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Gorbachev Versus the Apparat?

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In September 1988 six CPSU commissions were created to make policy proposals to the Politburo on the "most important issues in the life of the party and the country." The new commissions were intended to constitute the highest-level advisory bodies to the Politburo. More importantly, the creation of the commissions enabled Gorbachev to circumvent the CC departments, the backbone of the traditional party apparatus which was obstructing perestroika. In the apparat's place, the members of the "electoral organs" of the CPSU, i.e., the Central Committee and to a lesser extent the Central Revision (now Control) Commission, were to be brought into the decision-making process. This was part of Gorbachev's attempt to destroy the power of the *apparatchiki* thereby facilitating the separation of the party's functions from those of the state.

With the aid of the Institute's computer database, which includes extensive information on party appointments, it is possible to draw tentative conclusions on the Gorbachev leadership's attitudes toward top-level party bodies. The membership of the commissions was announced at the November 1988 Party Plenum. Subsequently two more commissions were established, an Interethnic Commission (December 1989) and a Culture, Education, and Science Commission, created by the 28th Congress in July. Thus there now appears to be a total of eight commissions (although the Interethnic Commission has not been referred to again since its creation was announced). At the 28th Congress a major "cleansing" of the party's leadership took place that included a large number of retirements from the Central Committee. Assuming that CC membership is a requirement for commission membership, Table I lists the most prominent members originally appointed and indicates in boldface the surviving

members. Members of CC departments (discussed below) are indicated by daggers. Former and current commission members appointed in March to the Presidential Council (eight of seventeen) are indicated by asterisks. Two (Medvedev and Yakovlev) originally served as commission chairmen.

Table 1. The Commissions and Their Membership

Boldface indicates members who remain after the 28th Party Congress.

^indicates CC department members originally appointed to commissions.

Former and current commission members appointed to the Presidential Council in March 1990 are indicated by asterisks.

Agrarian Commission

(original total 20 members)

[new chairman: Stroyev]

Ligachev (chairman)

Gostev

Masaliyev

Mesyats

Murakhovsky

Nazarbayev

Polozkov

Ponomarev

Sakalauskas

Skiba^

Sokolov

Stroyev

Culture Education and Science Commission

(Members not yet appointed)

Ideological Commission

(original total 24 members)

[new chairman: Dzasokhov]

Medvedev* (chairman)

Afanas'yev

Frolov

Kapto^

Karpov

Kuptsov

Marchuk

Nenashev

Vagris

Yagodin

International Commission

(original total 22 members)

[new chairman: Yanaev]

Yakovlev* (chairman)

Akhromeyev

Arbatov

Arutyunyan

Chernyaev

Falin^

Kryuchkov*

Laptev

Luchinsky

Manayenkov

Nishanov

Novozhilov

Primakov*
Revenko*
Tereshkova
Valyas
Velikhov
Vezirov

Party-Building and Cadres Commission

(original total 23 members)

[new chairman: ?Shenin]

Razumovsky^ (chairman)

Boldin*^

Boldyryov

Ivashko

Kruchina^

Malkov

Niyazov

Pugo

Razumov

Usmanov

Shevchenko

Socioeconomic Commission

(original total 21 members)

[new chairman undetermined]

Slyun'kov (chairman)

Afonin

Biryukova

Brakov*

Chazov

Frolov

Khodyryov

Korolyov

Malofeyev

Maslyukov*

Saikin

Vlasov

State and Legal Commission

(original total 18 members)

[new chairman undetermined]

Chebrikov (chairman)

Bakatin*

Bobkov

Brazauskas

Girenko

Kravtsov

Lizichev

Logunov

Makhkamov

Rubtsov

Terebilov

If the commissions are to play a significant role in party affairs, a large number of appointments to already existing commissions will be required, in addition to staffing two additional commissions. As Table I shows, at the Congress three new commission chairmen were appointed, and Shenin may be slated to be the new head of the Party Building and Cadre Commission, since he has assumed these functions in the Secretariat. In the past, all commission chairmen have been simultaneously Politburo members and CC Secretaries. It will not be possible to follow this precedent in filling all four vacant chairmanships, since there are only two candidates with the necessary dual status (V.A. Ivashko and G.V. Semyonova). According to the November 1988 resolution,

the commissions were to "present draft documents and analytical materials" to the Politburo. However, most of the commissions have held far fewer meetings than the minimum four times per year required by the resolution, the International Commission being the least active. In fact, for a period of 13 months this commission did not meet.

As part of the policy of breaking the power of the apparatus, in August 1988 the decision was announced to eliminate 11 departments, leaving only nine. Table II shows the departmental reorganization. The November 1988 resolution made it clear that the departments were to be subordinated to the commissions, and were to play an advisory role to the new higher bodies. The abolition of the majority of the departments was accompanied by an extensive purge of the department staff. Between the fall 1988 reorganization and the 28th Congress, 680 apparatchiki were eliminated. The reorganization of the apparatus and the establishment of commissions were intended to bring about the "further activization of the Central Committee." Thus of the total 128 members of the original six commissions (excluding chairmen and a cochairman), 114 were either CC full or candidate members, of whom 30 remain in the current CC. On the other hand, as Table I shows, only six of the original commission members were drawn from the CC departments. The seniority of commission chairmen further emphasizes the standing of the commissions. Department heads have been at most CC members (with the sole exception of the original Party Building Commission chairman G.P. Razumovsky, who was then a Politburo candidate member and CC Secretary). Finally, it is noteworthy that of the total of 53 CC members re-elected at the 28th Congress, 30 were commission members, whereas only nine department members remained on the Central Committee.

Both the original reorganization and the subject areas of departments created subsequently confirm the planned change in the functions of the party apparatus from executive-administrative responsibilities to a political-advisory role. The August 1988 memorandum on the reorganization made it clear that the Agrarian and Defense Departments were being retained only during a "transitional stage." On the other hand, in November 1989 and April 1990 an Interethnic Department and a Department for

Work with Sociopolitical Organizations were set up. In addition, at the 28th Congress not only was the Culture, Education, and Science Commission established, but also Gorbachev called for the creation of a Women's Issues Department (although there was no reference to it in the Congress's resolutions).

As well as appointments of Gorbachev supporters in the new Central Committee to the many commission vacancies, possibly accompanied by the establishment of new commissions headed by high-ranking party officials, another purge of the traditional apparatus may be expected. At a meeting of the Central Committee Secretariat on August 7, the decision was announced to "finally reject *nomenklatura* stereotypes," i.e., the *nomenklatura* principle of appointments. In addition, the size of the apparatus is to be cut further, and attestations (performance reviews) are to be conducted for all the members of the Central Committee apparatus

Table 2. Effects of CC Reorganization

Before	After
Administration of Affairs	Administration of Affairs Head: Kruchina
Administrative Organs	State and Legal Policy Head: Pavlov
Agriculture and Food Industry	Agrarian Head: Skiba
Chemical Industry	Abolished
Construction	Abolished
Culture	Abolished
Defense Industry	Defense Head: Belyakov
Economy	Socioeconomic

	Head: Shimko
Foreign Cadres and Foreign Travel General	Abolished General Head: Boldin**
Heavy Industry and Energy Supply International	Abolished International Head: Falin**
Liaison with Communist and Worker Parties of Socialist Countries	Abolished
Light Industry and Consumer Goods Machine Building	Abolished Abolished
Organizational-Party Work	Party-Building and Cadres Head: Razumovsky
Propaganda	Ideological Head: Kapto
Science and Educational Institutions	Abolished
Trade and Services	Abolished
Transport and Communication	Abolished Interethnic Relations* Head: Mikhailov Sociopolitical Organizations* Head: Kuptsov***

* Created at the 28th Congress, July 1990.

** Member of the Presidential Council.

*** Central Committee Secretary since 28th Congress.

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