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*Some interesting  
points here.  
OK.*

CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM

1. THE PLENUM OPENED ON 17 FEBRUARY WITH A LENGTHY SPEECH BY LIGACHEV ON THE RESTRUCTURING OF EDUCATION. THE FULL TEXT OF THE SPEECH APPEARS IN TODAY'S PRESS. LIGACHEV'S SPEECH WAS FOLLOWED BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE FLOOR WHICH HAVE NOT YET BEEN PUBLISHED. THE PLENUM CONTINUES TODAY. IT IS CUSTOMARY FOR ANY LEADERSHIP CHANGES TO BE ANNOUNCED AT THE END OF A PLENUM.
2. THE FOLLOWING IS THE SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS FROM LIGACHEV'S SPEECH.
3. LIGACHEV SAID THAT WIDERANGING REFORM OF THE WHOLE EDUCATION SYSTEM WAS NEEDED AS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE PROCESS OF PERESTROIKA. HE IDENTIFIED THREE MAJOR FAILINGS IN THE REFORM PROGRAMME INTRODUCED IN 1984. ITS APPROACH WAS TOO EVOLUTIONARY: THIS CONFLICTED WITH THE REVOLUTIONARY NATURE OF PERESTROIKA. SECONDLY, THE REFORMS WERE BASED ON AN "EXTENSIVE" APPROACH. THERE WAS NEED FOR GREATER SPECIALISATION. AND FINALLY, THE SYSTEM FOR RUNNING EDUCATION NEEDED DEMOCRATISATION.
4. LIGACHEV'S MAIN MESSAGE WAS THE NEED TO GIVE SCHOOLS MORE FLEXIBILITY IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO CONCENTRATE ON DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL ABILITIES. THERE SHOULD BE NO LEVELLING DOWN. THE PROGRAMME FOR INTRODUCING VOCATIONAL TRAINING INTO BASIC SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION HAD NOT BEEN A SUCCESS, AND SHOULD BE DISCONTINUED. THE NETWORK OF SEPARATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS SHOULD BE IMPROVED, IN ORDER TO OVERCOME THE SHORTAGE OF SKILLED WORKERS IN THE ECONOMY. THERE SHOULD BE MUCH CLOSER LINKS WITH INDUSTRY. HIGHER EDUCATION WAS NOT MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE ECONOMY. THERE WERE TOO MANY ENGINEERS TRAINED IN SOME AREAS AND A SHORTAGE IN OTHERS. THERE WAS AN ACUTE SHORTAGE OF ECONOMISTS. A NETWORK OF TRAINING CENTRES SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR RETRAINING WORKERS AND UPGRADING THEIR SKILLS.
5. INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION HAD DECLINED FROM 11% OF THE BUDGET IN 1970 TO 8% IN 1986. 21% OF SCHOOLS HAD NO CENTRAL HEATING, 30%



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HAD NO RUNNING WATER AND 40% NO DRAINAGE. THE NUMBER OF PLACES AT PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS WAS 1 MILLION SHORT OF DEMAND. IN MANY AREAS THE SWITCH FROM SCHOOL ENTRY AT 6 YEARS RATHER THAN 7 WAS ONLY BEING MANAGED BY 2, AND IN SOME CASES 3 SHIFT, SYSTEMS. THE RATE OF BUILDING OF NEW SCHOOLS WOULD DOUBLE IN THE NEXT TWO 5 YEAR PLANS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE 28 MILLION NEW PLACES BETWEEN 1990 AND THE YEAR 2000. THE PROGRAMME FOR EQUIPPING SCHOOLS WITH COMPUTERS WOULD HAVE TO BE SPEEDED UP. IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR EDUCATION, EDUCATIONAL COUNCILS WILL BE ESTABLISHED INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF PUPILS, PARENTS AND LOCAL FIRMS AS WELL AS TEACHERS. HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO OBTAIN SOME FUNDS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS FROM INDUSTRY.

6. LIGACHEV ALSO DEALT WITH THE NEED TO IMPROVE POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL TEACHINGS IN SCHOOLS. APOLITICISM, AND THE INFLUENCE OF BOURGEOIS MORALITY WAS INCREASING, AS WERE DISTORTED NATIONALIST SENTIMENTS, THE RESULTS OF WHICH HAD BEEN SEEN IN RECENT EVENTS IN ALMA ATA, THE BALTIC REPUBLICS AND YAKUTIA. FURTHER IMPROVEMENT WAS NEEDED IN THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN ORDER TO COPE WITH THE GROWING INTEREST OF THE YOUNG IN THE PROBLEMS OF PERESTROIKA AND DEMOCRATISATION AND TO ENABLE THEM TO UNDERSTAND THEIR HISTORY. LIGACHEV CONDEMNED THE GROWING TENDENCY, IN THE NAME OF GLASNOST, TO REPRESENT SOVIET HISTORY AS A SERIES OF MISTAKES AND CRIMES, AND THE LACK OF EMPHASIS GIVEN TO THE SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SOVIET SYSTEM. THIS WAS SHAMEFUL HE SAID. SOCIAL SCIENCE TEACHERS MUST ENSURE THAT THE YOUNG WERE TAUGHT THE SUBJECT FROM A CLASS POSITION AND THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD CLASS NATURE OF THE CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN THE COUNTRY. IT MUST BE MADE CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NO INTENTION OF 'LIBERALISING' SOVIET SOCIETY IN THE WESTERN SENSE, OR OF COPYING BOURGEOIS LIBERALISM IN ANY WAY.

7. LIGACHEV ALSO STRESSED THE NEED TO GIVE GREATER ATTENTION TO AESTHETIC EDUCATION, AND CONDEMNED THE CURRENT FAD FOR 'PRIMITIVE' MUSIC AMONG THE YOUNG. HE STRESSED THE NEED FOR A PROPER INTERNATIONALIST APPROACH TO EDUCATION, AND THE NEED IN THE REPUBLICS TO ENSURE THE DEVELOPMENT OF BILINGUALISM. THERE WAS A SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS QUALIFIED TO TEACH RUSSIAN IN THE NON-RUSSIAN REPUBLICS.

8. COMMENT WILL FOLLOW WHEN WE SEE HOW THE PLENUM ENDS.

CARTLEDGE