledged that *perestroika* was a "new development," he also emphasized that the entire construction of socialism was a "long series of transitions" and that current reform efforts were a "direct continuation" of the major achievements since 1917. In similar fashion, Ligachev insisted that Marxism-Leninism was not a brake to progress, but the very basis for the party's strategy.

And in dealing with the thorny question of interpreting the past, Ligachev declared that Gorbachev's report on the anniversary of the revolution provided the last word on the subject.

Ligachev dealt with the question of "democratization" in much the same way. He defined it in terms of the "masses' energetic participation" in running the state and society and he sidestepped the key issue of electing party officials by declaring that they had been selected by secret ballot for many years. Otherwise, his discussion of the process of democratization within the party remained vague and general in the extreme. His discussion of the economic reform was couched in the same terms. He simply lauded the new enterprise law, with its complex distribution of rights and obligations between enterprises and central ministries, as reflecting the necessary balance between centralism and autonomy.¹¹⁶

While Ligachev was abroad, Secretary Yakovlev briefly emerged as the dominant Secretary dealing with cultural affairs, presenting the main report to a CC conference of media officials and scientific and cultural workers. In contrast to Ligachev, he represented the decisions of the CC CPSU in January and June as an immense contribution to socialist theory and practice.¹¹⁷

But Yakovlev did not retain this position long. In early January 1988, when Gorbachev once again addressed a group of editors and other cultural leaders, all of the CC Secretaries *except* Yakovlev were in attendance.¹¹⁸ Most importantly, Gorbachev's address seemed to reflect greater responsiveness to his orthodox critics by fulminating against his critics from the "left," as well as those from the "right." While Gorbachev reaffirmed his commitment to continued reform, he now implied that there *were* limits to *glasnost*, warning the editors against misuse of their powerful positions for personal concerns or ambitions, and urging them to avoid recriminations against those who had held outmoded views but were now working for reform. Most significantly, he now declared that "we are for openness in the interests of socialism" and openly attacked any shift toward "bourgeois liberalism" as a retrograde step.¹¹⁹

Gorbachev's shift to the "right" seemed to set the stage for Ligachev's report to the CC CPSU on the reform of higher education in February 1988. Ligachev had been concerned with this problem for a long time. Upon his return from France in December 1987, he had spoken to a series of CC conferences on educational matters and he now clearly emerged as the regime's authority on the subject. In his introductory remarks Ligachev seemed to endorse *perestroika*; he called for rapid and radical change in educational policy in order to keep abreast with the fundamental changes in other areas of society, and repeatedly emphasized the need to cultivate individual students' capacity and creativity.

But Ligachev's discussion of the party's guidance of educational reform reasserted orthodox themes. He was sharply critical of Soviet youths' ostensible indifference to politics, their tendency to embrace "bourgeois" conceptions of morality, endorsement of primitive religious views and nationalist orientations. Most importantly, he vigorously repeated his criticism of "one-sided" and "subjective" interpretations of the Soviet past and present, reiterated the traditional orthodoxy that "mastery of theory" was essential to provide a coherent analysis of events and portrayed Gorbachev's address on the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution (with its extraordinarily "balanced" view of Stalin) as a model for the interpretation of the past. Ligachev lashed out at those who ignored the achievements of the past under the guise of *glasnost* and called on all to "uphold the honor and dignity of the trailblazers of socialism."¹²⁰ At the same time, Ligachev defined democratization as "genuine self-government of the working people" designed to produce political stability in the USSR and, echoing Gorbachev's previous remarks, was sharply critical of "bourgeois liberalism."

A few weeks later, a number of Ligachev's orthodox formulations were cited in an extraordinary published assault on *perestroika* and *glasnost*.¹²¹ In March 1988, *Sovetskaia Rossiia* published a letter from a Leningrad teacher which not only assailed the growing criticism of Stalin but implied that the critics of Soviet reality were the offspring of discredited "anti-

Soviet" elements of the past. The letter contained a savage attack on so-called "left liberal socialists" whose ostensible indifference to Soviet achievements and assaults on all past leaderships had undermined the prestige of the country's entire leadership. The letter also adopted a strikingly Great Russian chauvinist stance, made some nasty anti-Semitic comments in its assault on "refusenik socialism," and assailed the formation of a wide range of unofficial organizations and associations which had sprung up over the last two years.¹²² While it is impossible to determine Ligachev's responsibility for the publication of this savage critique of *perestroika* (or the accuracy of reports that Ligachev was temporarily silenced and reprimanded by the Politburo), public sources reveal that this incident did not help Ligachev's status in the leadership. While he continued to appear in public with other members of the leadership, he did not seem to participate in CC conferences and his views were not published in the press in the spring of 1988.

The leadership's rejoinder to this assault was itself rather slow in coming, which may have reflected an intense debate over the nature and content of the proper response. *Pravda's* initial critique in early April¹²³ was not terribly effective, but later G. P. Razumovskii, who had been promoted to a candidate membership in the Politburo at the February meeting of the CC CPSU,¹²⁴ made a stirring defense of the General Secretary's course in his address on the anniversary of Lenin's birth. Razumovskii now called for a full return to the socialism of Lenin with its "diversity of forms of economic, social, and spiritual life," massive extension of genuine authority to locally elected soviets, complete repudiation of the conceptions of socialism fostered during the cult of personality, and recognition of informal groupings as a legitimate reflection of people's impatience with the existing mass organizations.¹²⁵ With Ligachev at least temporarily under a cloud, Yakovlev once again assumed a predominant position in dealing with cultural policy. He represented the leadership at an unprecedented conference of writers and historians in support of *perestroika* held a few days after the anniversary of Lenin's birth.¹²⁶

In the spring of 1988, the Soviet leadership was absorbed with the preparations for the conference of the CPSU (June 1988) which was convened to discuss and approve Gorbachev's suggestions for the further democratization of the political system. During this period, the General Secretary continued to dominate the media with his interviews, pronouncements, and activities while Secretary Ligachev's views were seldom published. Indeed, his rare public comments seemed to indicate that he was either unwilling or unable to comment publicly on the proposed reforms. Unfortunately, Ligachev's silence on "ideological" issues makes it impossible to determine his attitude toward Gorbachev's proposals.

Whatever the reason for Ligachev's silence, he did participate in at least some important CC conferences and he did speak publicly on certain problems in the area of agriculture and energy. In early May he joined other members of the leadership to hear Gorbachev discuss the forthcoming conference with leading editors,¹²⁷ in mid-May he opened a CC conference on the production of fodder with a vigorous plea for improved production of livestock, milk and other products to meet the society's ever growing demand for better food supplies,¹²⁸ and he attended another conference (with other CC Secretaries) to hear Gorbachev call for an extension of land leasing and other "progressive" methods of agricultural reform.¹²⁹ In early June he ridiculed Western analysts' speculation about massive resistance to *perestroika* and ostensible divisions in the leadership itself but made no comment about the proposed political reforms outlined in the CC CPSU theses of May 1988.¹³⁰ Shortly thereafter he addressed a CC conference on the importance of alternative sources of energy to replace scarce oil and gas.¹³¹

The 19th Conference of the CPSU (June 1988)

Gorbachev's report on political reform to the 19th Conference of the CPSU seemed to be the logical outcome of his earlier efforts to redefine

the relationship between the *apparatus* of party officials, on the one hand, and the party members who staffed the state, on the other. In his effort to demarcate the respective functions of "party" and "state," Gorbachev defined the CPSU as the USSR's "political vanguard" and the Soviet state as the instrument of "government by the people."¹³² While the term "political vanguard" is extremely ambiguous, when read in the context of his comments on party officials, it implied that they should curtail their perennial intervention in the state's administration of the economy and give more attention to various elements of "internal" or "political work."

Gorbachev charged that the party *apparatus's* attempts to manage the economy had replaced democratic centralism with "bureaucratic centralism," explicitly enjoined local party officials from giving direct orders to state agencies, insisted that the party "renounce command style methods once and for all and conduct its policy by means of organizational, personnel and ideological work,"¹³³ and called for a total reform of the *apparatus*.

We will have to give up the present division of the apparatus of the CC CPSU and of the apparatus of local party bodies by sphere of management, restructure its composition in line with the party's current functions and reduce its size.¹³⁴

Gorbachev added that local party bodies would be reshaped to fulfill the CPSU's "political, organizational, and educational responsibilities," and sought to bring local party officials under direct popular control by insisting that they stand for election as the chairman of their respective soviet executive committees.¹³⁵

Gorbachev not only sought to limit the *apparatus's* traditional interference in economic administration but also sought to broaden the authority of both the local soviets and the Supreme Soviet. Gorbachev denounced the "governmentalization" of Soviet life and insisted that an extension of local soviet authority would fulfill the founding fathers' dream of a state based on wide popular participation. He not only called for

granting local soviets "full independent authority"¹³⁶ within their various regions but also insisted that the Supreme Soviet be transformed into a genuine legislative body with broad power. Gorbachev also evidently sought to extend his own personal authority over a revitalized structure of Soviets by calling for the indirect election of a new President of the Supreme Soviet with vast executive and legislative authority.¹³⁷

In his own address to the Conference, Ligachev sought to rebut B. Yeltsin's renewed assault on the ostensible failures of *perestroika* and his characterization of Ligachev (in an interview with Western journalists) as a major obstacle to further reform. Ligachev replied to Yeltsin's charges and other clear evidence of serious division within the leadership by forcefully reaffirming his own support for *perestroika* and by explicitly defending Politburo members Chebrikov, Solomentsev, and Gromyko (who had been publicly criticized by some speakers at the Conference) as warm supporters of Gorbachev's initial selection as General Secretary.¹³⁸

In the process of his angry rejoinder to Yeltsin, whom he implied was objectively serving the USSR's enemies abroad, Ligachev reiterated the critique of *glasnost* which he had enunciated repeatedly since early 1987. He lashed out at those whose search for "historical truth" had led them to ignore and "slander" the millions of Soviet citizens who had struggled for socialism despite Stalinist repression. At the same time he criticized editors and journalists who were engaged in carrying out "personal vendettas" against those ostensibly opposed to *perestroika* and implied that he had become the target of such assaults because of *Sovetskaia Rossiia's* publication of harsh criticism of *perestroika*.¹³⁹

Most importantly, Ligachev's references to the Secretariat and its subordinate officials revealed that he did not share Gorbachev's views on the need to reform the *apparat*. In discussing the Secretariat's activities (Ligachev described his own role as the "manager" of its day-to-day affairs rather than as its "chairman") Ligachev acknowledged that it was overburdened with economic questions, but he did not endorse Gorbachev's recommendation that it be totally reorganized. In fact Ligachev now

emerged as the champion of the much aligned party officials. He did not endorse Gorbachev's suggestion that they stand for election to the chairmanship of the local soviets, or the General Secretary's criticism of their perennial interference in economic management, and he sought to rebut Yeltsin's charge that party officials enjoyed undue material privileges by pointing to their modest salaries.¹⁴⁰

While it is impossible to determine the impact of this address to the Conference on his political standing, the public coverage of the leadership's various activities in the immediate aftermath of the Conference seemed to indicate that Ligachev's authority had diminished at least temporarily. He was not named to the Politburo's special task force on food production which was established immediately after the Conference,¹⁴¹ he did not participate in a CC CPSU-sponsored conference on machine tool construction held in mid-July,¹⁴² and he was portrayed as a mere rapporteur at a conference on pollution in Lake Baikal at the end of the month.¹⁴³

But in August, when Gorbachev evidently went on vacation, Ligachev provided a far more coherent discussion of the reforms proposed at the 19th Conference. Addressing the Gorkii *obkom aktiv*, Ligachev balanced his support for the process of *perestroika* and acceleration with serious reservations. On the one hand, he praised the 19th Conference as a direct expression of "democratization" and socialist self-government, for creating "real people's power" and for guaranteeing that the process of *perestroika* was "irreversible," and seemed at first glance to support Gorbachev's definition of the proper division of function between "party" and "state." Ligachev declared that the success of the proposed political reform depended on the CPSU's capacity to serve as a "real political vanguard in the Leninist sense," its ability to "free itself from inappropriate functions," and to restructure its "style, methods, and forms of party work."¹⁴⁴

On the other hand, Ligachev defended a broad and inclusive definition of party officials' responsibilities. He implied that party officials' direction of economic development would *not* be hampered by the proposed exten-

sion of Soviet authority or the new stress on the party's "political role" and portrayed "party" control over the economy as essential to counter the baleful influence of market forces, which Ligachev clearly regarded as subversive to socialism in the USSR. While he grudgingly acknowledged the need to use market forces, he warned that they were not a panacea for the economy's ills, urged their strict regulation, assailed the capitalist market as the source of injustice and inequality, and firmly opposed any policy which might increase workers' unemployment in the USSR. Moreover, Ligachev's detailed discussion of the Gorkii *obkom's* activities clearly implied that *party* officials, rather than *soviet* officials, were responsible for every sphere of economic, social, and cultural activities in their respective regions.¹⁴⁵

At the same time Ligachev was particularly outspoken about the unprecedented social and economic upheavals produced by the loosening of political control. He clearly regarded strikes and demonstrations against the "workers' state" to be impermissible and was particularly hostile to Armenian nationalist claims against Azerbaidzhan and the regime's confused approach to the solution of that dispute. He also expressed concern that the unprecedented and virtually continuous public discussion of policies unleashed by *glasnost* hindered the party's capacity to work in concert on the actual implementation of policy. He not only urged the party to end its endless debates, close ranks and act, but also expressed the hope that the vast enthusiasm for political reform not be allowed to impede the actual implementation of both economic and educational reform.¹⁴⁶

Finally, Ligachev also expressed some reservations about Gorbachev's "new thinking" in regard to international relations. In his elaborate report on political reform to the 19th Conference, Gorbachev had provided a characteristically ambiguous discussion of the international political system and the USSR's role within it. On the one hand, Gorbachev had portrayed the USA as a continuing military threat to the USSR and declared that international relations had not lost their "class character." On the other hand, these orthodox formulations seemed overshadowed by

his assertion that the USSR's foreign policy should focus on the preservation of human civilization from the threat of nuclear war, and by his enthusiastic discussion of the USSR's cooperation with the outside world in a variety of spheres.¹⁴⁷

While Ligachev's comments on foreign affairs were also ambiguous, they upheld the orthodox view that the world was still sharply divided between "imperialism" and "socialism." While he did recognize the overriding need to struggle against the dangers of nuclear war, he declared that the new emphasis on the solution of general human problems should not produce a "slowdown" in the ongoing struggles for social and national liberation. Most importantly, Ligachev now implied that Gorbachev had gone too far in deemphasizing the significance of the class conflict in international affairs:

We proceed from the class character of international relations. Any other approach to the question only sows confusion in the consciousness of the Soviet people and our allies abroad.¹⁴⁸

After this strikingly explicit warning that unchecked *perestroika* could lead to the collapse of centralized direction and control, Ligachev temporarily disappeared from public view, probably to take his own vacation. But he hardly disappeared from the political leadership. In late September 1988, the CC CPSU, in apparent accordance with Gorbachev's call to reform the Secretariat, created six new commissions in the Secretariat and named Ligachev the director of the commission on agricultural affairs.¹⁴⁹

It is extremely difficult to assess both the significance of this reform of the Secretariat and its impact on Ligachev's own position. At first glance, the creation of six new specialized commissions seemed to reflect Gorbachev's call to reduce the number of departments involved with economic management and to give greater weight to the Secretariat's "internal" party work. But without a more extensive knowledge of the relationship between the new commissions and the previously existing

departments, it is impossible to gauge the extent of this reform. A total dismantling of the previously existing departments would be a major victory for Gorbachev's campaign to streamline the *apparat*. However, if the departments have simply been absorbed into the new commissions, then Gorbachev's victory would be less than complete.

The determination of Ligachev's position after this reform depends largely upon one's assessment of his previous position. If it is true that Ligachev had been a "second in command" since 1985, that he had enjoyed immense authority over other CC Secretaries as "chairman" of the Secretariat and that his widely ranging public speeches reflected a commanding authority in a variety of areas, then his appointment as chairman of the new commission on agriculture might be viewed as a setback, particularly if the demands of this position limit his participation in other areas of decision making. If, however, it is true that his position has been in flux throughout the Gorbachev regime, that he has been increasingly obliged to share his authority in ill-defined fashion with other leading officials, and that the range of his public pronouncements reflects an effort to *establish* authority rather than his status as a clearly defined "second in command," then his new assignment might not be such a setback after all. While the massive problems facing Soviet agriculture make Ligachev's position extremely vulnerable, the regime's clear commitment to solve these problems provides him with immense opportunities for successful activities. Whatever his exact status, the reform of the Secretariat clearly placed Ligachev within the newly formed inner circle of the Politburo composed of those CC Secretaries who head the new commissions *and* are members of the Politburo.

The difficulty in determining Ligachev's position in the end of 1988 is merely the latest reflection of the immense problem of assessing his position on the basis of published information. Indeed, the public record of his pronouncements and activities could be used to support different conceptions of political conflict within the CPSU. For example, Ligachev's consistent criticism of various aspects of Gorbachev's reform program

could be seen as evidence that political discord under Gorbachev is fundamentally the same as the political strife under N. S. Khrushchev when the reformist first secretary was locked in constant battle with his orthodox opponents. Ligachev's statements could be read as the manifesto of an orthodox opposition to *perestroika* and *glasnost* which fears that the combination of cultural liberalization, decentralization of economic and political authority, extensive democratization, and increased discussion of a wide range of issues have unleashed trends within the system which threaten the very nature of socialism. Indeed, this interpretation has been expressed by outstanding specialists on politics in the USSR.¹⁵⁰

But how can we interpret Ligachev's repeated assertions of support for various elements of reform including the "democratization" of party and state life? It is, of course, perfectly plausible that these assertions are merely rhetorical statements of support for Gorbachev designed to create a public image of unity and consensus within the leadership as a whole. But Ligachev's combination of support and criticism of the process of reform *suggests* that Ligachev may be a major spokesman for a "loyal opposition" which recognizes the need for reforms that do more than "streamline" the system but which also fears that certain tendencies and orientations, if left unchecked, will threaten the party leadership's capacity to impose a coherent sense of direction for the society as a whole.

While it remains difficult to determine which of these alternative visions of political life is more accurate, Ligachev's public pronouncements in the summer of 1988 clearly indicate that the definition of party officials' role has become *the* major source of his disagreements with the General Secretary. In particular, Ligachev explicitly emerged as an outspoken defender of party officials against Gorbachev's concerted assault on their traditional prerogatives. Ligachev fears that Gorbachev's sustained attack on previous theory and practice, and his efforts to extend local soviet authority and the autonomy of local enterprises, and his calls to make officials submit to elections seriously threaten their role as the

source of direction and leadership for the Communists working in every institution in the USSR.

This issue did not seem central at the beginning of Gorbachev's reign when his discussion of party officials' responsibilities was often fuzzy and incomplete. But as Gorbachev broadened his definition of *perestroika* to include political as well as economic reform, this issue became increasingly salient, particularly after his call for the election of party officials in January 1987. As Gorbachev increasingly criticized officials' intervention in the state's economic management, represented the *apparat* as the source of "bureaucratic centralism," and sought to force officials to face internal party and popular elections, Ligachev came explicitly to their defense. As a result, while it has proved difficult to provide an unambiguous definition of Ligachev's role and authority at the apex of the system, it seems legitimate to conclude that he may enjoy immense authority as the spokesman for those who now serve the CPSU as he had for nearly twenty years as first secretary of the Tomsk *obkom*.

Ligachev's emergence as the defender of party officials' traditional prerogatives has created an extraordinary situation at the apex of the CPSU. General Secretary Gorbachev, who could be described as the successful *apparatchik* par excellence, seems to have turned against his natural constituency in his impatience to reform the political and economic system. He has sought to limit party officials' interference in economic management, to subject them to at least indirect electoral controls, to grant some ill-defined segment of their authority to the local soviets and the Supreme Soviet, and to assert his own personal authority through the state structure as an indirectly elected President of the Supreme Soviet. In contrast, Ligachev has vigorously defended the view, elaborated by First Secretary N. S. Khrushchev in the mid-1950s, that party officials at both the central and local level are the legitimate and necessary source of direction and guidance in every sphere of public policy.

This unprecedented division of opinion at the apex of the CPSU could have significant implications for the future of *perestroika*. If a major component of the General Secretary's program were to falter, for example, if the decentralization of economic authority failed to provide for a significant improvement of Soviet citizens' standard of living, Ligachev and those who share his views might press for the restoration of party officials' traditional prerogatives to overcome such difficulties and to assure "party leadership" of the system as a whole. Party officials are obviously divided in their views by functional specialization, regional location, and personal rivalry. But they have in fact provided the source of direction and leadership both for the party's rank and file and the society as a whole for years and could well band together with Ligachev and others against the General Secretary if they believed that "party leadership" of the system was endangered.

Notes

1. *The New York Times*, October 28, 1988, 6.
2. Alexander G. Rahr, *A Biographic Directory of 100 Leading Soviet Officials* (Radio Free Europe: March 1986), 3rd Edition, 118.
3. Jerry Hough, *How the USSR is Governed* (Cambridge: 1979), 215.
4. *Ibid.*, 415.
5. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1984), Part 2, 23-237.
6. *Ibid.*, 56-60.
7. *Pravda*, December 16, 1983, 3.
8. *Pravda*, February 10, 1984, 2.
9. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1985), 454-55.
10. *Ibid.*, 546.
11. *Ibid.*, 461.
12. *Pravda*, June 30, 1984, 2.
13. Y. Ligachev, "Partiia i komsomol na sovremenmon etape razvitiia sovetskogo obshchestva," *Kommunist*, No. 13 (1984), 9-22.
14. Rahr, *op. cit.*, 74.
15. *Pravda*, December 22, 1984, 2-3.
16. *Pravda*, February 2, 1985, 2.
17. *Pravda*, April 24, 1985, 2.

18. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1986), 19-26.
19. Dawn Mann, "The Organizational-Party Work Department," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* No. 402/87 (October 15, 1987), 5.
20. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1986), 134-159.
21. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1986), 161.
22. Gorbachev had not referred to Marxism-Leninism at all in his first two public reports as General Secretary.
23. *Pravda*, June 29, 1985, 3.
24. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1986), 38.
25. *Izvestiia*, July 3, 1985, 4.
26. *Pravda*, July 9, 1985, 2.
27. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1986), 197.
28. *Ibid.*, 167-168.
29. *Ibid.*; Rahr (1984), *op. cit.*, 126, 207.
30. *Ibid.*, 39-46.
31. Ligachev had not attended a similar session after the CC conference on the scientific-technological revolution in June 1985.
32. Ye. Ligachev, "Sovetnias' s partei s narodom," *Kommunist*, No. 16 (1985), 77, 84-85.
33. *Ibid.*, 84.
34. *Pravda*, October 25, 1985, 2.
35. For example, he reverted to the euphemistic formula that the media had not always dealt with the pressing problems of workers and peasants.

36. *Pravda*, November 21, 1985, 2.
37. *Pravda*, December 8, 1985, 2.
38. *Pravda*, December 22, 1985, 2.
39. *Pravda*, January 18, 1986, 4.
40. *Ibid.*, 2.
41. *Pravda*, January 29, 1986, 2.
42. *Pravda*, February 18, 1986, 1 for the Politburo's approval of his visit.
43. *XXVII S"ezd KPSS. Stenograficheskie otchet* (Moscow: 1986), Vol. I, 100.
44. *Ibid.*, 105.
45. *Ibid.* See also *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1987), 24.
46. *Ibid.*, 111.
47. *Ibid.*, 142.
48. *Ibid.*, 233.
49. *Ibid.*, 237.
50. *Ibid.*, 236.
51. *Ibid.*, 238.
52. *Pravda*, March 7, 1986, 1.
53. Rahr, *op. cit.*, 222.
54. *Pravda*, March 7, 1986, 1.
55. See, for example, *Pravda*, March 15, 1986, 1.

56. As published in *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1987), 218-220.
57. *Ibid.*, 225-228.
58. *Pravda* summarized Ligachev's remarks and they were published in full in *Teatr*.
59. A condensed version of Ligachev's report appears in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 44, 1-2.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Pravda*, May 4, 1986, 2.
62. *Pravda*, May 22, 1986, 2.
63. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1987), 231.
64. *Ibid.*, 232.
65. *Ibid.*, 233-34.
66. *Ibid.*, 235-236.
67. He did not attend the CC's conference on agricultural problems on August 6, 1986, despite his earlier report on the agro-industrial complex. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1987), 241-242. Nor did he join Yakovlev and other CC Secretaries at the CC conference on machine construction a few days later (*Ibid.*, 242), nor a conference on the acceleration of scientific-technological progress in the oil and gas industry held at the end of the month (*Ibid.*, 255-56).
68. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1987), 257-258.
69. *Pravda*, October 2, 1986, 2.
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Pravda*, November 7, 1986, 1-3.
72. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1987), 267.

73. *Pravda*, November 14, 1986, 5.
74. *Spravochnik Partiinogo Rabotnika* (1987), 285-286.
75. *Ibid.*, 287-288.
76. *Pravda*, January 6, 1987, 4.
77. *Izvestiia*, January 18, 1987, 2.
78. *Pravda*, January 25, 1987, 2. Ligachev's report was not published until after the meeting of the CC CPSU in January 1987.
79. M. S. Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i*, Vol. 4 (1987), 300.
80. Gorbachev listed the following spheres of policy: "public ownership, class and international relations, the measurement of labor and consumption, cooperatives, methods of management, people's rule and self-management, the struggle with bureaucratic aberrations, the revolutionary-transformational essence of socialist ideology, the principles of education and upbringing," and others. *Ibid.*, 302.
81. *Ibid.*, 305.
82. *Ibid.*, 334.
83. Rahr, *op. cit.*, 233. *Kommunist*, No. 3 (1987), 4.
84. *Pravda*, February 14, 1987, 1.
85. *Ibid.* At this particular juncture Gorbachev retreated temporarily from his radical critique (at least in the published version of his remarks). He reminded media officials that criticism was essential for *perestroika*, but he now seemed to give more positive treatment to the gains made by the USSR in the 1930s and 1940s.
86. Ligachev's brief comments on the CC meeting were published as a preface to the published version of his report on the agro-industrial complex. Ye. Ligachev, "Chelovecheskii faktor, khozaschet i perestroika v agropromyshlennom kompleks," *Kommunist*, No. 4 (1987), 27, approved for publication February 23, 1987.

87. *Ibid.*
88. *Pravda*, February 24, 1987, 2.
89. *Pravda*, March 3, 1987, 2.
90. *Pravda*, March 6, 1987, 2.
91. *Pravda*, March 24, 1987, 2.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Pravda*, April 1, 1987, 2.
94. *Pravda*, April 4, 1987, 2.
95. See excerpts from *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, April 19, 1987, 1, in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 16, 14.
96. *Pravda*, May 1, 1987, 1.
97. *Pravda*, May 22, 1987, 2.
98. *Pravda*, May 23, 1987, 2.
99. *Pravda*, May 26, 1987, 3.
100. *Pravda's* summaries did not include any positive references to the major political themes of the CC CPSU meeting of January 1987.
101. *Pravda*, June 3, 1987, 3.
102. *Pravda*, June 4, 1987, 2.
103. *Pravda*, June 26, 1987, 2.
104. *Pravda*, June 17, 1987, 1.

105. Excerpts from Ligachev's report published in *Sovetskaia Kul'tura* (July 7, 1987) appear in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 34, 15.
106. *Pravda*, August 27, 1987, 2.
107. *Pravda*, September 17, 1987, 2.
108. *Pravda*, September 19, 1987, 2.
109. *Pravda*, October 3, 1987, 2.
110. *Pravda*, October 22, 1987, 1.
111. *Pravda*, October 28, 1987, 2.
112. *Pravda*, November 12, 1987, 1.
113. *Pravda*, November 13, 1987, 1. Yeltsin's subordinates, particularly the *raikom* secretaries, were particularly vicious. *Pravda*, November 13, 1987, 1-3.
114. *Pravda*, November 21, 1987, 1.
115. *Le Monde*, December 4, 1987, 1.
116. *Ibid.*
117. *Pravda*, December 3, 1987, 2.
118. *Pravda*, January 9, 1988, 1.
119. *Pravda*, January 13, 1988, 1.
120. *Izvestiia*, February 18, 1988, 4.
121. The author cited Ligachev's formulation on the need for a "class approach" to all phenomena, his criticism of those who represented the Stalin period as a series of mistakes, and his call to respect the "trailblazers" of socialism.

122. A condensed version of the text appeared in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. XL, No. 13, 1-2.
123. *Pravda*, April 5, 1988, 1.
124. *Pravda*, February 19, 1988, 1.
125. *Pravda*, April 23, 1988, 1-2.
126. *Pravda*, April 28, 1988, 3; April 29, 1988, 2.
127. *Pravda*, May 8, 1988, 1.
128. *Pravda*, May 13, 1988, 2.
129. *Pravda*, May 14, 1988, 1.
130. *Pravda*, June 5, 1988, 2.
131. *Pravda*, June 9, 1988, 1.
132. "Report by Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee," 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU, *Documents and Materials* (Special Supplement for *Soviet Life*), 42.
133. *Ibid.*, 107.
134. *Ibid.*, 84.
135. *Ibid.*, 49.
136. *Ibid.*, 48.
137. *Ibid.*, 54-55.
138. *Pravda*, July 2, 1988, 2.
139. *Ibid.*

140. *Ibid.*
141. *Pravda*, July 5, 1988, 2.
142. *Pravda*, July 10, 1988, 2.
143. *Pravda*, July 29, 1988, 2.
144. *Pravda*, August 6, 1988, 2. The same day *Pravda* reported that CC Secretary Razumovskii was in Novosibirsk (where Ligachev had begun his career) to supervise changes in the local party leadership. This may have been designed to highlight Ligachev's loss of authority over personnel management.
145. Ligachev discussed the *obkom*'s involvement in industry, agriculture, modernization of plants and equipment, housing and consumer affairs, leasing in agriculture, problems of pollution, education, culture, and the preservation of historical monuments.
146. *Pravda*, August 6, 1988, 2.
147. Gorbachev, *op. cit.*, 30-35.
148. *Pravda*, August 6, 1988, 2.
149. *Pravda*, October 1, 1988, 1.
150. See, for example, Michel Tatu, "19th CPSU Conference," *Problems of Communism*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3-4 (May-August 1988), 1-15.

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