

Non-Target Communist Area Analysis Department

Background Information USSR

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"NOMENKLATURA" UNDER FIRE

One of the interesting developments at the recent plenum of the Kazakh Communist Party was the most unusual published attack¹ by I. Yu. Yusupov, the first secretary, on the current misuse of the "nomenklatura" system.

This was important because it is extremely rare for the Soviet press to make any reference at all to "nomenklatura", which means the list of members of the Party and/or the new class held by each party committee to enable it to fill appointments to all the leading posts in its area.

It is a subject close to every communist's heart, because his presence on or absence from the list largely determines the success or failure of his career. To get a job as director of a factory, kolkhoz, sovkhos, bank, enterprise, procurement agency, etc., or to be appointed to the local Soviet or party committee it is essential to be on the appropriate "nomenklatura". But the drawback of the system from the national point of view is that those eligible for the list often tend to be selected on the basis of Party loyalty and experience rather than all-round competence.

Yusupov's speech was made at a plenum which had occasion to dismiss T.I. Sokolov, a secretary of the Kazakh Central Committee who was also first secretary of Tselinny Krai, the area covering Khrushchev's virgin lands scheme. He was sacked for "serious mistakes in the leadership of the Krai party organization and for unsatisfactory fulfillment of the party's decisions regarding the development of agriculture." (Alma-Ata Radio, 19 March 1963).

Sokolov is a former candidate member of the C.C., CPSU (1956-61) and he came to Kazakhstan from the post of 1st Secretary of Perm Oblast (which used to be called after Molotov) in the RSFSR. Thus he would have been on the "nomenklatura" of the C.C., CPSU, not of the Kazakh CP, since it is probable that the principal party posts at all levels are on the "nomenklatura" of the next higher level.²

Moreover the communiqué announcing Sokolov's removal made no mention of any kind of ballot in connection with it

¹Pravda, 25 March 1963.

²See D.J.R. Scott, Russian Political Institutions, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1961, p. 182.

being held during the plenum. It thus looks as though the Kazakh Party was not consulted about Sokolov's dismissal, but simply was informed, presumably by Yusupov, that he had to go.

In the case of another failure, S. Toktamysov, the ex-first secretary of Kzyl-Orda Oblast, the plenum is reported to have taken a "closed and secret ballot" which "unanimously" decided to exclude him from the CC for "great mistakes in leadership of the oblast party organization, for gross violation of Leninist principles in the selection, distribution and training of cadres, for unworthy behaviour and for not justifying the confidence placed in him."

As regards his job as first secretary of an oblast, Toktamysov too would probably be on the "nomenklatura" of the CC, CPSU. Hence the ballot mentioned refers only to his expulsion from the Kazakh CC, and his removal from the oblast seems likely to follow by administrative action.

These two cases, like so many others in the republic, are instances of the "nomenklatura" system going wrong. Yusupov's attack on it began by pointing out that in the last 3 years, some 20,000 specialists with higher or secondary education have arrived in Kazakhstan from other "fraternal" republics.

"But at the same time", he said, "for several years some oblast and krai committees and the Bureau of the CC of the Kazakh CP have often overlooked such people, have oriented themselves mainly towards a narrow circle on the established 'nomenklatura'. This explains the serious defects which have recently been disclosed in the selection, allocation and training of cadres". (Pravda, 25 March 1963).

Yusupov is right, and not only about Kazakhstan. For decades the communist parties in the republics and elsewhere have relied too much on their "narrow circles" of established leaders, with the absurd result, so often criticized by Khrushchev, that men who have failed in one job appear again in a higher post only to repeat their previous mistakes in a wider field.

Personal ties are also involved on the large scale. D.A. Kunayev, the former first secretary of Kazakhstan, was accused at the plenum of "making great efforts" to have S. Daulenov appointed Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Kazakh SSR for motives of friendship, not efficiency. (Daulenov was dismissed in the winter of last year, and is now said to have been lacking both in initiative and morals). But the

wording of the report makes it clear that Kunayev could not appoint Daulenov on his own responsibility, and so "nomenklatura" must be held at least partially to blame for that failure too.

Either a drastic expansion of the list of eligible leaders is required, as Yusupov suggested, or perhaps a complete change of the system. But since the latter is unlikely to be achieved in the near future, he (and other communist leaders) could make a useful advance by pruning the present names and bringing in fresh blood in much greater quantity.

r.r.g.