

Raisa Gorbachova 'elected' to Soviet Culture Fund presidium

by Luba George

At a Moscow press conference Nov. 13, the 79-year-old Russian chauvinist, Dmitri Likhachov, announced that he had been elected chairman of the newly created Soviet Culture Fund. Likhachov revealed the power behind the throne by declaring that elected to the 10-person presidium was Raisa Gorbachova, wife and stringpuller behind Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov. Others named to the executive board included writers Yuri Bondarev and Boris Oleinik, and Valentin Falin, the former ambassador to West Germany, now chief of the Novosti news agency,

Likhachov speaks for the unofficial "Russian Party" which is said to consist of many leading political and military figures, including Gorbachov, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, and writer Vladimir Solukhin. He is also an officer of the Society for the Preservation of Russian Monuments (Rossiya Society). Earlier this year, in the theoretical journal *Kommunist*, he demanded that the entirety of northern Russia be declared a historical monument and spared any development, including river diversion projects. Many of Likhachov's articles feature Russia's Byzantine origins. Already in 1946, he wrote on how Russia had inherited its historical mission and imperial franchise—as the "Third Rome"—from Byzantium.

A 1981 (No. 24) edition of a *samizdat* (Russian underground material) miscellany, titled *Pamyat* (Memory), described how this "Russian party" came into existence after the 1917 October Revolution. In 1923, a study circle of Leningrad intellectuals calling themselves the "Cosmic Academy of Sciences" met regularly to read scholarly papers, some of which dealt with Russia's religious and historical past. In 1928, nearly all the members of the circle were arrested, charged with "counter-revolutionary" activity. Among those arrested by the OGPU (KGB) was future Academician D.S. Likhachov, accused of "nostalgia for the pre-revolutionary past." Today the same Likhachov is the *éminence grise* of the Soviet Culture Fund and a recognized specialist on "Ancient Russia." It was on his personal initiative, that Unesco declared 1986 the year to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the Kievan Rus epic, "The Lay of the Host of Igor." Likhachov has reinterpreted the piece as "the

first Great Russian epic."

The creation of the Soviet Culture Fund has provided the influential Raisa Gorbachova with her first official function. As the de facto leader of the Soviet Culture Fund, she will be doing openly what she has previously been doing behind the scenes: directing and shaping the Soviet Union's cultural transformation. Raisa, reportedly the daughter of Maksim Titorenko, an official in Lenin's New Economic Policy (the NEP promoted small-scale private enterprise), has been personally involved in easing the screws on Soviet artists.

The long-censored director Elem Klimov has been recently elected to head the U.S.S.R.'s Filmmakers' Union; Boris Pasternak's novel *Doctor Zhivago* may be published; the publication of works by poetess and contemporary of Maxim Gorky Anna Akhmatova will soon be under way. Even more stunning, was the appearance in print earlier this year, of poems by Akhmatova's husband, Nikolai Gumilyov. Never before published in the Soviet Union, Gumilyov was executed in 1921 for his part in the so-called Taganets plot of a group of Russian monarchists. (The Taganets circle also happens to have been penetrated and partially run by the shadowy Soviet intelligence group that would become known as the Trust.) The Soviet weekly *Ogonyok*, which printed Gumilyov's poems this past summer, also carried a lengthy biographical sketch of the poet by a member of the Writers' Union, which explained his "counterrevolutionary" actions as the result of a quite understandable and practically admirable Russian officer's loyalty.

The founding Membership List of the Fund reads like a Who's Who of the KGB-GRU "cultural" world: filmmakers like Elem Klimov, musicians like A.M. Balanchivadze (the brother of Stravinsky's collaborator and choreographer, George Balanchine), architects, members of the Soviet Peace Council, the *Rodina* (Motherland) Society, and Likhachov's pet project—the Society for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments. It includes "stars" like spy novelist and reputed

Chinghiz Aitmatov, the leading Soviet "NEP specialist" Sergei Zalygin, editor of *Sovetskaya Kultura* Andrei Belyayev,

the head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Publishing House, Archbishop Pitirim, and many more.

'Countermeasure' to Americanism

Likhachov declared in an article he wrote for the Soviet cultural weekly *Sovetskaya Kultura* (Sept. 20): "The creation of the Soviet Culture Fund is of great political significance, an act which has no comparison in any other country in the world. Take a highly developed country like America, for example. Here they are drilling into the heads of the population such propagandistic slogans as: 'U.S.A.—the nation of nations' . . . ' Under the rubric of protecting the heritage of all the world's nations, the United States is carrying out its propaganda of American hegemony . . . of nationalistic arrogance . . . in all cultural spheres. American hegemony in the sphere of culture is a big myth. . . . As a counter-measure to American demogogy, the founding document of the Soviet Culture Fund stipulates that citizens [e.g., Western members of the "Trust"] of any country can participate in its work . . . to help contribute in the realization of its tasks."

In his address to the founding conference, former Minister of Culture P.N. Demichev declared that Soviet culture must set the "new cultural standards" in the world today. "Often in the West it is written about the apocalypses and catastrophic degradation of man, about the loss of fundamental esthetic forms and norms of civilized behavior. . . . Today as never before, active spiritual standards have to be set which can counter today's imperialism."

A leading Soviet agent of influence since the time of Lenin, Armand Hammer, was this past summer directly involved with Raisa Gorbachova and Soviet Culture Minister Vassili Zakharov, in preparations to found the Fund, which promises to promote the "cultural and spiritual richness" of Russia, and to establish and upgrade "cultural ties abroad." Zakharov, the Central Committee's "agitprop" specialist, took over Demichev's job as culture minister Aug. 16 this year.

At the Fund's inauguration ceremony, Likhachov paid tribute to the "great friend of the U.S.S.R.," Armand Hammer, and underlined that the Fund and its work will live on "private contributions and donations." The October issue of *Soviet Film* reported on a new Soviet movie called *Face to Face*, directed by Anatoli Bobrabsky, which is a fictional previous of the Culture Fund's quest to reclaim art works for the Motherland. In the film, a Soviet journalist and a Russian emigré named "Prince Rostopchin" team up at Sotheby's to purchase for the U.S.S.R. a painting by the Russian artist Vrubel. And the Nov. 24 issue of the weekly *New Times*, illustrated by a big photo of Armand Hammer presenting his "gifts" to the Culture Fund at Moscow's central exhibition hall, proudly announced that "contributions to the Soviet Culture Fund have begun to flow in. More and more donations are entered on U.S.S.R. State Bank account No.700 specially opened for the purpose."

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