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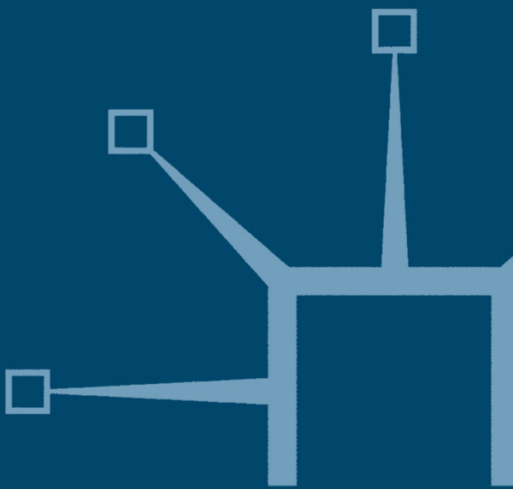
The Demise of Marxism-Leninism in Russia

Edited by

Archie Brown



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The Demise of Marxism-Leninism in Russia

Edited by

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In affectionate and respectful memory

of

Alexander Dallin
(1924–2000)

and

Alec Nove
(1915–1994)

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Contents

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Preface

This book is a successor volume to a very much shorter (and now out-of-print) book, *New Thinking in Soviet Politics*, written while the Soviet Union was still in existence and published by Macmillan (now Palgrave Macmillan) in 1992. The chapters by the late Alexander Dallin and the late Alec Nove, to whom this book is dedicated and whose loss we still mourn, appear here with only minor changes from what they wrote at that time. They stand the test of time well and remain instructive and insightful. By far the greater part of the material in the chapters that follow is, however, published for the first time. Not only is *The Demise of Marxism–Leninism in Russia* a much longer book than its precursor but its lengthiest chapter deals with a major topic – liberal thought in Russia – that has received all too little attention and was not the subject of separate treatment in the earlier book. Thus, an important addition to the team of contributors to the previous volume is Igor Timofeyev who has produced a very substantial scholarly account of the rise of liberal thinking in Russia.

There are several advantages bestowed by the passage of time. The period in which the Soviet Union changed out of all recognition, 1985–1991, and ultimately ceased to exist as a state, can now be seen as a whole and with additional time for reflection. Attention can also in the early years of the twenty-first century be paid to what has happened to Marxism–Leninism in post-Soviet Russia. The issue of whether Marxism–Leninism has really been consigned to the dustbin of history or whether it could make a comeback in Russia is addressed in more than one chapter. The book is not only about new ideas but also about the politics of intellectual innovation in the Soviet Union and Russia and the socio-political context in which ideational change occurred.

On a technical point, the system of transliteration from the Russian language used in the titles of books and articles in the endnotes is the British Standard scheme, one that is also that employed by the American journal, *Post-Soviet Affairs*. In the text of the book, however, the system has been simplified in a number of ways, such as dropping the 'i' in 'iy' endings of proper names. Thus, 'Valeriy' becomes Valery and 'Yavlinskiy' becomes Yavlinsky. Some inconsistency is unavoidable, for while, in general, we have opted for the 'y' ending as in 'Andrey',

this can equally well be transliterated as 'Andrei' and some references will be to English-language works where a system requiring that 'i' ending has been followed. Similarly, although the Russian word for reconstruction or restructuring should, according to the transliteration scheme the authors of this book are using, be rendered as *perestroyka*, it has already become more familiar in English as perestroika and we have given preference to familiarity over consistency in this case.

I am hugely indebted to my wife, Pat, who has compiled the index to this volume. The book benefits greatly from the thoroughness of that work.

Finally, I must confess that, as editor, I have taken longer than I should to complete work on this book and for that I owe an apology both to my fellow-contributors and to Palgrave Macmillan. For their patience and consideration at Palgrave, I am most grateful to Alison Howson and Guy Edwards.

St Antony's College, Oxford ARCHIE BROWN

Notes on the Contributors

Archie Brown is Professor of Politics at Oxford University and a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. From 1964 to 1971 he taught at Glasgow University. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1991, a founding academician of the Academy of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences in 1999, and a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2003. Among his publications are *Soviet Politics and Political Science* (1974), *The Soviet Union since the Fall of Khrushchev* (co-editor with Michael Kaser, 1975; 2nd edn, 1978), *Political Culture and Political Change in Communist States* (co-editor with Jack Gray, 1977), *Soviet Policy for the 1980s* (co-editor with Michael Kaser, 1982), *Political Culture and Communist Studies* (editor, 1984), *The Soviet Union: A Biographical Dictionary* (editor, 1990), *The Gorbachev Factor* (1996, winner of the W.J.M. Mackenzie Prize and the Alec Nove Prize), *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader* (editor, 2001), *Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin: Political Leadership in Russia's Transition* (co-editor with Lilia Shevtsova, 2001) and *The British Study of Politics in the Twentieth Century* (co-editor with Brian Barry and Jack Hayward, 1999; paperback edition 2003).

Alexander Dallin was a leading authority on Russian and Soviet history and politics. After teaching at Columbia University from 1956 to 1971, where he also served as Director of the Russian Institute, he moved to Stanford University where he was Raymond A. Spruance Professor of International History and, for some years, Director of the Center for Russian and East European Studies. From 1985 to 1990 he was President of the International Council for Soviet and East European Studies. His numerous publications included *German Rule in Russia 1941–1945* (1957; revised and enlarged edition, 1981), *Soviet Conduct in World Affairs* (editor, 1960), *The Soviet Union at the United Nations* (1962), *Diversity in International Communism* (editor, 1963), *Politics in the Soviet Union: 7 Cases* (co-editor with Alan F. Westin, 1966), *Soviet Politics since Khrushchev* (co-editor with Thomas B. Larson, 1968), *Political Terror in Communist Systems* (with George W. Breslauer, 1970), *Black Box: KAL 007 and the Superpowers* (1985), *The Gorbachev Era* (co-editor with Condoleeza Rice, 1986), *US–Soviet Security Co-operation: Achievements, Failures, Lessons* (co-editor with Alexander L. George and Philip J. Farley, 1988), *Soviet Scholarship*

under Gorbachev (co-editor with Bertrand M. Patenaude, 1988); *The Soviet System from Crisis to Collapse* (co-editor with Gail W. Lapidus, 1995), *Political Parties in Russia* (editor, 1993), *Odesa, 1941–1944* (1998) and *Dmitrov and Stalin, 1934–1943: Letters from the Soviet Archives* (editor with Fred Firsov, 2000).

Gail Lapidus is Senior Fellow at Stanford's Institute for International Studies and Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley, where she taught for many years in the Departments of Political Science and Sociology and directed the Berkeley–Stanford Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies. Her publications include *Women in Russia* (co-editor, with Dorothy Atkinson and Alexander Dallin), *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development and Social Change* (1978), *State and Welfare: USA/USSR* (editor with Guy Swanson, 1988), *The Glasnost Papers: Voices of Reform from Moscow* (co-editor with Andrei Melville, 1990), *From Union to Commonwealth: Nationalism and Separatism in the Soviet Republics* (co-editor with Victor Zaslavsky and Philip Goldman, 1992) and *The New Russia: Troubled Transformation* (editor, 1994).

Alec Nove was an outstanding specialist on the Soviet Union and on Communist and post-Communist economies. He served in the British Civil Service (mainly at the Board of Trade) from 1947 until 1958, when he joined the staff of the London School of Economics. From there he moved to Scotland to become the first Director of the Institute of Soviet and East European Studies at Glasgow University, a post he held from 1963 until 1979, whereupon he continued as Professor of Economics and subsequently Emeritus Professor. He was elected to a Fellowship of the British Academy in 1978. Nove's many publications included *The Soviet Economy* (1961), *Was Stalin Really Necessary?* (1964), *The Soviet Middle East* (with J.A. Newth, 1965), *An Economic History of the USSR* (1969; 3rd edn, 1992), *Efficiency Criteria for Nationalised Industries* (1973), *Stalinism and After* (1975), *The Soviet Economic System* (1977), *Political Economy and Soviet Socialism* (1979), *The Economics of Feasible Socialism* (1983), *Glasnost' in Action* (1989), *Alec Nove on Economic Theory: Previously Unpublished Writings* (1998) and *Alec Nove on Communist and Postcommunist Countries: Previously Unpublished Writings* (1998).

T.H. Rigby is Professor Emeritus and Visiting Fellow in the Australian National University's Research School of Social Sciences. He was a Research Officer at the London School of Economics and worked in

the Research Department of the British Foreign Office before becoming a Professorial Fellow in Political Science at ANU. His books include *The Disintegrating Monolith* (with J.D.B. Miller, 1965), *Communist Party Membership in the USSR* (1968), *Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom 1917–1922* (1979), *Authority, Power and Policy in the USSR: Essays in Honour of Leonard Schapiro* (co-editor with Archie Brown and Peter Reddaway, 1980), *Political Legitimation in Communist States* (co-editor with Ferenc Fehér, 1982), *Leadership Selection and Patron–Client Relations in the USSR and Yugoslavia* (co-editor with Bohdan Harasymiw, 1983), *Political Elites in the USSR* (1990), and *The Changing Soviet System: Mono-Organisational Socialism from its Origins to Gorbachev's Restructuring* (1990). His published work on post-Soviet Russia has focussed mainly on elite change and clientelism.

Igor V. Timofeyev holds a B.A. in History from Williams College, an M.Phil. in Russian and East European Studies from Oxford University, and a J.D. from Yale Law School. He was an Articles Editor on the *Yale Law Journal* and on the *Yale Journal of International Law*. He has served as a law clerk to Judge Alex Kozinski of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and to Justice Anthony M. Kennedy of the United States Supreme Court. He is currently an Associate Legal Officer in the Chambers of Judge Theodore Meron, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

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Glossary

Apparatchiki	Members of the Communist Party bureaucracy
Arenda	leasehold
Chinovniki	bureaucrats
CPRF	Communist Party of the Russian Federation
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
Glasnost'	glasnost, openness, transparency
Guberniya	province (an administrative unit in pre-revolutionary Russia)
IEWSS	Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System
IMEMO	Institute of World Economy and International Relations
Institutchiki	Scholars/specialists in Soviet and Russian research institutes
Khozraschet	autonomous financing
Khozyaystvo	economy; (in agriculture) farm, holding
KGB	Committee of State Security (Soviet political police)
Kto kogo	who whom (literally), who will dominate whom
MGIMO	Moscow State Institute of International Relations
Mnogopartiynost'	'multipartyness', a multi-party system
Moskovskie novosti	Moscow News (weekly newspaper)
Nauka i zhizn'	Science and Life (popular science journal)
NEP	New Economic Policy (instituted by Lenin in 1921 and ended in 1928)
Nomenklatura	Nomenklatura; list of appointments requiring the approval of a party committee; also used to refer to people on such lists as constituting an especially privileged social stratum
Novyy mir	Novyy Mir (New World), an influential monthly literary journal

Perestroyka	perestroika, reconstruction, restructuring, radical reform
Pravovoe gosudarstvo	A law-governed state
Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo	Soviet State and Law – a monthly legal journal in the Soviet period (now called *Gosudarstvo i pravo*)
Uskorenie	acceleration (with particular reference to the economy)
VASKhNIL	All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences
Zakonomernost'	regularity, conformity with a scientific (or supposedly scientific) law

1
Introduction

Archie Brown

That the Soviet Union had an official ideology known as Marxism – Leninism is generally agreed. That tells us something, but it also begs a lot of questions. Marxism–Leninism was obviously a posthumous term. Marx could not have used it and it never entered Lenin's head to do so. It was after Stalin had succeeded to the leadership of the Soviet Union that the term was introduced. As a concept, 'Marxism–Leninism' is also somewhat ambiguous. Does it, or *did* it, mean the sum total of the works of Marx and Lenin or should it, rather, be considered as the conscious selection from the works of the intellectual forefather and the father of the Soviet system made by subsequent Soviet leaders (or, more broadly, by the political elite)?

In reality Soviet Marxism–Leninism was both more and less than the sum of all the works of Marx and Lenin. It was *more* not only in the sense that subsequent politically authoritative interpreters added to (or 'creatively developed', as the Soviet phrase had it) the arguments of Marx and Lenin but also inasmuch as the doctrine was codified into a set of binding rules and principles applicable in contexts often very different from those in which Marx and Lenin wrote. It was *less* in that, for most of the Soviet period, Marxism–Leninism did indeed consist of a conscious selection from the works of Marx and Lenin by the Soviet political elite, with particular leaders or theoreticians acquiring considerable power *over* Marxism–Leninism. Most of what was produced (especially for mass consumption) was a slimmed-down and simplified Marx and Lenin, in which some parts of their writings were deliberately accorded much greater weight than others. In this way, Marxism–Leninism was put to effective use as an instrument of legitimation of the rule of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and as a means of imposing strict limits on acceptable political discourse and behaviour.

There is a large literature on whether Leninism was a distortion (or, as some have argued, a Russification) of Marxism, or whether the one followed logically from the other.[1] Both Marx and Lenin were extraordinarily prolific writers, and thus there is ample scope for finding different emphases in their works and for building different interpretations on divergent readings of their theoretical analyses. Certainly there are different Marxisms, and Marxism–Leninism, as developed in the Soviet Union, is only one of the Marxist traditions. Politically, however, it has been far and away the most important and influential.

So far as Marx is concerned, his absolute rejection of the market in economics (as distinct from a social–democratic critique which emphasises the limitations of the market) and his failure to postulate an essential role for legitimate conflict in politics can be seen as slippery foundation stones on which Lenin built. Within Lenin's own work there are very different emphases at different times. Some see 'two Lenins' – the Lenin of 'War Communism', the earliest years of Soviet power, 1917–1921, and the Lenin of NEP, the New Economic Policy (when concessions were made to the market, though not to political pluralism) launched in 1921 and ended by Stalin in 1928. War Communism had seen the nationalisation of industry and trade, compulsory food deliveries by peasants, and obligatory labour service by the bourgeoisie, and, of course, a civil war which was ruthlessly conducted both by the Bolsheviks and their opponents. NEP, in contrast, involved concessions to private trade and the peasantry, an end to compulsory acquisitions, revival of a market economy, and retreat from class war.

An alternative way of seeing 'two Lenins' is to contrast the Lenin of *What is to be Done?*, the political tract Lenin wrote in 1902 in which he called for a revolutionary vanguard and strictly-disciplined Party to overthrow the tsarist state, and the Lenin of *The State and Revolution*, another political treatise which he wrote in the summer of 1917 between the February and October revolutions, that has often been interpreted as a much more liberal and even democratic document. At the time Lenin wrote the latter of these two tracts, as John Plamenatz observed half a century ago, he had 'never had even a day's administrative experience'.[2] Thus, he thought that running a state was a much less complex task than it turned out to be. As a result, in Plamenatz's words, 'the world acquired *The State and Revolution*, the most simple-minded and improbable of all famous political pamphlets'.[3]

Lenin in power – as distinct from Lenin the theoretician – was a realist, and for him, as for most Bolsheviks, the New Economic Policy launched in 1921 was a necessary but *temporary and tactical* retreat,

albeit one which might have to continue for a long time. Lenin envisaged a NEP-like policy lasting for decades, whereas Stalin put an end to it just four years after Lenin's death in January 1924. Those who want to think well of Lenin often refer to the writings of the late Lenin, the Lenin of the NEP period, as 'the most mature Lenin', a Lenin who had seen the error of his earlier ways. That is, in some measure, the view of Mikhail Gorbachev. Even though he parted company definitively with Lenin*ism* while he was still General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev tended to project on to Lenin an evolution of his views which in some ways prefigured his own intellectual journey. In Gorbachev's interpretation: 'Here was a revolutionary giant, a man of great culture, who ended up a captive of his own ideological constructs. At the end he was trying to break out of the closed circle of dogma encompassing him.'[4]

Endless debate has taken place on the issue of the part played by the thought of Marx and Lenin in contributing to the highly authoritarian (or, for the period of 'high Stalinism', totalitarian) character of the Soviet state. There are very strong participatory–democratic strands in the thought of Marx and Lenin, especially in their vision of socialism as distinct from the period of struggle against the capitalist state, but hardly pluralist–democratic, particularly in the case of Lenin.[5] Of decisive importance for later Soviet developments, it could be argued, was the absence of a place for legitimate political contestation. Though Lenin's *State and Revolution* has, indeed, been interpreted as an example of the democratic and libertarian side of Lenin's thought, in contrast with the authoritarian *What is to be Done?*, A.J. Polan based an entire book-length indictment of Leninist authoritarianism on an analysis, precisely, of *The State and Revolution* and its implications. Published appropriately enough in 1984, Polan's book is called *Lenin and the End of Politics*. In it he writes:

> The 'libertarian' Lenin bears equal responsibility for the Gulag with the 'authoritarian' Lenin. Lenin's theory of the state rigorously outlawed all and any version of those political institutions and relationships that can make the triumph of the Gulag less likely. In their place, *The State and Revolution* put a concept of the state that already, in August 1917, was monolithic, authoritarian, single-willed and uncheckable.[6]

Yet, in the post-Stalin period a minority of reformist intellectuals within the ranks of the CPSU would draw upon the voluminous writings of Marx and Lenin to provide political cover for ideas that might

otherwise be deemed unorthodox or dangerous, making instrumental use of whatever texts suited their immediate purpose. There were also, in the pre-perestroika period, frustrated reformers who genuinely believed that Marxism and Leninism, in the course of their codification under Stalin and his successors, had been turned into an excessively static body of doctrine that betrayed the beliefs of the founding fathers. Such a view involved an idealisation of Lenin and an approach to his works which was, in its own way, as selective as that of the most orthodox party propagandists, but that is not to impugn the sincerity of all 'back to Lenin' enthusiasts. The Lenin of the New Economic Policy was, in fact, a source of inspiration for significant Russian reformers. Ideological belief systems thrive as a result of the filtering out of discrepant knowledge and inconvenient facts. However desirable was rigorous analysis of the past political behaviour of the Bolsheviks and of their canonical texts, this took place to only a limited extent even within the dissident movement. To give public voice to criticism of Marx and Lenin was unthinkable – until Gorbachev had made the Soviet Union safe for dissent–for the overwhelming majority whose priorities included keeping their jobs and staying out of prison.

However, although Gorbachev, especially in the earliest years of his leadership, frequently invoked Lenin, neither Leninism, however refined, nor official Soviet Marxism–Leninism could provide a basis for democratic or pluralising reforms. To the extent that these became serious objectives, they were sooner or later bound to produce a collision between reformers and the conservative guardians of official ideology. This can readily be seen if we compare the fundamental tenets of codified Marxism–Leninism with the ideas which gained political and ideological hegemony in the last years of the Soviet Union. The latter are discussed throughout this book.

Esoteric debate on Marxism–Leninism

The most basic principles of Marxism–Leninism in the form it had taken by the eve of the launching of perestroika were the following: (1) The idea that class struggle was the dynamic force whereby one socio-economic system was replaced by another; (2) The inevitability of progression from capitalist to socialist systems, with socialism eventually giving way to communism, as state functions were replaced by self-administration (although that supposedly final stage in the development of human society received little emphasis, as compared with that on the 'socialist state', and receded, even doctrinally, into an

ever-more-distant future); (3) The insistence that socialism consisted not only of state or co-operative ownership and control of the means of production and distribution but also of the type of political system that had been established in the Soviet Union; (4) The operational principle that the Communist Party was, in the words of the 1977 Soviet Constitution, 'the leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system' (meaning in political practice the CPSU's monopoly of political power); and (5) The equally crucial *modus operandi* of 'democratic centralism' as the organisational basis of societal and, more specifically, intra-party life, involving strict discipline and hierarchical subordination within the ruling party and exceedingly narrow limits on public debate.

There was often, to put it mildly, a tension between the Marxism of Marx (itself, of course, a subject of protracted debate and far from free of ambiguity) and codified Soviet Marxism–Leninism. Thus, Marx's materialist conception of history meant that the economic development of society and, in particular, changes in the modes of production (which gave rise to the division of society into classes and produced the class struggle) had explanatory primacy over ideas and institutions. Ideas acquired influence or hegemony because they reflected the interests of the ruling class. Although state institutions had a limited autonomy, they constituted the superstructure of society as distinct from its more fundamental economic base. While Soviet ideology embraced that doctrine, parts of it contradicted it. The heavy emphasis in orthodox Soviet doctrine from Stalin's time onwards on the authority of the state – together with the enormous power wielded by party and state political institutions in political practice – remained at odds with the Marxist historical materialism that was, nevertheless, taught in all Soviet higher educational institutions. Moreover, even the official Marxism–Leninism was not static. In Khrushchev's time the idea that Soviet society was a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' gave way to the scarcely Marxist notion of a 'state of the whole people', though politicians and theorists continued to emphasise the 'leading role of the working class'. In so far as the ruling ideas of the USSR were the ideas of the ruling class, in Soviet orthodoxy this meant ideas that were in the interest of the *working class*.

Even in Leonid Brezhnev's time a minority of relatively bold and innovative Soviet analysts succeeded in providing camouflaged critiques of the Soviet system which accepted some aspects of official ideology but drew very different conclusions from those of the guardians of official Marxism–Leninism. Thus, for example, Valery Kalensky, a covert

critic of the system, whose condemnatory views were to become increasingly overt and who emigrated from the Soviet Union in 1985 (thus missing the opportunity to benefit from the new freedoms of speech and publication that were soon to follow), accepted, for the purposes of his argument at least, that the working class constituted the ruling class of the Soviet Union. But, after armouring himself with quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin, he went on to write in a book published in Moscow in 1977:

> The concentration of enormous power in the hands of bureaucrats (*chinovniki*) has most serious political consequences, and leads namely to the acquisition by that special social stratum of a relative autonomy in relation to the ruling class as a whole, and to its being in certain circumstances even in conflict with it, thrusting upon it selfish interests of its own.[7]

Kalensky could get away with such writing in the 1970s because he was ostensibly talking about the relative autonomy of the state, or the bureaucracy, in general – in very broad comparative terms – rather than referring to the Soviet Union specifically. When I asked Kalensky two years after his book appeared if he had the Soviet Union in mind when he wrote such passages, he replied: 'Of course', and to the question, 'Do your readers here [in Moscow] realise that?', his answer was: 'All those whose opinion I care about do!' (Some strands of foreign critical Marxist analysis of the Soviet Union, in contrast, contended that official Soviet ideology did, indeed, reflect the interests of the ruling class, but that it was the higher reaches of the Soviet *nomenklatura* – the party and state bureaucracy and their senior appointees – who made up that ruling class. The substance of their view of the Soviet party–state bureaucracy was not so far apart from the views of within-system critics such as Kalensky[8] as the conceptual discrepancy between their analyses would suggest, since they argued that the official ideology provided the smokescreen behind which the ruling stratum wielded power.)

Even in Stalin's time the party line, including what constituted ideological correctness, changed from time to time, but since a person could easily pay for deviation from that line with his or her life, this was not conducive to even muted debate, but rather to pervasive conformism and a desperate attempt to demonstrate the utmost loyalty to whatever the line might be. Change occurred gradually after Stalin's death and it was more significant than many internal and

external observers appreciated in those years. While the Soviet Union remained a highly oppressive society up to the mid-1980s, Stalin's demise in March 1953 put an end to mass terror. In the new conditions esoteric debate began to be possible *within* Marxism–Leninism.

A changing terminology, first of all in small-circulation specialist books and journals and later in sections of the mass media, placed a new emphasis on the *political*, and terms such as 'political system', 'political culture' and 'political power' gradually entered the Soviet lexicon.[9] The acceptance of new terms was accompanied by esoteric debate and behind-the-scenes struggle, but it was not until the second half of the 1980s that terminological innovation was complemented by more fundamental discussion of key concepts and advanced by the deployment of these concepts in empirical analysis of Soviet politics and society. In foreign policy analysis and the study of the outside world, there was, likewise, significant intellectual innovation prior to the perestroika period, although that, too, remained within definite limits until the coming to power of Gorbachev.[10] Esoteric debate was conducted, for example, on such weighty topics as détente (between those who favoured a genuine easing of international tension and their hard-line opponents),[11] on the distribution of power within American politics and society,[12] on China (often as a disguised way of discussing *Soviet* developments),[13] on the type of social systems to be found in the Third World,[14] and on the merits and demerits of West European integration.[15] What remained crucial, however, in the pre-perestroika years was the deep gulf that persisted between the more radical views that could sometimes find their way into print and the doctrine espoused by the top party leadership. Moreover, it was blindingly obvious that no author could hope to be published who mounted an open attack on the basic assumptions of Soviet Marxism–Leninism.

Those who tried to stretch the limits of political acceptability in their writings were engaged in a battle of wits with the upholders of party orthodoxy that produced at best modest victories, usually more terminological than substantial, for they were confronted by a hierarchy of rewards (for conformist behaviour) and punishments (for deviation) which were the hallmark of a regime with well-honed instruments of political control. Most critics made the compromises necessary to hold down their jobs and to avoid attracting the attention of the KGB. They could also take the not unreasonable view that in Soviet conditions serious change was more likely to make headway if it emanated from within the system. A few took the further fateful steps that led from what the late Alexander Shtromas called 'intrastructural dissent' to

'extrastructural dissent'.[16] As Shtromas pointed out, even the two most famous dissidents of the post-Stalin era,[17] Andrey Sakharov and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, began by trying to exercise influence from within the system – as 'intrastructural' dissenters – and it was when the Soviet authorities clamped down on them that they made the moral choice not to backtrack but to accept the status of overt dissidents. This brought concomitant persecution, albeit somewhat modified in the cases of Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn – for example, internal and external exile rather than prison – on account of their fame and the interest taken in them in the West.[18] While Shtromas, writing at the beginning of the 1980s, stressed the positive role played by the overt dissidents, he also rightly observed: '[Political] change will most probably come not from without but from within the official system; "intrastructural", rather than overt "extrastructural", dissent will bring it about.'[19]

Marxism–Leninism provided theoretical legitimation for the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Their right to rule was not accorded by democratic elections, for though even the unreformed Soviet Union was declared by its leaders and propagandists to be a 'socialist democracy', the most elementary criteria of democracy – namely, free and fair contested elections – were wholly absent. It was, rather, Marxism–Leninism, the 'science of society' in the official Soviet formulation, which decreed the guiding role of the party, and the dominance of its top leadership, in the construction and development of 'socialism'. The corollary of the great concentration of power at the top of the Soviet political hierarchy was that change in the top leadership could open up the possibility of ideological change. Ideational innovation occurred when Khrushchev succeeded Stalin and, again, when Brezhnev succeeded Khrushchev. The changes included Khrushchev's insistence that the Soviet Union had entered, as the 1961 Party Programme put it, 'the period of full-scale construction of communism' and the prediction that communism 'in the main' would be built by around 1980 and, in contrast, the more cautious formulation of the Brezhnev years that the Soviet Union had entered the stage of 'developed socialism'. What these changes had in common – apart from being remote from the reality of the society around them, with its gross inefficiencies and injustices – was that they did not challenge the fundamental principles on which the Soviet system was constructed.

Gorbachev did not *begin* by doing so either, but his policy of *glasnost'* (openness or transparency), allowed reformers within the intelligentsia,

even between 1985 and 1987, to push ever wider the limits of the possible. Gorbachev's own thinking in the mid-1980s was a mixture of the old and the new. That did not necessarily work against systemic change a few years later. Even if Gorbachev and his allies had come in 1985–86 to as damning a verdict on the Soviet system as they had reached by the end of the decade, they could not have got away with a frontal attack on the system's foundations. As Aleksandr Yakovlev, the most radical of Gorbachev's appointees to the Politburo, put it (in a lecture delivered in the Vatican in January 1992):

> In many respects, though not in all, the transformations were doomed to be inconsistent. A consistent radicalism in the first years of perestroika would have destroyed the very idea of comprehensive reform. A united revolt of the apparatus – party, state, security-repressive organs, and economic – would have thrown the country back to the worst times of Stalinism. The context at that time was absolutely different from today.[20]

From 1988, both as a result of evolution of opinion among the reformist minority of the party leadership (which included, crucially, the most significant power-holder, the General Secretary) and of the political space opened up for increasingly autonomous activity within the intelligentsia, the fundamentals of the system began to be called into question quite publicly.[21] Gorbachev himself, who had begun his General Secretaryship in March 1985 believing that the Soviet system could be reformed and rejuvenated, had by the summer of 1988 reached the conclusion that it needed to be fundamentally transformed or dismantled.[22]

A new language of politics

A new language of politics emerged. Ideas were promulgated in political discourse which broke fundamentally with Marxism–Leninism. The term, 'New Political Thinking', was endorsed by the party leadership and many of the ideas encapsulated by it were, indeed, new in the Soviet context. Language, as James Farr has observed, is 'an arena of political action' and 'where there are different concepts, there are different beliefs, and so different actions and practices'.[23] Growing intellectual freedom and a cascade of ideas of remarkable novelty in twentieth-century Russia became the prelude to radical systemic change.

Quite soon after he succeeded Chernenko as General Secretary in March 1985 – to be precise, at the twenty-seventh Party Congress in early 1986 – Gorbachev began the process of consigning the Brezhnevian notion of 'developed socialism' to the dustbin of history. Noting that it had been introduced as a reaction against the facile doctrine of the Khrushchev era on the speedy building of communism, he observed that it in turn had become a complacent conception that concentrated on successes and ignored the real problems of the Soviet economy and society. 'Today', said Gorbachev, with the party committed to 'the acceleration (*uskorenie*) of socio-economic development', such an approach was 'unacceptable'.[24] It was 'developed socialism', among other concepts, he had in mind when he spoke to the January 1987 plenary session of the Central Committee of the Party about the way in which 'all manner of scholastic theorizing, having no bearing on anyone's interests and vital problems, was often even encouraged in the country, while attempts to carry out a constructive analysis and put forward new ideas were not supported'.[25]

In the early years of Gorbachev's leadership political discourse still took place within a Marxist–Leninist framework, albeit one which was far less tightly constraining than hitherto. It was increasingly becoming the case that, provided someone could find a quotation from Marx or, better still, Lenin, to support it, that person could put forward radical ideas which would have got him or her into serious trouble just a few years earlier. In a short book delivered to the publisher early in 1988 and published in 1989 even the liberal economist, Yegor Gaydar (whose first decision as acting prime minister in post-Soviet Russia was to free prices), and his co-author, Stanislav Shatalin (a market reformer of an older generation), found it prudent to cite Lenin and to draw on Soviet writing from the NEP period.[26] The thrust of their arguments was, however, far removed from traditional Soviet doctrine.

The 'New Thinking', or 'New Political Thinking', of the Gorbachev era in its earliest stages embodied both the advantages and limitations of 'revisionism'.[27] It was a flexible interpretation of Marx and Lenin which began to draw on ideas from NEP, from Bukharin, from the 'Prague Spring', from Eurocommunists – from the entire alternative tradition within Communism which had been labelled and castigated as revisionist. As Leszek Kolakowski, discussing the earlier East European revisionists, put it: 'The peculiarity of the situation was that both Marxism and Leninism spoke a language full of humane and democratic slogans which, while they were empty rhetoric as far as the system of power was concerned, could be and were invoked against that

system.'[28] In the case of Russia in the second half of the 1980s, there were intellectuals who had been influenced by ideas that owed little to Marxism and nothing to Leninism – in particular, by social democratic thought. Many of the theorists and social scientists within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union who elaborated innovative ideas were, in effect, closet social democrats. They had seen the future (in Western Europe), and it appeared to work. With each successive year of perestroika, the non-Leninist and social democratic strand in the thinking of Gorbachev and his allies in the leadership became ever more overt and prominent.

The 'New Thinking' on the Soviet political system, which displaced Marxism–Leninism, proceeded apace and it is significant that the new ideas preceded the new practice. Some of the groundwork for this ideological change had been laid in difficult conditions long before Gorbachev succeeded Chernenko as party leader, but between 1987 and 1990 there was what amounted to a *conceptual revolution* as well as a radical reform, and subsequent transformation, of the political system. Concepts which had either been marginalised by Soviet Marxism–Leninism or which had no place at all within that tradition were brought into the forefront of political discourse.

Many of those with a vested interest in the unreformed political system put up a fierce resistance to the conceptual innovation which they identified as ideological subversion. The reason it is legitimate to speak about the *demise of* Marxism–Leninism in Russia is that all but a handful of serious political actors had abandoned most of the traditional doctrine by the last year of the Soviet Union's existence. This was true even of the putschists whose attempted coup in August 1991 was aimed at the removal of Gorbachev and the reintroduction of highly authoritarian rule. The Chairman of the KGB at that time, Vladimir Kryuchkov, who was a leading figure in the self-appointed State Committee for the State of Emergency which put Gorbachev under house arrest at his holiday home in Foros on the Crimean coast and attempted to assume the reins of power, went so far as to say that 'for us the question of capitalism or socialism was a second order question'.[29] Preservation of the Soviet state was, he said, their primary concern, though in reality their actions achieved the opposite result and accelerated its breakup.[30]

Moreover, if we examine the documents of the leading figures of the reaction against perestroika in 1991, both the declaration of the so-called State Committee for the State of Emergency after they had isolated Gorbachev in Foros, and the earlier preparatory document for

their coup, 'A Word to the People', published on 23 July 1991, we find no trace of Marxism–Leninism, but an appeal to the greatness of the Russian state and an anti-Westernism (which, admittedly, was strongly present in Stalinist ideology, but at that time accompanied also by doctrine derived from Lenin). 'A Word to the People', was composed by nationalistic writers and signed by twelve conservative political figures, among them two of those who were part of the State Committee for the State of Emergency – the coup leaders – the following month (Vasily Starodubtsev and Aleksandr Tizyakov) and, more intriguingly, Gennady Zyuganov, at that time an official within the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, and in post-Soviet Russia the leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

The document asked how it could have happened that 'we admitted to power people who do not love this country, who fawn on their overseas patrons and seek advice and blessing there, across the seas'.[31] In one passage, which must have had Stalin and Brezhnev turning in their graves, and Lenin sorely troubled in his mausoleum, these defenders of the Soviet state and present-day leaders of the Communist Party said:

> We appeal to the Orthodox Church, which, having gone through Calvary, is slowly, after all the beatings, rising from the grave. The church, whose spiritual light shone in Russian history even during dark times, is today, while still gaining new strength, being torn by strife in dioceses and parishes, and is not finding proper support from the temporal powers. May it hear the voice of the people calling for salvation.[32]

Post-Soviet developments

If Marxism–Leninism was at a very low ebb in the last months of the Soviet Union, it is legitimate to ask, nevertheless, if it has made a comeback in the post-Soviet era. The kind of capitalism that has been built, with its extremes of inequality and of fortunes made by the most dubious means, could be regarded as fertile ground for those who would espouse Marxism–Leninism. Yet that body of doctrine has shown no sign of political revival. This is not to ignore the fact that the Communist Party has been able to maintain a strong presence in the legislature, appealing to many of those who were among the millions of losers in Yel'tsin's Russia. Three things are, however, clear. First, that support is declining. In the December 2003 elections for the State Duma

the Communist Party got only half as many votes as it did in the election four years earlier and less than half as many seats.[33] This, admittedly, owed something to the lack of fairness of the election, with the resources of the state and the mass media mobilised behind United Russia, the Kremlin's favoured party. The second point is that as a hegemonic ideology, Marxism–Leninism has entirely lost out. Insofar as there is now an official ideology in Russia, it is one which draws on nostalgia for some aspects of the Soviet order, but which pays no heed to Marxism–Leninism. Third, even the Communist Party's appeal – such as it is – has been based not primarily on Leninist ideology, but on a mixed bag of doctrine, including elements which are far removed from any of the variants of Marxism–Leninism promulgated in the Soviet Union. In particular, the party's leader and principal spokesman, Gennady Zyuganov, has expressed support for the market and a 'developed private sector' alongside a strong state sector – in other words, for a 'mixed economy' which, on paper at least, bears a closer relationship to the economic aspirations over many years of European non-Communist socialists than to traditional Soviet ideology.[34] Zyuganov has, moreover, espoused an eclectic ideology which is far more overtly nationalist than Soviet Marxism–Leninism, notwithstanding the element of hidden nationalism *it* contained. In that respect, Zyuganov's thinking is far removed from that of mainstream European socialist parties. While the Communist Party of the Russian Federation has different strands within it, some of them closer to orthodox Marxism–Leninism than the views expressed by the party leader, it has become more ideologically incoherent than its Soviet predecessor. That, paradoxically, has been part of the secret of its relative breadth of appeal (up until, at least, the 2003 Duma election). As Luke March, the author of an important study of the CPRF, has written:

> For many in the leadership, tactical changes such as the acceptance of the mixed economy and pluralism seemed to become accepted as integral parts of the communist model, and possibly as ends in themselves. Yet … there are limits to the extent to which communist parties can both incorporate elements of pluralist doctrines and compete in pluralistic politics before they lose distinctiveness and coherence.[35]

It is true that the Russian Communists still have pictures of Lenin at their meetings and they are absolutely opposed to removing Lenin's body from the mausoleum in Red Square. But Lenin is just one of their

symbols, and party leader Gennady Zyuganov has seemed at times to be a fellow-traveller of Christianity, going so far in April 1998 as to criticise Yel'tsin for making a foreign trip during Easter week. Accepting the Orthodox Church as one of the symbols of Russian statehood, the dominant tendency within the CPRF has tried to unite the traditions of Soviet and Russian patriotism. March makes the point that from 1995 onwards the leadership of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation have said different things to their core membership and to the public at large. For the benefit of the former, references to Marxism–Leninism do occur in documents intended mainly for internal consumption, but these are left out of the party's electoral platform when they are attempting to win the support of voters.[36] This suggests that even the main successor party to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has little confidence in the popular appeal of Marxism–Leninism.

Within the camp of the person who was an easy victor in the 2000 presidential election and who, following the Duma election of 2003, looked certain to be re-elected in 2004, Vladimir Putin, there is, of course, not the slightest concession to socialism or to Marxism–Leninism, but still more genuflection to state power and to the Orthodox Church. Indeed, much more effectively than the Communists, Putin has succeeded in drawing on the traditions of both Soviet and Russian patriotism, thereby uniting two rather different constituencies in support of the quasi-capitalist post-Communist economic system and the 'managed pluralism' characteristic of the post-Soviet hybrid political system.[37] While under Putin the law has been applied selectively against tycoons who have shown too much independence, the principle of private ownership, including ownership of natural resources attained at the expense of the long-suffering Russian public, has not been called into question, provided that it is accompanied by political loyalty. Throughout the post-Soviet period the political regime has hovered uneasily between democracy and authoritarianism, but even when authoritarian tendencies have threatened to gain the upper hand, there has been no recourse to Marxism–Leninism by way of ideological justification.

In the chapters that follow two things should become still clearer: first, that there was innovative political thinking in Russia both before and after perestroika; and, second, that it was, nevertheless, in those six-and-a-half years beginning in March 1985 that a conceptual revolution occurred. In Chapter 2, particular attention is paid to the development of non-Leninist thinking on the political system. Alec

Nove, in Chapter 3, illustrates the radicalism of the departure from Marxism–Leninism among economists who gained intellectual and political ascendancy during the Gorbachev years (and who, in some cases, were able more fully to put their precepts into practice during Yel'tsin's years at the helm).

Igor Timofeyev, in the following chapter, provides a detailed analysis of the development of liberal thought – not only in its economic dimension – in Russia after 1985. Even when the holders of state power in subsequent years have acted illiberally, and as concern among committed Russian democrats has grown at signs of creeping authoritarianism, there is and remains a huge body of liberal ideas in the public domain, including Russian editions of Western classical texts as well as the more recent contributions of Russian intellectuals.

Gail Lapidus, in Chapter 5, elaborates on the remarkable ideational and political transformation that took place in the last years of the Soviet Union regarding nationalism, federalism and sovereignty. She notes, too, the continued weakness of Marxist–Leninist ideology in the post-Soviet period, while observing that along with the benefits of the rejection of Leninism have gone some of the constraints upon overt manifestations of national chauvinism which the Soviet ideology imposed.

In no sphere was the conceptual revolution of the perestroika years greater than in that of foreign policy, whether in relation to East–West relations and the ending of the Cold War, or in what amounted to the abandonment of world Communism, both as a movement and as a goal. Alexander Dallin, accordingly, in Chapters 6 and 7, analyses the transformation of Soviet thinking in the last years of the USSR concerning those two inter-related areas of policy. In a final chapter, T.H. Rigby brings together some of the various strands contained in earlier chapters and adds his reflections on the moral dimension of new thinking in Russia. Examining the fate of Marxism–Leninism in post-Soviet as well as late Soviet Russia, he sees little or no prospect of this discredited ideology making a comeback, notwithstanding the new injustices and inequalities that call out for a radical critique.

Notes

1 For contrasting views on that issue, see John Plamenatz, *German Marxism and Russian Communism* (London: Longman, 1954) and Neil Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought*, Volumes 1 and 2 (London: Macmillan, 1977 and 1981). See also Robert Service, *Lenin: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 2000).
2 Plamenatz, *German Marxism and Russian Communism*, p. 245.
3 *Ibid*., p. 248.

4 Mikhail Gorbachev and Zdeněk Mlynář, *Conversations with Gorbachev: On Perestroika, the Prague Spring, and the Crossroads of Socialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 51. Or, as Gorbachev put it, earlier in those same conversations: 'it was around 1983 that I concluded that Lenin had seen that his efforts had failed, that democracy for the mass of the people had in practice been stifled. And for me the primary slogan to put forward in 1985 was "more socialism, more democracy". More democracy and more freedom in all things, both in economics and politics' (*Conversations with Gorbachev*, p. 66).

5 Even Marx's pluralist credentials were weak. As his recent, empathetic biographer Francis Wheen puts it colourfully: 'In [Marx's] speeches and editorials he insisted that Germany must have a democratic government "of the most heterogeneous elements" rather than a dictatorship of brilliant communists such as himself; but the vehemence with which he delivered these views – flinging insults and derision at anyone who dared disagree – suggested that this was a man who wouldn't recognise pluralism if it was served to him on a silver salver with watercress garnish'. See Wheen, *Karl Marx* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), pp. 135–6.

6 A.J. Polan, *Lenin and the End of Politics* (London: Methuen, 1984), p. 130.

7 V.G. Kalensky, *Gosudarstvo kak ob"ekt sotsiologicheskogo analiza (ocherki i metodologii issledovaniya)* (Moscow: Yuridicheskaya Literatura, 1977), p. 123.

8 Like the great majority of his fellow-researchers at the Institute of State and Law (Moscow) of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, Kalensky was a member of the Communist Party.

9 For further discussion of this, see Ronald J. Hill, *Soviet Politics, Political Science and Reform* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1980); Archie Brown, 'Political Power and the Soviet State' in Neil Harding (ed.), *The State in Socialist Society* (London: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 51–103; and Archie Brown, 'Political Science in the USSR' in *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 1986, pp. 443–81.

10 The fullest analysis of this is to be found in Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

11 For discussion of this, see, for example, Allen Lynch, *The Soviet Study of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Margot Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1988); and Stephen Shenfield, *The Nuclear Predicament: Explorations in Soviet Ideology* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs and Routledge, 1987).

12 See especially Neil Malcolm, *Soviet Political Scientists and American Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1984).

13 Gilbert Rozman, *A Mirror for Socialism: Soviet Criticisms of China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985; and Alexander Lukin, *The Bear and the Dragon: Russia's Perceptions of China and the Evolution of Russian–Chinese Relations since the Eighteenth Century* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), Chapters 2 and 3.

14 Especially Jerry F. Hough, *The Struggle for the Third World: Soviet Debates and American Options* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1986).

15 Julie M. Newton, *Russia, France, and the Idea of Europe* (London: Palgrave, 2003); and George Breslauer and Philip E. Tetlock (eds.), *Learning in US and*

Soviet Foreign Policy (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), especially Chapter 13 (by Jonathan Haslam) and Chapter 18 (by Robert Legvold).

16 Alexander Shtromas, *Political Change and Social Development: The Case of the Soviet Union* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1981), especially pp. 82–7.

17 The very concept of 'dissidents' would have been meaningless in Stalin's time when, for entirely imaginary political deviation, intellectuals could be executed as 'enemies of the people'.

18 Solzhenitsyn *had*, of course, served time in the Gulag, but that was in the Stalin era and before he had achieved fame as a writer. He was arrested in 1945, in labour camps from then until 1953, and from 1953 to 1956 in internal exile in Soviet Kazakhstan.

19 Shtromas, *Political Change and Social Development*, p. 86.

20 Aleksandr Yakovlev, *Predislovie, Obval, Posleslovie* (Moscow: Novosti, 1992), p. 267.

21 See, for example, Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Anatoly Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2000); Mikhail Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, 2 volumes (Moscow: Novosti, 1995): Andrey Grachev, *Gorbachev* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2001); and Georgy Shakhnazarov, *Tsena svobody: Reformatsiya Gorbacheva glazami ego pomoshchnika* (Moscow: Rossika Zevs, 1993).

22 Ibid. The dismantling of the *system* must be sharply distinguished from the dismantling of the *state*. The breakup of the Soviet Union into fifteen successor states was very much an unintended consequence of perestroika and an outcome Gorbachev struggled unsuccessfully to avoid.

23 James Farr, 'Understanding Conceptual Change Politically' in Terence Ball, James Farr and Russell L. Hanson, *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 29.

24 M.S. Gorbachev, 'Politicheskiy doklad tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS XXVII s"ezdu Kommunisticheskogo Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza', 22 February, 1986, in M.S. Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i,* Vol. 3 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987), p. 276.

25 M.S. Gorbachev, 'O perestroyke i kadrovoy politike partii', speech of 27 January, 1987, to a plenary session of the Central Committee, in Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i*, Vol. 4 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987), pp. 302–3.

26 S.S. Shatalin and E.T. Gaydar, *Ekonomicheskaya reforma: prichiny, napravleniya, problemy* (Moscow: Ekonomika, 1989), p. 52.

27 On revisionism, especially in the East European context, see Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origin, Growth and Dissolution*, Vol. III, *The Breakdown* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), especially pp. 456–78.

28 Ibid., p. 460.

29 Kryuchkov was speaking at a small conference on the Cold War (in which I participated), held at the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in Moscow in June 1999, jointly organised by that Institute and the Mershon Center of Ohio State University. The unusual feature of this round-table conference was that the main interlocutors of the small group of Western scholars were those who mounted the August 1991 coup.

30 On the coup, see Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, op. cit., pp. 294–305; and Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev,* pp. 371–423. The memoirs of

Gorbachev's aide, Anatoly Chernyaev, include in the American edition an 'Afterword' (pp. 401–23) in which he responds to the later concoctions of the putschists that, having put Gorbachev (and his immediate entourage, including Chernyaev) under house arrest, they had, nevertheless, left him free to leave for Moscow at any time, a ludicrous invention which a few Western authors who should have known better chose to disseminate.

31 *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 23 July, 1991, p. 1.

32 *Ibid*.

33 See *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 20 December–27 December, 2003, pp. 2 and 10–11; and www.russiavotes.org/2003RESULT.HTM.

34 See, for example, the interview with Zyuganov in *Pravda*, 22–23 May 1999, pp. 1–2, and p. 2.

35 Luke March, *The Communist Party of the Russian Federation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 117–118.

36 March, pp. 84, 91–2 and 101.

37 On Putin's appeal to both Soviet and Russian symbols, see Archie Brown, 'Vladimir Putin and the Reaffirmation of Central State Power', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 1, January–March 2001, pp. 45–55, especially p. 52; and on 'managed pluralism', see Harley Balzer, 'Managed Pluralism: Vladimir Putin's Emerging Regime', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 3, July–September 2003, pp. 189–227.

2

The Rise of Non–Leninist Thinking about the Political System

Archie Brown

A comparison of Soviet political discourse at the beginning of 1985 and in 1991shows a qualitative change in the scope and nature of political argument. The shift was especially dramatic between 1987 and 1990. Its main features were the transition from esoteric to open debate; the progression from system-adaptive to system-transformative proposals for change; and the ending of the mutual isolation of 'within-system' reformers, on the one hand, and dissidents, on the other.

Until the late 1980s it was possible only in circuitous ways to discuss in print the fact that the Communist Party *apparat* dominated the political system. The roles of the General Secretary and of the Politburo and the extremely important part played by departments of the Central Committee were not and could not be analysed even in specialised publications, not to speak of the mass media. Although policy communities or issue networks existed which facilitated the development of some specialist influence on legislation and executive decisions even in the unreformed Soviet system, the scope of that influence remained within strict ideological and political limits. The bolder spirits among the specialists could make seriously reformist suggestions, but these rarely affected authoritative decisions on major policy prior to the mid-1980s. Moreover, both censorship and self-censorship prevailed, while editorial controls and several layers of bureaucracy separated the specialists from the political power-holders.[1]

Although, on occasion, reformist economists were given more direct access to the leadership during the Brezhnev era, their influence was negligible, not least because the Soviet economic and political systems were so closely intertwined that any change in one had profound implications for the other. Such high-level access as existed tended to be with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Aleksey Kosygin, who headed the

Soviet governmental (as distinct from party) machine from 1964 until 1980. For most of that time Kosygin was rather more favourably disposed towards economic reform than other members of the Politburo. A modest reform which he initiated – it was, indeed, colloquially known as the 'Kosygin reform' – was introduced in 1965.[2] Yet, following the Prague Spring when marketising economic reforms and pluralising political reforms proceeded in tandem, even minimal concessions to the market became deeply suspect and Kosygin backtracked from his earlier flirtation with more economically realistic prices and support for a degree of decentralisation. (Partial reforms of the Soviet economic system were, in any event, probably doomed to failure, since they produced unintended consequences in a system that was a coherent whole, albeit one that – to put it mildly – failed to maximise efficiency.)[3]

One of the reform-minded economists of the Brezhnev period who became especially influential in the first two years of the Gorbachev era, Academician Abel Agenbegyan, has written of his experiences with Kosygin. At a meeting at the Council of Ministers he referred to the results of mathematical modelling of Soviet economic development when he was interrupted by Kosygin who snapped at him: 'And what on earth do you understand about models?' Aganbegyan had already put up with interruptions informing him that he knew nothing about metallurgy or engineering, and that he was wrong to call for more investment in engineering, but he lost all patience and political deference when challenged on his economic competence. As he recalls: 'now I could no longer control myself and said very clearly and loudly that if there was anyone in that room who knew about economic mathematical models, that person was I. "As for you", I said to Kosygin, "you really don't understand the first thing about it".'[4] As a result Aganbegyan was banished from the room and continued to be denied permission to visit any Western countries.[5]

Even when Aganbegyan wrote a note for the attention only of Kosygin and of the Chairman of the State Planning Committee (Gosplan), Nikolay Baybakov, attempting to make constructive proposals for economic reform, and when, on another occasion, he wrote a letter jointly, with other directors of leading institutes,[6] to General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev predicting a decline in economic growth rates, the result was the same both times. Kosygin, who had not been an intended recipient of the letter to Brezhnev (it was leaked to him), called Aganbegyan and his colleagues 'slanderers'.[7] 'Naturally', Aganbegyan relates, 'after such a reaction to a serious comment, backed by proofs and calculations, we lost for a time all desire to produce statements of that kind.'[8]

Similar rebuffs, up to the launching of perestroika, were administered by the conservative editor of the main theoretical journal of the Communist Party, *Kommunist*, Richard Kosolapov, to political analysts Yegveny Ambartsumov and Anatoly Butenko, who had attempted to bring into the public domain some of the serious defects of the Soviet political system by writing about 'contradictions of socialism'. These included, in Butenko's words, a contradiction 'between the development of democracy and the development of centralism'.[9] In the esoteric debate that took place up until the mid-1980s Soviet participants traded quotations from Marx and Lenin. Those who were trying to move towards a more empirically-based analysis of politics liked to cite Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and his *Civil War in France*. These were among the works praised by Georgy Shakhnazarov and Fedor Burlatsky in 1980 as 'unfading examples' of the kind of 'concrete analysis of the activities of the state, of political parties and their leaders' which they knew to be lacking, and believed was required, in the Soviet Union.[10]

The more fundamental criticism of the Soviet system that was expressed esoterically – by, for example, Valery Kalensky, and not only in his book cited in the previous chapter[11] – did something for the morale of those intellectuals who were thoroughly disillusioned with the Soviet system. Shakhnazarov and Burlatsky, however, because of their connections with party officialdom were more influential. (Shakhnazarov was a deputy head of the Socialist Countries Department of the Central Committee throughout most of the 1970s and 1980s, becoming an aide to Gorbachev in February 1988. Burlatsky had good contacts, dating back to his time in the party apparatus in the early 1960s as the first leader of a group of consultants set up by Yury Andropov when the latter was head of the Socialist Countries Department.) Until the perestroika period that influence was mainly at a conceptual level rather than in concrete analysis of the Soviet system and did not lead to any serious reform of that system. It was from 1987 that *more daring* concepts were authoritatively introduced into Soviet political discourse and these began to be *applied to Soviet reality* with far-reaching political consequences.

Checks and balances and separation of powers

The term, 'pluralism', was first used non-pejoratively at the highest level of the Soviet hierarchy in 1987, and the significance of the introduction and development of that concept will be elaborated later in this

chapter. The same year saw an endorsement of the need for 'checks and balances'. In pre-perestroika times, Valery Kalensky, in his book on James Madison, had devoted a whole chapter to 'the concept of checks and balances (*sderzhek i protivovesov*) and the problem of separation of powers'.[12] The difference between what was possible in 1981 and 1987 was, however, that with Gorbachev rather than Brezhnev in the Kremlin, the need for checks and balances *in the Soviet Union itself* could be argued in print. There was also, though, a vast difference between the limits of the possible in 1987 and 1990. When concepts that were new to Soviet discourse were introduced in the early years of perestroika they had to be qualified by the adjective, 'socialist'. Within a few years that qualifier was increasingly dropped. Moreover, since by 1988–89 there was vigorous public disagreement regarding the meaning and content of 'socialism', even the use of that term was much less politically restrictive than in the past. Certainly, the employment of the 'socialist' qualifier did not make it any less of a breakthrough when a meeting of the Soviet Association of Political Sciences – at which Georgy Shakhnazarov presided – discussed the concept of checks and balances in February 1987 and the journal, *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, in July of the same year drew attention to the call that had been made for the development of a 'socialist theory of checks and balances' and for the study of both Western practice and the Western theoretical literature on the subject. This was specifically linked to the need to prevent in the Soviet Union the excessive concentration of power in the hands of any one institution or individual.[13]

It was in late 1988 that Gorbachev gave his first endorsement of the idea of checks and balances in the context of recommending the setting up of a Committee for the Supervision of the Constitution. He spoke of 'our own socialist system of "checks and balances" taking shape in this country, designed to protect society against any violation of socialist legality at the highest state level'.[14] Since Shakhnazarov was by that time one of Gorbachev's principal speech-writers, it is likely that he drafted that statement. In no way, however, did this detract from the significance of the *de facto* chief executive of the Soviet state embracing the idea of checks and balances, especially since Gorbachev was an unusually well-read and intelligent product of the party apparatus who was fully aware of what he was saying.[15]

The principle of separation of powers likewise gained authoritative acceptance within the Soviet Union between 1987 and 1990 and made headway also in political practice. In the programmatic statement accepted by the Twenty-Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of the

Soviet Union in July 1990 a separate sub-section was devoted to the theme. It declared: 'The separation of powers into the legislative, executive, and judicial will create guarantees against the usurpation of unlimited authority and abuse of power and will allow spheres of competence to be clearly delineated'.[16] While the independence of the judiciary was hardly likely to be achieved overnight – and was far from having been realised a dozen years into post-Soviet Russia – a legislature which asked awkward questions of the executive and attempted to call it to account had already been created. A significant minority of deputies elected to the new all-Union legislature, the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, in 1989, and to the Congress of People's Deputies of the Russian Republic (elected in 1990) were ready to criticise the party and governmental leadership. While some demanded faster democratisation and supported the self-determination movements in a number of Soviet republics, others criticised the Gorbachev leadership for allowing such national movements to get out of hand.[17]

What all this amounted to, as noted in the opening paragraph, was that esoteric debate had given way to open debate by 1990, with sharp clashes of opinion occurring in newspapers of widely differing political orientations. This was accompanied by vigorous disputation in the legislature that was conveyed to a mass audience by television. Whereas the reforms envisaged at the outset of perestroika were essentially system-adaptive – Gorbachev believed at that time that the system could be improved, but by three years into his General Secretaryship he had reached the conclusion that it had to become different in kind – from the summer of 1988 onwards the reforms proposed (and substantially implemented) were system-transformative.[18] These included contested elections for a legislature with real powers and the election of presidents in the Soviet republics. Particularly momentous was the direct election of Yel'tsin as President of Russia in June 1991, following the indirect election of Gorbachev as President of the USSR in March 1990.

As mentioned at the outset, the period 1987 to 1990 saw also the end of the mutual isolation of 'within-system' reformers and dissidents. It was at the beginning of 1987 that Academician Andrey Sakharov returned to Moscow from his internal exile in Gorky (subsequently restored to its pre-Soviet name of Nizhny Novgorod), following a telephone call from Gorbachev in December 1986, informing him that he was free to do so.[19] Sakharov immediately added his voice to the burgeoning political debate, was elected to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR in 1989, appointed to a commission to

draft a new Constitution for the Soviet Union,[20] and emerged – along with prominent Communist Party members (including Boris Yel'tsin) – as one of the leaders of the Inter-Regional Group of Deputies that 'became a rallying point for emerging democratic groups throughout the Soviet Union'.[21] Even Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who chose not to return to his native Russia until 1994, became an *in absentia* participant in the political debates of the late 1980s in the Soviet Union. Editors of literary journals competed with each other to print those works of Solzhenitsyn that hitherto had been published only abroad. His devastating indictment of the Soviet system, *The Gulag Archipelago*, was published in successive issues of the journal, *Novyy mir*, in the second half of 1989 at a time when that journal had a monthly print-run of more than a million and a half copies. A Soviet dissident of quite different political outlook, Roy Medvedev, was elected both to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR in 1989 and to its inner body, the Supreme Soviet. In the same year he had restored to him membership of the Communist Party from which he had been expelled twenty years earlier; a year later he was a member of its Central Committee. By that year the 'extra-structural dissenters' had come together with the 'intra-structural dissenters',[22] for the latter by now constituted the ideological vanguard of transformative change. The increasing interaction between those who belonged to these two categories was facilitated by the radicalisation both of the within-system reformers and of the former dissidents. Most of the demands in the 1970s even of the dissidents had been for more modest reform than the contested elections that became a political reality from 1989. Meanwhile, those who had previously operated within the parameters of the system had come to advocate views which would make the Soviet system different in kind. Accordingly, many of them now made common cause with former dissidents who, for their part, seized the unique opportunity to play a part in the political process.[23] (One of the ironies of post-Communist Russia is that the former dissidents soon found themselves marginalised once again, while the most popular politician in the country in the early years of the twenty-first century was a former colonel in the KGB, President Vladimir Putin.)

Abandoning Marxism–Leninism

The most basic tenets of Marxism–Leninism lost their ideological hegemony between 1987 and 1990. The process was, in one sense, a gradual one, for the views of the reformers, including those of Mikhail

Gorbachev, evolved within that period, as did the outlook of the broader policy community, whether officials or specialists in the research institutes. In another sense, it was far from gradual, for movement from support for an essentially authoritarian system to support for political pluralism within the space of three years was, by the standards of Russian history, a startlingly brisk evolution. The ideational change was also of profound political importance. The official Marxism–Leninism, disseminated at great expense, had been a very effective means of stifling potentially dangerous criticism. Even in the generation that separated the Stalin era from the perestroika years every form of deviation had a name which could be attached to it with fatal consequences for the argument (if, no longer, as in Stalin's time, necessarily *fatal* consequences for the person who deployed it). Marxism–Leninism, presented as a truth for all time, was a crucial buttress for the Soviet power structure. The Brezhnev leadership, with cynical complacency, would regularly reassure itself and party members that it was plotting a steady course, avoiding the dangers of 'revisionism', on the one hand, and 'dogmatism', on the other.

In contrast, each of the five basic features of Marxism–Leninism outlined in Chapter one, was abandoned in the second half of the 1980s. After 1985, the stress on the fundamental importance of class consciousness and of class struggle gradually disappeared even from the most authoritative documents of the Communist Party, and the 'class approach' lost its appeal still more quickly within the society as a whole. The use of these concepts had been highly manipulative and instrumental even while they held sway in the unreformed Soviet Union. Internationally, the class struggle had become synonymous with the Soviet Union's struggle against capitalism, imperialism and, from time to time, revisionism. The 'Prague Spring' of 1968 was interpreted by the Soviet leadership as an exceptionally acute instance of 'class struggle', with the imperialists – abetted by local opportunists – attempting to claw back the socialist gains of the Czech working people. The informational monopoly which the party leadership maintained at that time (including jamming of foreign radio) helped to lull an apparent majority of the Soviet population into accepting this interpretation offered by their leaders. They did not ask why, if this were an instance of class struggle within a supposedly 'socialist state', the working class were losing, and losing so badly that they needed reinforcement by several hundred thousand foreign troops.[24]

It was one of the most fundamental ideological departures from received Soviet doctrine when Gorbachev took on board the view that

class interests must be subordinated to *universal interests*. In a nuclear age 'all-human values' had precedence over 'class values', and there was a corresponding need for co-operation to replace conflict in an increasingly interdependent world.[25] Politics, whether international or domestic, was, in other words, no longer seen as a zero-sum game. This constituted a rejection of Lenin's fundamental question in politics: *kto kogo* (literally 'who–whom?', meaning 'who will dominate whom?').

Some of these ideas had been voiced, and occasionally even published, before 1985,[26] but it was only under Gorbachev that they were given authoritative endorsement. Shakhnazarov was one of those who stressed the existence of universal interests over and above class interests. In an article published in a Soviet journal in 1984, he wrote that 'political ends do not exist that would justify the use of means liable to lead to nuclear war'.[27] At the time the article was judged to be unorthodox and it did not inform the thinking of the party leadership until after Gorbachev had succeeded Konstantin Chernenko as General Secretary in March 1985. In October 1986 Gorbachev spoke of 'the priority of the all-human value of peace over all others to which different peoples are attached'.[28] For Gorbachev, indeed, the idea that there were 'all-human' interests and values that had a higher significance than class interests became a central feature of the 'new political thinking' which he endorsed.[29]

The second of the basic tenets of Soviet Marxism–Leninism noted in Chapter one was the teleological assumption that capitalism would give way, world-wide, to socialism and that socialism, in turn, would be succeeded by the final stage of human development, communism. In the earliest years of perestroika Gorbachev and his supporters (within what was only superficially a united Soviet leadership) were still trying to reform and revitalise the Soviet system and Gorbachev still very occasionally spoke about the goal of communism. By 1990 he had essentially accepted a convergence of socio-economic systems, in which the most attractive model available appeared to him to be democratic socialism of the type advocated by the social democratic parties of Western Europe. The term 'communism' had dropped out of his vocabulary and the prospect of it was increasingly frankly recognised to be a mirage rather than a serious goal.[30] In the meantime, the international Communist movement had ceased to exist and the Communist countries of Eastern Europe had been allowed to abandon their Communist (or, in Soviet terminology, socialist) systems.

Consistent with this, the third tenet of Marxism–Leninism, that the Soviet economic and political system – *real'nyy sotsializm* or 'actually

existing socialism' – was the model for the rest of the world, had been shown to be an illusion. The withering away of censorship had enabled Soviet citizens to acquire knowledge both about the missing pages of Soviet history and about Western countries. *Glasnost'*, which rapidly developed into freedom of speech and of information, produced an enhanced awareness of the limitations of the Soviet economic system and of the arbitrariness, injustices, and lack of accountability characteristic of the unreformed polity. By 1990 the term 'administrative-command system' had become just one of the pejorative ways of referring to the Soviet economic system, while the pre-perestroika political system had been publicly recognised by Gorbachev and his supporters within the party leadership to have been neither free nor democratic. These points were put still more forcefully by the growing opposition movement, whose very existence provided ample evidence that the system had changed fundamentally.

So far as the economic system was concerned, those who supported the traditional Soviet command economy had lost the political argument. The disagreements that mattered were between, on the one hand, those who wished to combine concessions to the market with some vestiges of planning and, on the other, the more thoroughgoing marketeers – and, among the latter, the real argument was over *how* best to make a transition to the market without causing massive dislocation and hardship to the bulk of the population. Gorbachev initially accepted the radical proposals for speedy transition to a market economy put forward in the summer of 1990 by a team led by Stanislav Shatalin and Grigory Yavlinsky, but then sought a compromise whereby movement to the market would be more gradual. Yel'tsin – although (in contrast with Gorbachev) he had not read the lengthy report by the economists – accepted their conclusions without reservation.

At one point in late 1990 three different 'plans' for transition to the market in Russia and the Soviet Union as a whole were being debated. One was the Shatalin–Yavlinsky set of proposals, the product of a commission that had been set up with the blessings of both Gorbachev and Yel'tsin; a second consisted of the positions taken by the Soviet government headed by Nikolay Ryzhkov, whose main author was the economist, Leonid Abalkin; and the third was a compromise set of proposals, in which Gorbachev attempted to find some common ground between the two earlier documents, produced at his behest by Aganbegyan. At the time most radical democrats gave their unstinting support to the so-called '500-Days Programme' produced

by Shatalin and Yavlinsky, although Yegor Gaydar, who was a member of the '500 Days' team, was later to admit that its timetable was wildly over-optimistic. Much of that document, he remarked, if seen through the unbiased eyes of a specialist, could not (by the mid-1990s) be read 'without a smile'.[31] The programme's significance, as Gaydar noted in retrospect, had been primarily political rather than economic.[32] Whatever the practicalities or impracticalities of all three documents, and their place in the political struggles of 1990, the essential point in the present context is that they all involved an abandonment of Marxism–Leninism. As Gordon M. Hahn has observed: 'Each plan led to economic decentralization, privatization, a market economy and firm rights to ownership, entrepreneurship and private property. Differences were limited to varying time frames and tempos for implementation and whether price liberalization should precede privatization'.[33]

The fourth basic principle of Marxism–Leninism mentioned in the previous chapter, though one which could be regarded as the keystone of the entire Soviet political structure, was the leading role of the Communist Party. The idea that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union should become a 'normal' political party, competing with others for power, had scarcely surfaced even in dissident circles prior to 1985. But in the run-up to the Nineteenth Party Conference in 1988 there was serious discussion of radical political reform within Gorbachev's inner circle, and the idea of contested elections for a new legislature was accepted and promoted by Gorbachev. He recognised in private, but not yet in public, this would mean that at a later stage the Communist Party's leading role – its monopoly of power, in plain language – would also have to be abandoned.[34] At the Second Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR in late 1989 ninety-four deputies signed a document entitled 'On Perestroika Today and in the Foreseeable Future'.[35] Initiated by the Inter-Regional Group of Deputies, it called for the removal of the 'infamous sixth article' of the Soviet Constitution of 1977 which enshrined in the country's basic law the 'leading and guiding role' of the Communist Party. Henceforth, the document argued, if the Communist Party was to play a leading role, this should be a result of its having won free elections in fair competition with other parties.[36] The collapse of Communism throughout most of Eastern Europe had radicalised and emboldened Russia's democrats, but even before the changes there a senior researcher at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Viktor Sheynis, was among those who had called for the Soviet Union to cease to be a

'party-state', a phenomenon he associated with African countries. He argued that the Communist Party should become a 'normal political party, with normal European functions' which would mean that it would then not be the only one in the political arena.[37] In their document already cited, the Inter-Regional Group not only embraced the principle of a multi-party system but also looked forward to a split in the ranks of the Communist Party, arguing that it was both unavoidable and desirable that the CPSU should divide and that it should turn into 'two or three mass parties'.[38] They also welcomed the principle of political opposition, observing: 'Without political opposition normal political existence is not possible.'[39]

Gorbachev reacted angrily when Andrey Sakharov, one of the leaders of the Inter-Regional Group of Deputies, pressed for the removal of Article 6 at a session in late 1989 of the Congress of People's Deputies. This was because, as General Secretary, he could not accept or advocate such a step in public until he had persuaded or cajoled both the Politburo and the Central Committee of the Party into agreeing to such a momentous change. The matter had already been discussed in the Politburo in June 1989 with substantial resistance and three different viewpoints emerging.[40] It was in February 1990 that Gorbachev pushed the decision to change the Constitution through a plenary session of the Central Committee; in March 1990 the 'leading role' of the Communist Party was duly removed from the Constitution at a session of the Congress of People's Deputies. At that same session Gorbachev was elected President of the USSR by the deputies and, although the new executive presidency suffered from a lack of institutional underpinning, it involved an important switch of power from the party to the state. The Politburo henceforth no longer enjoyed its *de facto* pre-eminence as the highest executive committee of the Soviet state as well as the highest policy-making body within the party.

For many in the Communist Party the principle of a multi-party system and the idea of legitimised opposition were difficult pills to swallow, but Gorbachev, having recognised privately as early as 1988 that these changes would occur, publicly accepted both in 1990, even though he encountered opposition from delegates to the Twenty-Eighth Party Congress in the summer of that year. Indicative of the resistance was the fact that one of the changes made to the draft programmatic statement of the Congress published on 27 June in the final version (published on 15 July) was removal of the word, *mnogopartiynost'* ('multipartyness') from the section headed 'Civil Society and the Law-Governed State'. In the draft, one of the goals the Communist

Party was said to be striving for was a multi-party system and the free competition of socio-political organisations within a constitutional framework.[41] In the final version, after more conservative forces had hit back, the Party was advocating simply 'the free competition of socio-political organizations within a constitutional framework'.[42] From a vantage point of 1985, that would, of course, have seemed like a giant step forward, but so fast was the speed of ideological as well as more general political change over the succeeding years, that by 1990 the statement appeared unremarkable. At the Congress itself, which he later described as 'the break with Bolshevism',[43] Gorbachev did not hesitate to embrace the principle of a multi-party system, though he got a frosty reception from the delegates for such statements as 'The political system is being radically transformed, genuine democracy is being established, with free elections, a multi-party system and human rights'.[44]

The fifth basic doctrinal tenet of Marxism–Leninism mentioned in Chapter one, 'democratic centralism', was supplanted between 1987 and 1990 by the principle and practice of political pluralism. Would-be reformers in the period preceding perestroika and in the earliest years of the Gorbachev era had on occasion attempted to advance their agenda by stressing the 'democratic' component in 'democratic centralism', arguing that the centralistic part had been over-emphasised.[45] But given all the associations of democratic centralism, it was never likely that redefining that term could form any part of the foundation for democratising the Soviet system. That involved, among other things, changing the language of Soviet politics. In principle, the Communist Party had always made a distinction between 'democratic centralism' – whereby higher Party organs listened to views coming from lower down the organisation, although once a decision had been taken, it was binding on all – and 'bureaucratic centralism' in which the higher echelons acted arbitrarily and without consultation. In political practice the distinction had become completely blurred with the centralistic component all too evidently and consistently prevailing over the democratic. 'Democratic centralism' was both a euphemism and a support for an authoritarian and hierarchical political order. Movement towards genuine democratisation meant abandoning rather than rehabilitating that concept.

The first *explicit* attack in a large-circulation Soviet journal on Marx and Lenin themselves came as early as 1988. The sensation this caused was the greater in that the author, Aleksandr Tsipko, was at the time employed in the Central Committee of the Communist Party. His

series of four articles in the popular science monthly, *Nauka i zhizn'* began to appear in November 1988.[46] Tsipko had come to the attention of Gorbachev because he had been under attack by Richard Kosolapov – their common enemy – when the latter was still editor of *Kommunist*. At that time Tsipko was a researcher in the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System, headed by Oleg Bogomolov, who had made it a refuge for many an unorthodox thinker in the pre-perestroika years. 'When, at Shakhnazarov's request', Tsipko remarked later, 'Gorbachev finally took me into the Department of Socialist Countries in November 1986, I felt as if I were one of the initiates. I realized then that there was no limit to Gorbachev's ideological flexibility.'[47] Sensing 'the rapidly changing intellectual climate in the country and the new opportunities to speak and write the truth', Tsipko decided to commit to print his view that the entire foundations of the Soviet system were wrong and that much of the blame lay with Marx and Lenin, not only with Stalin.

However paradoxical it may appear, publication of Tsipko's heretical thoughts in 1988 was possible only because he worked in the Central Committee building and had the support of authoritative figures there. The deputy editor of *Nauka i zhizn'* was Nikita Khrushchev's daughter, Rada Adzhubei, who, Tsipko notes, 'did not rush to assume responsibility for publishing my articles'.[48] She checked up on his standing within the Central Committee apparatus and later told him that the censorship office had been relieved to learn that he had close ties with Vadim Medvedev and not only with Aleksandr Yakovlev. While Yakovlev was the more radical of these two Politburo members, Medvedev was a more serious reformer than he was given credit for by many in the Russian intelligentsia. He occupied a position in between that of the relatively conservative Yegor Ligachev and Yakovlev (whose anti-Stalinism was rapidly evolving into an anti-Leninism), but his views were closer to those of the latter than to the former. When Medvedev succeeded Yakovlev as the overseer of ideology, he found himself under fire from two fronts. On the one hand, in the face of sharp criticism at every meeting of the Politburo of articles that had appeared in the press, Medvedev was defending a 'pluralism of opinion' in those meetings, and, on the other hand, in public he was criticising the media, responding to the concerns of his Politburo colleagues. As a result, he later observed, he acquired in Central Committee circles the reputation of an 'extreme democrat', while for the 'democratic opposition' he was someone who belonged to the conservative majority in the Politburo.[49]

The importance of high-level political protection for disseminating views that before 1985 would have been more likely to earn their authors prison sentences than plaudits held good until, at least, 1988. Yakovlev provided this cover for many a writer, but, as the case of Tsipko illustrates, Medvedev did so also. Tsipko emphasises the importance of his attack on Leninism emanating from within the heart of the Soviet establishment when he observes: 'My argument with Communism and Marxism became legal and open and my struggle with the Soviet regime was conducted according to the Soviet rules of the game. This is why no one in the CC [Central Committee] touched me, setting a precedent and, in effect, legitimizing anti-Communism'.[50] It has to be added that in the post-Stalin period generally, while unorthodox views could sometimes be published if a powerful patron stood behind the author, there was not the slightest chance of direct attacks on Marx and Lenin seeing the light of day until several years into the Gorbachev era. The rules of the game had by then significantly changed. A sizeable minority of officials within the Central Committee apparatus was no less disrespectful of Marxism–Leninism than was Tsipko, even if they had not been prepared to be the first to commit their views to print. Tsipko cites one of them, Nikolay Portugalov, who greeted him in the Central Committee cafeteria with the words: 'Sasha, you are a genius. It took you four articles to say what could be said in a single sentence: Marxism is bullshit and the Bolsheviks led by Lenin are a bunch of criminals'.[51]

From monism to pluralism

'Democratic centralism' had nothing in common with pluralism and it was the endorsement of pluralism that indicated most clearly that the Soviet system had ceased to be Leninist and that Marxism–Leninism was no longer the hegemonic ideology. It was Gorbachev himself who broke the taboo on using the term, 'pluralism', other than pejoratively when in 1987 he advocated a 'socialist pluralism' and spoke approvingly, in the same year, of a 'pluralism of opinion'.[52] Gorbachev was well aware that there had been throughout the Soviet era an emphasis on the monist character of the Soviet state and that, ever since the Prague Spring of 1968, during which the concept of pluralism had been adopted by Czech reformers, the notion had been vehemently attacked by Soviet ideologists. The fact that it was taken up in the 1970s by Eurocommunists, as represented, for example, by the Italian Communist Party (PCI), further enraged the Soviet ideological establishment. Having

put radical political reform on the agenda in 1987, Gorbachev was conscious that to continue to anathematise pluralism was to play into the hands of his conservative Communist opponents. In Gorbachev's initial use of the term, this was, of course, a qualified pluralism, but once the General Secretary had made that ideological breakthrough, reformist writers took to using the term 'pluralism' to legitimate political competition. The adjective 'socialist' was frequently dropped and more and more contributors to the discussion advocated 'political pluralism' – among them, Anatoly Adamishin, who was at that time (1989) Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.[53]

Gorbachev himself first used the term 'political pluralism' as something desirable in February 1990, embracing that formulation at the same time as he publicly accepted the principle of a multi-party system and persuaded the Central Committee of the Communist Party to get rid of the constitutionally-enshrined 'leading role' of the Party in the Soviet political system.[54] The connection was a logical one, for a fully-fledged political pluralism clearly implied the right of creation of political parties as well as of independent organised groups. The changing evaluation of the concept of pluralism was bitterly resented by many in the party apparatus who saw it, rightly, as a further blow to their former ideological hegemony and actual political power. The implications of the doctrinal shift were brought out at the time by Andrei Melville, formerly a department head at the Institute of the USA and Canada in Moscow and, in post-Soviet Russia, deputy head of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO). Writing in 1990, Melville observed:

> The recognition not only of the fact but of the *validity of ideological pluralism* is a logical consequence of the freedom of social choice. The equal right of every ideology to exist is incompatible with claims to the possession of 'absolute truth', with our traditional postulate that only one ideology is 'genuinely scientific' and expresses the interests of 'the absolute majority of the human race' or of 'all progressive forces', while another ideology is 'unscientific' and serves 'reactionary interests'.[55]

The extent of the change in the attitude to pluralism in the Soviet Union within three momentous years could be illustrated by comparing the entry on pluralism in the 1987 edition of the *Kratkiy politicheskiy slovar'* (Short Political Dictionary)[56] and the entry on 'political pluralism' in the 'Political Vocabulary' section of a Communist Party

journal supportive of Gorbachev's reforms, *Dialog*, in the summer of 1990.[57] The former was scornful of the claims of 'bourgeois sociology' that pluralism represented a 'pure' or 'higher' form of democracy and noted equally disparagingly the use of the concept by Eurocommunists who mistakenly believed that there could be a variety of 'models' of socialism and failed to recognise 'the international character of Marxism–Leninism and the general laws of development of socialist revolution and the construction of socialism'.[58]

The 1990 entry in the party journal, in contrast, noted that the term, 'pluralism', had been more and more often used to delineate important aspects of perestroika and, above all, 'the deep and all-round democratisation of the society and fundamental reorganisation of the political system'. It was portrayed as contrasting sharply with the 'Stalinist–Brezhnevite administrative-command system of government' and with any kind of political monopoly. 'Political pluralism' was presented by *Dialog* as 'an effective instrument for the establishment of full democracy' and linked to the legitimation of political opposition.[59]

The pluralism which emerged in everyday political life in the Soviet Union was preceded by a striking plurality of views expressed in journals and books in the second half of the 1980s. The weekly publications, *Moskovskie novosti* (which appeared also in English as *Moscow News*), *Ogonek* and *Argumenty i fakty* and such journals as *Novyy mir*, *Znamya* and *Vek XX i mir* were in the vanguard of the widening of the scope of political argument and of breaking taboos on permissible subjects for discussion. Even the party's theoretical journal, *Kommunist*, became a forum for lively debate. Richard Kosolapov, an ideologue opposed to Gorbachev's 'New Political Thinking' and his concrete reforms, was dismissed as editor-in-chief in 1986 and replaced by Ivan Frolov, a respected philosopher of science and a former editor of the main philosophical journal in the country, *Voprosy filosofii*. When Frolov moved in 1987 to become an aide to Gorbachev with responsibility for ideology, he was replaced by Nail' Bikkenin, under whom *Kommunist* embraced a still wider diversity of viewpoints. The perestroika period was one of great intellectual as well as of political ferment. In addition to the journals and newspapers which became exemplars of the new pluralism, a whole series of innovative books with the general title, '*Perestroika*: *Glasnost'*, Democracy, Socialism', began publication in 1988. The first title in the series, *Inogo ne dano* (There is No Other Way) made a particularly strong impact.[60] Edited by Yury Afanas'ev, later to become a leading radical democrat and an ally

of Boris Yel'tsin, it contained contributions from many of the country's most notable reformers, among them Andrey Sakharov.

A real ideational pluralism in the social sciences also developed in the perestroika years, a process amply illustrated in later chapters of this volume. A very important early impetus to the emboldening of social scientific thought was provided by Aleksandr Yakovlev who had been appointed by Gorbachev to oversee ideology and specifically to break down ideological barriers to serious analysis. Especially significant in this respect was Yakovlev's lecture at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR on 17 April 1987 entitled 'On the achievement of a qualitatively new Soviet society and the social sciences'. In its most widely-read but abbreviated version, this lecture appeared as an article in *Kommunist*.[61] The full text, published in the journal of the Academy of Sciences, broke still more fresh ground.[62]

The freeing of Soviet and Russian intellectual life and the pluralisation of the political system occurred, in other words, several years before the end of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The closed system of official Marxism–Leninism which had seemed so impermeable had been opened up. Walls which could not be broken down by dissidents, in spite of their brave efforts over several decades preceding perestroika, no longer protected the hegemonic Soviet ideology, for doors in those walls were opened – and from the inside. Only the General Secretary of the Communist Party had sufficient authority to initiate this process and, specifically, to break the taboo on embracing the concept of pluralism. The link between leadership change and ideational change was, accordingly, a close one, although Soviet leaders had changed in the past without any remotely comparable assault on Marxism–Leninism. By the mid-1980s, moreover, society was ready for such changes. Without the response from below to the initiatives from above – from a large, well-educated social stratum exhilarated by the removal of their ideological straitjacket – the speed of change would have been less dramatic.

The breakthrough, however, resulted above all from a combination of leadership change, institutional power (with key positions in the power structure – most notably, the General Secretaryship – having passed into the hands of reformers) and new ideas. The fact that the Soviet Union in 1985 faced many problems did not mean that it stood on the verge of imminent collapse. Nor did it mean that there was anything inevitable about the turn to social democratic, liberal and pluralist ideas rather than to Russian nationalism, neo-Stalinism or a combination of concessions to the market with implacable opposition

to political pluralism which some of Gorbachev's opponents identified as a preferable 'Chinese model'. The *content* of the 'New Thinking' was no less important than the fact that it was *new* in the Soviet context. Ideas – especially those of Marx and Lenin – played a crucially important part in the foundation of the Soviet state and the creation of the Soviet system. Ideas, especially those which dissected and discredited Marxism–Leninism, played a decisive role in the dismantling of that system and in the disintegration of the Soviet state.

Notes

1 On reformist proposals prior to perestroika and on their radicalisation after Gorbachev came to power, see the studies in different areas of policy of Robert English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Michael Ellman and Vladimir Kontorovich (eds), *The Destruction of the Soviet Economic System: An Insiders' History* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998); Neil Melvin, *Soviet Power and the Countryside: Policy Innovation and Institutional Decay* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); and Julie M. Newton, *Russia, France, and the Idea of Europe* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
2 See Philip Hanson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy: An Economic History of the USSR from 1945* (London: Longman, 2003), pp. 101–8.
3 *Ibid*., p. 108.
4 Abel Aganbegyan, *Moving the Mountain: Inside the Perestroika Revolution* (London: Bantam Press, 1989), pp. 152–3.
5 Aganbegyan notes: 'Until 1985 I managed to visit only Bulgaria and Hungary – and then only for short periods. And although I went through the due processes several times I was refused exit visas.' *Ibid*., p. 155.
6 Aganbegyan worked from 1961 until 1985 at the Institute of Economics and Organisation of Industrial Production at Novosibirsk, from 1967 to 1985 as Director of that institute which came under the jurisdiction of the Siberian branch of the Academy of Sciences.
7 Aganbegyan, *Moving the Mountain*, p. 155.
8 *Ibid*., p. 156.
9 A.P. Butenko, 'Protivorechiya razvitiya sotsializma kak obshchestvennaya stroya', *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 10, 1982, pp. 16–29, at p. 27.
10 See G.Kh. Shakhnazarov and F.M. Burlatsky, 'O razvitii marksistsko-leninksoy politicheskoy nauki', *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 12, 1980, pp. 10–22, at p. 12; and Archie Brown, 'Political Science in the Soviet Union: A New Stage of Development?', *Soviet Studies*, vol. xxxvi, no. 3, July 1984, pp. 317–44, especially pp. 335–8.
11 See, in addition to *Gosudarstvo kak ob"ekt sotsiologicheskogo analiza* (Moscow: Yuridicheskaya literature, 1977), V.G. Kalensky, *Politicheskaya nauka v SSha; kritika burzhuaznikh kontseptsii vlasti* (Moscow: Yuridicheskaya literature, 1969); V.G. Kalensky, *Medison* (Moscow: Yuridicheskaya literature, 1981); and V.G. Kalensky, *Bill' o pravakh v kontstitutsionnoy istorii SSha* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983). The first of these works was intended to stimulate the development of

political science in the Soviet Union and, through lengthy quotations, it introduces Soviet readers to the analyses of many leading American political scientists, as well as providing a sophisticated critique of their views. The second is a sympathetic study of the ideas of James Madison. The third is an account of the development of civil rights and freedoms in the United States and the subtext is the lack of such rights and freedoms in the Soviet Union. Kalensky was not allowed to use his original choice of title, 'The Development of Civil Rights in the USA', since the implied contrast with the USSR might have become too obvious. The price of publishing his book was to accept the more boringly academic title, 'The Bill of Rights in the Constitutional History of the USA'.

12 Kalensky, *Medison*, pp. 65–100.

13 S.E. Deytsev and I.G. Shablinsky, 'Rol' politicheskikh institutov v uskorenii sotsial'no-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya', in *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, No. 7, July 1987, p. 120.

14 *Pravda*, 30 November 1988, p. 2.

15 As Jack F. Matlock, Jr, the United States's very well-informed Ambassador to Moscow from 1987 to 1991, has, among others, noted, Gorbachev was a most unusual member of the Politburo in being a voracious reader of the 'white books', including the writings of Western political leaders and analysts, that were published in extremely limited editions for a closed circle of the party elite. His reading-matter in the 1970s included the writings of Antonio Gramsci, Giuseppe Boffa, Willy Brandt, François Mitterrand, and C. Northcote Parkinson (the author of *Parkinson's Law*). Thus, while Matlock recognises the part played by Gorbachev's more enlightened interlocutors within the Soviet establishment, especially people he had himself promoted such as Aleksandr Yakovlev, he writes: 'It would be wrong, however, to imagine that Gorbachev was, in the first instance, persuaded and "educated" by these "establishment liberals" (for want of a better term). He drew on their ideas, listened to their advice, and used them to draft his speeches and correspondence, but he himself was the main driving force behind what came to be called the new thinking in Soviet foreign policy' (Matlock, *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House, forthcoming 2004). (I wish to record my gratitude to Jack Matlock for giving me the opportunity to read that book manuscript in advance of its publication.)

16 *Pravda*, 15 July 1990, p. 2.

17 For a variety of interesting perspectives on the democratic and national movements, see Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Yitzhak Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State 1953–1991* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998); M. Steven Fish, *Democracy From Scratch: Opposition and Regime in the New Russian Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Alexander Lukin, *The Political Culture of the Russian 'Democrats'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Michael McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001); Alec Nove, *Glasnost' in Action* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989); and Michael Urban with Vyacheslav Igrunov and Sergei Mitrokhin, *The Rebirth of Politics in Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

18 See Mikhail Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, 2 vols (Moscow: Novosti, 1995); and Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
19 See Andrei Sakharov, *Memoirs* (New York: Knopf, 1990), pp. 615–16.
20 On Gorbachev's support for Sakharov's inclusion in the membership of the constitutional commission, see Andrei Sakharov, *Moscow and Beyond, 1986 to 1989* (New York, Knopf, 1991), pp. 129–30.
21 Fish, *Democracy From Scratch*, p. 38.
22 See the discussion, drawing on this terminology of Alexander Shtromas, in Chapter 1.
23 Roy Medvedev's position should be distinguished from that of Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn and not only in the content of his views. Even during the years when he could publish only abroad he received some support and information from the reform-oriented part of the Central Committee apparatus. One of those who surreptitiously helped him was Georgy Shakhnazarov.
24 On the Prague Spring and the Soviet response, see Mikhail Gorbachev and Zdeněk Mlyná *Conversations with Gorbachev: On Perestroika, the Prague Spring, and the Crossroads of Socialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Zdeněk Mlynář, *Night Frost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism* (London: Hurst, 1980); Kieran Williams, *The Prague Spring and its aftermath: Czechoslovak Politics, 1968–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Jaromír Navrátil (ed), *The Prague Spring 1968: A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998); and H. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).
25 See English, *Russia and the Idea of the West*, op. cit.; and Jeffrey T. Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behavior and the End of the Cold War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).
26 See English, *Russia and the Idea of the West*, pp. 167–8.
27 G.Kh. Shakhnazarov,, 'Logika politicheskogo myshleniya v yadernuyu eru', *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 5, May 1984, pp. 62–74, especially pp. 72–3.
28 Cited by Stephen Shenfield, *The Nuclear Predicament: Explorations in Soviet Ideology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul and the Royal Institute of International Relations, 1987), p. 45.
29 See, for example, Gorbachev's speech in the Kremlin to an international symposium on 16 February 1987, 'Za bez''yadernyy mir, za gumanizm mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy', in M.S. Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i*, Vol. 4 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987), pp. 376–92.
30 The last time Gorbachev used the term 'communism' in a positive way was at the Nineteenth Party Conference in 1988 in a sentence in which he spoke of a 'democratic, humanistic type of socialism' producing a 'qualitatively new condition of our society' which would be 'an important step in the advance to communism'. This attempt to square the circle probably even then represented no more than tactical ideological solace for the majority of delegates to the conference who were concerned by the radicalism of the reforms they were asked to endorse. See M.S. Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i*, Vol. 6 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1989), p. 397.
31 Yegor Gaidar, *Dni porazheniy i pobed* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1997), p. 65.

32 *Ibid*.
33 Gordon M. Hahn, *1985–2000: Russia's Revolution from Above: Reform, Transition, and Revolution in the Fall of the Soviet Communist Regime* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2002), p. 226.
34 As Gorbachev notes in his memoirs, the decision in principle to give up the monopoly position of the Communist Party was taken at the Nineteenth Party Conference in 1988 'with all the consequences flowing from that (a multi-party system, tolerance of political opposition, and others)' (Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, vol. 1, p. 480.
35 'O perestroyke segodnya i v obozrimom budushchem: zayavlenie narodnykh deputatov SSSR-chlenov mezhregional'noy gruppy', *Vek XX i mir*, no. 2, 1990, pp. 42–8.
36 *Ibid*.
37 V.L. Sheynis, in '"Kruglyy stol"': Plyuralizm v sotsialisticheskom obshchestve: puti utverzhdeniya v usloviyakh perestroyke', *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta: Seriya 12: Teoriya nauchnogo kommunizma*, no. 4, July–August 1989, pp. 3–72, at p. 39.
38 *Vek XX i mir*, no. 2, 1990, p. 45.
39 *Ibid*.
40 Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, vol. 1, p. 482.
41 *Pravda*, 27 June 1990, p. 4.
42 *Pravda*, 15 July 1990, p. 3.
43 Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, vol. 1, p. 548.
44 Angus Roxburgh, *The Second Russian Revolution: The Struggle for Power in the Kremlin* (London: BBC Books, 1991), p. 187. See also Gorbachev, *Zhizn' i reformy*, vol. 1, pp. 548–56.
45 See, for example, M.I. Piskotin, 'Demokraticheskiy tsentralizm: problemy sochetaniya tsentralizatsii i detsentralizatsii', *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, no. 5, May 1981, pp. 39–49; A.P. Butenko, 'Protivorechiya razvitiya sotsializma kak obshchestvennogo stroya', *op. cit*.; and B.P. Kurashvili, *Ocherk teorii gosudarstvennogo upravleniya* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), especially pp. 241–63.
46 *Nauka i zhizn'*, nos 11–12, 1988, and 1–2, 1989.
47 Aleksandr Tsipko, 'The Collapse of Marxism–Leninism', in Michael Ellman and Vladimir Kontorovich (eds), *The Destruction of the Soviet Economic System: An Insiders' History* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), pp. 169–86, at p. 183.
48 *Ibid*., p. 184.
49 V. Medvedev, *Prozrenie, mif ili predatel'stvo: k voprosu ob ideologii perestroyki* (Moscow: Evraziya, 1998), p. 184.
50 Tsipko, *op. cit*., pp. 184–5.
51 *Ibid*., p. 185.
52 *Pravda*, 15 July 1987, pp. 1–2, at p. 2; and *Pravda*, 30 September 1987, p. 1.
53 Anatoli Adamishin, 'Humanity's Common Destiny', *International Affairs* (Moscow), No. 2, February 1989, p. 11.
54 *Pravda*, 6 February 1990, pp. 1–2, at p. 2.
55 Andrei Melville, 'What's "New" about the "New Political Thinking"?', paper prepared for the Cato Institute conference on 'Transition to Freedom: The New Soviet Challenge', Moscow, 10–14 September 1990, p. 26.
56 *Kratkiy politicheskiy slovar'* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987), pp. 342–3.

57 *Dialog*, No. 7, 1990, p. 59.
58 *Kratkiy politicheskiy slovar'*, *op. cit.*, pp. 342–3.
59 *Dialog*, No. 7, 1990, p. 59.
60 Yu. N. Afanas'ev (ed.), *Inogo ne dano* (Moscow: Progress, 1988). Other works in the series included A.N. Zav'yalova (ed.), *Postizhenie* (Moscow: Progress, 1989); Kh. Kobo (ed.), *Osmyslit kul't Stalina* (Moscow: Progress, 1989); A.G. Vishnevsky (ed.), *V chelovecheskom izmerenii* (Moscow: Progress, 1989); M.I. Melkumyan (ed.), *Drama obnovleniya* (Moscow: Progress, 1990); M.P. Vyshinsky, *Pravo i vlast'* (Moscow: Progress, 1990); A.A. Protashchik (ed.), *Cherez ternin* (Moscow: Progress, 1990); A.I. Prokopenko (ed.), *SSSR: Demograficheskiy diagnoz* (Moscow: Progress, 1990); V.E. Kachanov (ed.), *Armiya i obshchestvo* (Moscow: Progress, 1990); M.Ya. Lemeshev (ed.), *Ekologicheskaya al'ternativa* (Moscow: Progress, 1990); N.A. Simonia (ed.), *SSSR v mirovom soobshchestve: ot starogo myshleniya k novomu* (Moscow: Progress, 1990); and T.A. Notkina, *Pogruzhenie v trasinu (anatomiya zastoya)* (Moscow: Progress, 1991).
61 *Kommunist*, No. 8, 1987, pp. 3–22.
62 'Dostizhenie kachestvenno novogo sostoyaniya sovetskogo obshchestva i obshchestvennye nauki', *Vestnik Akademii nauk SSSR*, No. 6, June 1987, pp. 51–80. Yakovlev's aide, Nikolay Kosolapov (whose views were very far removed from those of his namesake, Richard Kosolapov) played an important part in the drafting of the article, and among the people who contributed ideas to it was Aleksandr Tsipko. (See Tsipko, 'The Collapse of Marxism–Leninism', in Ellman and Kontorovich (eds), *The Destruction of the Soviet Economic System*), pp. 169–86, especially pp. 182–3.

3

The Rise of Non-Leninist Thinking on the Economy

Alec Nove

Almost half a century has gone by since Wassili Leontief wrote 'The fall and rise of Soviet economics'. And indeed at that time there had already been a marked recovery from the miserable state into which the discipline had been plunged in Stalin's time. One can only note with regret and a kind of nostalgia the high quality of the profession in the 1920s: Aleksandr Chayanov (peasant agriculture and cooperation), Nikolay Kondrat'ev (long and short cycles, growth theory), Vladimir Bazarov (theories of value and of socialist industrialisation), L. Yurovsky and S. Fal'kner (money and finance), Vladimir Groman and Pavel Popov (balances of the national economy) were men of great distinction. All were destroyed.

After Stalin died it took a few years for members of the profession to get off their knees. In 1955 V. Dyachenko took his colleagues to task for timid 'quotationism'. He added, 'The elaboration of key problems of the national economy is most backward. For years not a single solid theoretical work in this field has been published'.[1] It is hard to blame the individuals concerned. They wished to go on living. Interestingly, in his last work Stalin vigorously attacked one Yaroshenko, who had wished to define economics as the study of the organisation of production and distribution. Some in the West speculated – since no one had heard of Yaroshenko – that Stalin had invented a straw man. So it was a surprise for me, when I attended a discussion in Moscow in November 1989, to see none other than Yaroshenko himself (then aged ninety) tell the audience that he had survived, and was still defending his viewpoint!

Much that was positive happened in the following ten years. The 'legitimation' of mathematical economics, of input–output techniques, of cybernetics, the foundation of the Economico–Mathematical

Institute, the ideas of Leonid Kantorovich and Viktor Novozhilov, arguments with the remaining dogmatists about the meaning and relevance of the Marxist labour-theory of value, the publicity given to the ideas of Evsey Liberman; these were signs of real intellectual progress. Mention must also be made of the role of Vasily Nemchinov, who gave influential support to the spread of new ideas, and the rediscovery of old ones. Such men as Albert Vaynshteyn, released and rehabilitated, also made significant contributions. A younger generation arose – for example, Nikolay Petrakov and Stanislav Shatalin – which tried with some success to modernise theory and to link it with practice. (They subsequently played a leading role in the reform discussion of the Gorbachev era.) They all had to cope with dogmatists' counter-attacks, with accusations of 'marginalism' and of not being faithful to the labour-theory of value. There were plenty of published criticisms of the malfunctioning of this or that sector of the economy, which enabled Western authors of textbooks to fill them with critical quotations. However, as a number of Soviet economists pointed out, proposals could go no further than 'further perfecting' the existing system. The importance of 'commodity–money relations' was formally recognised, but it was not possible to discuss the desirability and possible extent of markets or the role of prices in resource allocation. The principles of centralised planning could not be challenged. An exception was the pamphlet by Gennady Lisichkin, *Plan i rynok* (Plan and Market), published in 1965. The author was heavily criticised and left Moscow for a time.

The support given in those years to mathematical economics may well be explicable by the belief that computerisation and programming techniques gave promise of an efficient form of centralised planning. Much work was done to develop 'SOFE' (System of Optimal Functioning of the Economy), a very good study of which was published in English in Helsinki by Pekka Sutela.[2] While intellectually stimulating, and on a much higher level than the dogmatists' economics of socialism, SOFE proved a cul-de-sac. It proved impossible to 'marry' it with an actually functioning economy, not least because it proved impossible to define a meaningful 'objective function'.

Orthodox apologists spun out variations on the theme of 'real' or 'mature' or 'developed' socialism. When, in 1983, scholars in Novosibirsk (notably Tat'yana Zalavskaya) began to dig deeper, to relate the economic system to social reality and to raise the question of its conformity to the organisational and social–psychological needs of a modern industrial economy, publication of their discussion document

was refused, and Zaslavskaya and Abel Aganbegyan were reprimanded for allowing it to be leaked. But the fact that this discussion was taking place serves as a reminder that in those years freedom of speech was much greater than was freedom of the press; much that appeared later was already being debated in the years of so-called stagnation.

There were some taboos before the launching of perestroika. Marx, Engels and Lenin were beyond criticism. It was difficult to query official statistics, though some criticisms did begin to appear (I used them in my Manchester Statistical Society paper, 'Has Soviet growth ceased?', published in 1983). There could be no critical analysis of the economies of other Communist-ruled countries (unless, like China, they had already been relegated to outer darkness). Western Sovietologists were, with hardly an exception, treated as bourgeois falsifiers.

The advent of *glasnost'* did not transform the situation overnight. As also in some other disciplines, changes were needed in personnel, editors, and so on. But clearly the recognition of the need for radical reform opened wide the area of permissible discussion both about the actual state of the economy and on genuinely radical means of remedying observed ills.

The first published article that sounded loud and clear alarm about the looming crisis of the economy was that of Nikolay Shmelev in *Novyy mir*:

> Today we have an economy characterized by shortages, imbalances, in many respects unmanageable, and to be honest, almost unplannable… Apathy, indifference, thieving, have become mass phenomena… There is no belief in the officially announced objectives and purposes, or in the very possibility of a more rational economic and social organization of life… Things should be given their proper names: stupidity is stupidity, incompetence is incompetence, today's Stalinism is today's Stalinism.[3]

and so on for many pages. Others soon followed his example. During the next three to four years there emerged a picture of startling inefficiency, malfunctioning, waste, losses and misallocation; all these could now be directly and openly given a systemic explanation, rather than be attributed to human error or specific instances of inefficiency.

Official statistics could now also be publicly challenged. The most famous example is the article by Grigory Khanin and Vasily Selyunin,

'Lukavaya tsifra',[4] which suggested that the official growth of national income from 1928 to 1986, a ninety-fold increase, should be scaled down to an increase of between six and seven times, surely the largest downward amendment of growth rates known in world statistical history. Khanin's ideas were published soon after in the Party's own *Kommunist*. Others joined in. In a similar vein, Andrey Illarionov, in *EKO*,[5] presented data to show that the Soviet Union was an underdeveloped country at a level similar to that of Venezuela, Portugal or Greece. Others noted the very low position of the USSR in respect of infant mortality, comparable to Mauretania and Barbados. Still others poured scorn on the officially published comparisons of US and Soviet national income. Subsequently Soviet scholars openly circulated papers expressing the view that the CIA substantially overestimated both Soviet growth and the relative size of its GNP and personal consumption.[6] This is not the right context in which to discuss statistics. But these recomputations led to 'ideological' conclusions of considerable significance: if Khanin, Illarionov and others were anywhere near correct, then the Soviet Union was as far behind the United States (or perhaps even further) than was the Russian Empire in 1913. This called for a long, hard, critical look at Soviet economic history, indeed at the entire post-revolutionary experience, and, as we shall see, at the ideological basis of the revolution itself. Thus, to cite just one example, we had S. Dzarasov writing:

> How shall we see Soviet experience? Let us not avoid the question by laughable comparisons of our growth with the prerevolutionary period. Other countries did not stand still either… The experience of the Soviet Union, despite certain achievements, in the last historical analysis has turned out to be negative. The vast efforts of three human generations, huge sufferings and millions of victims sacrificed on the social altar have not achieved the desired level of progress. The USSR could not achieve this within the framework of the old conception of socialism. Let us look truth in the face. In the eighth decade of its history, our country is still, as in years past, well behind the advanced countries in the basic indicators: technology, the qualifications of the workforce, labour productivity, wages, the quantity and quality of goods and services, social security, human rights.[7]

From which necessarily follows a set of recommendations for very radical, indeed revolutionary, change.

Criticism of Marxism–Leninism

There also followed the need for a cool, hard look at Marxism–Leninism itself as well as an attempt (which will not be discussed in detail here) to interpret the nature of Soviet society in and after its Stalinist period. The *nomenklatura*, its privileges, its role as a sort of collective ruling class, were freely discussed and debated.[8]

Even the comparatively conservative A. Sergeev could raise the question:

> It is known that Marx and Engel held that socialism and commodity production were not only contradictory but incompatible. Lenin took the same view. Even today no one has the theoretical effrontery to assert that Lenin was the creator of the theory of commodity production under socialism. Was the theory of Marx, Engels and Lenin about socialism then wrong?[9]

Gavriil Popov, who also became very active in politics, was appointed editor of *Voprosy ekonomiki* in July 1988. He at once brought with him a new wind. Here is an extract from his first editorial:

> The years of stagnation had serious effects on theory. Scholastics, fruitless cleverness, were combined with shameless apologetics for any measures taken by the leadership, praising them as if grandiose theoretical achievements… There was no decisive breakthrough in the elaboration of a contemporary model of socialism. Yet after Lenin, not to speak of Marx and Engels, there were huge changes in the world.

A debate followed on what should be in a new economics textbook. Was Lenin's theory of imperialism wrong? Rakitsy declared that 'we do not live under socialism, but in a barrack-like deformation of socialism'. Popov himself harshly criticised Engels's *Anti-Duehring*. In fact several of the economists argued that Duehring was right as against Engels.[10]

During 1989 and even more in 1990 criticism of Marxism–Leninism became still sharper. It spread even to the Party's own *Kommunist*. In a remarkable article, I. Pantin and E. Plimak had much to say about contradictions in the thought of Marx and Engels, about so-called bourgeois democracy, about the possibilities of planning without a market, about the peasantry. Did they not recommend 'the expropriation of land

ownership', apparently including smallholdings, compulsory labour in labour armies in town and 'especially' in the countryside? 'As we have seen, Marx and Engels not seldom committed errors, sometimes on matters of principle'.[11]

Lenin too came under increasing criticism. With the publication of the *Gulag Archipelago*, Vassily Grossman's *Vsyo techyot* and Vladimir Soloukhin's *Chitaya Lenina*, there seemed little more that could be printed to his detriment. Less and less by 1989–90 did one see the slogan 'back to Lenin'. His own economic naïveté, for example his use of the German war-economy model, or the example of the post office, could be freely pointed to. An article in early 1990 by V. Yevstigneev in *Voprosy ekonomiki* serves as another example. After a whole series of critical remarks and telling quotations, it is roundly asserted that

> Socialism, according to Lenin, is a total state monopoly, emerging out of a state-capitalist monopoly, organizing production in a military manner on the basis of 'a single factory', implying a transition to centralized economic control, especially over the workforce. The country is seen as a 'single factory' with commodity exchange excluded (since how can one have commodity exchange between brigades and workshops), with the inevitable domination of non-conomic 'disciplinary' obligation to work, governed by a trinity, joined together in a supermonopoly, monopolizing production, employment, and political power and ideology.[12]

Furthermore, in *Nauka i zhizn'* the prolific Gavriil Popov referred at length to the party programme of 1919, adopted under Lenin's guidance, stressing how closely Stalin stuck to its provisions through all his political life.[13] Earlier in the same journal Popov had coined the phrase 'administrative system' to describe Stalinist centralised planning, and had examined its logic and its *modus operandi*. This was an important stage in the ongoing re-examination both of Stalinism and of the purposes which it served.

This finally brings one to the reform process itself, and to the views of the profession about the causes and remedies of the acute crisis in which the partially-reformed system found itself in the later years of perestroika, and to the important and linked question *kuda my idyom* – where are we going, what sort of reform model should there be? What was missing was an adequate theory or strategy of transition, and of course it was vital to know also where one was supposed to be 'transiting' to.

There were first-class analyses by such men as Yegor Gaydar[14] (later to become acting prime minister under Boris Yel'tsin) and Konstantin Kagalovsky,[15] many statements and interviews by such eminent specialists as Leonid Abalkin, Nikolay Petrakov and Stanislav Shatalin. As the last-named said to a Central Committee plenum in February 1990, 'It is not now a question of saving socialism, communism, or any other -ism, it is a question of saving our people, our country'.[16] There was widespread vigorous criticism of the half-measures taken up to that point; of the soaring budget deficit, excessive money creation, lack of action on prices, the collapse of control over money wages, the confusions of regional economic autonomy and the problems linked with nationalism (with each republic all too ready to prove that it was exploited by others). Vladimir Tikhonov, the Chairman of the All-Union Society of Cooperators, repeatedly accused the authorities of obstructing the growing cooperative movement, while the slogan 'land to the peasants' was rendered inoperative by the fact that *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy* (backed at the centre for the first five years of perestroika by Yegor Ligachev) had no wish to part with their land. It is necessary to present some of the evidence concerning the changing views of many prominent economists about a 'regulated market', market socialism, capitalism and the Polish model, although it is something of a thankless task to present a series of highly divergent views, which were rapidly evolving in all sorts of directions. One thing which was notable, however, was the ever-greater freedom of expressing virtually all of them.

As also in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the failures of the centralised system and of attempts to reform it led a number of economists and publicists to abandon the very notion of market socialism and to say, with Kornai, 'there is no third way', that their own earlier notions of combining plan and market in some socialist way were 'naïve'. This remained a minority view up to the end of the Soviet Union, but it was a growing minority. Furthermore, it was likely that a number of prominent economists preferred not to say such things openly, bearing in mind not only the views of the leadership but the state of public opinion. For it was a fact that private enterprise, private employment ('exploitation'), private and cooperative trading intermediaries, the entire institutions and 'culture' of the market, were not well regarded by a large segment of the population. So, while such men as Bogomolov, Petrakov, Shatalin, Latsis and Gaydar repeatedly and openly attacked the reform programme under Gorbachev as too little, too late, too much regulation, too little

market, it was far from clear what sort of 'socialist' model they had in mind – if indeed they had one.

Meanwhile Pinsker and Pyasheva[17] and Pyasheva[18] (published in Riga) went all the way to a position that was a mixture of Hayek, Friedman and Thatcher, quoting Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* and denouncing the West European welfare state in the crudest Chicago terms. They both seemed to see not only Swedes but even the West German social democrats as dangerous lefties who desired to travel the road to serfdom *slowly*. The 'basis' of socialism could by 1990 be questioned also by such economists as Vladimir Mau, writing on 'the contradictions of socialist doctrines'.[19]

At the other extreme were the neo-slavophile publicists of *Nash sovremennik* and *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, men such as Aleksandr Prokhanov and Mikhail Antonov, whose economic ideology reminded one of Solzhenitsyn and Dostoevsky: they were against Western commercial culture, were deeply suspicious of marketisation and of the penetration of foreign capital and they attacked the reforming economists. Outside a Moscow conference hall in November 1989 someone held up a poster, asserting that ABALKIN IS LYSENKO TODAY. Their alternative was less than clear. In conversations with two of them I formed the opinion that they believed in some cleaned-up version of centralised socialist planning with minimal market elements.

In contrast, the journal *Voprosy ekonomiki* (no. 4, 1990) published 'the economic programme of the Democratic Union', which advocated extensive denationalisation and privatisation. It denounced leasing in agriculture as 'preserving and perfecting state-despotic relations and the preservation of an "Asiatic" type of collectivism', preferring private and genuinely cooperative ownership of land. In the same issue appeared the programme of the 'Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists'. So the debate was spread widely in the pages of that monthly. The same issue printed articles by the distinguished American Sovietologist, Joseph Berliner; the Hungarian economist, Laszlo Csaba; and the Japanese scholar, S. Tabata (of Hokkaido). Under Popov's editorship the journal had certainly become lively!

There were all kinds of other views being aired during the perestroika period which it would take too much space even to list, let alone summarise. A good example was V. Dadayan on 'Economics of socialism, aims and means', in *Voprosy ekonomiki*.[20] Here he discussed at length the objectives of social justice and efficiency, property relations and the role of the state, with particular stress laid on social justice as a defining characteristic of socialism. In the same issue R. Nureev tackled

another controversial subject: 'The Asiatic mode of production and socialism'. After a critical examination of the concept, the author noted some similarities between it and aspects of Soviet reality, such as the mass use of forced labour. The next article in that same issue discussed the 'compatibility of socialism and entrepreneurship'. Meanwhile senior members of the profession showed themselves aware not only of the dangerous potential consequences of the growing economic crisis, but also of the lack of any adequate theory of transition. Shatalin and others advocated the creation of a capital market, the recognition of a market for labour and harsh economic discipline, mitigated by social guarantees. They sought the spread at the earliest date of free market prices, but also realised that their introduction in the present circumstances of acute shortage could lead to a social explosion. This explains why a man like Gavriil Popov, undoubtedly a believer in markets, could advocate having recourse to a (temporary) rationing scheme to deal with immediate emergency, as he did soon after becoming Chairman of the Moscow City Soviet in 1990.

So, on the one hand, the freedom with which a wide variety of views found their way into print could only be welcomed. But, on the other, this very wide variety, reflecting also a broad spectrum of political differences, could not be of much help to a leadership increasingly bemused by the fact that perestroika seemed to have made the economy much worse. One is also conscious that (as was the case also in Hungary and Poland) some economists had taken to idealising the free markets of the West. The *Boston Globe* published a telling cartoon, under the heading 'Eastern Europe'. A citizen is reading 'The ABC of capitalism'. Under the letter B he finds

> BONDS, JUNK
> BAILOUT, SAVINGS & LOANS
> BUY OUTS, LEVERAGED
> BANKRUPTCY

Of course there was much of value to be learned from the experience and the institutions of the West; and rather less from formal mathematicised neo-classical theory, which tends to abstract from important aspects of real competitive markets and neglects institutions. There was and is urgent need for what could be called relevant economics, inspired neither by Marx nor by Walras.

Meanwhile new ideas proliferated in the Gorbachev era in a free atmosphere of vigorous debate. But there was also gloom and premonitions of

imminent collapse. The old ideological bearings had all but withered away. Some came to consider 1917 itself as a disaster and Stalinism as 'the tragedy, responsibility and pain of Bolshevism', to cite one of Aleksandr Tsipko's challenging articles.[21] To bring economic and political order out of threatening chaos a legitimate government needed to act in the name of – what? To achieve what sort of just society? To define and build a new sort of socialism? Or was 'socialism the longest road from feudalism to capitalism'?

To paraphrase one of the statements by the radical publicist Vasily Selyunin: 'We led you the wrong way for seventy years, and in the last five years we ruined the economy. So trust us to lead you, through inflation and unemployment, to a happy future'.[22] Not exactly an inspiring electoral programme for the Communist Party to present. Although other parties were formed in the last years of the Soviet Union, there remained a dearth of constructive alternative strategies. It is hardly surprising that the process of disintegration continued.

Notes

1 *Voprosy ekonomiki*, no. 10, 1955, pp. 3–4.
2 P. Sutela, '*SOFE*' (Helsinki, 1987).
3 'Avansy I dolgi', *Novyy mir*, no. 6, 1987, p. 142.
4 *Novyy mir*, no. 2, 1987, p. 181.
5 *EKO*, no. 12, 1988.
6 In papers presented to the conference at Arden House, Virginia, held in April 1990.
7 *Voprosy ekonomiki*, no. 2, 1990.
8 A review article on these debates by V. Vilchek appears in *Novyy mir*, no. 3, 1990.
9 *Voprosy ekonomiki*, no. 7, 1988.
10 *Voprosy ekonomiki*, no. 10, 1988, and V. Kiselev in Y. Afanasyev (ed), *Inogo ne dano* (Moscow, 1988) pp. 357–8.
11 *Kommunist*, no. 4, 1990, p. 28.
12 *Voprosy ekonomiki*, no. 3, 1990.
13 G. Popov in *Nauka i zhizn'*, no. 11, 1989.
14 *Kommunist*, no. 2, 1988, no. 2, 1989, no. 2, 1990, and also *Pravda*, 24 and 25 July 1990.
15 *Kommunist*, no. 4, 1990, p. 60.
16 *Pravda*, 20 February 1990.
17 *Novyy mir*, no. 11, 1989, p. 184.
18 *Rodnik*, no. 1, 1990.
19 *Izvestiya Akademii nauk – seriya ekonomicheskaya*, no. 3, 1990.
20 *Voprosy ekonomiki*, no. 3, 1990.
21 *Nauka i zhizn'*, no. 2, 1989.
22 *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 2 May 1990.

4

The Development of Russian Liberal Thought since 1985

Igor V. Timofeyev

> Historically, liberalism lost in our country. The people preferred the idea of social justice to the idea of individual freedom….But now, when the time has shown the inadequacy of the idea of social justice and social equality if unaccompanied by the ideas of individual freedom, when we are elaborating the understanding of freedom of conscience and human rights, liberal ideas are fruitful.
>
> Alla Latynina, 'Kolokol'nyy zvon–ne molitva'[1]

The process of ideological innovation and of political and economic liberalisation initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev after 1985 led to the re-emergence of liberalism as a system of political thought in Russia. Gorbachev's own contribution in the content of the public debate created a much more hospitable climate for liberal intellectuals. Gorbachev expanded tremendously the permitted boundaries of public discourse by introducing many ideological concepts which had been forbidden previously by the official Soviet ideology.[2] At the same time, he promoted many prominent intellectuals who espoused liberal ideology to influential positions in the political leadership, in the cultural organisations, and in the organs of mass media.[3] Gorbachev's goal was to solicit the support of the leaders of the professional and creative intelligentsia for his reformist policies, and to use them both to popularise his programme and, through that, to facilitate his struggle with opponents of reforms in the leadership.[4] The liberal intellectuals took ready advantage of this opportunity to air their views in the increasingly active periodical press and, with the advent of political democratisation, in the electoral contests and legislative forums.[5] While readily

supporting Gorbachev's agenda, they began to exhibit ideological innovation of their own, and, as the process of reforms accelerated, to go further than the publicly-announced position of the Soviet leadership. These ideas were a radical departure from the official Marxist–Leninist ideology of the pre-perestroika period, even if their proponents often introduced the change gradually and couched it in an appropriate ideological language. This linguistic obfuscation often masqued a striking resemblance to and, in some cases, a direct borrowing from the ideas prominent in Western (and, consequently, pre-revolutionary Russian) liberal thought. As Archie Brown noted in the last years of the Soviet Union, 'it is the reunion of Soviet thinking with other intellectual traditions – mainly Western but also Russian – which marks a qualitative difference between contemporary public discourse in the Soviet Union and that at any previous time of Soviet history'.[6] In advancing these ideas, and in modifying them in response to the rapid political and economic changes in the country, Russian liberal intellectuals of the 1980s often found themselves confronted with the same dilemmas that plagued their Western and pre-revolutionary Russian counterparts. They faced the need to define their positions on such issues as the relationship between the individual and society, the desirable equilibrium between social justice and avoidance of artificial egalitarianism, the relationship between the law and the state, the choice between unhindered free enterprise and a regulated market, and a tension between the virtues of a democratic political system and the advantages of a more authoritarian order. While the solutions which the liberals adopted fell within the range of options available within the canon of Western liberal thought, they were also distinctly influenced by the peculiar political circumstances of transition from Communism and the weakness of Russian liberal tradition.

This chapter is concerned primarily with those liberals who figured prominently in the public media, rather than with those whose influence was perhaps equally important in shaping the course of the Soviet transformation, but was exercised predominantly in the corridors of power.[7] The appointment of prominent liberal-minded intellectuals to leading positions in the periodical press was of seminal importance for the fostering of the climate of openness in the public discourse. Thus, in the middle of 1986, Vitaly Korotich became the chief editor of the popular, mass-circulation journal *Ogonek* and Yegor Yakovlev was given control over the weekly newspaper *Moskovskie novosti*. Both men turned their periodicals into leading forums of liberal opinion.[8] In the specialised press, Gavriil Popov became editor

of *Voprosy ekonomiki* in July 1988, and transformed the journal into a prominent voice for economic reforms.[9] A similar development occurred in literary journals, with prominent liberal writers Grigory Baklanov and Sergey Zalygin being appointed chief editors of the major literary journals, *Znamya*, and *Novyy mir* respectively, in 1986.[10] These appointments provided liberals with important institutional platforms from which to exert a powerful influence on public opinion and to mould the character of public discourse.[11] Until the establishment of democratically-elected political institutions, the liberal media served as the liberals' main public outlet, and a dramatic increase in the subscription figures to these publications in the aftermath of 1986 testifies to their rapidly growing popularity.[12]

A particular difficulty in analysing Russian liberalism in the 1980s is that many prominent liberals modified their ideas in response to the continuously expanding ideological boundaries of discourse during perestroika, to the changing political and economic situation, and to their interaction with other views encountered in public discourse. This chapter, therefore, seeks to identify chronological periods in the evolution of Russian liberal thought from 1985 until 1991 and to draw a schematic picture of the various stands adopted by Russian liberals during this time on such issues as individualism, social justice, the nature of the economy and the type of the political system.

Cautious individualism: the re-emergence of Russian liberalism, 1985–1987

The central postulate of all strands of Western liberalism was the commitment to the overarching importance of the individual. The first question that an investigation of Russian liberalism in the 1980s therefore needs to address is whether the liberals of the period began to articulate such a commitment and, if so, how they defined the relationship between an individual and the community. The commitment to the importance of individual liberty sharply distinguishes liberalism from the more authoritarian or communitarian ideologies, such as conservatism, socialism or fascism, all of which tend to subordinate individual freedom to the interests of a collective entity founded on common social, religious or ethnic attributes. Contrastingly, the central premises that define liberalism and underlie the coherence and unity of liberal thought are the acknowledgement of individual freedom as an overriding universal ideal and a subsequent concern with the creation of the socio-economic, legal, and political framework

that enables the realisation of this freedom.[13] The question of how individual autonomy should be construed is especially important given the historical tendency in Russian liberal thought to emphasise the social dimension of an individual, viewing him as being formed, attaining his freedom, and achieving his goals within the community.[14] This historical predilection, moreover, was taken to the extreme by Slavophile and Marxist thought, which subordinated the interests of the individual to those of society.[15] This heritage gave Russian liberalism, when it began to re-emerge in 1985, a distinct 'communitarian' (or 'social') emphasis during its initial stage.

The call for more attention to be directed toward the individual was first raised by liberals active in the cultural sphere, who linked it to issues of artistic creativity and cultural diversity. This issue figured prominently in the expanding public debate conducted by Russian intellectuals in the cultural sphere. While responding to the new cultural politics and initiatives implemented by the Gorbachev administration, liberal intellectuals began to advance notions that both expanded the framework of the debate and redefined its conceptual focus by introducing the liberals' preferred themes.

The emphasis on the individual was shared by both the nationalist and the non-nationalist liberals, although subtle differences in their positions can be delineated. Speaking about the needs of the contemporary Russian culture, Academician Dmitry Likhachev, a scholar of Russian literature who was the towering figure in the liberal nationalist camp, and indeed in the entire cultural intelligentsia, expressed his desire to see 'a greater ability to understand … the individuality of another person, his individual personality. Individuality should be praised more highly.'[16] This perspective was soon echoed by future First Secretary of the Cinematographical Union, film-maker Kirill Lavrov, who did not share Likhachev's nationalist leanings. Describing his hopes for a more vigorous cultural environment of perestroika, Lavrov stated that 'today we are more than ever before interested … in the true worth of human individuality'.[17]

Suggesting a way to foster this attention to the individual, Lavrov proposed to strengthen, as the institutional guarantee of this process, the artist's professional autonomy.[18] Such autonomy, as Aleksandr Abdulov, an actor of the Lenin Komsomol Theatre, elaborated shortly, was essential in order to liberate creative artists from stifling bureaucratic control. Moreover, Abdulov pointed out, this autonomy would be concomitant with the artist's duty to society, for the audience itself desired from the artist a more individualised,

rather than a bureaucratically-standardised, performance.[19] This dual argument, premised on the interests of both the actor and society, was extended by playwright Edvard Radzinsky, who insisted, in addition, that the theatres should also be able to 'compete' for the support of the audience, an opportunity of which they were deprived by the administrative limitation of their number.[20]

This embrace of the need of competition for popular demand was exemplified by writer and film-maker Yury Nagibin at an August 1986 round-table discussion on the problems of publishing and book availability. Nagibin saw the cause of the existing lack of good literature in the government's regulation of publishing houses, which forced them to produce excessive quantities of unwanted literature, particularly, as he pointedly noted, of ideological propaganda. Nagibin's solution was to adopt public demand as a regulating indicator, for, in his view, the public was sufficiently well-read and educated to make an informed choice.[21] Nagibin's comment exhibited one of the future defining features of the Russian liberalism of the 1980s – its willingness to trust the population – which represented a significant shift from the ambivalent approach of their pre-revolutionary predecessors.[22]

Not all liberals, however, were equally willing to introduce quasi-market incentives into the cultural sphere. Likhachev himself exhibited these misgivings towards market competition and fear of the perilous influence of consumerism. Displaying the Russian intelligentsia's traditional elitism and paternalism, he warned that 'often the criterion of box office receipts and financial profitability determines the repertoire policy [of concert theatres] ... and brings a lot of harm to the true culture. The nourishment of higher feelings and tastes in a man is being replaced, in reality, by an accommodation of the basest instincts.'[23] Likhachev, however, recognised both the futility and the undesirability of opposing the popular culture. Acknowledging that '[the] mass culture, as well as the avant-garde [culture] has always existed in the arts' and that 'we are going towards the mass culture,' Likhachev argued that '[s]peeches against the mass culture as such ... should not be welcomed'.[24] Instead, in his view, artistic merit should serve as a proper criterion.

Thus, although Russian liberals in 1985–1986 began to promote individualism and professional autonomy in the cultural sphere, some of them were reluctant to complement it with an embrace of competition (especially a market-based one) and to devolve the power of judgement to the public. Liberal nationalists in particular were wary of the potential implications of democracy and consumerism for the

cultural standards of society, and wanted to retain for themselves the role of arbiters of the process.[25] While supporting individual autonomy and freedom, they sought to ensure that an individual's choices would be conducive to moral and cultural development.[26] Moreover, they constrained this choice further by specifying that the objective should be consistent with the enhancement of society's spiritual and cultural heritage. As Sergey Averintsev, a prominent liberal nationalist and literary scholar at the Gorky Institute of World Literature, put it, 'man is an historic being, and he cannot lose his roots, cannot refuse to venerate patiently the rights of his fathers and grandfathers as a limit to his self-assertion without suffering a very serious deprivation to his human essence'.[27]

The emphasis on the promotion of individual creativity also figured prominently in the debate about economic reforms that unfolded in response to Gorbachev's call to end the trend of economic stagnation that had set in by the end of the Brezhnev era. The thrust of the reform was to reverse the decline in the rate of economic growth and to make the economy more technologically innovative and responsive to consumers.[28] While Gorbachev's initial economic measures, summed up as *uskorenie* (acceleration), bore strong traditional pre-perestroika features of tightening labour and social discipline and increasing investment into industry, they were also characterised by an increasingly open discussion of novel economic methods and concepts. Gorbachev's own description of the needed economic reform as perestroika signaled his desire to entertain radical proposals in this sphere, and his invitation was readily accepted by liberal economists, as well as by liberal intellectuals in general.

The initial liberal arguments in the economic debates revealed the same 'social' bias as the one displayed in the cultural debates. Academician Tat'yana Zaslavskaya of the prominent reformist Institute of Economics and Organization of Industrial Production at Novosibirk, who was one of the authors of the early blueprint for economic reforms, exemplified this view. The thrust of her critique of the Soviet economic system was the fact that it stifled individual creativity by destroying the link between the interests of the individual and those of society.[29] In Zaslavskaya's view, 'the primary reasons for the need for perestroika were not the sluggish economy ... but an underlying mass alienation of working people from significant social goals and values'.[30] Combating the egotistical self-interest that such alienation fostered, Zaslavskaya called for the re-establishment of a link between an individual's self-interest and the 'common good' of

society, for a recognition that while 'social interests can be satisfied only when ... personal interests have been realized,' at the same time 'the primacy of social interest over personal ones is ... the most important prerequisite for the fullest satisfaction of both'.[31] A testimony to the prominence of Zaslavskaya's synthesis was an argument advanced by the publicist Aleksandr Nikitin, who stressed the economic benefits of a freer expression of individual opinion in the workplace, underlining at the same time that 'individual opinions, individual initiative is an incomparable social treasure'.[32]

This perception of an interdependence between the individual and society informed the economic structure which the Russian liberals proposed in 1985–1986. Similarly to the liberals active in the cultural sphere, they singled out bureaucracy as the main barrier to society's economic energy and advocated, as a remedy, the liberation of individual initiative, the provision of autonomy to the enterprises, and their greater receptivity to the demands of consumers.

One of the most visible proponents of this approach was the noted eye surgeon and future businessman and politician, Svyatoslav Fedorov. Fedorov changed his scientific–medical centre 'Mikrokhirurgiya Glaza' to a 'co-operative' system, which combined individual financial incentives with an overall framework of a workers' collective.[33] This synthesis, he argued, allowed workers to utilise modern technology with a greater efficiency than was possible for an individual practitioner, thereby benefiting 'the greatest number of patients', as well as obtaining significant financial savings, a part of which was then used to improve the centre's equipment. At the same time, Fedorov combined this collectivist and utilitarian approach with an unambiguous support of individual financial rewards and pay differentials, arguing that they stimulated the efficiency and productivity both of the individual workers and of the entire enterprise.

Fedorov's scheme was implemented (and praised) by many other liberals active in such diverse sectors as industrial production and consumer service. Nikolay Travkin, a director of one of the first industrial complexes to experiment with this system (the Mosoblselstroy Trust) and a future founder of Russia's Democratic Party, lauded the economic advantages derived from a combination of individual initiative and enterprise autonomy.[34] After this model was introduced on a wider scale, through the system of *khozraschet* (autonomous financing) and the Law on Co-operatives (1988), many commentators extolled the benefits that it would bring to the state sector. Drawing parallels with similar Eastern European reforms, economist Vladlen Krivosheev of the

Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System (IEWSS) postulated that the *khozraschet* system and the competition from cooperatives would increase substantially the efficiency of the state sector. Echoing the arguments of Zaslavskaya and Fedorov, Krivosheev asserted that the new economic mechanism would channel 'individual labor activity in the interests of society'.[35]

The economic vision that dominated the thought of the Russian liberals until the middle of 1987 was therefore one which sought to promote individual creativity through the collective framework of the enterprise. At the national level, the liberals applied this model to advocate economic autonomy of enterprises within the overarching system of state planning. To accomplish these objectives, they argued for a simultaneous extension of the enterprises' autonomy and an introduction of democracy into the workplace. At this juncture, the goal of the reform, in the words of economist Pavel Bunich, department head at the Ordzhonikidze Institute of Management in Moscow, was the relatively modest aim of uniting 'extensive centralized [planning] with the economic, democratic forms of management'.[36]

The liberals therefore enthusiastically supported Gorbachev's economic programme, most notably the Law on the State Enterprise of 1987, which expanded the enterprise autonomy through *khozraschet* and introduced intra-enterprise democracy through the councils of Workers' Collectives and the elections of managers. Bunich, among other liberals, commended this intention to balance 'self-financing as one side of the *khozraschet*' and 'the autonomy of workers' collectives' as the other.[37] Democracy in the workplace, so Bunich and other liberals believed, would stimulate greater innovation and productivity by liberating individual creative energy and ensuring that management assertively utilised the newly-received autonomy of their enterprise. They perceived this vision as a successful reconciliation of the individual and community, and as an embodiment of socialism. As Academician Oleg Bogomolov, Director of the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System, remarked, 'the freedom and the unshackled [character] of human relationship under socialism naturally mandates such forms of workplace association among people … who unite in order to realize it more effectively into life, with the benefit to the state and, of course, to themselves'.[38]

Consequently, the liberals argued that the intellectual origins of this model lay in Leninist thought (or, at least, in the earliest years of perestroika they justified their ideas through such comparisons). Recalling Lenin's early vision of the intra-factory workers' democracy,

economist Pavel Volobuev of the Institute of History, Natural Sciences and Technology, remarked that 'the councils of working collectives [are] direct descendants of the legendary *fabzavkomy* [factory-plant committees] of the revolution', and the revival of these forms therefore continued 'the October [revolution's] path in the development of democracy'.[39] Even more prominently, many liberals, such as Zaslavskaya, compared the economic reforms to Lenin's New Economic Policy.[40]

The early stage of the Russian liberal vision in 1985–1986 was characterised therefore by a relatively cautious attempt to emphasise the importance – in both culture and economy – of individual creativity, and to provide conditions for its realisation through the increase in professional and economic autonomy, the relaxation of bureaucratic controls, and the introduction of financial incentives. The liberals, however, wanted to contain this individual energy within an overarching collective framework, in order both to guard against the danger of excessive individualism and to advance the common goals of society. The perestroika liberals also exhibited a greater willingness to trust the public than was the case with their intellectual predecessors. At the same time, they believed that the choices of the newly-liberated public would accord with the liberals' cultural and economic vision.

Thus, cultural liberals trusted the public to make informed choices when it came to literary and artistic productions, rather than to become enamoured with worthless 'mass culture', while economic liberals believed that workers in the enterprises would choose to pursue goals advantageous both to themselves and the enterprise, rather than to opt for purely egotistical profit-maximisation. The liberal nationalists displayed, perhaps, the most realistic attitude, for they professed profound misgivings as to whether liberated individuals would pursue the goals which they saw as beneficial for society. The alternative, however, both for liberal nationalists and for liberals in general was a continuing entrapment of the individual by bureaucracy and a protracted stagnation of society. Faced with this choice, liberals opted for a liberation of individual energy and, in the optimistic atmosphere of the early perestroika, de-emphasised the tensions implicit in their vision.[41]

This liberal vision itself outwardly resembled West European social liberalism, with its emphasis on the social character of the individual, whose needs and interests could be best realised not in spite of, but through, the state. It stemmed, however, from more peculiar intellectual origins. In the economic realm, liberals derived their views from

the reform-communist tradition, albeit creatively (and liberally) interpreted.[42] In the cultural sphere, many liberals saw their intellectual roots in a liberal-nationalist vision which stressed Russia's cultural and spiritual heritage.[43] In either case, there was a certain *il*-liberal quality to their thought, for they envisioned a particular objective for which both the individual and society should strive, and appointed themselves as the interpreters of this goal. Of course, the liberals' freedom of action was significantly constrained by the political environment within which they operated, for they lacked access to power and could express their opinion only within a relatively narrow ideological framework. As perestroika progressed, the relaxation of political constraints and the expansion of permissible ideological debate substantially reshaped the character of Russian liberalism, moving it in a more traditional liberal direction.

Hopes and anxieties: political and economic liberalism, 1987–1989

Until the middle of 1987 the liberals adhered, at least publicly, to the concept of the economic reform that entailed a stimulus of individual creativity, expansion of enterprise autonomy, and a democratic accountability of management. As the economy failed to improve, however, many of them began to doubt whether this approach was sufficiently radical, or even correct. During the same period, liberals confronted the new stage of Gorbachev's reforms, which aimed at the unprecedented political transformation of the Soviet system. The period from the early 1987 to the summer of 1988 was marked by public debates over the processes of *demokratizatsiya* (democratisation) and *glasnost'* (openness). Believing that the success of his economic and social reform necessitated the broader participation of society and seeing a growing opposition to his policies from the hard-line elements of the Communist Party leadership, Gorbachev embarked on a thorough transformation of the Soviet Union's political edifice. Gorbachev's programme of political modernisation, announced at the Nineteenth Communist Party Conference in June–July 1998, was to transfer the functions and duties of the Communist Party to the state and government organs, and to liberalise the country's electoral system. The goal was to create a 'socialist law-based state' with a dynamic legislature and a separation of powers.

The electoral competition for the Congress of People's Deputies (as the newly established super-parliament was called) that took place on

March 1989 generated an extensive (and intense) public debate on the direction of further reform. This process, occurring at a time of growing economic crisis and expanding political activity, further shifted the character of public debate towards the central issues of liberalism: the achievement and the nature of political and economic liberties, as well as the potential contradictions and tensions between these two sets of freedoms. Liberals hoped that these changes would make the process of liberalisation irreversible and provide them with a share of political power. At the same time, they were concerned about the effects of democracy on the economic reforms and were ambivalent, in their position as the leaders of civil society, about what stance to adopt towards both the leadership and the population. These challenges forced liberals to modify substantially their attitudes toward the individual, democracy and economic arrangements, altering significantly the character of Russian liberalism compared to both its early perestroika phase and its historical prototype.

The radicalisation of liberal views on the economy was adumbrated in May 1987 by economist L. Popkova, who criticised the government reforms for their attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable: a market and a planned economy.[44] A year later such criticism became commonplace, and many liberals began to question the collectivist premise that dominated the early stage of their economic model. Academician Nikolay Amosov, a well-known surgeon and Director (until his retirement in January 1989, at the age of seventy-five), of the Institute of Cardiovascular Surgery in Kiev, gave one of the most candid expressions of this position, stating that 'individualism, even selfishness, is the real stimulator of progress', as evidenced by the success of the West in such areas as 'a stable growth of production, consumption, education, health, and social security'.[45] Almost echoing the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, Amosov declared that 'modern capitalism is vigorous and dynamic [because it] is based on firm biological foundations'.[46] In a testimony to the rapidity of this conceptual shift towards a greater individualism, by February 1989 Nikolay Shmelev, an eminent economist and a department head at the Institute of USA and Canada, was warning, in a speech about the dangers of enterprises' monopoly on prices, that 'collective selfishness … is in no way easier than individual selfishness'.[47]

Political scientist Aleksandr Tsipko, a consultant at the time in the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee and, from 1990, Deputy Director of the IEWSS, extended this individualistic approach into the ideological realm, arguing, in December 1988, that

the goal of perestroika should be the replacement of the traditional postulates of the Soviet ideology with the concept of humane socialism, based on 'the autonomy of the individual', which 'presupposes the right to one's personal happiness … [and] to one's personal way of life'.[48] Tsipko's appeal was made even more explicit by the sociologist and publicist Igor´ Klyamkin, also of IEWSS, who openly declared that socialism, as it existed in the Soviet Union heretofore, could not guarantee an efficient and humane society, and needed to be replaced by a socialist vision oriented towards 'the individual'.[49]

In conformity with the new emphasis on individualism, many liberals began to look for an economic model that would provide individuals with more effective incentives, and this search led them to address the issue of ownership. The thrust of the new model, defined by Gavriil Popov as 'the model of the owner [*model' khozyaina*]', was to 'transform the workers' collectives into true owners of the enterprises', thereby providing them with 'real economic independence'.[50] The new approach represented a subtle but momentous shift in the liberal programme away from the emphasis on the autonomy of self-governing collectives to the recognition of a need to endow workers with the rights of ownership.[51]

The second direction in the radicalisation of the liberals' economic policy was the advocacy of a full-fledged market. Nikolay Petrakov described it as 'a move away from the centralised system of control over the distribution of goods and the means of production to a free trade in them'.[52] In Petrakov's opinion, such a market would best reconcile 'individual and social interests' through a coexistence of 'private and collective' economic entities.[53]

Many liberals also began to modify their adherence to the notion of social justice, and to advocate instead more robust economic competition. Andrey Fedorov, the head of the first co-operative restaurant in Moscow and the newly-elected Secretary for External Economic Relations of the USSR Union of Co-operatives, decried the low level of work ethics of the population and blamed it on the government's guarantee of full employment. 'The only help,' Fedorov argued, 'would be [the introduction of] unemployment … [for] until the time when I know that if I am fired, I would not find an acceptable job, nothing fundamental would change'.[54] Fedorov's argument about the benefit of a certain economic insecurity was repeated, albeit more gently, by Pavel Bunich, who spoke about the need to introduce into the state sector, through the institution of leasehold [*arenda*], the same mechanism of individual reward and of individual risk that existed in the co-operative sector.[55]

Elaborating his concept, Bunich argued that after-tax profits of an enterprise should therefore become 'the property of the collective,' and enterprises themselves should receive 'full rights to merge their funds … [and] to invest their capital in new areas of activity'.[56] Bunich's goal was to expand drastically the autonomy of the state enterprises, to liberate them from government planning and – as he openly acknowledged – to effectively transform them into cooperatives.[57]

As Bunich's comment indicated, liberals began to view the mechanism of *arenda* as an ideologically acceptable way to re-fashion the relation of ownership into one resembling private property. This conceptual shift was exemplified by Svyatoslav Fedorov, who transferred his eye-surgery centre into an *arenda*, or, as he put it, 'bought from the state the right to live according to our own reasoning'.[58] Although Fedorov continued to praise the collective nature of his centre, he also began to espouse more traditional liberal notions of ownership, seeing individualised ownership as a stimulus to economic productivity. As a particular advantage of the new system, Fedorov singled out the opportunity to make the shares distributed to the workers hereditary and argued, in a remarkable tour-de-force, that his workers were more productive than in the West because they were 'owners' and not 'hired labor'. Despite Fedorov's declaration that 'the collective ownership with a just division [of profit] is more profitable than private property', the system which he advocated bore a distinct similarity to a free enterprise with workers as principal shareholders.

Liberals began to extend the same approach to agriculture. Yury Chernichenko, a writer specialising in agricultural issues and a future founder of the Russian Peasant Party, argued that the shortage of agricultural goods could be remedied only by 'a complete change in the ownership and utilisation of land', which he defined as 'an immediate and unrestricted transfer of any state lands … to the peasant willing to pay for it a greater long-term *arenda* fee than other claimants'.[59] Thus, under the guise of *arenda*, Chernichenko wanted to introduce private peasant land ownership. Chernichenko justified the radicalism of his proposal by arguing that it was the only possible path for the future development of socialism in the countryside. 'Either we find a new model of land use,' he stated, 'or we end the experiment of creating a socialist system as premature for today's human civilization'. While professing his adherence to socialism, Chernichenko simultaneously made clear that the goal of his scheme was to bring Soviet agriculture in line with contemporary foreign

experience. 'The main task,' he suggested, 'is to make the peasant family *khozyaystvo* the main pillar of agriculture – just as it is in the rest of the world.'

Chernichenko's approach was endorsed by Vladimir Tikhonov, Academician of the All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences (VASKhNIL) and future Chairman of the USSR Union of Co-operative Societies. Tikhonov, however, regarded the *arenda* as insufficiently radical, because it did not give the peasant 'a full and undivided ownership' of land, without which the re-emergence of an independent agricultural producer was impossible.[60] It fell to Gely Shmelev, head of the agricultural department of IEWSS, to openly admit the fact that liberals viewed *arenda* as a step towards private ownership, by stating that '*arenda* may be a transitional form to a full ownership of the means of production'.[61]

Shmelev also linked liberals' calls for changes in agricultural policies with the need to renounce ideological dogmas of the past, particularly the tendency of 'ideologizing and politicizing objective economic processes, of dividing them into 'ours' and 'not ours.''[62] In Shmelev's opinion, it was this refusal to consider ideologically non-conformist economic alternatives and to learn from the Western experience that accounted substantially for the Soviet economy's backwardness.

Shmelev thus introduced an important goal which the liberals began to pursue – hesitantly at first but with an increasing assertiveness – from late 1988 onwards: the separation of economic arguments from ideological justification and their evaluation instead purely on economic merits. An early example of this process was a proposal by publicist Vladimir Yakovlev to eliminate administrative restrictions on the activity of co-operatives, and instead to have them 'governed [only] by the law of demand'.[63] Any other approach, Yakovlev argued, was doomed to fail, for it would contradict economic laws, which were 'as immutable as the laws of nature'. Yakovlev's point was reinforced by another publicist, Valery Vyzhutovich of the Writers' Union weekly newspaper, *Literaturnaya gazeta*, and later of *Ogonek*, who, breaking another ideological taboo, argued for the replacement of various economic indices utilised by the Soviet statisticians to measure 'the state of health of our economy' by 'a single real [index] – profit'.[64]

Gely Shmelev again provided one of the best examples of this type of argument, when he urged the introduction of a market for hired labour. 'Is it not time,' Shmelev asked, 'to eliminate the scarecrow of hired labour,' and to give independent entrepreneurs the right to hire workers?[65] In a revealing comment made in June 1987, the writer and

journalist of *Izvestiya* Anatoly Druzenko encapsulated this process, describing perestroika as a demolition of 'the economic ideology of directives and of "the apparat"', and its replacement with 'common sense'.[66]

In another move toward the traditional liberal standpoint, many liberals also began to highlight the importance of ownership as a guarantee of individual freedom. As economist Yury Markashov phrased it, 'while a human being is completely dependent economically on one or the other official agency [*vedomstvo*], he does not have a free choice and does not have a feeling of independence, a feeling of freedom'.[67] 'Only economically independent individuals,' continued Markashov, 'can be independent politically, spiritually and morally'. Markashov's emphasis on the creation of economic conditions for the exercise of individual freedom was reiterated by a writer and political commentator of *Moskovskie novosti*, Dmitry Kazutin, who stressed the primary importance of individual freedom in the constellation of economic and political reforms. 'In accordance with the concept of reform,' posited Kazutin, 'a working man should be ... an independent personality, an *owner* who would be answering for his independent actions and living on his personally earned means'.[68]

Simultaneously with the radicalisation of their economic proposals, the liberals began to look for guarantees which would ensure the irreversibility of the economic and ideological reforms. A particular impetus for this desire was their realisation that the process of perestroika would be more prolonged, and less straightforward, than initially anticipated. According to Yegor Yakovlev, editor of *Moskovskie novosti*, the early stage of perestroika was characterised by a 'political naïveté' that 'an effective economic model will emerge at once ... all opponents of *glasnost'* will disperse... and social justice will turn out to be re-established'.[69] Addressing the same issue, Anatoly Druzenko emphasised the need to learn from the unhappy experiences of the past, particularly from the 1960s Kosygin economic reforms, which failed due to the lack of political change.[70] In Druzenko's view, the processes of economic and political reform were inseparable and interdependent, and he concluded that 'a lot in our present economic life depends on the entrenchment and enlargement of *glasnost'*, on the irreversibility of the process of democratisation'. This point was reiterated by Gavriil Popov, who stressed that 'only a democratic system can ensure an effective variant of perestroika in the economy'.[71] Moreover, Popov declared, democracy had a much more ambitious task to fulfill, namely to eliminate barriers to perestroika in 'every area of life – in the party, in the state, in the economy, in ideology!' Thus, the liberals

began to view political democratisation as both a necessary condition for economic restructuring and an important reform in its own right. By the end of 1987, Yegor Yakovlev could boldly point to an answer to the problems which he identified at the beginning of the year, stating that 'the solution of the two interrelated problems – the further democratization of society and radical economic reform – is the most urgent task of present-day Soviet life'.[72]

The emphasis on the link between political and economic reform became even more prominent in liberal discourse after the Nineteenth Party Conference endorsed Gorbachev's proposals for an overhaul of the political system and the introduction of competitive elections. As Gavriil Popov noted in the conference's aftermath, radical economic reform was being actively slowed down by the political–administrative apparatus, whose opposition could be overcome only through a reliance on a new political mechanism based on strong democratic support:

> A new variant of party-state system that would support the radical variant of changes in the economy is impossible to form without a reform of that system in the spirit of its democratization. Only with the presence of democracy would the position of the organs of the party-political system and of its leaders reflect the opinion of the people.[73]

This point was made even more explicitly by one of *Ogonek*'s readers, V. Remizov, who expressed his wish that the most educated section of society (*obshchestvennost'*) would finally understand that 'all our ills … in the spiritual sphere or in the economy … derive from the same root. This root is the infringement of the right of the people in the formation of the organs of power.'[74]

Having embraced democratisation, liberals began to champion the rejuvenation of civil society as one of its essential elements. As Vladimir Shubkin, a philosopher from the Institute of the International Workers' Movement, phrased it, 'the most important problem is – can society control the state?'[75] Yevgeny Ambartsumov, head of the department of politics at the IEWSS, advanced this point even more forcefully, contending that 'socialism in its predominantly statist form has exhausted its potential', and therefore it should 'acquire new forms, answering more to its fundamentals, to its orientation toward the self-realization of the human being'.[76] To accomplish this task, Ambartsumov argued, '*the reverse absorption of state power by society*' will

be required.[77] Thus, Ambartsumov linked the development of the individual with the limitation of the state, thereby echoing one of the principal notions of Western liberalism.

To promote civil society, liberals advocated the creation of so-called 'informal organizations', which ranged from local clubs, such as ecological associations, to proto-parties, such as the 'Popular Fronts in Support of Perestroika'. According to Vladimir Shubkin, the purpose of these 'new social organizations' offering support for perestroika, was to 'express the opinion of society, bring it to the attention of the authorities, and ensure that this opinion is considered by the authorities when deciding matters of considerable social importance'.[78] Shubkin underlined that the existence of independent socio-political organisations in society was essential for the process of democratisation. Many other liberals, such as Mikhail Malyutin, viewed Shubkin's idea as the most promising one, especially considering Russia's peculiarities, such as 'the absence of serious traditions of a multi-party system in the national culture with its traditional hypertrophy of the functions of the state'.[79]

In addition to advocating political and ideological democratisation, liberals also turned their attention to legal guarantees as a way to safeguard civil rights, economic freedoms and democratic procedures. 'The contemporary socialist state', as *Izvestiya*'s political commentator Aleksandr Bovin unambiguously stated, 'can be thought of only as a law-based state. And the first steps on the path of perestroika are therefore simultaneously the steps on the path of the strengthening of legality and order.'[80] Many liberals, such as the writer and jurist Arkady Vaksberg, argued that the strengthening of legality would serve as the best defence of the rights of the individual against the domineering power of the bureaucracy, thereby strengthening the population's faith in the irreversibility of the process of reform.[81] Liberals considered legal safeguards to be vital for many other facets of perestroika. Thus, Dmitry Kazutin believed that the creation of 'a legal defence of *glasnost*'' would be the best guarantee against the re-establishment of 'a monopolisation of a viewpoint on that or the other issue', while jurist Boris Lazarev argued that the replacement of the arbitrary bureaucratic regulations of social and economic relations with a legal framework would increase markedly the stability of society.[82] The ultimate importance of law for the liberal project was spelled out by journalist Yury Feofanov, legal commentator of *Izvestiya*, who argued that law should defend not only democracy and *glasnost'*, but, most importantly, the rights of the individual against state bureaucracy.[83] This view was also stressed by jurist Anatoly Vengerov, who noted that only legal guarantees imposed on

the state could serve as powerful constraints against the re-establishment of arbitrary, or even of totalitarian Stalinist, rule.[84] The Russian liberals began therefore to espouse the traditional liberal concept of law as a force which prevents the potential encroachment of the state upon individual freedoms.[85] This belief was exemplified by legal expert Aleksandr Maksimovich Yakovlev, head of the Criminal Law Department at the Institute of State and Law, who, stressing the importance of 'legal structures' for the stability of a democratic polity, remarked that a '[l]aw-based state … does not simply use law as the weapon of power, but is itself constrained by this law'.[86]

Not all liberals, however, embraced democracy unreservedly; and many of them exhibited hesitation about its viability in Russia and, in particular, its compatibility with radical economic reforms. One group of liberal intellectuals argued that due to the peculiar traits of Russian history, particularly its lack of any democratic experience, the country was not yet truly prepared for democracy. Fedor Burlatsky, head of the Department of Philosophy of the CPSU Institute of Social Sciences and a political observer (later editor) of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, was one of the most prominent reformers who expressed this concern. In an article published two weeks before the Nineteenth Party Conference, he warned that the establishment of a Western-style political structure in Russia (which Burlatsky supported) would be an uphill struggle because of what he saw as the low level of Russian political culture. Burlatsky noted that 'Russia had certain elements of a democratic tradition (peasant commune, zemstvo, the duma, and others), but never knew a liberal one, i.e. individual autonomy from state intervention, never had the concept of the inalienable rights of man. It was and still is considered that we are all servants of the state'.[87]

Leonid Gozman, psychology lecturer at the Moscow State University, identified another potential pitfall of perestroika, pointing out that the process of political and economic reform went against the population's deep-rooted psychology of passivity and submission and failed to take account of its lack of familiarity with freedom. The introduction of reforms, noted Gozman, was characterised by 'psychological ignorance', for it neglected to consider that 'freedom is responsibility [and] uncertainty', and therefore requires adjustment to it.[88] The ability to exercise freedom, emphasised Gozman, was a radical departure from past practice, when 'on the contrary, the subordination to the opinion of the majority, of the collective, which often meant the suppression of an individual, was welcomed'.

The liberals' particular concern was about the possible effect on the population's attitude toward the reforms of the social dislocations which economic reforms were likely to provoke. Nikolay Shmelev warned that the population already had little trust in the reform proposals of the leadership, due to their disillusionment with previous attempts at reform.[89] This danger, added the chief editor of *Ogonek*, Vitaliy Korotich, was further increased by official propaganda, which nurtured an 'expectation … of unending benefits' from perestroika in the population.[90] A failure to fulfill these 'naïve expectations', warned Korotich, might motivate some to prefer 'the iron fist of coercion' to democracy.

In this regard, a particularly salient dilemma for the liberals was the government's proposal to liberalise the system of prices (resulting unavoidably in their increase). The price reform, wrote Leonid Batkin, 'is absolutely necessary [economically], but is acutely dangerous politically', and its social effects 'may become the best present to the enemies of perestroika'.[91] Similarly to Burlatsky, Batkin saw the cause of this danger in the insufficient political maturity of society, particularly in its unreadiness to accept the risk that the reforms – which, Batkin believed, the population supported – entailed. At the same time, Batkin remained an optimist and rejected the proposals of other liberals intentionally to moderate their programme in order to avoid antagonising society and thereby placing the leadership in a difficult position.[92] Instead, Batkin argued, citing the role of intellectuals throughout Russian history, the task of the liberal intelligentsia should be to 'propose models for the future' which may be unrealistic at the moment, but which pointed toward goals that the politicians should strive to achieve, helping to build popular support for them.[93] Batkin argued that even if at present perestroika 'does not have the wide and concrete support [of society], it does not mean that such support in principle cannot be obtained tomorrow.'.[94] Looking for political means through which to realise this proposal, Batkin ridiculed those liberals who argued for the theoretically laudable but practically impossible goal of a multi-party democracy, and advocated instead a realist approach. Addressing the issue of what political force in the Soviet Union of 1988 was best positioned to move society gradually toward democracy and reform while combating the threats of anarchy and reaction, Batkin argued that for the moment the only available force was the Communist Party leadership. The main effort of liberal intellectuals, therefore, should be to provide the party with liberal ideas to implement, rather then to wish aimlessly for a multi-party system.

Thus, while Batkin remained a supporter of democracy (the one-party system which he envisioned was predicated on a reforming and democratising CPSU), he represented a realist current in Russian liberalism. The adherents of this current argued that in the absence of democratic traditions, liberal political culture, and institutional bases for political competition, the liberals' best option was to choose gradual change through support of, and co-operation with, the country's reformist leadership, thereby both ensuring the continuation of its liberalising programme and facilitating the leadership's move in a liberal direction.[95]

Alongside this gradualist position, a similar, but more authoritarian, strand in Russian liberal thought of the time can also be perceived. This strand stressed the potential for political instability which could result from an involvement of the population in the political process, given an unfavourable development of the economic reforms. Representatives of this view emphasised the positive role that a strong state can play during periods of extensive transformation, as a guarantor of both stability and reform. Thus, the historian and writer Natan Eydelman suggested, discussing the instances of regime-oriented liberal reforms in Russian history (most prominently, those of Alexander II in the 1850s–1860s) and referring to the ideas of the nineteenth-century Russian proto-liberal thinker Aleksandr Gertsen (Herzen), that 'in the age of … radical transformations … the supreme power is usually more progressive and better than the middle section [of society]'.[96] Andranik Migranyan, political scientist at IEWSS, brought in a Western liberal authority, Alexis de Tocqueville, to buttress this position. Reminding his readers of Tocqueville's warning addressed to 'all countries which entered on the path of modernization and democratization', Migranyan admonished that

> there is nothing more dangerous for a country where traditions of democracy and freedom do not exist than excessively rapid reforms and changes… The population does not have the time to accept, internalise, and adapt to the new system, and changes in the socio-economic and political system do not have time to become institutionalised and entrenched.[97]

Migranyan contended that a totalitarian system cannot peacefully develop into a democracy in a single leap, for destatisation creates clashing interests, whose polarisation increases the likelihood of systemic collapse. Therefore, society's revival should advance unrestricted

in the spiritual and economic spheres, but authoritarian power should be preserved in the political realm to regulate conflicting interests and to channel them towards a compromise.[98] Citing the experience of transitions to democracy in the Iberian and Latin American countries, Migranyan argued that a similar 'soft authoritarian' regime would be appropriate at the current stage of perestroika.[99]

Despite Migranyan's arguments, the majority of liberals in 1987–1989 supported an immediate introduction of democracy, viewing it as the best way both to constrain the power-holders and to nurture an active civil society. They believed that elections with competing political forces were the essence of political reform, and that without such elections, any reform, economic or otherwise, would be impossible. As Yury Burtin put it, 'in order for the democratisation not to remain just a good intention, it must be guaranteed organisationally'.[100] Igor' Vinogradov argued that such a stance was pre-figured by the liberals' ideological commitment to pluralism. Recognition of 'the reality of *socialist pluralism*', he wrote, 'leads unavoidably … to the acceptance of the necessity of ensuring and reflecting this pluralism in *political* forms'.[101] This pluralism, moreover, should be characterised by the provision of 'full *political* rights'.[102]

Pavel Bunich made one of the most forceful arguments for the importance of political democratisation for the success of the economic transformation. Bunich believed that the economic reforms were intentionally slowed down by the bureaucratic apparatus, and that only popular pressure, exercised politically, could overcome this resistance. 'Only through political actions', Bunich argued, 'can economic actions break through into mass practice. In this battle a consumer has a chance to win'.[103] Bunich's reasoning was reiterated by Dmitry Kazutin, who remarked that 'the direction [of reform] is obvious: democratization, sovereignty of the people, assertion and strengthening of new forms of ownership, material self-interest in any sphere of activity – only these factors can lead the country out of the crisis'.[104]

The March 1989 elections to the Congress of People's Deputies provided a crucial boost to the pro-democratic liberals. Despite the only partially-competitive nature of the vote, the elections provided an unprecedented opportunity for public debate and a number of dramatic electoral victories by prominent liberals, conferring upon them political legitimacy and providing them with an enhanced public platform in the new Soviet parliament and in the media.[105] In the description of Gavriil Popov, 'voting in the elections, the people have

unambiguously demonstrated their readiness to demand a transition from an administrative variant of perestroika to the democratic one'.[106] The unexpected level of political activity among the masses and their strong democratic attitudes armed 'democratic' liberals with powerful arguments in their debates with the 'soft authoritarians' and 'gradualists', a number of whom changed their views under the influence of the election campaign.[107]

The elections and the unprecedented openness of the nationally-televised proceedings of the First Congress of People's Deputies which was convened in May were viewed by many liberals as having accomplished (or, at least, having made a significant progress toward) their aim of fostering an active and politically-informed civil society. Academician Andrey Sakharov, giving his impressions in the aftermath of the Congress, remarked: 'It [the Congress] politicised society. The process of politicisation began even during the elections. The people woke up to an active political life, began to feel that they are not cogs without rights, and showed that they could do something for the country.'[108] Yury Feofanov reiterated this positive assessment of the Congress and of the elections on the activisation and individualisation of society. Under their influence, Feofanov argued, 'yesterday's faceless statistical "Soviet man" today becomes a citizen, finally receives his own unique voice, which in the recently held elections obtained a certain worth for the first time and, I am sure, will increase ten times in the future ones'.[109] Academician Roal'd Sagdeev, a leading physicist and a former director of the Institute of Space Research, also saw the process of democratisation as self-perpetuating, and emphasised that the choice of the people represented a clear commitment to, and a willingness to fight for, 'a pluralism [that is] real, political'. The people, noted Sagdeev 'from the beginning turned to the idea of democratisation in order to be able to make choices'.[110]

Emboldened by their electoral support, unable to implement their programme fully at the First Congress, and seeing the support that their proposals enjoyed among the population, liberals began to radicalise both their political and economic agenda, and to advocate openly such goals as the transition to a multi-party system, the establishment of a free market, and the introduction of private property. In adopting these positions, liberals began to refer openly to the Western liberal experience, championing it as a solution to Russia's mounting problems.

Thus, political analyst Vladimir Baranovsky argued, in the aftermath of the First Congress, that many inconsistencies in the new political

structure and process could be easily avoided if only 'we could have agreed to borrow something from foreign parliamentary experience'.[111] Baranovsky's comment revealed the liberals' desire to depart from the traditional lip service to the notion of returning to the system of the soviets and to advocate instead a convergence with Western forms of political activity and political systems. Andrey Sakharov gave explicit voice to this, arguing the need for 'a pluralistic convergence of socialist and capitalism systems', and cited Swedish social democracy as an example of this synthesis.[112]

As the process of democratisation unfolded, many liberals began to note that the Communist Party was falling behind society in the process of perestroika, and that it might be overtaken as the leading force of the reforms. 'The party', argued writer Aleksandr Gel'man, 'initially pushed society towards changes, but at present the awakened society pushes the party itself towards renovation. If it [the party] does not respond to this push, perestroika may go ahead past the party.'[113] As Aleksey Yemelyanov, Academician of VASKhNIL, put it, the fact that 'the democratisation of the party is lagging considerably behind the democratisation of society has become a braking mechanism on perestroika'.[114]

In arguing that the party lagged behind in the process of reforms, liberals were pursuing a two-fold goal. Firstly, by recognising that the Party (and particularly its leadership) remained the main political force, they wanted to ensure its continuing democratisation. By subjecting it to public pressure, liberals hoped to embolden the reformist wing in the leadership, to help it to justify its programme as corresponding to popular expectations, and to provide it with ammunition in its battle against the conservatives in the Party. In the circumstances of a still partly authoritarian (although increasingly pluralistic) political system, this was the main way – and a limited one at best – in which the liberals could ensure the continuation of the leadership's policy of reforms by marshalling public opinion in support of the reformist course. A second, and a more ambitious, task that can be perceived in the liberals' critique of the Party was an attempt to buttress their own power as leaders of the emerging politically-organised civil society. By arguing that society had become the main force of the reforms, liberals were in effect promoting themselves as the most dedicated reformers and as a force enjoying the confidence of society and, from this position, offering to support the leadership in its course on radical reform. As writer Daniil Granin remarked in the aftermath of a December 1989 CPSU Central

Committee Plenum, where Gorbachev was subjected to a determined critique from the conservative segment of the Party officialdom, the choice before Gorbachev was either 'a return to the past' or 'an acceleration of perestroika'. and in order to choose the latter option Gorbachev needed the support of the democratic intelligentsia.[115]

Public support could indeed be a powerful force, or at least it was considered so by the liberals. Speaking about the creation, in the aftermath of the First Congress, of an Inter-Regional Group which united liberal deputies, deputy editor of *Moskovskie novosti*, Vitaly Tret'yakov, praised the emergence of such parliamentary opposition, and remarked that its strength lay not so much in its numbers as in 'the sympathies of millions of voters toward its leaders'.[116] Tret'yakov's comment is yet another testimony to how the liberals' adherence to democracy was strengthened by the popularity which their agenda enjoyed amongst the electorate.

The public support increased the assertiveness of the liberals in their dealings with the government. Whereas previously the liberals' only option was to support and, insofar as the limits of public debate allowed, expand the leadership's reformist agenda, now they switched to a debate on a coalition with the leadership, in which the leadership would shape its policies with consideration for the liberals' proposals. Thus Viktor Loshchak, another deputy editor of *Moskovskie novosti*, declared that the government should not take the support of either society or the liberal intelligentsia for granted, but instead should 'conclude a kind of agreement with the country, convincing it, and first all of the people's deputies, of the productivity of its decisions'.[117] Loshchak's statement revealed the new boldness of the liberals in their vision of the country's political organisation, where the government would depend on the support, or at least concurrence, of the population, as expressed through their elected representatives. In advocating this notion of government accountability to the electorate, liberals were effectively promoting a traditional Western liberal–democratic notion of the relationship between the state and society, an objective which Loshchak openly admitted: 'The problem of trust in the government is now a concept in our own, and not only in foreign, vocabulary.'

The publicist and human rights activist Len Karpinsky echoed this emphasis on the new self-assertiveness of society, defining perestroika as 'the re-birth of the civil society which sheds its administrative straightjacket and straightens to its full height'.[118] Karpinsky warned, however, that an excessive reliance on this awakening society might be

fraught with dangers, for the rapidity of the process of democratisation generated groups which were prone to extremism, and in instigating them, liberals risked provoking a crackdown from the state. Karpinsky directly criticised other liberals, such as the controversial criminal investigator Telman Gdlyan, who called upon people to take to the streets in order to wrest power from the bureaucracy.[119] In Karpinsky's view, such 'power of the street' was not needed in society, for it had no creative potential, but a sizeable destructive one. Instead, Karpinsky emphasised an organised form of popular expression and the creation of institutional guarantees of democracy. The battle for reform, he argued, should be conducted 'inside enterprises, cooperatives, in the fields under *arenda* ... in the halls of the Supreme Soviet', for only through such institutions could the public lay 'real foundations of new structures that are called upon to replace the old ones'.

A similar advocacy of a gradual transition to democracy and a reluctance to use public discontent as a form of pressure on the authorities was displayed by journalist Yury Bandura, who criticised a recent appeal of some liberal deputies for a national strike in support of the abolition of Article Six of the Constitution, which enshrined the 'leading role' of the Communist Party.[120] 'Such proposals cannot but increase the political tension in society', argued Bandura. In addition, they undermined popular respect for the liberals' 'most effective instrument', the parliament.

Bandura's argument exemplified the dilemma of the liberals in late 1989 to early 1990. They attempted to exercise their influence through the newly-elected representative institutions which, however, in late 1989 continued to espouse more conservative positions than those assumed by the liberals. Unable to impose their agenda on the institutions and, consequently, on the country's leadership, some of the liberals turned to popular opinion for support, seeking to use it in order to radicalise the government programme. Such a strategy was fraught with two dangers. Firstly, it implicitly undermined the legitimacy of the elected parliamentary institutions, which were for the moment one of the liberals' main bases for political and public activity. Secondly, the appeals to the population to embark on such radical measures as strikes, which went beyond the pale of political mechanisms, had the potential to radicalise the population to the point where the liberals would no longer be able to control the agenda. This concern led a number of liberals to advocate a more moderate strategy of social consolidation around the country's leadership as the best way to promote reforms. As political scientist Georgiy Khatsenkov put

it bluntly, 'today the party is really [in charge of] the governance of the country', and an underestimation of this power 'may lead to great losses and to civil war'.[121] The only viable path to reform was therefore 'the reform of the party … its transition to a party of a parliamentary type'. To facilitate this process, Khatsenkov called for the 'consolidation of political and social movements' around the newly-established Union presidency, as the only force strong enough both to promote the reform and to ensure social stability, 'safeguarding the country from new and dangerous upheavals'.

The differences between these two approaches of the liberals were exemplified in a December 1989 debate between the trade-union activist from Nizhniy Tagil, Veniamin Yarin (later, co-chairman of the council of the first non-government trade union movement, the Independent Front of Workers) and the factory director Mikhail Bocharov (a few months later, Yel'tsin's first, but unsuccessful, candidate for Russia's prime ministership). Bocharov assumed an undisguisedly radical position. Pointing to the recent events in East Germany, he commented that 'in ten days they accomplished more than we have in four years: they changed their entire leadership – maybe this is how we should proceed?'[122] Yarin sharply rebuked Bocharov's suggestion, in favour of a more conciliatory approach: 'With all my critical attitude to the leadership of the party and the country, I would still want to call for prudence … We need consolidation, solidarity, and some period of calm and of order.'[123] Yarin and Bocharov demonstrated therefore the tension among Russian liberals in their attitude toward the country's leadership that had developed by early 1990. While some of them, like Bocharov, were ready to advocate a confrontation with the authorities, seeing it as the only way to accelerate reforms, another current, represented by Yarin, opted for co-operation with the leadership, and emphasised the importance of ensuring order in society at the same time as promoting reform.[124]

This dilemma was acknowledged by Gavriil Popov, at the time one of the leaders of the Inter-Regional Group, in his comment about the insufficiently radical character of perestroika in the late 1989. 'The fault, of course', admitted Popov, 'lies also with us, radicals, who, with the exception of those from the Baltics, were able neither to convince the centre of the need to accelerate perestroika, nor to raise the people to fight for this acceleration.'[125] Popov's solution was a further activisation of society through the upcoming electoral campaigns for the republican and local Soviets, provided, as Popov stressed, that the electoral rules were democratised and the Party's unfair advantage, guaranteed by its

constitutionally-privileged position, was eliminated.[126] These changes would have substantially increased the liberals' chances of securing control over the new organs of power on the sub-union levels, providing the liberals with an opportunity to escape their historical dilemma of being placed between an authoritarian state and an unreceptive population, and finally to acquire sufficient power to begin the implementation of their agenda. At the same time, the prospect of power presented liberals with new challenges, for they had to form a coalition broad enough to command popular support, to translate their ideological notions into practical policies, and, most importantly, to define their policies towards the Union authorities under Gorbachev.

If 1985–1986 was a period of cautious re-emergence of Russian liberalism, the years 1987–1989 were a period marked by its assertiveness. As a result of Gorbachev's political reform, the liberals moved from a position of subservience to the political authorities to one where they were choosing between a coalition or a confrontation with the country's leadership. The increase in the liberals' political influence was accompanied by their ideological maturity, as they moved away from the standpoint of reform communism or liberal nationalism towards an open advocacy of such Western liberal notions as individual freedom and self-interest, a market-based economy and an (almost) private property, a civil society and independent political organisations, a democratic political system and a law-based state. Despite the broad agreement amongst the Russian liberals on these goals, several fractures began to appear in the liberal movement, as its members adopted diverging positions toward the compatibility of political and economic reforms, toward co-operation with the state, and toward reliance on popular support for the realisation of their programme. As the Russian liberals headed into the new electoral competition in early 1990, their general convergence on the overarching liberal goals would prove to be sufficient to obtain a qualified victory. At the same time, as Russian liberalism confronted the responsibilities of power and the aggravated economic situation, its incipient fractures would grow into profound differences on both ideology and political tactics.

Liberalism triumphant? The capture of power and the ideological fracture, 1990–1991

By early 1990, liberals were becoming both increasingly candid in the public expression of their ideological views and less hesitant to appeal to the country's electorate for political support. This dual shift was a

response to the continuing erosion of the official constraints on public discourse and to the rapid political mobilisation of the population in the aftermath of the March 1989 elections. Reflecting upon the latter phenomenon, the historian and publicist Nikolay Popov commented that in the year since the elections 'the consciousness of the people underwent a fast politicization', dispelling the 'political apathy, political ignorance and, in general, the low political culture of society'.[127] Moreover, emphasised Popov, the greatest trust of the population belonged to the two 'institutions of democracy' where liberals were most prominent: the media and the electoral campaigns.[128]

Another factor buttressing the confidence of Russian liberals had been the wave of anti-Communist revolutions which occurred, with Gorbachev's acquiescence, in Eastern Europe in the period of 1989–1990. As the events in Eastern Europe evolved from economic reform conducted by Communist regimes to the transfer of political power to the opposition, Russian liberals began to perceive parallels between the dynamic of change in the East European societies and that in the Soviet Union itself.[129] Commenting on the seminal June 1989 elections in Poland, which resulted in a solid defeat of the government and a transfer of power to the Solidarity opposition, liberal publicist Anatoly Druzenko remarked that the results of the Polish elections were of great relevance to the Soviet Union, demonstrating the public reluctance to countenance the ruling regime's inability to solve many pressing social problems.[130] In such a situation, added Druzenko, the votes supported the 'constructive' opposition.

The Russian liberals' success in the republican and local elections of March 1990 solidified their belief that democratic attitudes were becoming entrenched in the population.[131] Thus, in March 1991, historian Grigory Vaynshteyn noted that 'society already had acquired a series of institutions which serve as guarantees of the irreversibility of its need for democratic changes'.[132] Vaynshteyn based his optimism on the existence of 'a new juxtaposition of political forces, in which the organizations and social movements that consolidate the democratically-oriented part of society play an increasingly independent and an increasingly perceptible role'.[133] This process, in Vaynshteyn's opinion, was a self-perpetuating one: society's democratic predisposition served as a basis for new political movements, which, in turn, promoted further the democratisation of society.

Realising the importance of political associations for electoral contests and, later, for effective activity in the organs of power, the Russian liberals began to organise themselves into political parties and

movements.[134] Unlike their predecessors – the 'informal groups' of the 1987–1988 period – the new formations openly declared their pro-liberal (or, as they preferred to label it, pro-democratic) orientation and defined themselves in opposition to, rather than in support of, the ideology of the Communist Party. This ideological assertiveness was accompanied by a political one. The liberal movements were no longer willing to play a subsidiary role to the country's leadership, but strove to acquire political power in their own right and to implement their own conception of reforms.

While distinguishing themselves from the official Soviet ideology, the liberals paid less attention to the ideological distinction of their movements *vis-à-vis* one another, subscribing instead to a broad liberal vision. This ideological vagueness facilitated political co-operation between different liberal groups, with the most prominent example being the formation in January 1990 of the electoral bloc 'Democratic Russia'. The bloc's programme, which called for 'freedom, democracy, the rights of man, a multiparty system, free elections, and a market economy', could be viewed simultaneously as a commitment to the main principles of Western liberalism and as an exceptionally general anti-totalitarian statement.[135]

Democratic Russia carried this all-embracing vision throughout both its electoral campaign and its subsequent activity in the new soviets, never committing itself to a particular version of liberalism, nor indicating how the potential tensions implicit in its policies might be resolved. In time, these tensions, exacerbated by access to political power, developed into open rifts on such issues as the desired type of market economy, the appropriate extent of democracy, and the trade-offs between individual freedom and social justice. As the Communist Party's ideological and political dominance gradually withered away, thereby removing a target against which the liberals could easily unify, these rifts led to the fragmentation of both Democratic Russia and the liberal coalition into several ideological strands, ranging from reformist socialism, to social democracy, to the advocacy of a radical free-market.[136]

A number of prominent liberals doubted the feasibility of fashioning politically viable and ideologically well-defined parties out of their electoral coalitions. Speaking shortly after Democratic Russia's victory in the March 1990 elections to the Moscow City Council, Sergey Stankevich, the founder of the Moscow Popular Front and one of Democratic Russia's leaders, contradicted Nikolay Popov's assessment and argued that society was still ideologically underdeveloped, and

therefore lacked the 'opportunities for the formation of stable political movements'.[137] Stankevich asserted that the political culture of society, best described as 'a typical populist atmosphere with a certain characteristic trait of protest crusades', prevented liberals from forming stable ideologically-based associations, forcing them instead to 'support any democratic activity in the form of a party, mass movement – in any form, provided that it goes … for the benefit of the cause'.[138]

Stankevich's pessimism about the prospects for a multi-party system was echoed by Igor' Klyamkin, who also became a prominent member of Democratic Russia and editor of its newspaper. Klyamkin noted that although 'the democratisation brought to life numerous political forces, not a single one of them acts, however, on a country-wide scale or is ready to assume responsibility for its destiny'.[139] He especially lamented the lack of a '"Solidarity"-type organized force', which would put an end to the Communist Party leadership's monopoly on power. The best strategy for the creation of a multi-party system, argued Klyamkin, was therefore for the Communist Party itself to 'self-liquidate as a non-democratic force standing above society and the state' and to turn into one of several competing political organisations. Klyamkin's argument represented a modified continuation of the 'realist' approach that was advocated during the earlier stage of perestroika (1987–1989) by the party reformers, such as Fedor Burlatsky and by some of the liberals, such as Leonid Batkin.[140] At that time, the realists believed that the limit to the democratisation's possibilities was a one-party system led by a self-democratising Communist Party. By early 1990, they progressed to an advocacy of a multi-party democracy, but continued to argue that the most realistic and beneficial (although no longer the only feasible) way to achieve it was through the Party's own initiative.[141]

Stankevich's and Klyamkin's assessments of the nascent stage of party formation in 1990 were echoed by Oleg Rumyantsev, co-chairman of the political club 'Democratic Perestroika' in Moscow and one of the founders, in May 1990, of the Social Democratic Party. Speaking about the attempt, in October 1990, to consolidate the numerous 'democratic' parties and organisations into a single movement, also named 'Democratic Russia', Rumyantsev confessed his misgivings about society's readiness to support institutionalised party activity. 'Our multi-party system is not a classical one', he noted, 'it is not stratified, it does not have expressed interests and a social base, it resembles more a socio-cultural demarcation'.[142] In fact, Rumyantsev admitted, the main task of the new movement (as well as

of the liberals in general) was to 'awake civil society to existence and to grow with it', which required Democratic Russia to be 'not an emerging super-party, but a wide democratic movement'.

Other liberals, however, believed that society's political consciousness was ready for the immediate establishment of alternative parties. Nikolay Travkin, who in May 1990 founded the Democratic Party of Russia, criticised the Democratic Russia movement as too amorphous in structure and ideology to be capable of effectively challenging the Communist Party's monopoly on power. Instead of 'creating a "Solidarity-type" movement', argued Travkin, the most promising route was the strengthening of the emerging 'democratic' parties (particularly, as Travkin unsurprisingly argued, his own).[143] Travkin, however, remained in the minority among the liberals, most of whom defended the concept of a loosely-structured 'umbrella' coalition.[144]

To a significant extent, the intellectual origins of the liberal coalition's ideological vagueness can be found in the liberals' determined assault, in 1990–1991, on the official Soviet ideology. In particular, the liberals attacked the long-standing tendency of the Soviet leadership to imbue its approach to the economic, social, or political problems with ideological dogmas. Oleg Bogomolov exemplified this liberal offensive, when, explaining his August 1990 decision to quit the Communist Party, he urged the Party to 'stop paying allegiance to the dogmas of the Marxist faith, and to turn to the common sense, to the universal experience of humanity, to the eternal moral notions which never yet have let people down'.[145]

The liberals' attack on the Communist ideology quickly became accompanied by a growing aversion to ideology in general. Igor' Klyamkin encapsulated this correlation in a February 1990 article, where he sharply criticised the authorities' practice of attaching the name-tag 'socialist' to every political and economic proposal and called instead for admission that the proper inspiration for reforms was to be found in the Western experience.[146] Fearing the damage that 'these new ideological bargains, deceptions and self-deceptions' might bring, Klyamkin asked rhetorically:

> To whom is it all directed? To those who don't know that the contemporary market … as well as contemporary representative democracy was formed in a society which is commonly called capitalist? But why use the ignorance of our citizens and delude them again, insisting that more of the market and of democracy mean 'more socialism?' … Is it not easier to explain that since we are

> behind the West … it is because they have such things as the market and democracy… and that to transplant them to our soil means to transplant *their* inventions?[147]

This ideological conditioning to which society had been subjected was, in the view of the publicist Sergey Panasenko, one of the main reasons for the low success of, and the fragility of popular support for, the economic reforms. 'The habit of judging economic decisions from an ideological pro-Communist position had eaten into the body and blood of Soviet citizens', argued Panasenko, and it was one of the main reasons why 'many carry on such an intense fight against the legalisation of private ownership of the means of production, including land, while at the same time acknowledging paradoxically the greater economic effectiveness of the private entrepreneurial model'.[148]

Panasenko's assessment was supported by the influential (and outspokenly radical) economist Stanislav Shatalin, Director of the Institute of National Economic Forecasting and a recent appointee to Gorbachev's Presidential Council. Agreeing with Panasenko that the ideological obfuscation inflicted significant harm on the economy, Shatalin asserted: 'We have to understand well that there is no alternative to the road to the market. That our half-measures and half-truths will not lead to anything good'.[149] Pointing to a particular example, Shatalin noted that 'in the Law on Property we have shamefully hidden private property … [which] we must introduce'. Echoing Shatalin's argument, Pavel Bunich cited an example of how the government's ideologically motivated refusal to recognise the existence of growing underground unemployment impeded the solution of the problem. Bunich urged the government to 'legalise the term "unemployed"… to give such an individual civil rights, [and] not to pretend that the unemployed do not exist.'[150]

Oleg Bogomolov extended Bunich's and Shatalin's criticism to the entire strategy of economic reform proposed by the government in May 1990 under the slogan of a transition to 'a regulated socialist market'. In Bogomolov's derisive judgement, 'what was being proposed today is, of course, not a market'.[151] This fact was evident, he argued, from the very phraseology of the programme: 'Notice how often in his report [Prime Minister] N. I. Ryzhkov repeatedly employed the word 'regulated.' And how not once did he mention the main principles of the market … freedom of the market's participants, whether an individual or a collective, to dispose of one's property, products, profit from one's work.' The government's proposal,

Bogomolov concluded, was 'an attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable … administrative coercion and market self-regulation'.[152]

The government's proposal of a 'regulated market' was criticised even more harshly by Viktor Sheynis, a senior researcher at the Institute of World Economics and International Relations (IMEMO) and one of the leading strategists of Democratic Russia. While sarcastically praising the government's improvement upon the earlier concept of a 'planned-market economy [*planovo-rynochnaya ekonomika*]'. Sheynis stated unequivocally that 'the market, like democracy, cannot be socialist or capitalist'.[153] The government's linguistic contortion, Sheynis argued, revealed again that its 'policies are still subservient to the ideology of "socialist choice" – a collection of dogmas that lost their content and meaning a long time ago'. Reiterating Klyamkin's appeal, Sheynis urged the government to finally recognise that 'the market and the multiplicity of the forms of ownership … are not an attribute of capitalism … and not an antipode of socialism … but a universal achievement of human civilization'.

Writer Fazil Iskander, author of influential satires on Stalin's period and on Khrushchev's agricultural campaigns, encapsulated the liberals' aversion to ideology, highlighting its disfiguring influence on the individual. By forcing the individual to 'give ideology the mystery of his life, his true worth, his moral freedom, his individuality', ideology caused the individual's complete abnegation, which was 'the original cause' of the country's present crisis.[154] The liberation of the individual, as well as the solution of the Soviet Union's problems, demanded therefore the complete destruction of the ideology. Iskander emphasised, moreover, that the abandoned ideology should not be replaced by a new one; instead, the Soviet Union should adopt the non-ideological values of world civilisation. 'The world which we are trying to build on the ruins of ideology', wrote Iskander, 'should be an ordinary human world … a normal world of today's civilised humanity … The renunciation of ideologisation should not transform into a new kind of ideologisation, into a new hatred.'[155]

Thus, while essentially calling for the adoption of the principles of the liberal West (under the guise of those of 'civilised humanity'), Iskander simultaneously demonstrated the Russian liberals' reluctance to admit that what they were borrowing was a particular set of ideological notions. Instead, the liberals preferred to describe their proposals as non-ideological pragmatic recommendations, derived from time-proven 'universal' experience. Stanislav Shatalin exemplified this attitude in a self-descriptive comment: 'I consider myself an economist who professes

a faith in economic laws and who does not like it when one brings into them ideological, political and other concepts that have no direct relation to economics.'[156]

As the liberals achieved political power and confronted the need to devise solutions to the country's problems, their consensus, underpinned by the goal of de-ideologising the Soviet political and economics, began to unravel. Instead, the liberals started to elaborate different strategies for economic and political reforms, which were predicated on distinct (and often dissimilar) notions about the place of the individual in society, the desirable type of market system and the optimal kind of political structure. While retaining their general commitment to democracy and a market-based economy, the liberals elaborated two rival perspectives on these issues: the first adhering to a social liberal (or social–democratic) perspective; the second advocating radical free-market liberalism.

The reformist socialist strand, which was influential during the earlier stages of perestroika, had lost its prominence by 1990, and its adherents have since unambiguously embraced Western social–democratic notions. This dynamic was exemplified by publicist Vsevolod Vil'chek, who argued in July 1990 that the goal of 'democratic and humanistic socialism', proclaimed in the Central Committee's platform to the Twenty Eighth CPSU Congress, was, despite the Party's refusal to acknowledge it, a 'common goal of international social democracy'.[157] Contrary to the more radical liberals, Vil'chek still believed in the possibility of the Party's reform, if it were to follow its 'social–democratic [strand], which defends a humanistic socialism (that is to say one deriving from the principle of the priority of the individual, and not of a nation or class)'.

Speaking in the aftermath of the Twenty-Eighth Congress, Vyacheslav Shostakovsky, Rector of the Moscow Higher Party School and one of the leaders of the reformist 'Democratic Platform' movement within the Party, also noted the 'closeness and even commonality of many positions' between the Congress's 'vision of the future society and the programmatic principles of the Socialist International'.[158] Shostakovsky argued, however, that this outward similarity was deceptive, for the Party was unable to relinquish its Communist dogmas and to transform itself into a political organisation functioning within a multi-party framework. In Shostakovsky's judgement, the Party preferred to remain 'a kind of ideological and personnel department … a totalitarian social institution … a structure penetrating the entire society and based on the notorious principle of democratic centralism'. In these conditions,

Shostakovsky felt, the only option for the social–democratic wing of the party, organised in the 'Democratic Platform', was to leave the CPSU and to form a separate party. When shortly thereafter, in September 1990, the 'Democratic Platform' constituted itself as the Republican Party (with Shostakovsky as one of its co-chairmen), it adopted a typical social–democratic programme, declaring that 'the ideal of the new party is a civil society of free workers'. The programme committed the Republicans to 'social protection for all those who are unable to provide for themselves', while simultaneously promoting individual initiative and opposing artificial equality by condemning the 'propagation of … the cult of dependency and the jealousy toward wealth which is acquired through work and talent'.[159] These objectives echoed the programme of the Social Democratic Party, founded a few months earlier, which had called for a 'democratic, civilised' form of the market and for an avoidance of the 'predatory' form of capitalism.[160]

In addition to these two formally-constituted parties, the social–democratic current also included a significant number of those liberals who supported the transition to a market system, but wanted to accomplish it gradually and to alleviate its effects on the social well-being of the population. A noted proponent of this approach was economist Grigory Yavlinsky, Russia's Deputy Prime Minister in 1990 and one of the authors of the 'Five Hundred Days' programme, which embodied the idea of a gradual marketisation.[161] One of the essential conditions for the success of this process, argued Yavlinsky, was 'to avoid a rapid jump in prices and a fall in the standard of living'.[162] Such a strategy, in his opinion, would translate into popular support for the transition to the market, thereby ensuring the second major requirement for the successful economic reform, a calm political situation in the country.[163]

The social democratic strand shared a certain ideological affinity with the historical tendency of Russian and Soviet liberal thought to emphasise the individual's social character and the state's obligation to ensure the welfare of society and the provision of social justice. The second current of late perestroika's liberalism, however, departed from this tradition through an open espousal of a rapid transition to a free market, an advocacy of the state's withdrawal from the economy, a preference for economic competition over social protection, and a willingness to place limits on democratic freedoms for the benefit of the economic reform. Among prominent liberal politicians, Gavriil Popov distinguished himself as the leading proponent of this approach. Thus, criticising the platform issued by the Central

Committee of the Communist Party in the wake of the March 1990 elections for its failure to endorse private property, Popov accused the Central Committee of unwillingness to 'establish real guarantees against the restoration of the barrack state' and of lagging behind modern economic development by still not having appreciated what was 'the achievement of the universal human development of the twentieth century, that only private property … acts as the most real guarantee of both the freedom and all the rights of an individual'.[164] In line with this view, Popov called for a rapid 'denationalisation, *destatisation of ownership*', considering the Communist Party's failure to specify the schedule for this process as another indication of its hesitancy to embrace radical economic reform.[165]

Simultaneously with his advocacy of a rapid transition to the market, Popov began to exhibit ambivalence about its compatibility with democracy, and to moderate his democratic commitment with a certain measure of authoritarianism. Although he supported the democratisation of the electoral procedures and the removal of the Communist Party's constitutional monopoly on power, Popov wanted to complement this expanded democracy with the establishment of 'a strong and independent executive power', which would counterbalance the legislative power of the soviets.[166] This addition, he argued, would enhance democracy by providing the public with an opportunity to directly elect their leaders and by establishing a system of checks and balances in the government.[167] 'Without a strong and independent executive power', asserted Popov, 'it is impossible to create an effective political system'.

Popov's advocacy of a strong executive power became more determined a year later, in May 1991, when, as the Chairman of the Moscow City Council and an expected front-runner in the city's first direct mayoral elections, he expressly doubted that the same extent of democracy as existed in the West was possible in the Soviet Union of the early 1990s. Emphasising that the country was undergoing a 'transitional period', Popov argued that its challenges called for 'a special system of administrative power. This power has to be firm, stable, and possess continuity'.[168] Moreover, added Popov, this 'new administrative regime has to be accompanied by a limitation of the power of our current representative organs, of our current parliaments, of the soviets of all levels'. The main task of this regime, revealed Popov, would be to prevent popular discontent and to maintain social control (although it would also have the traditional role as a provider of social services). 'On one side', noted Popov, 'this regime has to defend the population in the

social sphere, on the other – to suppress the excessive demands for social guarantees'. When the transition to a 'real market economy' was completed, the normal democratic structures would be established.[169] Popov, therefore, was gravitating toward a viewpoint advocated by the 'soft authoritarians', such as Andranik Migranyan, similarly grounding arguments for such a regime in the necessity of managing a transition to a market economy while averting social upheaval.[170]

Popov's combination of a vigorous free-market liberalism with quasi-authoritarianism was supported by Vladimir Tikhonov, who stated that 'in order to implement the [economic] reform, it is necessary to have coercion by an administrative power'.[171] Specifying that he was 'an opponent of authoritarianism', Tikhonov was nevertheless convinced that 'the existing system can be dismantled only with the help of the same instrument that created it. The state coercion – including the coercion of the inert heads of *kolkhozy*, of ministries and of factories – is necessary in order to force them to move to new thinking.' At the same time as he was willing to rely – admittedly out of necessity – on state coercion, Tikhonov also called for the minimisation of the state's role in the economic sphere, and, therefore, for an extensive denationalisation of both industry and land. 'World experience has shown', he argued, 'that nationalised industry can never be consistently effective in comparison with one based on private, cooperative, and corporate ownership'.

The Russian liberals who supported the free market began increasingly to refer to the Western neo-liberals – monetarist economists and conservative politicians of the 'new right' – in support of their proposals. Thus, calling for a rapid privatisation as the best way to introduce private ownership, Pavel Bunich supported his argument by citing the thought of Milton Friedman that 'it is considered just to distribute the worth of government enterprises among citizens'.[172] Bunich argued against the view that a free privatisation of state property impoverishes the state, by noting that 'in reality a normal state is strong through the property of its citizens, and not through the monstrosity of its capital'. Sergey Panasenko appealed to the Western monetarist theorists in a harsh criticism of the argument that state intervention in the economy was concordant with Western practices. The attempts to support the concept of a 'regulated market' by examples culled from Western economic theory, claimed Panasenko, were at best disingenuous, and at worst misguided. In Panasenko's opinion:

> our economists, who are arguing for a powerful state regulation of economic activity while actively citing Western experience, for

> some reason omit from their sight that … as long as ten years ago, Keynesian, neo-Keynesian, Labourite and similar ideas of state regulation of economy were subjected to a forceful fire of criticism. And today many states renounce intervention into the affairs of the private business, judging that society wins rather than loses from it. There is a growing interest in neo-conservative theories – in particular in the economic philosophy of von Hayek. And we are repeating endlessly, and in a vulgar form, yesterday's thoughts of the Western political economy, passing them up as a revelation.[173]

Grigory Vaynshteyn expressed even more unambiguous praise of the Western proponents of the radical free market when arguing against the Soviet government's professed commitment to the adoption of policies which enjoy a consensus in society. Such a position, Vaynshteyn argued, was misguided, and would lead only to stagnation. '[I]f we look at the recent history of the countries of the West', argued Vaynshteyn, we would notice that:

> the latest leap in their social development was ensured precisely by the refusal, in the 1970s–80s, of such politicians as Thatcher, Reagan and Kohl to utilize the 'centrist' method of solving political problems. The political success of such leaders … was based to a significant extent on the realisation of the fact that centrist decisions in the circumstances of the deepening differences of social interests condemn society to stagnation.[174]

Therefore, argued Vaynshteyn, the Soviet leadership should abandon its attempts to secure 'a so-called social agreement' and to adopt instead a radical, if painful and unpopular, economic strategy.

Vaynshteyn's praise of the Western free-market approach was echoed by economist and writer Larisa Piyasheva, who centred her criticism on attempts to use the state as an arbiter (and a provider) of social justice. In an October 1990 appeal to Boris Yel'tsin, candidly sub-titled 'monologue of a "market extremist"',Piyasheva attacked what she held to be the gradual approach of Shatalin's and Yavlinsky's 'Five Hundred Days' programme, particularly its strategy of a gradual price liberalisation for the sake of minimising economic dislocation and preventing social upheaval. Such a strategy, argued Piyasheva, had a misguided view of social benefits, and would result in a perpetuation of the Soviet culture of dependency, characterised by 'a depraved ideology which elevates poverty into virtue'. Instead, Piyasheva praised the wealth disparity

which the transition to the market would bring: 'Social results of the process of the transition to the market will be very good: people will become wealthier, more independent, more certain of themselves, more free and responsible. And, consequently, our life will become richer and more diverse.' With this assessment of the market's beneficial role, Piyasheva cautioned Yel'tsin against paying an excessive attention to social equality, urging him 'not to assume the impossible mission of dividing and redistributing', which would lead only to 'the already travelled road of populism'.[175]

Instead of trying to preserve prices for the sake of social stability, argued Piyasheva, the Russian government should devise a way to 'effectively stimulate business and enterpreneurship'. She attacked likewise 'the deceptive formula about the equivalence of different forms of ownership', arguing that such a notion 'disguised the intention to preserve state property as untouchable, defending it from the market and from private competitors'. 'The size of state property', argued Piyasheva, 'should instead be reduced to a minimum'.

Piyasheva therefore argued strongly against the approach that characterised Western social liberalism and social democracy, such as the notion of redistributive justice and the recognition of the positive role of the state in minimising social inequality. In doing so, Piyasheva employed arguments prevalent among contemporary Western neo-liberals, maintaining that a state-driven control over prices and a redistribution of wealth for the sake of social equality would only perpetuate the culture of dependency in society and inhibit its productive capacity. Instead, Piyasheva urged the state to support primarily private enterprise as the most dynamic kind and as one best positioned to reform Russian society's historical tradition of artificial wealth levelling and of reliance on the state.

Piyasheva's arguments in favour of private enterprise were extended by Sergey Panasenko, who stressed that such ownership would underpin democracy and political pluralism by molding the emerging Soviet entrepreneurs into an independent social class. 'Only private ownership of the means of production', argued Panasenko, 'is a guarantee from the pressure of the hierarchical state structures, and one able maximally to ensure the observance of the rights and freedoms of citizens. Only its introduction will make the democratization in the USSR irreversible.'[176] Calling therefore for a rapid 're-privatisation' of the economy, Panasenko argued that such a process, combined with a development of the co-operative movements, would lead to 'the emergence of an economic force which will be to an enormous extent

independent of the state apparatus', and whose presence would benefit both pluralism and democracy in the country. As an example of this process, Panasenko pointed to the developments in the co-operative sector, where 'the first co-operatives began to unite into unions and associations', whose 'voices rang especially strongly and insistently during the time of elections', indicating 'the birth of a new political force'.

As Panasenko's comment demonstrated, the liberal adherents of a free market welcomed the emergence of a sizeable economic and social force which had traditionally underpinned Western liberal democracy and which had been sadly lacking in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Russia. The free-market liberals hoped that the emergence of such a force, combined with the liberal control of some of the state institutions and, for the moment, the support for liberal notions among the public, would enable them to implement their policy of a rapid transition to the market and, more ambitiously, to change the long-standing Russian and Soviet tradition of the reliance on the state and of the subordination of the interests of the individual to those of society. At the same time, however, many free-market liberals were doubtful about the permanency of their popular support, and therefore contemplated limiting democracy for the duration of the transitional period. They also neglected the potential pitfalls of the upcoming years, such as the possibility that the embryonic bourgeois class, whose appearance they welcomed, might prove to be less than supportive of liberal ideas and instead prone to rely on state patronage.

In the last two years of perestroika, Russian liberalism therefore achieved the apogee of its success: it dominated the public discourse, it enjoyed widespread popular support, and it obtained a significant share of the political power. Seeking to consolidate their success, Russian liberals embarked on a process of institutionalising their influence through the formation of political parties and movements. This process was facilitated by their common aim of de-legitimising the official Soviet ideology and replacing it with an emphasis on the values of Western civilisation. While this broad ideological affinity was sufficient to maintain a substantial, if flexible, unity throughout the electoral campaigns of 1990 and the ensuing struggle for power with the Union authorities, it also precluded the formation of a well-organised broad political movement with a well-defined liberal ideology. Instead, the challenges of effecting political and economic reforms that confronted Russian liberals from 1990 to 1991 exacerbated the incipient ideological differences within the movement,

transforming them into open ideological fractures. Neither of the main liberal currents which emerged by early 1991 – social democracy and free-market liberalism – were embodied by a well-organised party which enjoyed ideological clarity, mobilisational power and public support, instead leaving the advocates of each of these strands to rely on the resources of the state to pursue their objectives. Despite these drawbacks, however, by 1991 the Russian liberals were able to elaborate their diverse positions without the need to conform to an overarching state ideology.

Uncertain prospects: the legacy of Perestroika for post-Soviet Russian liberalism

During the period of slightly less than seven years when Gorbachev was at the helm of the Soviet state, Russian liberal thought underwent a process of dramatic transformation from an overall subservience to the Marxist–Leninist ideology in 1985 to its decisive renunciation and an embrace of the notions of Western liberal thought by 1991.

The initial concerns of perestroika-era liberalism, as it began to re-emerge in 1985, were the issues of individual freedom, professional autonomy, the improvement of economic performance, and the creation of an economic framework that would best reconcile individual creativity with the interests of society. Although these concerns dealt with similar issues to those which have confronted Western liberal thought, many Russian liberals preferred to present their notions as either a rediscovery of the original ideas of Leninism (in the case of reformist Communists) or as a contribution to the broader goal of the spiritual and cultural development of Russia (in the case of liberal nationalists). Both of these intellectual traditions – reform-Communism and liberal nationalism – had distinctly illiberal origins, insofar as they limited individual freedom by its subordination to a particular pre-defined purpose, whether it be a furtherance of socialist or of nationalist ideals.

During the next stage of perestroika (1987–1989), Russian liberals began to broaden the scope of ideological discourse and conceptual innovation, seeking to introduce and to legitimise such typical liberal notions as civil society, private property, the law-based state and the multi-party system. In promoting these concepts, Russian liberals increasingly turned their attention to the central elements of Western liberal thought. Moreover, they were beginning to acknowledge the fact that the source of their ideological inspiration was no longer

Marxist–Leninist ideology (however reformed), but Western values. At the same time, Russian liberals began to differ in their approaches to many of the issues which they confronted, such as the compatibility between political and economic reforms, the optimal way to achieve the democratisation of society, and the feasible extent of political democratisation. Defining their positions on these issues, Russian liberals produced potential rifts in their intellectual movement, as some of them began to espouse immediate introduction of democracy, while others were more hesitant or even directly opposed.

This final period (1990–1991) in the development of Russian liberalism within the Soviet state provided liberals with a substantial amount of political independence, thereby enabling them not only to assume an unexpected and unprecedented degree of openness in public discourse, but also to put their vision into practical realisation. The achievement of political power, however, forced liberals to elaborate more distinctly their solutions to the multifaceted problems that confronted Russia and the Soviet Union. As they faced this task, the initial liberal consensus which was predicated on a broadly liberal (or, more precisely, anti-totalitarian) vision began to fracture into two distinct currents – social democracy and a free-market liberalism.

The sources of the intellectual vision of these movements exemplify the convoluted relationship of Russian liberalism of the Gorbachev era to the canon of Western liberal thought, to its pre-revolutionary antecedent, and to the Soviet Union's official ideology. The social–democratic current, while deriving its origins from the reform-Communist vision, began increasingly to discard this intellectual heritage and to adopt a Western social–democratic approach as its intellectual model. While its emphasis on social welfare and on the connection between the individual and society reverberated with the social reformist tradition of pre-revolutionary Russian liberalism, this commonality played a decidedly secondary role compared to the influence of Western or former Soviet ideas.

In contrast to social democrats, the free-market liberals represented a much more radical departure from both the Soviet and the pre-revolutionary Russian traditions. Instead of emphasising the individual's connection to society and seeking to moderate economic rigours with the social protection of the state, free-market liberalism desired to replace these traditions with the notions of the individual's self-reliance and a rigorous support of free enterprise. Deriving its views largely (if not entirely) from Western neo-liberal notions, this current of perestroika-era liberalism not only did not possess any antecedents in the intellectual

tradition of Russian liberalism, but also actively defined itself in opposition to it. It did, however, retain a proclivity toward state-driven solutions, characteristic in general of Russian political thought, as it sought to rely on the power of a strong state in order to promote its liberal programme among a reluctant population, and manifested a distinct hesitancy with respect to the compatibility of economic liberalism and political democracy.

Thus, in the course of the epochal transformation of the Soviet Union initiated by Gorbachev, the overwhelming dominance of the Soviet ideology gave way – gradually at first, but with an increasing acceleration thereafter – to the embrace by significant and influential sections of Russian public opinion of notions which had more in common with Western liberalism than with Marxism–Leninism. In the process of advancing and modifying their views, Russian liberals made an important contribution to the intellectual and political transformation of the Soviet polity, even as their own conceptual thought was transformed under the influence of these events.

With regard to the post-1991 development in Russia, the initial confluence of the liberals' political and economic objectives was shattered by the introduction of radical pro-market reforms in 1992, resulting, first, in a frequent conflict between the liberals' desire for a market economy and their aspirations for a political democracy, and, second, in differences amongst Russian liberals concerning the need to mitigate the effects of the marketisation on society. [177] In prioritising between these two goals, Russian liberals (especially those who emphasised the importance of the free market) were, from the outset of the post-Gorbachev period, more committed to building a market economy than to constructing democracy.[178] As Archie Brown noted: 'As a result of these misplaced priorities, they built neither the one nor the other. A corrupt and asset-stripping form of capitalism emerged alongside a hybrid political system or mixed polity – a mixture of democracy, arbitrariness, and kleptocracy.'[179] As Russia's economic crisis persisted, even those free-market liberals who intentionally neglected the issue of political reform in the early 1990s began to acknowledge the importance of competent state structures for a well-functioning market economy. Writing in the wake of the 1996 presidential elections, Yegor Gaydar, while still suspicious of the calls for 'an increase in state control over the economy' and believing those appeals to be motivated by the 'mercenary interests' of Russian financial oligarchs, acknowledged the need for a more active state that would act as a provider of legal and social guarantees in the conditions of a free market.[180] The

state apparatus, Gaydar acknowledged, must 'ensure order, stability of the national currency, observance of contracts, social security, and regulation of natural monopolies'.[181]

In addition, some of the causes of the drawbacks experienced by Russia in its efforts to introduce the rule of law, a structurally sound and a socially just market economy, and a well-calibrated democratic political system resulted partially from the positions on these issues adopted by the pre-1991 Russian liberals. Thus, the pervasive disregard of many state officials for the observance of the rule of law, and the judiciary's reticence to oppose the executive power, can be partially explained by the liberals' failure to adopt the Anglo-American concept of 'the rule of law' which constrains the state by locating the source of law both in legislation and in the inherent rights of individuals, or even to adhere scrupulously to the (potentially) less stringent German *Rechsstaat* approach of the state constrained by its own law.[182] Given the Russian (and Soviet) state's tradition of disrespect towards self-imposed legal constraints, the result has been a promulgation of frequently changing and conflicting legal enactments that are ignored both by public officials and by economic actors.[183] The present-day incestuous relationship between state officials and the leaders of financial and industrial conglomerates in the Russian economy stems partially from a lack of public debate between adherents of the radical free market and their social–democratic counterparts prior to the launch of economic reforms in January 1992. Similarly, the hybrid – partly authoritarian and partly democratic – nature of the current Russian political system results to an extent from insufficient attention devoted by the liberals to the issues of constitution-making and party-construction essential for an effective functioning of the democratic process, as well as to the necessity of political compromises and coalition-building.[184] In the realm of foreign policy, the progression of Russia's post-Soviet foreign policy from an unambiguously pro-Western stand to a more national-minded approach can be related to the gradual faltering of the liberals' pro-Western commitment upon being confronted with such issues as the loss of the superpower status, the desire of the other former Soviet republics to distance themselves from Russia, and the overnight emergence of a sizeable Russian diaspora in these newly-independent states.[185] Similarly, the effectiveness of liberalism in neutralising, at times through a partial amalgamation, the popular appeal of a rival ideological framework of Russian nationalism helps to explain the failure of numerous intellectuals and politicians in post-Soviet Russia to capitalise on nationalist feelings in their struggle for power.[186]

At the same time, a study of Russian liberal thought of the late twentieth century can serve as an indispensable vantage-point for the overall understanding of the history of liberalism in Russia. Many of the themes prevalent in Russian liberal thought from the middle of the nineteenth century were transformed radically in the 1980s and 1990s under the influence of the changing socio-economic and ideological–political conditions. With regard to the prolonged conflict in the history of Russian intellectual thought between Westernisers and Slavophiles, the modern Russian liberals adhered initially to a determined pro-Western position during the Gorbachev era, becoming frequently embroiled in public debates with the conservative Russian nationalists. During the Yel'tsin presidency, however, some of them started to mitigate their Westernism with a cautious infusion of Slavophile notions of spirituality. The post-Communist period witnessed initially a decisive shift in Russian liberal thought towards an emphasis on the primacy of the individual, replacing an earlier tendency to place limits on the freedom of the individual in the interests of the community. The subsequent experience of the social costs of economic reforms, however, gave a new impetus to the 'communitarian' strand in Russian liberalism. The Russian liberals of the late twentieth century also abandoned their predecessors' misgivings towards the market-based economy and demonstrated a willingness to accept commercialism in the cultural sphere, modifying another deeply ingrained viewpoint of the Russian intelligentsia. The example of Western prosperity has been crucial in facilitating this intellectual shift, but the subsequent failure of the Soviet and Russian governments to emulate the success story of the West led to the resurfacing of the traditional ambivalence about the effects of the market on society's moral and cultural development. In another significant shift, the emergence in twentieth-century Russia during the Soviet period of a sizeable stratum of highly-educated professionals, which historically has tended to support a liberal policy, helped to dispel the Russian liberals' earlier fear of electoral democracy. The limited exposure before 1985 of these professionals to liberal ideas, however, rendered their support for the liberal agenda conditional on the liberals' successful performance in the areas of economic and social policy, and their subsequent disillusionment was reflected in the poor showing of liberal parties in the post-Communist parliamentary elections of 1993, 1995, 1999 and 2003.

An investigation of the ideas of the late twentieth-century liberals in Russia, especially in comparison with Western experience, shows the difficulties faced by liberal ideology emerging in a country which did not pass through the same 'liberal era' as Western Europe.[187] Moreover,

modern Russian liberalism developed in the peculiar – and often inhospitable – political circumstances of transition from Soviet Communism. Yet, notwithstanding the unpromising historical heritage, liberalism made a remarkable breakthrough, and Russia in the last fifteen years of the twentieth century demonstrated in an unfamiliar context the enduring appeal and remarkable resilience of liberal ideas in the increasingly complex contemporary world.

Notes

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1 Alla Latynina, 'Kolokol'nyy zvon – ne molitva', *Novyy mir*, vol. 8 (1988) p. 244.

2 On Gorbachev's role in promoting a conceptual revolution, see Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 121–9.

3 On Gorbachev's political appointments, see Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, pp. 97–111; on his appointments in the cultural sphere and in the organs of the mass media, see John Dunlop, 'Soviet Cultural Politics', *Problems of Communism* 36 (1987), pp. 35–45; and Yitzhak M. Brudny, 'The Heralds of Opposition to *Perestroyka*', *Soviet Economy,* vol. 5 (1989) pp. 171–2.

4 This strategy of mobilising support of the reformist civil society in the context of state-led transformations is well described in Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 47–8. For its application to Gorbachev's perestroika, see ibid., pp. 371–3, especially fn. 14.

5 One of the earliest instances was a well-publicised speech delivered by the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko to the Congress of Russian Writers on December 12, 1985, where he vigorously praised the new openness in the examination of current social issues. (See Yevtushenko's speech in *Literaturnaya gazeta*, vol. 51 (1985), reprinted in Yury Bondarev *et al.* (eds) *Shestoy S''ezd pisateley RSFSR: Stenograficheskiy otchet* (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1987), pp. 106–10.)

6 Archie Brown, 'New Thinking on the Political System,' in Brown (ed), *New Thinking in Soviet Politics* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 12.

7 Most prominently, such figures as the Politburo members Aleksandr Yakovlev and Eduard Shevarnadze, as well as Gorbachev's advisors Georgy Shakhnazarov, Anatoly Chernyaev and Andrey Grachev. Of course, a rigid

distinction between the two groups should not be posited, for many of these individuals were active in the public debate. Conversely, as perestroika progressed, many members of the scientific and creative liberal intelligentsia entered the political establishment, as evidenced by appointments of Leonid Abalkin, Director of the Institute of Economics of the USSR Academy of Sciences, as the Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and Chairman of the State Commission for Economic Reforms; Nikolay Petrakov, Deputy Director of the Central Economic–Mathematical Institute (TsEMI), as Assistant to the General Secretary of the CPSU (and later, to the USSR President) on Economic Problems; and Chingiz Aytmatov, a well-known writer, to the Presidential Council.

8 On *Ogonek*'s role in perestroika see Cathy Porter, 'Introduction,' in Vitaly Korotich and Cathy Porter (eds), *The Best of Ogonyok: The New Journalism of Glasnost* (London: Heinemann, 1990). This volume also contains a small but representative sample of *Ogonek*'s journalism. On *Moskovskie novosti*, see L. Belkin (ed.), *Firsthand News* (Moscow: Progress, 1988).

9 On the role of *Voprosy ekonomiki* under Popov in developing liberal economic ideas during *perestroika*, see Alec Nove's chapter in the present volume.

10 See Dunlop, 'Soviet Cultural Politics', pp. 36 and 39–40; and Brudny, 'Heralds', p. 171. On the role of the literary journals, see Riitta Pittman, '*Perestroika* and Soviet Cultural Politics: The Case of the Major Literary Journals', *Soviet Studies*, vol. 42 (1990) pp. 111–32; Julia Wishnevsky, 'A Guide to Some Major Soviet Journals', *Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe Research Bulletin*, RL Supplement 2/88, 1988, July 20 and Julian Graffy, 'The Literary Press', in Julian Graffy and Geoffrey A. Hosking (eds), *Culture and Media in the U.S.S.R. Today* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989), pp. 107–57. On Baklanov, see his interviews 'Slovo nado vystradat', *Ogonek*, 52 (1986); and 'Ispytanie glasnost'yu', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 45 (1988); on Zalygin, see Yitzhak M. Brudny, 'Between Liberalism and Nationalism: The Case of Sergey Zalygin', *Studies in Comparative Communism*, vol. 21 (1988) pp. 331–40; and Sergey Yurenen, 'Sergey Zalygin vo glave Novogo mira', *Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe Research Bulletin*, vol. 147 (1986) pp. 1–2. For the purposes of the rest of this chapter, it is helpful to delineate two intellectual currents among these appointees: for lack of better definition, they can be termed 'reform Communist' (or 'Khrushchevite liberal') and 'liberal nationalist'. The latter current devoted a special attention to the issues of Russia's patrimony, while the former was more concerned with the question of political and economic reform. Thus, Zalygin can be classified as a liberal nationalist (or, to hint at a historical parallel, a liberal Slavophile) of the 1980s, while Korotich, Yegor Yakovlev and Baklanov would trace their intellectual lineage to the ideas of reform Communism, particularly to the Twentieth Party Congress. On this distinction, see Brudny, 'Between Liberalism and Nationalism' and Darrell P. Hammer, 'Alternative Visions of the Russian Future: Religious and Nationalist Alternatives', *Studies in Comparative Communism*, vol. 20 (1987) pp. 265–75. Brudny, in particular, argued that it was a conscious attempt on the part of Gorbachev and Aleksandr Yakovlev to construct a liberal coalition out of these two

streams to promote their cultural policies and, more broadly, their liberal agenda, aimed at the eradication of Stalinism in public life. See Brudny, 'Between Liberalism and Nationalism', pp. 339–40, and, for an expanded version of this argument, Yitzhak M. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953–1991* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 193–9.

11 In addition to availing themselves of the increased access to official media organs, liberals also became active in establishing independent *neformal'nye* (informal) publications, particularly in Moscow, St. Petersburg (Leningrad) and the Baltics. Continuing the *samizdat* tradition of the 1960s, these publications were private initiatives undertaken without the approval or cooperation of the state. Unlike their *samizdat* predecessors, they were largely tolerated by the authorities. On the emergence of the 'unofficial' press, see Vera Tolz, 'Independent Journals Proliferate in the USSR', *Radio Liberty Research*, 1988, January 27, and Mary Dejevsky, '*Glasnost'* and the Soviet Press', in Graffy and Hosking, *Culture and Media*, pp. 37–8. While this chapter concentrates on liberal ideas expressed in the already established publications, this less visible liberal input into the transformation of the Soviet public discourse was an important concomitant process.

12 See, for example, Vishnevsky, 'Guide', and Graffy, 'Literary Press', pp. 107–8. The rise in demand was, in fact, so great that it frequently provoked acute and widely-publicised crises caused by the inability (or, as many argued, unwillingness) of the government publishers to satisfy the public demand. See Janna Gross, 'Letters to Ogonek: The Subscription Crisis of 1988' (Master's thesis, Georgetown University, 1989).

13 See, for example, John Gray, *Liberalism*, 2nd edn. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995), p. xiii.

14 On this tendency in Russian liberal thought, see Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 92–114, and William G. Wagner, 'Family Law, the Rule of Law, and Liberalism in Late Imperial Russia', *Jahrbucher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, vol. 43 (1995) pp. 532–3, the last focusing on the implications of this position in the legal sphere. On the attitudes toward individualism throughout Russian history, see A. V. Obolonsky, *Drama rossiiskoy politicheskoy istorii: sistema protiv lichnosti* (Moscow: Institut Gosudarstva i Prava, 1994).

15 Although for a rival interpretation of the legacy of the Slavophile thought in this regard, see Nikolay N. Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture* (Harvard: Cambridge University Press, 1995), especially pp. 60–87. For the implication of the Marxist intellectual tradition on Gorbachev's perestroika, see Andrzej Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom: The Rise and Fall of the Communist Utopia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 536–55.

16 Dmitry Likhachev, 'Kul'tura i my', *Ogonek*, 36 (1985). Likhachev, however, emphasised at the same time a social, and almost organic, link between an individual and society, stating, in a March 1986 conversation with the village prose writer Valentin Rasputin, that focus on the individual should be tempered by the individual's 'feeling of responsibility ...

toward the motherland, toward his country, toward his people'. (Dmitry Likhachev and Valentin Rasputin, 'Velikiy mir "Slova"', *Ogonek*, vol. 12 (1986).) See also Likhachev's essays 'Nature and the Russian Personality', 'The National Ideal and National Reality', and 'Patriotism Versus Nationalism', in Dmitrii S. Likhachev, *Reflections on Russia*, Nicolai N. Petro (ed.) (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 16–23 and 47–61. The synthesis between an emphasis on the individual and on the cultural development of the entire society informed not only Likhachev's public pronouncements, but also his practical activity. Speaking about the main tasks of the Soviet Cultural Fund – an organisation dedicated to the preservation of the country's cultural heritage that Likhachev helped to establish in 1986 and led throughout perestroika – Likhachev stressed the importance of individual art collectors for the preservation of Russian cultural heritage. Calling on the Fund to facilitate the exhibition of private collections, Likhachev emphasised simultaneously the need to ensure that the owners of the collection retain full control over it, without 'any administrative intrusion into their activity' and, especially, any pressure to donate the works to the state. See Dmitriy Likhachev, 'Vo blago kul'tury', *Ogonek*, vol. 17 (1986). On Likhachev, see S. Frederick Starr, 'Foreword', in Likhachev, *Reflections on Russia*, pp. xi–xxii; an introductory article by N. P. Adrianova-Peretts and M. A. Salmina, in a bibliography of works by and about Likhachev, *Dmitriy Sergeevich Likhachev*, 3rd. edn., enl., (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), pp. 11–42, and, for an autobiographical perspective, Dmitry Likhachev, 'Neskol'ko slov o sebe' *Ogonek,* vol. 48 (1986); and his "O sebe," in Dmitry S. Likhachev, *Izbrannye raboty* (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 3–23.

17 Kirill Lavrov, 'O glavnom', *Ogonek*, vol. 45 (1985).

18 Ibid. Calls for professional autonomy were quite numerous among the representatives of the creative intelligentsia during the formative years of perestroika. See, for example, a high-profile public discussion initiated in July 1985 by Mark Zakharov, artistic director of the Lenin Komsomol Theatre in Moscow, in 'Aplodismenty ne deliatsya', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, vol. 31 (1985), and continued by playwright S. Aleshin, 'S kolokol'ni dramaturga', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, vol. 37 (1985), artistic director of the Gorky Drama Theatre in Kuybyshev P. Monastyrsky, 'Zhdem peremen', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, vol. 40 (1985), artistic director of the Taganka Theatre of Drama and Comedy Anatoly Efros, 'Bylo by khorosho…' *Literaturnaya gazeta*, vol. 47 (1985), and artistic director of the Kirov Bolshoy Drama Theatre in Leningrad Georgy Tovstonogov, 'Razmyshleniya v den' peremen', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, vol. 52 (1985).

19 See an interview with Aleksandr Abdulov and his wife Irina Alferova in N. Kataeva, 'Slagaemye udachi', *Ogonek*, vol. 26 (1986).

20 Edvard Radzinsky, 'Uchit'sya otvetstvennosti,' *Ogonek*, vol. 26 (1986). In response to these liberal demands, a number of theatres were granted significant economic autonomy from 1 January, 1987. See the description of that arrangement in an interview with Valentin Fokin, artistic director of the Ermolova Theatre in Moscow, in 'Eksperiment v teatre', *EKO (Ekonomika i organizatsiya promyshlennogo proizvodstva)* vol. 4 (1987) pp. 177–82. A testimony to the rapid evolution of liberal ideas during the

Gorbachev period is the fact that when Fokin initially called for the introduction of these measures in *Sovetskaya Kul'tura*, 12 December, 1985, he was attacked as an economic extremist and a promoter of unemployment amongst actors.

21 'Kniga: chitat' ili imet', *Ogonek*, vol. 33 (1986). A year later, in May 1987, the prominent liberal writer Vasil' Bykov reinforced Nagibin's argument, imbuing it in addition with a moral dimension: '[P]ublishers have no right to saturate the book market with works which have no demand, which do not get sold. It would be unnatural, both economically and also, probably, morally.' (Vasil' Bykov, 'Trava posle nas', *Ogonek*, 19 (1987).)

22 The preferred strategy of pre-revolutionary Russian liberals was to use the state apparatus to inculcate liberal norms, such as respect for individual liberties and for the culture of legality, in the relatively backward and potentially turbulent popular classes, and the liberals' fear of popular upheaval frequently forced them to countenance the conservative policies of late Imperial Russia. See V.V. Leontovich, *Istoriya liberalizma v Rossii, 1762–1914* (Moscow: Russkii Put', 1995), pp. 463–8, 508–12. Of course, the heterogeneous Russian liberal movement of the late nineteenth-early twentieth century contained also a more radical wing, commonly associated with the Kadet party of Paul Milyukov, which considered appealing to the popular classes in order to compel the state to put into effect the Kadets' liberal agenda. See Leontovich, *Istoryia liberalizma*, pp. 480–8; William G. Rosenberg, *Liberals in the Russian Revolution: The Constitutional Democratic Party, 1917–1921* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); and, for a personal account, albeit written with a benefit of hindsight, P. N. Milyukov, *Tri popytki: k istorii Russkogo lzhe-konstitutsionalizma* (Paris: Franko–Russkaya pechat', 1921).

23 Likhachev, 'Kul'tura i my'. On this paternalistic tradition, and its influence on the intelligentsia's sense of civil responsibility, see Leonard Schapiro, 'The Pre-Revolutionary Intelligentsia and the Legal Order', in Richard Pipes, (ed.) *The Russian Intelligentsia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp. 19–32.

24 Dmitry Likhachev, 'Dostoinstvo kul'tury', *Ogonek*, vol. 48 (1986).

25 Yury Nagibin acknowledged as much, stating that the publishing agencies should differentiate between the demands of readers, relegating those who prefer solely 'adventure' fiction to the use of libraries. See 'Kniga: Chitat' ili imet'. Nagibin's view, therefore, was similar to Likhachev's belief that criteria of artistic or literary merits defined by the intelligentsia should serve as standards for the popular culture and for the government's cultural policy.

26 A certain correlation with the Western notion of positive freedom can be undoubtedly perceived here. The adherents of this concept argued that freedom cannot be defined merely in the negative sense, as the absence of physical, intentional and external restraints that would preclude individuals from pursuing their interests. Instead, they identified freedom with the ability of all members of society to develop their talents and to gain personal fulfillment. Correspondingly, these liberals stressed the social character of both individuals and freedom, and argued that the state had to play an active role in creating conditions that would enable

any member of society to effectively pursue personal autonomy, even if it meant enacting measures which might coerce an individual's freedom in its negative interpretation. The adherents of the positive definition of freedom included, most notably, English liberals of the turn-of-the-century, such as T. H. Green, L. T. Hobhouse, and, in the political realm, H. H. Asquith, David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. See Andrew Vincent and Raymond Plant, *Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship: The Life and Thought of the British Idealists* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984); and Michael Freeden, *Liberalism Divided: A Study in British Political Thought, 1914–1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). For a comparison of the 'negative' and the 'positive' conceptions of freedom, see Isaiah Berlin's seminal essay 'Two Concepts of Liberty', in his *Four Essays on Liberty* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 118–72; and John Gray, 'Liberalism and the Choice of Liberties', in his *Liberalisms: Essays in Political Thought* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 140–60. Although greatly elaborated by the theorists and practitioners of liberal thought, these two conceptions of freedom can claim a heritage much older than that of liberalism itself; for a brief overview, see Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 59–99.

27 Sergey Averintsev, 'Ne utratit' vkus k podlinnosti', *Ogonek*, 32 (1986). In the same essay, Averintsev defined his intellectual position as derived from the views of the liberal critic and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, who belonged to the more 'individualist' strand of twentieth-century Russian liberalism. Both Bakhtin and Averintsev combined their liberal beliefs with a profound reverence for certain Russian Orthodox traditions. This strand of liberal Orthodoxy can be traced (at least) to the nineteenth- and the twentieth-century philosophers Vladimir Solov'ev and Nikolay Berdyaev. On Averintsev's political ideas and activities, see his interview 'S' ezd malo pokhoz na razgovor …' in Andrey Karaulov, *Vokrug Kremlya* (Moscow: Novosti, 1990), vol. 1, pp. 117–35. On Bakhtin's ideas, see Gary Saul Morson, (ed.), *Bakhtin, Essays and Dialogues on His Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson (eds), *Rethinking Bakhtin: Extensions and Challenges* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989); and Michael Gardiner, *The Dialogics of Critique: M.M. Bakhtin and the Theory of Ideology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992). For a critical biography of Bakhtin, see Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1984); and Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), with the latter providing a useful bibliography of works by and about Bakhtin.

28 On Gorbachev's concept of economic reform, see Alec Nove's chapter 3 in this volume.

29 See Tat'yana Zaslavskaya, 'Chelovecheskiy faktor razvitiya ekonomiki i sotsial'naya spravedlivost'", *Kommunist,* vol. 13 (1986) pp. 61–73; and id., 'Tvorcheskaya aktivnost' mass: Sotsial'nye reservy rosta', *EKO* 3 (1986) pp. 3–25. For a fully-developed argument of Zaslavskaya's position, which remained largely consistent throughout perestroika, see a collection of her essays *A Voice of Reform: Essays* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1989) and her *The Second Socialist Revolution: An Alternative Soviet Strategy* (Bloomington and

Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), especially pp. 48–57. For an evaluative review of these works, see Walter D. Connor, 'Fast Forward, Rewind: Politics in the Gorbachev Era', *Studies in Comparative Communism*, vol. 25 (1992) pp. 79–87. Zaslavskaya's emphasis on the interrelationship between economic growth, societal development and individual material incentives was shared by many other liberal economists. See, for example, an approving response to Zaslavskaya's first article cited above by Stanislav Shatalin, head of the Institute of National Economic Forecast of the USSR Academy of Sciences, in 'Sotsial'noe razvitie i ekonomicheskiy rost', *Kommunist,* vol. 14 (1986) pp. 59–70, and a commentary by economists Aleksandr Bim and Aleksandr Shokhin (of Petrakov's and Shatalin's institutes, respectively), 'Sistema raspredeleniya: Na putyakh perestroyki', *Kommunist,* vol. 15 (1986) pp. 64–73, which stressed the need for individual incentives through differentiated work pay.

30 Tat'yana Zaslavskaya, 'Socialism with a Human Face', in Cohen and vanden Heuvel, *Voices of Glasnost*, p. 122. This view was elaborated by many other reformist economists. Academician Abel Aganbegyan of the Novosibirsk Institute, who was the Academician–Secretary of the Economics Section of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and the Editor-in-Chief of *EKO*, stated, for instance, that 'the main problem in perestroika is the problem of the human being'. See Abel Aganbegyan, 'Chelovek i ekonomika', *Ogonek*, vol. 29 (1987).

31 Zaslavskaya, *Second Socialist*, 97.

32 Aleksandr Nikitin, 'Lichnoe mnenie', *Ogonek*, vol. 5 (1987).

33 See Svyatoslav Fedorov, 'Srochno trebuyutsya derizhery!' *Ogonek*, vol. 37 (1985).

34 Galina Kulikovskaya, 'Kakoy kharakter u Nikolaya Travkina?' *Ogonek*, vol. 49 (1986).

35 Vladlen Krivosheev, 'Tekhnika razresheniya', *Ogonek*, vol. 3 (1987).

36 Pavel Bunich, 'Mir ekonomiki', *Ogonek*, vol. 38 (1987).

37 *Ibid*.

38 Oleg Bogomolov, 'Byt' ili ne byt'', *Ogonek*, vol. 47 (1987). As Director of the IEWSS since 1969, Bogomolov turned it into one of the most radical policy-oriented institutes in the USSR, and many of the institute's scholars who were able, through their work, to keep in touch with developments in Western economic thought and with economic (and, later, political) reform processes in Eastern Europe, became prominent intellectual and political figures in the perestroika liberalism. (See Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, p. 112 and pp. 341–2, especially fn. 93.)

39 Pavel Volobuev, 'Oktyabr' i sotsial'noe tvorchestvo mass', *Moskovskie novosti,* vol. 44 (1987). For Lenin's concept of workers' democracy, and the irreconcilable antagonism inherent in that concept between Leninist thought and democratic theory and practice, see Neil Harding, *Leninism* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 166–93.

40 See, for example, Tat'yana Zaslavskaya, 'Narod bezmolvstvuet? . . ', *Ogonek*, vol. 41 (1988); and her 'O strategii sotsial'nogo upravleniya perestroykoy', in Yu. N. Afanas'ev, *Inogo ne dano* (Moskva: Progress, 1988), pp. 49–50; see also Abel Aganbegyan, 'Economic Reforms', in Abel Aganbegyan (ed.), *Perestroika 1989* (New York: Scribner and Sons, 1988) pp. 73–105; and Nikolay Shmelev, 'Avansy i dolgi', *Novyy mir,* vol. 6 (1987) pp. 142–58. The example

of NEP was used extensively by Gorbachev himself as an ideological justification of his programme of economic reform. (See Christopher Smart, 'Gorbachev's Lenin: The Myth in Service to *Perestroika*', in *Studies in Comparative Communism,* vol. 23 (1990) pp. 17–18.)

41 During the later period of perestroika, many liberals would address these tensions more openly. Thus, notable historian Leonid Batkin would attack the notion that individualism, which he saw as a quintessential West European idea, can be reconciled with the traditional Slavophile concept of *sobornost'*. See L.M. Batkin, *Ital'yanskoe vozrozhdenie v poiskakh individual'nosti* (Moscow: Nauka, 1989) pp. 6–8. The preferable concept for Batkin was, undoubtedly, individualism, which he termed 'a programme … [f]or the third millennium". *Ibid*., p. 31.

42 An interesting argument on the sources of this reformist tradition is provided in Graeme Gill, 'Sources of Political Reform in the Soviet Union,' *Studies in Comparative Communism*, vol. 24 (1991) pp. 235–57. Vladimir Mau, a prominent liberal economist and, in the post-Soviet period, an advisor to, and associate of, Yegor Gaydar, argued, in his survey of the reformist economic ideas in the Soviet Union from the 1960s until perestroika, that these ideas were appropriate only 'as applied to the socialist system of economic management', and 'constructed in the logic of that system' and '[h]obbed by the ideological dogmas and political restrictions of the recent past, they proved incapable of quickly offering a complex vision of the direction and problems of systemic transformation of the economy'. Vladimir Mau, 'The Road to *Perestroika*: Economics in the USSR and the Problems of Reforming the Soviet Economic Order', *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 48 (1996) p. 220.

43 On the general issue of compatibility between liberalism and nationalism, see Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) for an affirmative answer; and Ian S. Lustick, 'Liberalism and Nationalism: Can They Be Joined?' *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics*, vol. 27 (1994) pp. 265–79, for a doubting response. For an additional plethora of perspectives, see Roger Michener, (ed.), *Nationality, Patriotism and Nationalism in Liberal Democratic Societies* (St Paul: PWPA, 1993), and Bob Brecher, Jo Halliday, and Klára Kolinská (eds), *Nationalism and Racism in the Liberal Order* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), especially the essay by Lubica Učník, 'The Discourse of Liberalism and Post-Soviet Europe', pp. 61–76, which focuses on the debate about the juxtaposition of individualism and nationalism in the follow-up of the splitting of Czechoslovakia. See also Andrzej Walicki, 'Czy Jest Mozliwy Nacjonalizm Liberalny? (Is Liberal Nationalism Possible?)', *Znak*, vol. 502 (1997) pp. 32–50, for an analysis of this issue in the case of post-Communist Poland. For definitions of the liberal and anti-liberal conceptions of nationalism in post-Communist countries, see Vladimir Tismaneanu, 'Fantasies of Salvation: Varieties of Nationalism in Postcommunist Eastern Europe', in Michael D. Kennedy (ed.), *Envisioning Eastern Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 114–19. The history of the tension between liberalism and nationalism stretches to the early period of liberal thought. See, for example, Elmer Louis Kayser, *The Grand Social Enterprise: A Study of Jeremy Bentham and His Relation to Liberal Nationalism* (New York: AMS Press, 1967) and

F. Rosen, *Bentham, Byron, and Greece: Constitutionalism, Nationalism, and Early Liberal Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), especially Chapter 14. Both works are especially revealing since they concentrate on Britain, where nationalism, either as an ideological or as a political movement, never achieved remotely the same degree of strength as it has elsewhere in Europe.

44 L. Popkova, 'Gde pirogi pyshnee,' *Novyy mir*, vol. 5 (1987) pp. 139–41. While refusing to declare 'where the ideological sympathies of the author lie, on the side of the plan or of the market', Popkova asserted the incompatibility of the two: 'Where socialism exists, there is not, and cannot be, a place for the market and for the liberal spirit'. *Ibid*., pp. 240–1. Popkova was rebuked by the prominent economist Otto Latsis, former department head at IEWSS and, since 1987, First Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *Kommunist*, in a subsequent issue of the journal, but, revealingly, not on the grounds of merit, but because of premature timing. In Latsis' view, construction of the new economic mechanism would have to be a protracted process, with a yet undefined outcome, and to question its compatibility with socialism at the outset would only lead to an 'abandon[ment of] perestroika'. See Otto Latsis, 'Zachem zhe pod ruku tolkat'?' *Novyy mir*, vol. 7 (1987) pp. 266–8.

45 Nikolay Amosov, 'Real'nosti, idealy i modeli', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, vol. 40 (1988). Amosov criticised as 'erroneous' the prevalent opinion that '[c]ollectivism is stronger than individualism'. The reality, asserted Amosov, is 'exactly the contrary – a man is first of all an egoist'.

46 While this was a radical departure from the liberals' traditional commitment to social justice and equality, Amosov did recognise the possibility of tempering economic efficiency in favour of society's 'moral goals'. Herbert Spencer extended the doctrine of *laissez-faire*, with its demand for a complete effacement of the state from the economic process, into the realm of social and political theory and, combining it with Darwinist theory of natural selection, argued that a process of selection of the best took place in human society as well. On Spencer's thought, see Richard Bellamy, *Liberalism and Modern Society: An Historical Argument* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992) pp. 14–16; David Wiltshire, *The Social and Political Thought of Herbert Spencer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), and Tim Gray, *The Political Philosophy of Herbert Spencer* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996).

47 Nikolay Shmelev, 'Da, no …,' *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 7 (1989).

48 Aleksandr Tsipko, 'Istoki stalinizma. Ocherk: Egoizm mechtateley', *Nauka i zhizn'*, vol. 1 (1989) p. 48. For an extension of his argument, see the rest of Tsipko's article, in *Nauka i zhizn'*, vol. 11 (1988) pp. 45–55; 12 (1988) pp. 40–8; 2 (1989) pp. 53–61.

49 Igor' Klyamkin, 'Pochemu trudno govorit' pravdu', *Novyy mir*, vol. 2 (1989) p. 150.

50 Gavriil Popov, 'Pobeseduem v dukhe glasnosti…', *Ogonek*, vol. 33 (1988). Popov's article appeared less than a month after he assumed the editorship of *Voprosy ekonomiki*.

51 Popov's article exhibited another shift in the liberal thinking and rhetoric. Instead of evoking solely the earlier Soviet or East European experience as economic models, Popov looked towards Imperial Russia,

drawing a parallel with the nineteenth-century reforms of Alexander II. Referring to what would become one of the main liberal themes in 1988–1989, Popov argued that the history of the abolition of serfdom in 1861 demonstrated the necessity of 'changes not only in the economic, but also in the political sphere', such as 'the creation of *zemstva* as organs of self-government, of jury courts, and others'. This position can be contrasted with Popov's earlier description of the 1861 reform, when he saw one of the reform's main problems in the danger it presented to the bureaucratic apparatus and the refusal of government officials to involve liberal experts from society in the planning and execution of the reform. See Gavriil Popov, 'Fasad i kukhnya "velikoy reformy"', *EKO*, vol. 1 (1987) pp. 144–75, especially pp. 167–9.

52 Nikolay Petrakov, 'Tovar i rynok', *Ogonek*, 34 (1988).

53 *Ibid*. Although in the aftermath of 1991 Petrakov would become more conservative and would frequently criticise the radical economic policies of the Gaydar government, during the Gorbachev period he was one of the most radical Soviet economists. See, for example, Jerry F. Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985–1991* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1997) pp. 116–17, 352–4.

54 Andrey Fedorov, 'Daite operit'sya…', *Ogonek*, vol. 45 (1988).

55 Pavel Bunich, 'Goszakaz ili prikaz?' *Ogonek*, vol. 44 (1988). This call was supported by many liberal economists, who saw the extension of the principle of *arenda* to state enterprises as a way to transform the psychology of the population toward an acceptance of economic competition (including, potentially, bankruptcy of some enterprises) and differentials in individual monetary rewards. See, for example, Tat'yana Koryagina, et al.,'Zakon o kooperatsii i platnye uslugi', *Kommunist*, vol. 6 (1988) pp. 97–101. With the formation of the USSR Union of *Arenda*-holders in February 1990, Bunich was elected as its first President. See Pavel Bunich, 'Zachem shutit' s ognem', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 6 (1990).

56 Pavel Bunich, 'Uiti ot illuzii', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 22 (1989). A similar redefinition of the concept of social justice was promoted by Petrakov. In his view, social justice would require 'a final abandon[ment of] the long-governing theory … [that since] all our enterprises belong to the state, and hence all profits in the final accounting also belong to the state, therefore it is not so important which enterprise earns how much'. In place of this system, Petrakov called for differential monetary rewards, both for the enterprises and for individuals. See Nikolay Petrakov, 'Zolotoy chervonets vchera i zavtra', *Novyy Mir*, vol. 8 (1987) pp. 205, 220–1.

57 For instance, Bunich called for the replacement of separate laws on the state enterprise and on co-operatives by a single one.

58 Svyatoslav Fedorov, 'Ne byt' nakhlebnikom!' *Ogonek*, vol. 28 (1989).

59 Yury Chernichenko, 'Zdat' uzhe pozdno!' *Ogonek*, vol. 23 (1989).

60 Vladimir Tikhonov, 'Tak chya zemlya?' *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 17 (1989).

61 Gely Shmelev, 'Ne nado pugat' naymom', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 26 (1989). In a shift characteristic of many perestroika liberals, Shmelev would later become highly critical of the post-1991 economic developments.

62 Gely Shmelev, 'Arendator: ne khodok, a khozyain', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 11 (1988).

63 Vladimir Yakovlev, '… I ni kopeykoy men'she!' *Ogonek*, vol. 52 (1987).
64 Valery Vyzhutovich, 'Vlast' rublya', *Ogonek*, vol. 44 (1987). Interestingly, Vyzhutovich added that this decision would not only be a wise economic choice, but would also improve the moral health of the society, for '[n]othing helps to improve our moral health as much as a healthy economy'. This statement was a rejoinder to the arguments advanced at that time by the Russian conservative nationalists, who protested the introduction of financial incentives into the economy, stressing instead the benefits of moral incentives. (See, most notably, a book by the head of a sector of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Mikhail Antonov, *Nravstvennost' ekonomiki: Publitsisticheskie zametki* (Moscow: Molodaya Gvardiya, 1984); his *Nravstvennye ustoi ekonomiki: XIX Vsesoyuznaya partkonferentsiya i istoricheskie sud'by strany* (Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1989); and his numerous articles, such as 'Tak chto zhe s nami proiskhodit?' *Oktyabr'*, vol. 8 (1987) pp. 3–66; 'Idti svoim putem', *Molodaya Gvardiya*, vol. 1 (1988) pp. 195–200; and 'Nesushchestvuyushchie lyudi', *Nash sovremennik*, vol. 2 (1989) pp. 125–50.) As Alec Nove put it, Antonov's 'economic ideology reminded one of Solzhenitsyn and Dostoevsky'. Nove, 'The Rise of Non-Leninist Thinking on the Economy', Chapter 3 of this volume, p. 48. Vyzhutovich's statement also reverberated with Vasil' Bykov's comment about the moral benefits of the market (see fn. 21). The divergence between the economic conceptions of Russian liberals and of Russian conservative nationalists is perhaps best illuminated in the works of their prominent spokesmen – Abel Aganbegyan and Mikhail Antonov respectively – addressing the issue of the 'scientific–technological revolution'. While Aganbegyan's *NTR: Vzglyad ekonomista* (Moskva: Molodaya Gvardiya, 1987) was advancing the liberal blueprint of reform, Antonov's *NTR: Rol' chelovecheskogo faktora* (Moscow: Molodaya Gvardiya, 1987) argued for a need of great sensitivity to the spiritual and moral Russian national traditions during the reform process.
65 Shmelev, 'Ne nado pugat'.
66 Anatoly Druzenko, 'Pervichen zdravyy smysl', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 26 (1987).
67 'Bol'she sotsializma!' (Part I), *Ogonek*, 12 (1988). Markashov was one of the editors of the journal *Rabochiy klass i sovremenyy mir*.
68 Dmitry Kazutin, 'Demokratizatsiya plyus reforma', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 49 (1987). Emphasis in the original.
69 Yegor Yakovlev, 'Samoe trudnoe – vperedi', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 10 (1987).
70 Druzenko, 'Pervichen'. See also an article by Dmitry Kazutin, 'Pervyy god iz samykh trudnykh', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 43 (1987), where he argued that many opponents of Gorbachev's economic reforms '[h]ope that at the end it will end in the same way as the economic reform of 1965'.
71 Gavriil Popov and Valery Vyzhutovich, 'Kto protiv?' *Ogonek*, vol. 18 (1988).
72 Yegor Yakovlev, 'Novyy etap i zadachi politicheskogo avangarda', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 48 (1987).
73 Popov, 'Pobeseduem'.
74 V. Remizov, 'Segodnya polupravda ne nuzhna', *Ogonek*, vol. 17 (1987).
75 'Bol'she sotsializma!' (Part II), *Ogonek*, vol. 14 (1988).

76 Yevgeny Ambartsumov, 'O putyakh sovershenstvovaniya politicheskoy sistemy sotsializma', in Afanas'ev, *Inogo ne dano*, p. 86.

77 *Ibid*. Emphasis in the original. In the same volume, Leonid Batkin, a future leader of the 'Democratic Russia' movement, amplified Ambartsumov's call, demanding a 'maximum *destatisation* of Soviet life', and speaking of the need for the state to become an instrument of society. (See Leonid Batkin, 'Vozobnovlenie istorii', *ibid*., p. 176; emphasis in the original.)

78 'Bol'she sotsializma!' (II).

79 Malyutin, 'Neformaly v perestroyke: opyty i perspektivy', in Afans'ev, *Inogo ne dano*, p. 226. By the middle of 1988, when Shubkin and Malyutin were publicly advocating the creation of 'informal organisations', numerous such organisations had been in existence for many months. Moscow alone had 500 informal associations in October 1987 and about 1,500 by September 1988. See *Moskovskaya pravda*, October 14, 1987 and September 20, 1988 (cited in Timothy J. Colton, *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 589). These associations – whose concerns ranged from cultural and recreational to ecological to, increasingly, political – began to form as early as June 1986, when the Ministry of Culture relaxed its regulations on 'amateur organisations'. Since late 1986, liberals took advantage of this permissive climate (facilitated by Boris Yel'tsin during his short tenure as the First Secretary of the Moscow City Party Committee) to establish organisations with political interests. The two most seminal were the Club of Social Initiatives (to which Malyutin himself belonged), founded in late 1986, and the Perestroika Club, formed in the spring of 1987, both by young Moscow reformers. (See Colton, *Moscow*, p. 590.) In July 1988, many of these associations united into the Moscow Popular Front, modeled after similar fronts created by the liberals in the Baltic States. As discussed further in the chapter, the front came to play a crucial role in the liberal victory in the 1990 elections to the Moscow City Council. More prominently, Academician Andrey Sakharov and other well-known reformers founded in August 1987 the "Memorial' society, dedicated to the commemoration of the victims of the Stalinist terror, and, in October 1988, Sakharov and Zaslavskaya, among others, inaugurated 'Moscow Tribune', a club advocating radical economic reform and representative democracy. Thus, in many cases, the liberal input in the creation of a civil society in Russia came far earlier, and was less visible, than their subsequent public pronouncements. The latter, therefore, were not only calls for action, but also public legitimisation of the actions already taken. On the development of the independent socio-political organisations in Russia, see Vera Tolz, *The U.S.S.R.'s Emerging Multiparty System*, Washington Papers 148 (New York: Praeger, 1990); Lyudmila Alekseeva, *Nyeformaly: Civil Society in the U.S.S.R.* (New York: Helsinki Watch, 1990); *Samodeyatel'nye obshchestvennye organizatsii SSSR (spravochnik)* (Moscow: Moskovskiy Narodnyi Front, 1988); and Geoffrey A. Hosking, Jonathan Aves and Peter J.S. Duncan, *The Road to Post-Communism: Independent Political Movements in the Soviet Union, 1985–1991* (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1992).

80 Aleksandr Bovin, 'Pervye shagi', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 28 (1987).

81 See, for example, his speech at the plenum of the governing board of the USSR Union of Writers on March 2, 1988, in *Literaturnaya gazeta*, vol. 10 (1988); as well as his articles 'Tsaritsa dokazatel'stv', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 4 (1988); 'Protsessy', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, 18 (1988); and 'Kak zhivoy s zhivymi', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, vol. 26 (1988).

82 See Dmitry Kazutin, 'V kollektivnom poiske istiny', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 30 (1987) and Boris Lazarev, 'Pravovaya kul'tura', *Pravda*, June 23, 1988.

83 Yury Feofanov, 'Blagodelen li strakh pered zakonom', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 50 (1987).

84 Anatoly Vengerov, 'Zaslon vozhdizmu', *Ogonek*, vol. 23 (1988).

85 The adherence to legal guarantees was shared by many liberal nationalists, despite the historical reluctance of the Slavophile strand of Russian political culture to rely on the law for stability and guidance of the body politic. By 1989, Sergey Averintsev, in his first speech at the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies, reprimanded his conservative colleagues for their disdainful attitude toward the law, quoting a nineteenth-century satire directed at the Slavophile antipathy toward the law. See Sergey Averintsev, 'K sovesti', *Sovetskaya kul'tura*, 15 June, 1989; and a discussion of the episode in Nicolai Petro, 'Informal Politics and the Rule of Law', in Donald Barry (ed.), *Toward the 'Rule of Law' in Russia? Political and Legal Reform in the Transition Period* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), pp. 227–8.

86 Aleksandr Maksimovich Yakovlev, 'Otverzhenie i utverzhdenie', *Ogonek*, vol. 43 (1988). For an overview of the development of the Soviet concept of a 'law-based state', see B.N. Topornin (ed.), *Sotsialisticheskoe pravovoe gosudarstvo: problemy i suzhdeniya* (Moscow: Institut Gosudarstva i Prava, 1989), especially articles by V.E. Guliev, M.V. Baglay, and M.I. Piskotin. In positing that the Soviet state should be constrained by law, and not simply create law to govern society, Yakovlev and the other Soviet jurists appeared to be moving from the German concept of *Rechtsstaat* (in which the state creates a stable legal framework for society), which had been historically prevalent in Russian jurisprudence, to the Anglo-American ideal of law (in which the state is constrained by either law which it creates or by law higher than its own). On the distinction between the two types, and their applicability to the Soviet Union, see Harold J. Berman, 'The Rule of Law and the Law-Based State (*Rechtsstaat*). With Special Reference to the Soviet Union', in Barry, *Toward the 'Rule of Law' in Russia?*, pp. 43–60.

87 Fedor Burlatsky, 'O Sovetskom parlamentarizme', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, vol. 24 (1988). Burlatsky is more properly characterised as a 'liberaliser' within the Communist elite, rather than as a committed ideological liberal. In the later stages of perestroika, Burlatsky's continuing pessimism about the democratisation of Russia's political system, given the low level of political culture in Russia, would be shared by other prominent liberals, such as Leonid Batkin and Sergey Stankevich. Similar laments about 'the absence in our society of firm democratic traditions', this time in the legal sphere, were expressed by Valery Zor'kin, professor at the Higher Legal Correspondence School of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, in 'Sovetskaya pravovaya doktrina: Opyt i uroki', *Kommunist*, vol. 2 (1989) p. 115. As a solution, Zor'kin called for a 'deepening of democratic

processes', and 'cultivation ... of a democratic culture'. In post-Soviet Russia, Zor'kin, as the first Chairman of the country's Constitutional Court, clashed with Yel'tsin over the latter's dissolution of the Russian parliament and a suspension of the Constitutional Court. See Valery Zor'kin, 'Uroki oktiabria-93', *Konstitutsionnyy Vestnik*, vol. 1 (1994) pp. 7–19; and Robert Sharlet, 'Russian Constitutional Crisis: Law and Politics Under Yeltsin', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 9, no. 4 (1993) pp. 314–36.

88 'Bol'she sotsializma!' (II).

89 Nikolay Shmelev, 'Novye trevogi', *Novyy mir*, vol. 4 (1988) pp. 160–75.

90 'Perestroika: Kto protiv?' *Ogonek*, vol. 50 (1988). For a similar criticism of the early period of Gorbachev's economic reform, see Vladimir Mau, *The Political History of Economic Reform in Russia, 1985–1994* (London: The Centre for Research into Communist Economies, 1996), pp. 40–4.

91 Batkin, 'Vozobnovlenie', p. 157. A similar warning that the price reform will be utilised by the bureaucracy as a 'simple ... and effective method of driving a wedge between the people and the ideologues of perestroika' was issued by liberal publicist Andrey Nuykin. See Andrey Nuykin, 'O tsene slov i tsenakh na produkty', *Ogonek*, p. 22 (1988). Unlike Batkin, Nuykin was not convinced that the reform was essential for the economy, believing it to be a ploy to shore up the unprofitable state agencies, rather than to introduce a system of economic competition between enterprises.

92 Such a proposal was expressed, for example, by Gavriil Popov, referring to the Popkova–Latsis debate, in Gavriil Popov and Nikita Adzhubey, 'Pamyat' i 'Pamyat'," *Znamya*, vol. 1 (1988) p. 195. Emboldened by the liberal success in the 1989 elections, however, Popov would move sharply to the radical democratic standpoint, at least until 1991.

93 Batkin, 'Vozobnovlenie', p. 173. By contrast, some liberals, such as Yegor Gaydar, at the time the editor of the section of political economy and economic policy in *Kommunist*, believed that popular support for liberal reforms can be obtained through correct (and more rational) economic measures, such as 'the difficult, but absolutely necessary anti-inflationary measures'. See Yegor Gaydar, 'Khozyaystvennaya reforma: Pervyy god'. *Kommunist*, vol. 2 (1989) p. 33. Gaydar directly dismissed the 'stereotype of economic paternalism' in 'the relationship between the state and society' that argued for a tax reduction in order to compensate for the rise in prices. Yegor Gaydar raised the necessity of anti-inflationary measures and of the reduction of the national deficit several months earlier, in a November 1988 joint article with Otto Latsis, 'Po karmanu li traty', *Kommunist*, vol. 16 (1988) pp. 26–9. In May 1989, he repeated the warning that '[t]he main obstacle on the path of the deepening of the [economic] reform – [is] the increasing inflationary processes'. Yegor Gaydar, 'Zrya deneg ne dayut', *Kommunist*, vol. 8 (1989) p. 35.

94 Batkin, 'Vozobnovlenie', p. 157.

95 Liberals were conscious of the pitfalls of this strategy. Commenting on the liberal hope that the anticipated 'free elections to the Soviets [of People's Deputies]' will 'sharply increase democratic pressure on the party and state apparatus', Igor' Klyamkin warned that 'if the party organs will feel a threat to their immunity from the jurisdiction of law and from

control, if they will see that they are finding [themselves] under the supervision of society, then they will try to eliminate such situation, declaring that it favours an attempt upon the holy of holies – upon "the leading role" [of the Party]'. Igor' Klyamkin, 'Pochemu trudno govorit' pravdu', *Novyy Mir*, vol. 2 (1989) p. 216.

96 Natan Eydelman, 'Revolutsiya sverkhu v Rossii (Zametki istorika)', *Nauka i zhizn'*, vol. 1 (1989) pp. 120–1. For Eydelman's discussion of Herzen's attitude toward the reforms of Alexander II, see the other parts of the article, especially 10 (1988) pp. 97–8, and 11 (1988) pp. 112–18. Herzen's overall strategy of political and social transformation was, in fact, more democratic. See Walicki, *History of Russian Thought*, pp. 127–34; and, for a more detailed treatment, Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of the Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961). For Eydelman's own interpretation of Herzen as a humanist concerned with 'inner liberation' of the individual, see Natan Eydelman, 'O Gertsene: Zametki', *Znanie-Sila*, vol. 12 (1987) pp. 65–71.

97 Andranik Migranyan, 'Mekhanizm tormozheniya v politicheskoy sisteme i puti ego preodoleniya', in Afanas'ev, *Inogo ne dano*, p. 109.

98 Andranik Migranyan, 'Prosto li stat' Evropoy?' *Vek XX i mir*, vol. 20 (1988) pp. 22–5.

99 A year later, in the summer of 1989, Migranyan initiated a heated debate among the liberal intelligentsia by reiterating his thesis on the necessity of authoritarianism for a transition to market and liberal democracy, provoking strong criticism from Batkin, Klyamkin and Ambartsumov. See a description of this debate in Barry Sautman, 'The Devil to Pay: The 1989 Debate and the Intellectual Origins of Yeltsin's "Soft Authoritarianism"', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 28 (1995) pp. 131–51.

100 See Yury Burtin, 'Vozmozhnost' vozrazit', in Afanas'ev, *Inogo ne dano*, p. 485.

101 Igor' Vinogradov, 'Mozhet li pravda byt' poetapnoy?' in Afanas'ev, *Inogo ne dano*, p. 293. Emphasis in the original.

102 *Ibid*., p. 292. Emphasis in the original.

103 Pavel Bunich, 'Shans dlya potrebitelya', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 5 (1989).

104 Dmitry Kazutin, 'Otvetstvennost', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 29 (1989).

105 On the influence of the 1989 elections, see Michael Urban, *More Power to the Soviets: The Democratic Revolution in the USSR* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1990) and Brendan Kiernan, *The End of Soviet Politics* (Boulder: Westview, 1993).

106 Gavriil Popov, 'Vperedi S''ezd', *Ogonek*, vol. 18 (1989). In an earlier article, Popov argued that the main choice in the March 1989 elections was between these two variants of perestroika, and he appealed to the voters to support only the 'democratic' candidates. See Gavriil Popov, 'My–sami!' *Ogonek*, vol. 6 (1989).

107 See, for example, Leonid Batkin, 'Stat' Evropoy', *Vek XX i mir*, vol. 8 (1989); and id., 'Dissident', *Znani-Sila*, vol. 11 (1989) pp. 45–7. In contrast to his earlier willingness to rely on the Communist Party leadership for the advancement of reforms, now Batkin viewed the resentment of 'wide masses' of the population against the Brezhnev era, and the expression of this resentment through the newly liberalised media, as the main hope

for further democratisation. In Batkin's opinion, it was this popular sentiment, publicly expressed, rather than the elite intellectual 'dissident' movement which 'essentially exhausted itself and was suppressed' by 1985, that has become the genesis for a new '[o]pposition' to the authorities. Batkin argued that this popular opposition was not to be feared – at least not by the liberals – for it was 'a necessary element of any modern and healthy society'. Batkin, 'Dissident', p. 47.

108 Andrey Sakharov, 'Stepen' svobody', *Ogonek*, vol. 31 (1989).

109 Yury Feofanov, 'Tak sozdaetsya narod', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 24 (1989).

110 Roal'd Sagdeev, 'Ispytanie demokratiey', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 25 (1989). The idea of political pluralism became a prominent goal of the Russian liberals during the Gorbachev era. The introduction of the concept is discussed by Archie Brown in Chapter 2 of the present volume.

111 Vladimir Baranovsky, 'Parliamentarizm: evropeyskiy rakurs', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 27 (1989).

112 Sakharov, 'Stepen' svobody'.

113 Aleksandr Gel'man, 'Dva avtoriteta v odnoy lodke', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 31 (1989).

114 Aleksey Yemel'yanov, 'Pered sessiey', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 39 (1989).

115 Daniil Granin, 'Moment vybora', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 52 (1989). Granin was writing in anticipation of the Second Congress of People's Deputies, where, he argued, the struggle between the pro- and anti-reform factions would renew, and where liberal deputies would play a crucial role in deciding it.

116 Vitaly Tret'yakov, 'I Verkhovnyy, i Sovet' *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 33 (1989). The creation of the Inter-Regional Group was seen as of the utmost importance by many liberals, who viewed it as another step towards political pluralism and a functioning system of democratic checks and balances. Thus, when in January 1990 the group declared itself as a formal political opposition during the Second Congress of People's Deputies, economist Gennady Fil'shin characterised it as '[t]he most positive result of the Congress', adding that '[o]pposition is a component part of any democratic state… the creation of the opposition is a factor that is even more important than a multi-party system'. See Gennady Fil'shin, 'Shag vpered?' *Ogonek*, vol. 4 (1990).

117 Viktor Loshchak, 'Vremya i den'gi', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 42 (1989).

118 Len Karpinsky, 'Parallel'nye kolonny: kuda vedut marshruty?' *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 47 (1989). In 1992, Len Karpinsky would succeed Yegor Yakovlev as Editor-in-Chief of *Moskovskie novosti*.

119 Gdlyan had been recently dismissed as the Group Head in charge of the USSR Prosecutor's Office criminal investigation of government corruption in Uzbekistan, amidst allegations, many made by Gdlyan himself, that his dismissal was politically motivated and stemming from evidence of corruption against some members of the CPSU Politbureau, most notably the conservative Yegor Ligachev.

120 Yury Bandura, 'Gotovimsya k s''ezdu', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 50 (1989).

121 Georgy Khatsenkov, 'Iz plena mistifikatsiy', *Ogonek*, vol. 14 (1990).

122 Mikhail Bocharov and Veniamin Yarin, 'Poslednyaya nadezhda', *Ogonek*, vol. 51 (1989).

123 Yarin's call for solidarity [*splochennost'*] with the leadership was made all the more striking by the fact that he previously astonished a VTsSPS Congress with an appeal for the trade unions 'to become an opposition to the party'. *Ibid*. Now, however, Yarin temporised his position, calling instead simply for the inclusion of several 'workers' representatives' into the party's leading organs. Interestingly enough, in March 1990, Yarin would be the only worker appointed to Gorbachev's Presidential Council. Around the same period, Yarin began to display publicly his concern about the direction being taken by economic reforms and, particularly, their impact on workers, adumbrating thereby some of the divisions that would occur in Russian liberalism towards the end of perestroika.

124 In this debate, perestroika liberals were reliving the dilemma which the Kadets confronted in 1905–1906, when their left wing advocated a determined opposition to the government until it would agree to relinquish power, while the right wing (and the Octobrists) argued for co-operation with authorities for the sake of order and stability. On this dilemma of pre-revolutionary Russian liberalism, and on the failure of the early Russian liberals to obtain political power and to promote their agenda during 1905–1917, see Paul Miliukov, *Russia and Its Crisis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1905); Michael Karpovich, 'Two Types of Russian Liberalism: Maklakov and Miliukov', in Ernest J. Simmons (ed.), *Continuity and Change in Russian and Soviet Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955) pp. 129–75 and Geoffrey A. Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment: Government and Duma, 1907–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

125 Gavriil Popov, 'Vtoroy s''ezd', *Ogonek*, vol. 50 (1989).

126 These proposals were advocated most prominently, both at the Second Congress and elsewhere, by Andrey Sakharov. See his *Moscow and Beyond: 1986–1989* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), pp. 151–5.

127 Nikolay Popov, 'Krisis doveriya – krizis vlasti', *Ogonek*, vol. 7 (1990).

128 Popov based his statement on the results of a poll conducted by Tat'yana Zaslavskaya's All-Union Centre for the Study of Public Opinion (VTsIOM), which she founded in January 1988.

129 For an interpretive chronology of the changes in Eastern Europe, see Bernard Gwertzman and Michael Kaufman, *The Collapse of Communism* (New York: Times Books, 1990).

130 Anatoly Druzenko, 'Pol'skiy povorot', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 25 (1989).

131 The influence of the 1990 elections in Moscow, where the liberals scored one of their most important victories, on the shift in the balance of power between the Communist leadership and the liberal movement is well described in Colton, *Moscow*, pp. 604–30; and, in more detail, in Timothy J. Colton, 'The Politics of Democratization: The Moscow Election of 1990', *Soviet Economy*, vol. 6 (1990) pp. 285–344.

132 Grigory Vaynshteyn, 'Chto tam – za pravym povorotom?' *Ogonek*, vol. 11 (1991).

133 Vaynshteyn acknowledged, however, the need for further improvement in such areas as legal guarantees.

134 The activities and beliefs of some of these democratic movements are examined in M. Steven Fish, *Democracy from Scratch: Opposition and*

Regime in the New Russian Revolution (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), which adopts a structural–associational approach, and in Alexander Lukin, *The Political Culture of the Russian 'Democrats'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), which looks at them from a perspective of political culture.

135 For the programme of Democratic Russia, see *Russkaya Mysl'*, 2 February, 1990. It was based on a proposal by the Inter-Regional Group; see an article by the group's secretary and one of the leaders of Democratic Russia, Arkady Murashev, 'Mezhregional'naya gruppa', *Ogonek*, vol. 2 (1990). For the history of Democratic Russia, see Julia Wishnevsky, 'The Rise and Fall of Democratic Russia', *RFE/RL Research Report,* vol. 1 (1992) pp. 23–7; and Yitzhak M. Brudny, 'The Dynamics of "Democratic Russia", 1990–1993', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 9 (1993) pp. 141–70.

136 See, for example, the collection of articles by one of Democratic Russia's leaders and, from March 1990 to November 1991, the secretary of the Presidium of the Russian Supreme Soviet, Sergey Filatov, *Na puti k demokratii* (Moscow: Moskovskiy Rabochiy, 1995), pp. 81–2; and Yitzhak M. Brudny, 'Ruslan Khazbulatov, Aleksandr Rutskoi, and Intraelite Conflict in Postcommunist Russia, 1991–1994', in Timothy J. Colton and Robert C. Tucker, *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership* (Boulder: Westview, 1995), pp. 75–6, 102. The ideological and the political divisions of the Russian liberals often did not correlate, with many political groups retaining Democratic Russia's ideological malleability, while others modified their ideology to suit the personal ambitions of their leaders. This chapter concentrates on the ideological splits, making only passing references to the political affiliations of the individuals examined.

137 Sergey Stankevich, 'Kak rasporyadit'sya vlast'yu?', *Ogonek*, vol. 17 (1990). Stankevich also cited the lack of legal, media and economic infrastructure necessary for the establishment of independent political parties, testifying thereby to the weakness of civil society in the late Soviet Russia. This weakness would persist into the post-Soviet period, serving as one of the main causes for the insecurity of liberal and democratic reforms in Yel'tsin's Russia. See Richard Rose, 'Russian as an Hour-Glass Society: A Constitution without Citizens', *East European Constitutional Review*, 4 (Summer 1995) pp. 34–42.

138 In particular, Stankevich emphasised the potential to use the power of the new Soviets to further the democratic transformation of society (see *ibid*.), and would soon be elected Deputy Chairman of the Moscow City Council. Stankevich argued that in the absence of a developed civil society, his course of action was a 'pragmatic' one. Nevertheless, the insufficient attention that the Russian liberals accorded to the process of party formation became a major liability for the establishment of a stable liberal polity in the aftermath of 1991. In another testimony to the rapid evolution of the liberal thinking during *perestroika*, Stankevich reportedly defended the one-party system in 1988. See V.V. Fadeev, *Ocherk 88 goda: pokhozhdeniya neformala* (Moscow: Russkoe slovo, 1992), 1, p. 41.

139 Igor' Klyamkin, 'Trudnyy spusk s ziyaushchikh vysot', *Ogonek*, vol. 5 (1990).

140 Although during the early period of perestroika, there was a commonality between the views of Batkin and Burlatsky, they diverged as Gorbachev's

process of reform accelerated. Batkin became a self-styled liberal, while Burlatsky remained committed to a more conservative stand on political and economic reform.

141 Compare, for example, Burlatsky's 1989 argument in *Novoe myshlenie: Dialogi i suzhdeniya o tekhnologicheskoy revoliutsii i nashikh reformakh*, 2nd edn., enl. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1989), Chapter 17 'Demokratizatsiya', with his March 1990 belief that 'the most important task [was] to establish the principle of a multi-party system' in Burlatsky, *Russkie gosudari*, p. 265. Klyamkin's views underwent an evolution similar to those of Batkin. Although Klyamkin espoused the 'realist' view in early 1990, by the end of the year he modified his position in a more radical pro-democratic direction, calling upon liberals to quit the CPSU and to support Democratic Russia. At the same time, however, Klyamkin retained significant misgivings about the feasibility of a rapid liberal transition in Russia, described by him as 'an attempt to leap into democracy and a market'. See Igor' Klyamkin, 'Mozhet li Gorbachev zabrosit' sotsializm', *Zhurnalist*, 12 December, 1990; and *id*., 'Bez demokraticheskogo dvizheniya nasha pravyashchaya elita nikogda ne perestroit sebya', *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 23 January, 1991.

142 See Vladimir Glotov, 'Oktyabr' "Demokraticheskoy Rossii"', *Ogonek*, vol. 45 (1990). On the founding congress of Democratic Russia, see Brudny, 'Dynamics', pp. 149–50; and Dunlop, *Rise of Russia*, pp. 102–6.

143 See Travkin's comments at the Democratic Russia's founding congress in *Izvestiya*, 20 October, 1990; see also John B. Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 103. On the creation of Travkin's Democratic Party and its programme, see 'My–za grazhdanskiy mir', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 11 (1990) and 'Demokraticheskaya partiya Rossii', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 21 (1990). See also an interview with Travkin and Yevgeny Ambartsumov, who joined the party and was one of its electoral candidates, 'Postavit' vo glavu ugla', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 11 (1990).

144 See Brudny, 'Dynamics', p. 150. Oleg Rumyantsev, for example, declared that he placed himself 'outside the [Social Democratic] party framework' for the duration of the Democratic Russia congress and stressed the need for all participants to 'identify themselves with the "Democratic Russia" movement', rather than with the organisations which they represented. (See Glotov, 'Oktyabr''.)

145 Oleg Bogomolov, 'Ne mogu snyat' s sebya viny', *Ogonek*, vol. 35 (1990).

146 Klyamkin, 'Trudyy spusk'.

147 *Ibid*. Emphasis in the original.

148 Sergey Panasenko, 'Kak nam stat' razvivayushcheysya stranoy?' *Ogonek*, vol. 27 (1991).

149 Stanislav Shatalin, 'Ekonomika krivykh zerkal', *Ogonek*, vol. 20 (1990).

150 Pavel Bunich, 'Chto mozhet pravitel'stvo, chto khochet narod?', *Ogonek*, vol. 18 (1990).

151 Oleg Bogomolov, 'Peremena dekoratsiy', *Ogonek*, vol. 23 (1990). Bunich's reaction to Ryzhkov's proposal was similarly unflattering. Refuting the government argument that it wished to avoid the social consequences of the Polish strategy of 'shock therapy', Bunich quipped that Ryzhkov's

programme was 'shock but no therapy'. (See the entry on Bunich in Archie Brown (ed.), *The Soviet Union: A Biographical Dictionary* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1990), p. 61.)

152 Bogomolov's indictment repeated, almost word for word, the charge that the liberal economist Popkova leveled against the government as early as May 1987, for which she was reprimanded by other liberals (see fn. 44). By 1990, such previously heretical criticism was not only uttered by leading economists, such as Bogomolov, but had become commonplace.

153 Viktor Sheynis, 'Most cherez propast''. *Ogonek*, vol. 38 (1990).

154 Fazil' Iskander, 'Chelovek ideologizirovannyy', *Ogonek*, vol. 11 (1990).

155 This was a dramatic shift from the position held by many liberals only a year earlier. Discussing the requirements of the economic reform in February 1989, Igor' Klyamkin, for instance, argued for an 'ideological revolution' in the economic thinking, similar to one accomplished in China. Such a change, Klyamkin believed, 'is not a repudiation of ideology ... [or] of ideological stimulation of economic activity', but 'is a search for such ideology that would help the man to adjust to the economic stimuli'. Klyamkin, 'Pochemu trudno govorit' pravdu', p. 236.

156 Shatalin, 'Ekonomika'.

157 Vsevolod Vil'chek, 'S''ezd i raz''ezd', *Ogonek*, vol. 24 (1990).

158 Vyacheslav Shostakovsky, 'V chem nashi raznoglasiya?' *Ogonek*, vol. 39 (1990).

159 Sergey Mulin, 'Men'sheviki stali respublikantsami. Na tri mesyatsa?' *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 47 (1990).

160 'Rozhdenie Partii', *Moskovskie novosti*, vol. 23 (1990).

161 On the history of the 'Five Hundred Days' plan, see Ed A. Hewett, 'The New Soviet Plan', in Alexander Dallin and Gail W. Lapidus (eds), *The Soviet System in Crisis: A Reader of Western and Soviet Views* (Boulder: Westview, 1991), pp. 383–98 and, for a personal perspective, Stanislav Shatalin, 'Tebe nado byt' prem'erom ...' in Andrey Karaulov, *Vokrug Kremlya* (Moskva: Slovo, 1991), vol. 2, pp. 185–201.

162 Grigory Yavlinsky, 'Chto dal'she?' *Ogonek*, vol. 44 (1990).

163 Yavlinsky's realisation that an effective economic reform has to enjoy popular support (and, therefore, the effect of reforms on the population must be taken into account) is in a stark contrast to the position eventually adopted by the more radical free-market liberals in Russia, most notably Yegor Gaydar. See Gaydar's description of his economic reform of 1991–1992 in Yegor Gaydar, *Dni porazheniy i pobed* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1996), pp. 152–73. In his memoirs, Gaydar characterised Yavlinsky's 'Five Hundred Days' programme as a predominantly political, or even 'publicistic', document. While belittling the economic merits of Yavlinsky's policy, Gaydar acknowledged that 'this programme remarkably superimposed itself on the political demands of the day, promising easy prescriptions for creating market happiness to the unsettled Russian society'. See *ibid*., p. 65. By contrast, Gaydar fully expected his own economic policy to result eventually in resignation of his government. See i*bid*., p. 105. (Of course, Yavlinsky was not the only liberal to advocate somewhat more gradual economic reform and to pay attention to popular opinion, lest it turn against the reformers altogether. See an early version of this warning by Andrey Nuykin in fn. 91.)

164 Gavriil Popov, 'Za chto golosuet Rossiya', *Ogonek*, vol. 10 (1990).
165 *Ibid*. Emphasis in the original.
166 Popov, 'Vtoroy s''ezd'.
167 Popov's call for a directly elected executive signified the liberals' recognition of their public appeal, and they saw these direct elections as another guarantee against the possibility of the bureaucratic apparatus dominating the Soviets.
168 Quoted in the report on a round-table discussion on the history and prospects of perestroika, organised by the newspaper *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, in Georgy Rozhnov, 'Ne budite nochnogo storozha', *Ogonek*, vol. 19 (1991).
169 It is suggestive that Popov was gradually expanding the predicted length of this regime. In December 1990, he envisioned that the transitional period would last two to three years (see Gavriil Popov, 'Perspektivy i realii', *Ogonek*, 50 (1990)); while by May 1991, Popov believed that it would take five to fifteen years (see Rozhnov, 'Ne budite').
170 Despite these similarities, however, Popov's position had a qualitative difference from that of the 'soft authoritarians'. While Migranyan argued for a regime that would maintain cultural and economic freedom but keep political activity under a tight control until the economic transition was accomplished, Popov wanted to preserve a substantial degree of democracy and, specifically, a system of 'checks and balances' that would constrain the executives in his 'administrative regimes', namely direct elections of the executives, independent legislatures, and an opposition party. Migranyan's views during this period also underwent some modification, but remained largely consistent in their main features. In 1990, for example, he argued that 'strong leadership is needed to push through marketizing reforms that would create an organized social and political base for institutionalized democratic politics'. (Andranik Migranyan, 'Gorbachev's Leadership: A Soviet View', *Soviet Economy*, vol. 6 (1990) p. 159.) Migranyan originally made this argument in July 1989 in 'Dolgiy put' k evropeyskomu domu', *Novyy mir*, vol. 7 (1989) pp. 166–84.
171 Vladimir Tikhonov, 'Zhit' bez illuziy', *Ogonek*, vol. 36 (1990).
172 Pavel Bunich, 'Est' li vykhod?' *Ogonek*,' vol. 7 (1991).
173 Sergey Panasenko, 'Nadezhna li opora', *Ogonek*, vol. 16 (1990).
174 Grigory Vaynshteyn, 'Otchuzhdenie', *Ogonek*, vol. 26 (1991).
175 Larisa Piyasheva, 'Umom ponyat' Rossiyu', *Ogonek*, 44 (1990). Piyasheva's economic ideology resembled, in Alec Nove's view, 'a mixture of Hayek, Friedman and Thatcher'. See Nove, 'The Rise of Non-Leninist Thinking on the Soviet Economy', Chapter 3 of this volume, p. 48. In 1992, Piyasheva would become Gavriil Popov's chief aide for retail privatisation, resigning in September of that year after a conflict with Anatoly Chubais, Yel'tsin's head of the State Privatization Committee, following a disagreement about the appropriate privatisation scheme for Moscow. On the debate between the Moscow authorities under Popov and the Gaydar government over the appropriate strategy of privatisation (as well as the economic reform in general), see Gavriil Popov, 'Yegor Gaydar and the IMF Make Gavriil Popov Leave His Post', *Moscow News*, 19 February, 1993. In line with his earlier views, Popov argued that the Gaydar model of economic reform could be

effective only given 'a sufficiently long stage of a tough authoritarian regime', which could 'protect emergent capitalists until they organize their businesses so effectively as to be able to pay good wages to their employees and thus take the masses out of the zone of discontent and protests'. The absence of 'such power in Russia', in Popov's opinion, doomed the Gaydar model. For a more extensive version of Popov's criticism, see his *Snova v oppozitsii* (Moskva: Galaktika, 1994).

176 Sergey Panasenko, 'Vybiraya svobodu', *Ogonek*, vol. 5 (1990).

177 Grigory Yavlinsky, for instance, became a consistently outspoken critic of the economic policies pursued by successive governments under the Yel'tsin presidency, especially those of radical price liberalisation, corruption-tainted 'insider' privatisation, and lack of meaningful demonopolisation. See, for example, his *Uroki ekonomicheskoy reformy* (Moscow: EPItsentr, 1993), p. 93, describing Gaydar's economic programme as 'a regime of vulgar liberalization', which 'led to release of super-monopolistic monsters, traditions, relations, systems and connections of a command economy'. More recently, Yavlinsky located one of the main causes of Russia's economic crisis in its political underdevelopment, namely the authoritarian and 'super-presidential' Constitutional system, and a lack of democratic state institutions and a civil society. See Grigory Yavlinsky, *Krizis v Rossii: konets sistemy? nachalo puti?* (Moscow: EPItsentr, 1999).

178 This point is elucidated in Archie Brown, 'The Russian Crisis: Beginning of the End or End of the Beginning?' *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 15 (1999) pp. 56–73.

179 *Ibid.*, p. 57. The detrimental economic consequences of Russian liberals' neglect of the need for state-based market-supporting institutions are examined in more detail in Michael McFaul, 'State Power, Institutional Change, and the Politics of Privatization in Russia', *World Politics*, vol. 47 (1995) pp. 210–43.

180 Gaydar, *Dni porazheniy i pobed*, p. 365.

181 *Ibid.*, p. 366. Gaydar's comment represents, perhaps, a belated convergence of many Russian liberals to the position elaborated by Robert Dahl in an influential 1993 essay, where he argued that strictly free-market economies were incompatible with liberal democracy. Acting through channels of political communication that a democracy provides, interest pressure groups will always force the state to undertake some degree of interference in, and regulation of, the economy. See Robert A. Dahl, 'Why All Democratic Countries Have Mixed Economies', in John W. Chapman and Ian Shapiro (eds), *Democratic Community* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 259–82; see also his 'Why Free Markets Are Not Enough', *Journal of Democracy*, 3 (1992) pp. 82–9.

182 The inability of Russian liberals to evolve the concept of *pravovoe gosudarstvo* into a notion as robust as its Anglo–American or German counterparts is, of course, only a partial explanation of Russia's failure to create a law-based state. A more complete analysis would also take account of the sheer rapidity with which legal norms became outdated and new ones were promulgated by a wide variety of law-making bodies (including, notably, the virtually unconstrained Presidential power to issue edicts); of

the absence of a deep-rooted legal culture in Russia; and of the sheer reluctance of Russian political institutions to accept legal constraints on their behaviour. As legal commentator Yury Feofanov presciently remarked in 1991 with respect to the last aspect, 'The limits of law are not always comfortable for executive and administrative authority, especially if it is not accustomed to living within a legal regime'. Yury Feofanov, 'Pravo i nasha zhizn': Mne dorog prestizh vlasti', *Izvestiya*, 27 February, 1991.

183 The Russian state's difficulty in establishing a functioning legal system, capable of enforcing its judgments, and the tendency of Russian economic actors to rely on the system of patron-client networks, rather than to shift to a reliance on law, are explored in Kathryn Hendley, 'Legal Development in Post-Soviet Russia', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 13 (1997) pp. 228–51.

184 On this remissness of Russian liberals, stemming, to a significant degree, from failures of political leadership, see Archie Brown, 'Political Leadership in Post-Communist Russia', in Amin Saikal and William Maley (eds), *Russia in Search of Its Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 28–47 and Brown's 'Politika liderstva v Rossii', *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universitet: Seriya 18: Sotsiologiya i politologiya*, vol. 2 (1998) pp. 59–77.

185 For an examination of the evolution of foreign policy views in Russia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, see Margot Light, 'Foreign Policy Thinking', in Neil Malcolm *et al.*, *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 33–100.

186 The prevalence and popularity of this rhetoric forced, however, many liberal politicians to incorporate nationalistic notions into their ideology. Sergey Stankevich provided a programmatic statement of this emerging consensus in his famous essay 'Derzhava v poiskakh sebya', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 28 March, 1992. This consensus was most evident in the greater nationalistic rhetoric of Russian liberals in the area of foreign affairs. See Alex Pravda, 'The Public Politics of Foreign Policy', in Malcolm *et al.*, *Internal Factors*, pp. 172–4, 179–82. Yitzhak Brudny argues, however, that Russian liberals, especially the free marketeers such as Gaydar and Chubais, failed to develop 'an ideology of liberal nationalism that could legitimize the democratic form of government, a market economy, and the non-imperial borders of the Russian state'. Brudny, *Reinventing Russia*, p. 261. In Brudny's view, this failure partially accounts for their low level of public popularity. See *ibid.*, pp. 259–65.

187 Of course, the current frailty of Russian liberalism should not be explained predominantly by the fact that Russia has not shared in the Western 'liberal era'. An equally, if not more, compelling factor is the more recent Soviet 'totalitarian' or, later, 'authoritarian', heritage, experienced by several generations of Russian society.

5

Transforming the 'National Question': New Approaches to Nationalism, Federalism and Sovereignty

Gail W. Lapidus

Introduction

The demise of Marxism–Leninism during the last years of the USSR was dramatically manifested in the transformation of Soviet approaches to the 'national question'. Marxist–Leninist theory, and Soviet ideology, had long treated national identities and loyalties as a relic of the past which would be eradicated under socialism, and viewed the 'federal compromise' which had created the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a transitional arrangement pending the ultimate fusion of the varied nations and peoples of the USSR in a new socialist community. The accession of Mikhail Gorbachev to the Soviet leadership, and the inauguration of an increasingly far-reaching programme of reforms, radically altered the entire political discourse surrounding issues of national identity, nationalism and federalism, as well as the relative power of central and republic elites. Gorbachev's reforms not only brought the 'national question' to the top of the political agenda; they altered the very premises of the discussion. Among ideologists and academic specialists, within the political leadership of the Communist Party, and in Gorbachev's own understanding of the issue, it is possible to trace not only a broadening critique of Stalinist approaches but the progressive erosion of Marxist–Leninist assumptions as well. The 'national question', in the form in which it had been inherited from the past, ceased to exist. Its place was taken by a major political struggle over the causes and consequences of rising national self-assertion, and over the nature and future of the Soviet federation itself, in which

sharp cleavages extending to the very top of the Soviet leadership became entwined with the broader struggle over reform. Issues of nationalism, federalism and sovereignty would remain contentious even after the demise of the USSR, as the Russian Federation itself embarked on a novel effort at state and nation-building.

These cleavages were the product of far-reaching conceptual as well as political changes unleashed by *glasnost'* and democratisation. They involved fundamental challenges to the ideological assumptions underlying Soviet nationality policy, a reassessment of the past history and present condition of national relations, important shifts in the definition of such key concepts as nationalism, federalism and sovereignty, and consideration of a whole range of structural and policy measures that would significantly alter the nature of the Union itself. In short, new political realities demanded a rethinking of the entire ideological legacy underlying Soviet nationality policy, and brought a growing recognition within an important segment of the Soviet leadership that a perestroika of the federal system was a necessary and indeed inseparable component of the larger process of reform.

The slowness of the Gorbachev leadership to appreciate the importance of these new and daunting challenges, and to develop an effective and timely response to them, contributed significantly to the unraveling and ultimately the dissolution of the USSR. Gorbachev himself would later acknowledge that the greatest shortcoming of his entire presidency was his failure to recognise the seriousness of the 'national question'.[1] At the same time, the fierce resistance of key groups within the Soviet establishment to departures from ideological and institutional orthodoxy sharply limited Gorbachev's freedom of manoeuvre, provided the leadership with highly tendentious and misleading analyses of unfolding events, and continuously blocked efforts to accommodate to new challenges.

It is therefore important to recall that the 'national question' was never initially a part of the reformist agenda. In launching the entire process of reform, the Soviet leadership – and Gorbachev in particular – never anticipated that the economic and political changes they contemplated would ignite nationalist mobilisation, and they clearly underestimated its explosiveness. As close advisor Anatoly Chernyaev commented in his memoirs, 'for a reformer of Gorbachev's magnitude it was a major, perhaps fatal mistake not to foresee what democratisation might mean for national issues'.[2] Sharing the widespread assumption that the Soviet Union had successfully resolved the 'national question', Gorbachev himself came to power relatively ill-prepared –

both by personal temperament and by previous political experience – to deal with the problem, and when it began to force itself to the centre of his attention, he revealed a certain irritation that such intensely emotional, indeed irrational, sentiments and preoccupations could divert attention from the larger struggle over reform.[3]

Nor were reform-minded scholars or intellectuals outside the political establishment any better prepared. By contrast with the discussions of economic and political reform which long antedated Gorbachev's accession to power, the national question was largely absent from their agenda as well. The pervasive conviction enshrined in Marxist–Leninist theory and in Soviet ideology that modernisation would erode particularistic loyalties and attachments and that socialism would bring about the rapprochement and ultimately the fusion of national groups;[4] the tendency to denigrate national sentiments as atavistic and unworthy of progressive intellectuals; the belief that a new Soviet identity had supplanted earlier national loyalties; and the assumption that a shared commitment to economic and political reform would unify all progressive forces on an all-Union basis, rather than dividing them along ethnic and republic lines, were shared by reformers inside and outside the political establishment alike.

The events of 1986–1991 rudely shattered these assumptions. The emergence of national movements whose demands increasingly focused on broadening republic sovereignty compelled analysts as well as policymakers to engage in fundamental rethinking of both Soviet assumptions about nationalism and of the nature of the Soviet multinational and federal system. The erosion of Marxist–Leninist ideology and the emergence of 'new thinking' about the national question was, therefore, an unintended consequence of political forces unleashed by the reform process rather than one of its sources, and the key actors in this drama were not primarily reform-oriented intellectuals in Moscow think-tanks but cultural elites and political activists in the non-Russian republics.

The national question in Soviet ideology

Both the theory and practice of Soviet nationality policy reflected a fundamental tension whose origins go back to the two competing ideologies of nineteenth-century Europe: nationalism and socialism. Nationalism identified the nation as the fundamental human community, and the vertical ties that linked its members as the most compelling social identity, while socialism assigned supreme importance to

the horizontal ties of social class which cut across national boundaries, and viewed national identities as transient and obsolete, destined to be superseded by a new socialist community. But the broader hostility of orthodox socialism to nationalism was tempered in practice by a recognition that support – however qualified – for the principle of national self-determination was essential if national movements were to be harnessed to the cause of social revolution. The early writings of Lenin and Stalin on the subject, like the 1903 Party Programme, sought to craft a position somewhere between the radical internationalism of such orthodox Marxists as Rosa Luxembourg and the Austro-Marxists' view of the nation as a central, enduring and valuable form of human community.

The central features of Leninist doctrine on the national question prior to 1917 consisted of three key elements: it provided the rationale for an effort to enlist the support of nationalist movements by creating a broad, if temporary, revolutionary coalition not only within Russia but internationally; it did so by explicitly affirming the right of national self-determination, including the right of secession, while promising full national cultural rights to national minorities within the framework of a socialist state; and it fought to preserve the unity and centralisation of the socialist party and to resist any concessions to national or federal demands. This programme enhanced the ability of the Bolsheviks to win the neutrality, if not the outright support of, the burgeoning non-Russian national movements as the Tsarist empire disintegrated under the pressures of World War I, and it contributed to their victory in the Civil War.

Yet the very success of the Bolshevik revolution created a fundamental dilemma for the new Soviet state. The 'Leninist compromise' that shaped the RSFSR in 1917–18 and the formation of the USSR in 1921–22 embraced ethno-territorial federalism as the organising principle of the new state and committed it to granting political–administrative recognition and limited cultural autonomy to a variety of national groups. At Lenin's insistence, republic sovereignty and the right of secession were inscribed in the Soviet constitution, however circumscribed they might be in practice, and even as the Bolshevik state engaged in the forcible reincorporation of most of the newly-independent borderlands of the Tsarist empire. A highly centralised Party organisation (and increasingly powerful mechanisms of coercion and repression) provided a powerful unifying force against the centrifugal pressures that the federal system might have generated. Nonetheless, the creation of a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – an ethno-territorial hierarchy based on what

Gregory Massell felicitously labeled 'tactical nation-states' – provided an institutional framework, a political legitimacy, and a cultural impetus for the assertion of group interests, values and demands.

While Stalin's views appeared largely congruent with Lenin's prior to the revolution, his approach to the 'national question' increasingly diverged from Lenin's in several key respects. His promotion of 'autonomisation' as a substitute for real federalism, and his measures against the so-called 'nationalist–socialists' in the Caucasus, precipitated a major breach between the two just before Lenin's death. But underlying this conflict was a more fundamental divergence. Stalin never fully shared Lenin's critical view of the Tsarist empire nor his concern that the enduring legacy of Great Russian chauvinism – including in the Party apparatus itself – would nullify all effort to achieve equality and mutual trust. Because Lenin tended to view nationalism in psychological terms as a reaction against oppression he sharply distinguished the nationalism of an oppressing nation from that of an oppressed one, and argued that far-reaching and indeed compensatory efforts were needed to achieve real equality. In a series of notes on the national question written just before his death, already highly critical of Stalin's policies, and suppressed inside the Soviet Union until 1956, Lenin wrote:

> For the proletariat it is not only important but essentially indispensable to win for itself the maximum of confidence of the minorities in the proletarian class struggle ... For that there is necessary the indemnification, in one way or another, by means of behaviour or concessions in regard to the minorities, of that mistrust, of that suspicion, of those insults, which the ruling 'great' nation had in the historical past brought them ... Nothing delays so much the development and consolidation of proletarian class solidarity as does national injustice, and offended members of minority groups are of all things most sensitive to the emotion of equality and to the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades, even through carelessness, even in the form of a joke. For this reason, in this case it is better to stretch too far in the direction of concessions and gentleness toward the national minorities, than too little.[5]

Stalin, by contrast, viewed the Russian empire not as the historic oppressor but as the benefactor of the non-Russian peoples. The glorification of the Tsarist past in Stalinist historiography transformed

the non-Russian peoples from the victims of Great Russian chauvinism to the perpetrators of nationalist deviation.

The resort to large-scale discrimination, repression and violence against minority nationalities was similarly antithetical to the core of Leninist doctrine as well as practice. It was directed not only against individuals accused of specific acts of disloyalty but against whole national groups on the basis of their national identity, and it extended to mass deportations of entire nationalities from their homelands.

In the course of subsequent decades, economic power and political control became increasingly concentrated in the hands of a predominantly Slavic central elite that identified Sovietisation with Russification and viewed expressions of national consciousness and self-assertion as a political threat. While the treatment of national minorities varied considerably from case to case as well as over time throughout the Soviet period, and gave rise to a major scholarly controversy in the West over whether the Soviet system was essentially 'nation-creating' or 'nation-destroying',[6] the fundamental dualism of Soviet practice – its commitment to an essentially unitary state clothed in the trappings of federalism, and to the simultaneous 'flowering' and 'merging' of nations – created the two poles of an ongoing political struggle long hidden from view.

The national question in the Brezhnev era

Khrushchev's attack on elements of the Stalinist legacy had important and liberalising consequences for nationality policy, but his militant utopianism also led to renewed emphasis on the rapprochement and ultimate fusion of nations and the possible elimination of the republics themselves. At the same time, Khrushchev's ill-fated experiments with economic decentralisation and regionalisation reinforced the long-standing conviction within the state and party apparatus that the centrifugal forces generated by the system could only be checked by extreme centralisation. While Khrushchev's reforms encouraged renewed discussion of a wide range of issues, serious scholarly efforts to modify conventional Soviet assumptions about national relations first surfaced in the Brezhnev era, as ethnographers and sociologists conducting empirical research on ethnic processes began to challenge both the dominant role of party ideologists in characterising inter-ethnic relations and some of the assumptions and clichés they typically invoked. It is enough to recall such well-worn phrases as the 'flowering and rapprochement of nations', and the 'emergence of a new historical

community – the Soviet people', to be reminded of the ideological straitjacket their efforts confronted.

A major, if somewhat esoteric, debate over terminology which erupted in the mid-1960s reflected an effort by a number of scholars to escape the stifling constraints of Stalinist orthodoxy concerning nations and their development.[7] During the 1970s and early 1980s scholars such as Yulian Bromley, Director of the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Ethnography in Moscow, and a number of his colleagues, sought to legitimate the role of ethnographers in analysing contemporary Soviet ethnic processes and to offer a more complex and subtle treatment of ethnic processes than official ideological positions allowed for.[8] Among the promising new directions pointed to by this work was the effort to add a subjective and psychological dimension to Stalin's rigid definition of 'nation' by making self-consciousness one of its core features, and to suggest that national identity was more enduring and less malleable than Party ideology had assumed.

But the obligatory tone of self-congratulation which permeated scholarly writings, the continuing ideological constraints surrounding the entire discussion of ethnic processes, and the narrow scope of permissible social science research all limited the ability of Soviet scholars to engage in serious study of inter-ethnic relations in Soviet society and to prepare either the political leadership or the public for the problems ahead. As one dissident ethnographer, Igor Krupnik, summed up the situation:

> The stringent ideological choice of ideas and opinions was intended to cut off all attempts at critical analysis and independent prognosis. The closed nature of demographic, sociological, and practically all contemporary statistical data destroyed for the majority of scientists the possibility of independent creative research and a feedback mechanism in the form of wide-ranging debate and discussion that prompts a response from one's colleagues. Finally, the possibility of analyzing the complicated problems of the day just on the level of closed memoranda or government publications either left only narrowly specialised, predominantly historical themes to the 'open press' or demanded publication of fulsome praise.[9]

Parallel to but distinct from these scholarly controversies over what constituted a nation, a series of policy debates bearing on the nature and future of the Soviet federal system was also under way in the late Brezhnev era. Two opposing tendencies, with conflicting diagnoses,

goals, and recommendations, contended for influence over policy. The dominant position within the political establishment advocated greater political and economic integration, the more rapid assimilation of the non-Russian nationalities into a larger Soviet community, and ultimately the abolition of the republics themselves. Other figures, however, particularly within the republics themselves, were quietly urging greater accommodation by the Soviet system to the needs and desires of diverse national groups and implicitly the preservation and strengthening of the republics.

The debates ranged, in extremely Aesopian language, over a whole gamut of sensitive political, economic and cultural issues: the balance to be struck between a unitary and centralised as opposed to a more federal and pluralist conception of the Union; the degree to which resource allocation should continue to be redistributive, subsidising the less-developed republics in the interest of equalisation; the desirability of continuing to pursue 'affirmative action' in higher education and employment rather than shifting to purely meritocratic criteria; the respective roles of Russian and local languages in the non-Russian republics; and whether to pursue an ethnically-differentiated demographic policy in the face of increasingly divergent regional birthrates.[10] While the Brezhnev leadership ultimately refrained from taking dramatic new initiatives in these areas, the most vocal public challenges to the status quo in the late Brezhnev era came from advocates of a more integrationist, coercive, Russo-centric, and assimilationist approach to these questions.

Coercive integrationism in the post-Brezhnev era

This approach appeared to gain additional influence with the accession of Andropov to the Soviet leadership. In his keynote address on the sixtieth anniversary of the formation of the USSR in December 1982, Andropov delivered an unusually sophisticated analysis of the nationality question which was a striking departure from the complacent optimism typical of such occasions. Reminding his audience that numerous problems demanded attention and that they could not be attributed solely to 'survivals of the past', he explicitly called for the formulation of a 'well-thought-out, scientifically substantiated nationalities policy'.[11]

Particularly striking on this occasion was Andropov's explicit use of the term *sliyanie* (merger or fusion) to describe the ultimate goal of Soviet nationality policy, in a passage quoting Lenin himself. The term

had rarely been used during Brezhnev's tenure and had not appeared in the Central Committee decree published under Brezhnev six months earlier announcing the forthcoming anniversary celebration. But it had made a striking reappearance in late 1982 in the speeches and writings of Richard Kosolapov, an important party theoretician of extremely conservative views and editor-in-chief of the Party theoretical journal, *Kommunist*. In an article published at the end of 1982, Kosolapov had explicitly quoted Lenin's words that the goal of socialism was not only to bring about the rapprochement (*sblizhenie*) of nations but their fusion (*sliyanie*) as well. 'As clear a statement as this', he had added, 'leaves no room for reinterpretation'.[12] Kosolapov had gone on to criticise the attempts of 'some social scientists' to either ignore Lenin's views on the subject or, worse still, to depict them as a form of Great Russian chauvinism. 'To put it bluntly', he had asserted, 'only a few years ago comrades who insisted on developing the idea of fusion in unadulterated form and comparing it with practice found themselves in a difficult situation with some scholarly organisations and journals…'.[13]

Clearly, Andropov's tenure in office was too brief to ascertain with any confidence whether his nationalities policies would in fact have taken the more coercive and unitary direction these statements seemed to portend. But several broad features of the Gorbachev coalition's initial approach to political and economic reform suggested considerable continuity with Andropov's. This early programme embraced three broad goals: first, to reassert effective central control over the strategic levers of power which had slipped away under Brezhnev by curtailing the excessive independence of local political machines (particularly in the Central Asian republics) and conducting purges of their key personnel; secondly, to arrest the deterioration of economic performance that jeopardised both domestic stability and international power by shifting from an extensive to an intensive pattern of economic development and pressing for economic acceleration and modernisation; and thirdly, to revive declining civic morale and restore a sense of social discipline by campaigns targeted at what were perceived as two major and visible sources of social corrosion: corruption and alcoholism.

The 'national question' did not figure directly in this strategy, which aimed at rationalising economic and political organisation on an all-Union scale, and emphasising efficiency over equity, in the interest of strengthening both control and performance. But in the multi-national and federal context of Soviet politics, this agenda would inevitably

impinge differentially on the interests of different national elites. What the Gorbachev leadership failed to realise was that by directly challenging many of the expectations and entitlements, political and economic, nurtured during the Brezhnev era, this agenda would prove to be an explosive one, and would contribute to the erosion of key sources of stability in national relations.

To mention just one example, when Gorbachev lent his support to proposals for expanding the economic role and rights of republics and regions, the view that economic stringency dictated sharp cutbacks in non-essential investment and that resource allocation to republics for social needs should be more directly linked to their performance threatened a sharp diminution of support for those republics most heavily dependent on central allocations. The Central Asian republics, with their rapidly expanding populations and urgent need for investments in social infrastructure, were most directly threatened by this shift. Coupled with the cancellation of the Siberian river diversion project, which foreclosed the prospect of abundant new sources of water for the irrigation of Central Asian cotton and other crops, these initial economic policies were a clear message that the shift from an extensive to an intensive pattern of economic development meant that Central Asia could no longer count on major investments from the centre but would have to rely far more heavily on its own internal resources.

The Gorbachev leadership's insistence on the need to restore discipline in cadres policy was equally unsettling to many republic elites. The attack on Brezhnev's policy of 'trust in cadres' reflected the view that a general laxness and insufficient exactingness toward cadres had permitted the creation of republican satrapies which had effectively escaped central control. As Gorbachev put it in his political report to the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress: 'At some stage, some republics, territories, regions and cities were placed outside the boundaries of criticism'.[14] Moreover, rejecting the view that 'affirmative action' on behalf of national minorities, including the use of informal quotas to insure adequate representation, was a legitimate consideration in personnel appointments, the new leadership harshly criticised the substitution of nepotism and favouritism for meritocratic criteria. The 'mechanical distribution of places and posts according to national criteria' was condemned as a 'vulgarisation of the very idea of internationalism'.[15]

Closely allied with a highly-publicised campaign against corruption, this new cadres policy resulted in massive purges of republic and local leaderships, and their replacement, in many cases, by trusted Russians sent from the centre. These purges, and the investigations of widespread

corruption which accompanied them, also struck most directly at the Central Asian elites.[16] Because of the different ways in which national elites in different parts of the country had built their political positions, the new orientations in economic policy and in cadres policy, coupled with the highly-publicised campaign against corruption, constituted an especially direct assault on the power and status of key Central Asian party and state officials.[17]

References to the need for due representation of all nationalities in the Party and government bodies of the national republics, a veiled call for increased appointments of Russians, coupled with advocacy of increasing the 'inter-republican exchange of cadres' – a euphemism for a policy of assigning trusted officials from the centre to key positions in the non-Russian republics – also seemed to foreshadow a more aggressive personnel policy by the new leadership. Moreover, cadres policies which rejected the preferential recruitment of ethnic minorities into political positions implicitly favoured the appointment of ethnic Russians to key positions in the central state and party apparatus. Indeed, fifty of the fifty-five all-Union ministers appointed between 1985 and 1987 were Russian, as were virtually all new Politburo members.

To what extent these early policies reflected the views of Mikhail Gorbachev himself remains unclear. It is likely that this assertive personnel policy reflected the proclivities of Yegor Ligachev, who had direct responsibility for cadres during this period. Indeed Gorbachev's own speeches at the time do not refer to the need to give due representation to all nationalities in party and government bodies in the national republics, nor do they call for the inter-republic exchange of cadres, while Ligachev, by contrast, strongly advocated such an approach in his speech to the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress and on other occasions. Moreover, by 1988–89, when Ligachev's influence in the leadership was considerably diminished, personnel policy took a different direction. Increasingly, officials appointed to the position of republic First Secretary were of the local nationality, and in some cases were figures who commanded some respect in their own republics.

If Gorbachev's views on economic and personnel matters gave primacy to considerations of efficiency over entitlements, and of integration over decentralisation, his views on nationality theory – while relatively sparse – were comparatively enlightened. They were largely free, for example, of the patronising attitude toward non-Russians reflected in ritual references to the debt of gratitude owed to the Russians for their sacrifices on behalf of others, a staple of Brezhnev's speeches on the subject. They also

avoided any hint that progress toward socialism would facilitate the gradual merger (*sliyanie*) of nations and nationalities. Indeed, in a possible allusion to Kosolapov's views Gorbachev affirmed that during the preparation of the party programme in 1985, he personally had opposed proposals by 'certain learned gentlemen' to incorporate in the programme the 'dangerous formulation' about the 'merging of nations' which Andropov himself had once endorsed.[18]

But in December 1986 the unintended consequences of the leadership's aggressive new approaches to resource allocation and to cadres policy were brought home most dramatically when, in the wake of economic policies perceived as detrimental to Central Asian interests, as well as massive purges of personnel on charges of corruption, the replacement of Dinmukhamed Kunaev, the ethnically Kazakh first secretary of the Kazakhstan party organisation, by Gennady Kolbin, a Russian, triggered massive rioting in the capital city of Almaty.[19] Gorbachev would later acknowledge that this appointment had been a serious mistake, commenting that he had acted, in general, 'according to the old rules', and that 'at the dawn of perestroika we were still far from being what we became'.[20]

But these early initiatives encountered growing difficulties and resistance on other grounds as well, and failed to arrest a further deterioration of the economic situation. By late summer 1986, Gorbachev and some – but by no means all – of his colleagues within the leadership had come to the conclusion that economic stagnation had its roots in deeper social and political problems, and that more far-reaching changes were needed if they were to be successfully addressed. Gorbachev's growing recognition of the socio-political sources of stagnation was in turn reflected in the evolution of his conception of perestroika. From its initial focus on economic acceleration and tighter political controls, it now expanded to encompass, in Gorbachev's words, 'not only the economy but all other sides of social life'. This redefinition of the whole meaning of reform, which now brought political reform to the centre of attention and which assigned a critical place to *glasnost'* and democratisation, would have far-reaching consequences for the national question in Soviet political life.

The impact of *perestroika* on the national question

In seeking to tap the sources of vitality, dynamism and innovation that had developed outside the framework of official institutions, Gorbachev's reforms progressively expanded the boundaries of legitimate economic,

social and political activity. The changes initiated from above created novel opportunities for the emergence and mobilisation of new social actors. In particular, the official endorsement of *glasnost'* and democratisation significantly altered the relationship of state and society, legitimising new forms of expression and activity, expanding the resources at the disposal of new groups, and altering the calculus of costs and benefits associated with political activism.[21] By transforming the structure of political opportunities, the reforms were the critical catalyst in mobilising a variety of grievances and providing them with new forms of expression.

During the first three years of the Gorbachev era, from 1985 until the spring of 1988, the progressive broadening of the scope of *glasnost'* provoked an upsurge of national consciousness that extended to virtually every region of the country. The delegitimation of Stalinism, closely linked as it was to the espousal of a socialist pluralism of ideas, gave official sanction to increasingly sharp critiques of Stalinist nationality policies, or indeed, to any practices that might be so labeled. It also called into question the entire gamut of assumptions, institutions, and values that had formed the core of Soviet nationality theory and policy over many decades, and nurtured the hope – and indeed the expectation – that long-standing grievances and injustices would now be rectified. Gorbachev's explicit acknowledgement, in the wake of mounting inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts, that Soviet scholarship had presented an excessively rosy view of Soviet achievements in national relations, his call for greater truthfulness in analysing real problems, and his explicit support for filling in the 'blank pages' in Soviet history, were taken as authoritative permission to reopen controversial issues of nationality policy previously closed to discussion.

Gorbachev's speech to the Central Committee plenum in January 1987, for example, included an acknowledgement that the problems brought to the surface by the demonstrations of December 1986 in Almaty were hardly confined to Kazakhstan, that the Party had committed real errors in nationality policy, and that the taboos which prevented serious discussion of these issues only exacerbated them. Blaming scholars for presenting excessively complacent assessments of Soviet reality, he called upon social scientists to engage in serious analyses of nationality problems.[22] It fell to Eduard Bagramov of the Institute of Marxism–Leninism, a leading ideologist on national relations and the well-known author of precisely such rosy assessments, to spell out the implications of this speech for future work on Soviet nationality theory and practice. In a major article in *Pravda*, Bagramov presented an exceptionally sharp critique of key features of traditional

approaches, and urged social scientists to contribute a more candid and realistic assessment.[23]

In the national republics as in Moscow, the extension of *glasnost'* to the national question opened the door to an ever-widening public discussion of highly sensitive issues, a virtual outpouring of long-suppressed resentments, and growing demands for fundamental policy changes. Under the umbrella of *glasnost'*, what had long been an Aesopian dialogue among intellectual elites was increasingly transformed into publicly-articulated demands by newly-emerging cultural and socio-political movements devoted to national revival, which adopted names like 'Awakening', 'Rebirth', and 'Revival' to convey their goals.

Out of an amorphous mixture of resentments and grievances that found growing expression in the local media, as well as at scholarly and cultural gatherings, cultural and intellectual elites in the national republics began to elaborate an increasingly coherent critique of a whole gamut of Soviet nationality policies based on an interpretation of the Soviet experience that directly challenged the prevailing official myths. Their efforts to treat the defence of human rights, religious freedom, support for pluralism and the rule of law as essential features of a new democratic political community were further bolstered by the release of significant numbers of former dissidents from prison or exile, many of whom had been early participants in the Helsinki Committees. This process of 'cognitive liberation' not only altered the whole discourse concerning national relations; it also sought to legitimise national self-assertion by identifying it both with international norms and with the processes of reform and democratisation initiated by the party leadership itself.

With the inauguration, in the spring of 1988, of a new stage of the reform process, which centred on the democratisation of political life and included a dramatic new departure – the introduction of competitive elections – the new intellectual currents nurtured by *glasnost'* coalesced into political programmes identified with embryonic new political movements. In the Soviet setting, given the ideological vacuum resulting from the delegitimation of Stalinism and increasingly of Marxism–Leninism as well, it was predictable that these new organisations (initially unofficial and informal but over time developing into structured socio-political movements) would be overwhelmingly, although by no means exclusively, national movements. Although the emerging political configuration embraced a broad spectrum of causes and orientations, including liberal–democratic,

Christian, social–democratic, monarchist, and 'green' movements, common nationality and shared historical grievances were among the most powerful of all potential bonds, and the small scale of the national republics and density of ties among their intellectual elites offered a natural basis for organisation. Emerging national movements in the non-Russian republics – beginning in the Baltic republics but spreading more broadly over time – increasingly adopted anti-imperial discourses and linked demands for political reform and democratisation with calls for greater republic sovereignty and, in some cases, for outright independence.

The emergence of a new, if rudimentary, parliamentary system following the 1989 elections opened a third stage in the reform process. The elections not only gave enormous impetus to the process of political mobilisation; they also had far-reaching consequences for the structure of power in the Soviet system, the role of the Communist Party, and the nature of centre–periphery relations. By compelling local party officials to become responsive to local constituencies, rather than exclusively to higher central organs, not only did the political reforms give unprecedented leverage to organised local groups; they also accelerated the fragmentation of the Party along republic and national lines.

This fragmentation was particularly dramatic in the Caucasus, where the Communist Party organisations of Armenia and of Azerbaijan entered into an increasingly bitter conflict over the status of Karabakh. Not only between republics but within republic party organisations growing national tensions, exacerbated by struggles between conservatives and reformers at the centre, were making it increasingly difficult to maintain party unity and discipline in the face of conflicting pulls. The problem became particularly acute in the Baltic republics and Moldova, as the radicalisation of the popular fronts brought increasing pressure to bear on the party organisations to back their programmes or risk losing popular support. The most dramatic challenge to party unity came in Lithuania, when its Communist Party – further emboldened by the political revolutions in Eastern Europe – declared its independence from Moscow. As segments of the republic party leaderships formed virtual coalitions with the people's fronts, some Russians and members of other non-titular nationalities in these republics expressed growing outrage at what they considered the leadership's deviation from party principles, and formed counter-movements to defend their interests.

The process of democratisation and the introduction of competitive elections was also accompanied by a progressive shift of political initiative

from the Party organisations to legislative bodies. In the republics as at the all-Union level, the newly-elected parliaments were no longer content to serve as docile rubber stamps; they began to view themselves as genuine arenas of public debate and policymaking, and as the vehicle for the legitimate expression of republic interests. As the political elites of the national republics emerged as major actors in the unfolding struggles over power and policy, they increasingly took on the role of defenders of republic interests against the centre, and of champions of greater republic economic and political autonomy.

The mounting economic crisis contributed directly to the escalation of such demands. Faced with increasingly erratic economic policies emanating from Moscow, republic elites pressed for ever greater local control over the economies and resources of their republics. The rhetoric of 'republic sovereignty', formally enshrined in the Soviet Constitution but for decades largely deprived of meaning, was increasingly invoked by newly-empowered political actors now seeking to give real substance to the claim.[24]

Language policy also became an important focus of these efforts, and played a significant role in widening political mobilisation. While debates over republic sovereignty and restructuring the Soviet federation were largely confined to economists and legal specialists, controversies over language policy exploded into major public demonstrations involving hundreds of thousands of participants. In the course of 1989, under pressure from these demonstrations, the parliaments of the non-Russian republics one after another passed laws which substituted the titular language for Russian as the state language of the republic. These laws not only challenged Moscow's efforts to maintain a uniform cultural space across the whole of the Soviet Union, and with it a unitary conception of the Soviet community, but they also challenged the hitherto dominant status of Russian-speakers in the republics, who until this point had experienced little pressure to learn the language of the republics in which they lived and worked. Because the new laws constituted not merely a symbolic gesture but potentially a major alteration in the relative status and opportunities of different ethnic groups, the debates around them were particularly divisive, and contributed to a sharpening of inter-ethnic tensions within the republics.

The election of Boris Yel'tsin to the Chairmanship of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet in May 1990, and the adoption of a declaration of sovereignty by the Russian Republic in June, opened a fifth and critical stage in this unfolding process: it joined the personal and political

conflict between Yel'tsin and Gorbachev to a struggle over the nature and future of the Soviet Union. Yel'tsin's embrace of a liberal and anti-imperial conception of Russian national identity had profound and far-reaching consequences: its effect was to dramatically sever the Russian Federation from the Soviet 'Centre' with which it had long been conflated.[25] Moreover, by associating Russia itself with the demand for republic sovereignty, and redefining Russia as an equal partner in the struggle to build a new federation of sovereign nations, Yel'tsin's actions gave support, legitimation, and a powerful new impetus to these demands. The call for republic sovereignty could no longer be ascribed to a handful of extremists or separatists in the Baltic or other non-Russian republics: they now emanated from the Russian heartland itself.

In short, *glasnost'* and democratisation unleashed a simultaneous cognitive and political revolution which transformed the nature of Soviet politics and, in the process, the 'national question'. By contributing to the erosion of the core values and institutions which had long served as the integrating forces in the Soviet multinational system, the Gorbachev reforms brought into question the entire definition of the Soviet political community and compelled a reassessment of the nature and future of the Soviet federation itself.

New political thinking on the national question

By contrast with the policy debates of the Brezhnev era, in which integrationist perspectives were in the ascendant, the main challenge to traditional Soviet approaches to the 'national question' now came from the advocates of national self-expression, decentralisation, and republic sovereignty. This 'new political thinking' about nationalism, national identity, and federalism called into question the central legitimating myths which had long provided the ideological underpinnings of Soviet nationality policy, including the myth of proletarian internationalism itself.

The point of departure of new approaches was the explicit abandonment of the illusion that the 'national question' could be once and for all time 'solved'. For decades, Soviet policy had been based on the expectation – deeply enshrined in Marxist–Leninist ideology – that modernisation and socialism would automatically erode national identities and loyalties and promote the creation of a new multinational community based on the equality, prosperity, harmony and growing uniformity of its members. Such illusions were now dispelled. The

focus, in Soviet rhetoric, on 'solving' (*reshenie*) the national question was increasingly replaced by a focus on 'managing' (*upravlenie*) it.

This shift went hand in hand with the growing recognition that these problems were not merely 'survivals of the past' but that Soviet policy had itself contributed to exacerbating national relations. Whether the problems had their roots in Stalinist distortions of Leninist principles, as the leadership maintained, or whether they derived from Lenin's own faulty approach to the issue of nationalism, as some scholars and activists now alleged, the whole Soviet record was now up for reassessment.[26] The need for such a reassessment was endorsed by the Institute of Marxism–Leninism itself, which now acknowledged, however reluctantly, that its previous understanding of these issues had been incomplete and distorted.[27]

Central to this shift was a reassessment of the nature of the Soviet state. Article after article in the daily press as well as in scholarly publications now proclaimed that, contrary to official assertions that the USSR was an equal federation of sovereign states, the Soviet Union was in fact a highly-centralised, virtually unitary state disguised in the trappings of a federation; its republics, insisted one historian, enjoyed less autonomy than had the provinces of the Tsarist empire. Moreover, as *glasnost'* also opened up public discussion of the formation of the Soviet system, and indeed of the Russian empire of which it was the heir, conventional Soviet accounts of the 'voluntary accession' of various regions and republics also came under challenge. A counter-historiography sought to demolish these myths by offering a more truthful accounting of the processes of territorial expansion and forcible conquest which had brought the territories and peoples of the region under Tsarist and Soviet rule.[28] The conventional treatment of the USSR as a multinational state was increasingly displaced by a discourse which drew on the experience and vocabulary of empire to characterise the Soviet system.[29]

The most sustained and bitter struggle over historical rectification – a struggle with far-reaching political implications – was conducted by elites and activists in the three Baltic republics to force the Soviet leadership to publicly acknowledge the secret protocol of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 and the forcible Soviet annexation of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia during the Second World War. The campaign initially met with the standard official denials. Leading officials in Moscow questioned the existence of the alleged protocol – whose full text was published for the first time in the Soviet Union in the Estonian language in 1988 – insisting that no original documents could be

found. A series of articles, conferences, and reports in the Baltic media documenting the events of 1939 in rich detail eventually paved the way for the creation of a special commission of the newly-elected Supreme Soviet to examine the question. The issue was a divisive one within the Moscow leadership. Aleksandr Yakovlev, who visited the Baltics in August 1988 and advocated a more accommodating approach to the national movements, later commented:

> I had to admit to them that we had an empire, that there really was a centre which dictated to the Republics. I had to agree with them. Anything else would have been blasphemy. So I supported them, and I still think I was right.[30]

In Politburo discussions Gorbachev himself opposed efforts to label the popular fronts 'extremist', urged the Party organisations to seek common ground and work with them, and insisted that democratic methods of Party work precluded the use of force.[31] However Yakovlev's views were not widely supported in the Party apparatus. In August 1989, in an effort to preempt the findings of the commission as well as planned commemorations of the event in the Baltic republics, the Soviet leadership was compelled to acknowledge the signing of the secret protocol and the subsequent revision of it. But it continued to deny that there was any connection between the protocol and the subsequent accession of the Baltic republics to the USSR, and insisted that the entire agreement had been voided in any case by the German attack on the USSR in 1941.

In the fierce debates that now raged over nationality policy countless other long-standing assumptions came under attack. The notion that the Soviet socialist system had destroyed all vestiges of the tsarist 'prison of nations' was challenged by the argument that the USSR was an empire even more oppressive than its predecessor. The myth that socialism had promoted economic equality among nations was supplanted by a bitter argument over who was exploiting whom. The very notion of Russians as benevolent 'elder brothers' was attacked as a patronising effort to disguise the reality of Russification, assimilation, and exploitation. Russians themselves began to complain with growing bitterness of this unprecedented and unjustified wave of Russophobia.

Another important feature of the new currents of thought about nationality issues was the novel value now attached to national distinctiveness. In an environment newly hospitable to the idea of pluralism, if not full-blown multiculturalism, the traditional view that

sliyanie – the convergence and ultimate fusion of nations and nationalities – was both a possible and a desirable goal of Soviet policy came under explicit attack. The disappearance of national diversity, it was now argued, would constitute an irreparable human loss.[32] Gorbachev himself expressed concern for national values in affirming, in January 1989, that '… we cannot permit even the smallest people to disappear, the language of even the smallest people to be lost; we cannot permit nihilism with regard to the culture, traditions and history of peoples, be they big or small.'[33]

The new concern with rediscovering, reviving, and protecting national groups and their cultural heritage not only repudiated earlier assimilationist goals; it attached new importance to the revival of national languages and cultures, and to the role of the national republics as a framework for defending national values and identities. If, during the Brezhnev era, advocates of circumscribing the powers of the republics, if not eliminating them altogether, were ascendant, the situation was now radically changed: with the emergence of republic cultural and political elites as major political actors this position – while retaining powerful adherents – could no longer go unchallenged.

Not surprisingly, the tide of national assertion which was sweeping across many of the non-Russian republics also gave new impetus and legitimacy to the public expression of Russian national consciousness, and to the view that Russia was itself a victim of Soviet rule. For much of Soviet history, Russian nationalism had been closely identified with Bolshevism as well as with empire – indeed, had been described in the West as a form of 'national Bolshevism' – and had viewed the preservation and expansion of centralised Soviet power as a primary goal. This view began to be openly challenged from a variety of political positions; the argument was now advanced that the conflation of Russian and Soviet identities had been detrimental to Russia's own development. Not only had Soviet rule deprived Russia of separate republic institutions through which its own political, economic and cultural interests could be advanced; Russian statehood had effectively been dissolved in all-Union institutions.

As the debate over Russia's declaration of sovereignty in 1990 made clear, advocates of republic political and economic sovereignty – whether in Russia or in other republics – did not necessarily view it as incompatible with the Union. Rather, the very elasticity and ambiguity of the term 'sovereignty' in Soviet discourse – a term which could embrace decentralisation, autonomy, and enhanced control over republic resources, as well as the whole gamut of arrangements from

federalism and confederalism to full independence – was precisely what attracted advocates of diverse political orientations. Moreover, demands for republic sovereignty could be presented as a return to Leninist norms, an effort to give real content to rights long enshrined in the Soviet constitution itself. Support for Russian republic sovereignty thus constituted a novel strain of liberal Russian nationalism which aspired to the creation of a Russian nation-state as an equal partner in a reconstructed federation of republics.[34]

The emerging new thinking on nations, nationalism, and republic sovereignty raised two key dilemmas for reformers, dilemmas which proved to be exceptionally divisive. The first was how to address escalating – and often competing – claims for national self-determination, particularly when they were not confined to the Union republics but were increasingly voiced by autonomous republics and even by national minorities lacking republic institutions of their own. In the case of the Union republics, which were formally endowed with sovereignty and the right of secession by the Soviet constitution itself, reformers were arguably seeking to give real content to rights already enshrined in Soviet law but whose exercise had been blocked. Advocates of changes in the status of the autonomous republics or of national minorities, by contrast, were compelled to base their argument on a more tenuous assertion of a broader right of national self-determination.

Influenced by the radical views of Andrey Sakharov and Galina Starovoitova, some members of the Inter-Regional Group of Deputies called for abolition of the entire multi-tiered structure of Soviet ethnofederalism, contending that only by giving equal recognition to all claims for national self-determination could the invidious hierarchy of national groups established by Soviet rule be overcome. Others feared that this approach in fact played into the hands of conservative forces at the centre who sought to use the autonomies to weaken the rights of the Union republics. In their view, measures ostensibly intended to enhance the rights of national minorities (such as the Law on Secession adopted by the Supreme Soviet on 3 April 1990, which permitted autonomous republics and even 'compact national groups' to hold separate referendums on secession) were really designed to thwart in practice the self-determination of the Baltic, and potentially other, union republics.[35] The second dilemma faced by the advocates of reform was the challenge of balancing support for the right of ethnic groups to full and free development with their commitment to human rights, usually defined as individual rights, a tension that

came to the surface only as the repressive features of the Soviet system began to be relaxed.

At the heart of much of the emerging new thinking about national relations was the repudiation of a striving for uniformity. Insisting that a country as vast and diverse as the USSR could not be treated as a monolithic whole, with uniform policies laid down by an omnipotent centre, reformers called for the formulation of differentiated policies suited to the distinctive features and needs of different regions of the country. The radical decentralisation of decision-making they advocated would in any case result in increasingly diverse patterns of economic, political and cultural life from republic to republic; in different kinds of ties between centre and periphery; and in diverse new relationships between republics and countries outside their borders. As early as 1989 Gorbachev himself had recognised that perestroika would proceed in different ways and at different speeds in different regions of the country. By 1991 he had been won over to the idea of an 'asymmetrical federation'. How, and even whether, these variations could be accommodated within the framework of a single political, economic and legal universe now emerged as a major subject of controversy.

Underlying the increasingly sharp struggle between traditional and reformist assumptions about nations and national identity were two contending visions of the Soviet future itself. While there were different emphases and views within each group, reformers tended to argue that the USSR should be reconstructed as a genuine federation, or even confederation, of sovereign national republics which should enjoy substantial economic and political autonomy in shaping the destiny of their historical homelands.[36] The centre, in their view, should carry out only those limited functions of foreign and security policy, and of overall economic co-ordination, delegated by the republics.[37] Conservatives, on the other hand, although giving lip service to reform of the federal system, assigned highest priority to preserving a highly centralised Union under Communist Party leadership and were fundamentally hostile to what they viewed as dangerous centrifugal forces. They viewed the entire territory of the Soviet Union as 'our common home', insisted there should be no corner of Soviet territory in which a Soviet citizen could not feel at home, and advocated the use of force where necessary to preserve Communist rule and suppress all manifestations of separatism.[38] The Gorbachev leadership, bitterly divided by these issues, struggled to find a position between the two around which a centrist consensus could be sustained.

The evolution of Gorbachev's views

As already noted, the Soviet leadership, and Gorbachev in particular, had failed to anticipate that this entire process of reform would reignite the 'national question', and they underestimated its potential explosiveness. In this as in other areas, Gorbachev's education was a rapid one; in two short years, between 1986 and 1988, swiftly moving events not only propelled what at first seemed an marginal issue to the top of the Soviet political agenda but radically transformed the leadership's understanding of it. Gorbachev himself would later admit that his initial failure to appreciate the importance of the issue was the single greatest failure of his leadership.[39] By 1989 Gorbachev had come to realise that the 'national question' was inescapably entwined with reform, and a restructuring of national relations was explicitly incorporated into the reform agenda. One year later, he was struggling to cope no longer with reform but with revolution. The 'national question' had been superseded by the question of the future of the Union itself.

Gorbachev would surely look back with irony on a speech he had delivered in Lithuania in June 1980 to mark the fortieth anniversary of its annexation to the Soviet Union. Entitled 'Friendship of USSR Peoples – An Invaluable Achievement', the speech is permeated with the official complacency and self-congratulation that was a hallmark of the Brezhnev era. Even after his accession to power, Gorbachev's expressed views on the subject still conveyed the traditional platitudes. In his speech of 8 May 1985 to mark the fortieth anniversary of Soviet victory in the Second World War Gorbachev affirmed that 'the blossoming of nations and nationalities is organically connected to their all-round drawing together. Into the consciousness and heart of every person there has deeply entered the feeling of belonging to a single family – the Soviet people, a new and historically unprecedented social and international community'.[40] While much of this constituted the typical Soviet rhetoric of the period, it was also the case that Gorbachev's own belief in some of the legitimating myths of the Soviet system strengthened his conviction that it could be successfully reformed.

Over the next four years, in response to the growing tide of national self-assertion across the USSR, Gorbachev's pronouncements on nationality policy underwent a radical change. The distance he had travelled is most dramatically evident if the optimism of these early speeches is compared with the sombre address he delivered on nationwide television on 1 July 1989 in the wake of mounting ethnic

violence in Soviet Central Asia. Expressing alarm at the 'tremendous danger' posed by growing national tensions and conflict, both to the fate of perestroika and to the integrity of the Soviet state, he warned that those who fanned such strife were 'playing with fire'. 'The present generation and our descendants', he asserted, 'will curse both those who pushed us on to this path and those who did not warn in time and stop the madness'.[41]

Gorbachev's evolution reflected both a broader process of learning about the scope and depth of his country's problems and a major shift in political strategy. His statements revealed a steadily growing awareness that national relations in the USSR were far more conflictual and problematic than he had previously realised. They presented an increasingly harsh assessment of the assumptions and policies that had aggravated them. They expressed a growing sensitivity to the grievances of national elites and a recognition that some accommodation to their demands was essential to the future of perestroika itself. But until the spring of 1991 they stopped short of sanctioning a significant devolution of economic and political power to the republics.

The change in Gorbachev's underlying assumptions was accompanied by a shift in policy as well. From an initial approach to reform which largely ignored the national question, his political strategy evolved over time to make a fundamental restructuring of the Soviet federal system – including new mechanisms for dealing with inter-ethnic relations – a key component of the reform programme. Both learning and policy change were in turn a reaction to rapidly unfolding events which made it clear that political coalition-building on behalf of reform could not be based exclusively on his original economic and political agenda, but had to accommodate the national aspirations of key republic as well as central elites. By 1989, a perestroika of national relations had moved to the top of Gorbachev's political agenda. As he confessed in his political report to the Supreme Soviet that year:

> It must be admitted that at the beginning of restructuring we by no means fully appreciated the need for updating nationalities policy. Probably we were too slow in resolving a number of urgent questions. Meanwhile, natural dissatisfaction with the economic and social problems that had accumulated began to be perceived as an infringement on national interests.[42]

Even before his accession to power Gorbachev had revealed himself to be a strong advocate of political and economic rationalisation and a

proponent of shifting from an extensive to an intensive pattern of economic development. Well into the mid-1980s economic reform was the prism through which he viewed other issues, and efficiency rather than equity was his primary focus. When he addressed problems of centre–periphery relations, it was primarily from the standpoint of how the republics might more effectively contribute to the development of a single, unified national economic complex. Gorbachev's speech on ideology at an all-Union conference in December 1984, for example, typically gave priority to the need for 'a rational distribution of productive forces and their further integration into the overall national economic complex', just as his remarks at the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress in February 1986 expressed impatience with the parasitic attitude of some republics which sought to live, in effect, at the expense of the rest, and to promote local interests without making an appropriate contribution to the welfare of the Union as a whole.

Gorbachev's political report to the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress, on 25 February 1986, like his later statements, was free of the Russocentric thrust characteristic of Brezhnev's pronouncements. The nationality issue occupied only a marginal place in his lengthy report, another indication of its marginal claim on his attention, and primarily in the context of economic policy. While Gorbachev took a favourable view of expanding the economic role of republic and local organs in order to strengthen the territorial aspects of economic planning and management, he warned yet again of the dangers of localism and of parasitism, and stressed once more the importance of linking resource allocation to the efficiency of each republic. Finally, his remarks treated the growing interest in national heritage and roots as a healthy and desirable phenomenon, while at the same time warning against the tendency toward self-isolation.[43] They acknowledged that 'contradictions are inherent in any development, and they are inevitable in this sphere as well' and urged, in an almost routine way, the need for special sensitivity and circumspection in dealing with national issues.

These 'contradictions' became increasingly visible over the course of the next few years. The demonstrations in Almaty in December 1986 were the first in a series of jolts that would transform the Soviet leadership's view of nationality relations from complacency to alarm. Gorbachev's speech to the Central Committee plenum in January 1987 included an acknowledgement that the problems brought to the surface by the Almaty demonstrations extended far beyond Kazakhstan. He admitted that the Party had committed real mistakes in

nationality policy, and that the taboos which had prevented serious discussion of these problems had only served to aggravate them. Blaming scholars for excessively rosy assessments of Soviet reality – rather unfairly, given the enormous ideological constraints and bureaucratic pressures on Soviet social science – he called on Soviet social scientists to stop depicting national relations in terms 'more reminiscent of complimentary toasts rather than of serious scientific studies'.[44] Gorbachev's recognition of the limitations of existing Soviet scholarship, and his call for serious scholarly analyses of nationality problems was an open invitation to extend the scope of *glasnost'* to this domain. It was quickly taken up by scholars in the national republics as well as in Moscow.

In subsequent months the first, tentative airings of grievances encouraged by *glasnost'* mushroomed into increasingly sharp discussions, escalating demands, public demonstrations of growing frequency and scale, and increasingly organised protest. Gorbachev himself was directly exposed to the rising current of national feeling when he visited Estonia and Latvia in the spring of 1987. In conversations with workers as well as cultural figures, he admitted that the Baltic republics' road to socialism had been thorny and complex, and acknowledged 'omissions' and 'miscalculations' in party policy. But his report to the Politburo remained largely optimistic about the popular mood in the Baltics, suggesting it would be sufficient to combat the faults of particular bureaucrats to remove dissatisfactions.

By the summer of 1987, the leadership found itself faced with a mounting wave of demonstrations. In the Baltic states they reached a crescendo on the anniversary of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact on 23 August. Even Red Square became the scene of public demonstrations for national rights: in July 1987 Crimean Tatars assembled there to demand the restoration of their homeland. Less dramatic and publicly visible, but also of concern, were the growing expressions of grievances over language and cultural policy in a number of republics, and of environmental protests that were given powerful new impetus by the catastrophe at Chernobyl.

In the autumn of 1987, still seeking to assimilate the lessons of Almaty and of continuing manifestations of national unrest, the Gorbachev leadership issued its first major statement on national relations. In an editorial in the Party's ideological journal, *Kommunist*, the conventional clichés about the achievements of socialism in resolving the nationality problem were joined to a novel acknowledgement that 'negative manifestations' like nationalism, chauvinism, and localism

might have deep structural roots.[45] Further, while the article deplored the inadequacies of Soviet social science in addressing nationality problems, it acknowledged that it would have been 'unpleasant' to have spoken frankly, in earlier times, of mistakes. Finally, amidst the conventional and unpromising list of policy recommendations there appeared, alongside the usual exhortation to strengthen training in the Russian language, a reference to the need for improving the teaching of national languages in Russian schools.

While it announced no major new departures in either theory or practice, the editorial reflected the broader impact of *glasnost'* on the treatment of nationality problems. By endorsing and encouraging a more frank acknowledgement of real problems, and criticising the long-standing tendency to exaggerate Soviet achievements while sweeping problems under the carpet, it licensed more extensive reassessments of the issues and more radical critiques of traditional practices, both at the centre and in the national republics.

By the end of 1987, the leadership's earlier view of the nationalities question as marginal was giving way to a recognition that it was becoming an increasingly important focus of political problems. In a speech marking the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution, Gorbachev indicated that perestroika and democratisation were having important consequences for national relations, and that the Party intended to address the issue in greater depth in the near future. These plans had crystallised, by early 1988, into a decision to devote a special plenum of the Party's Central Committee to the issue, to be convened in the autumn. In a striking demonstration of how far his own views had evolved under the pressure of events, Gorbachev now identified nationalities policy as 'the most fundamental, vital issue of our society' and called for a thorough review of both theory and practice.[46]

In the summer of 1988 the Soviet leadership confronted the worst crisis yet in national relations. Long-standing Armenian claims to Nagorno–Karabakh, an autonomous enclave within the Azerbaijan SSR populated largely but not exclusively by Armenians, escalated into massive demonstrations in both Armenia and Nagorno–Karabakh demanding the territory's transfer to the Armenian Republic.[47] Provoked by this threat to the territorial integrity of their republic, Azeris responded with counter-demonstrations and escalating violence that culminated in a massacre of Armenian residents in Sumgait.

The conflict over Nagorno–Karabakh highlighted the political dilemmas created by the Soviet leadership's endorsement of democratisation, as well as its apparent willingness to redress some of the crimes of the

Stalin era. In the case of Karabakh, Moscow's posture encouraged Armenian expectations that past violations of their rights would be rectified. But any significant alteration of the status of Karabakh would inevitably have created a confrontation with Azerbaijan. Caught in what was essentially a zero-sum situation, with violence escalating on both sides, Gorbachev concluded that no satisfactory solution could be found and – at the cost of alienating both sides – he placed the territory under direct rule from the centre. The eruption and escalation of the Karabakh crisis dramatically highlighted the extent to which, here as in other areas, developments on the ground were themselves beginning to drive policy. The Soviet leadership increasingly found itself in the position of reacting – too slowly and not always wisely – to events it could no longer fully direct or control, and the instruments at its disposal for managing rising inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts appeared increasingly inadequate to the task.

By the time the Nineteenth Party Conference met in June 1988 and endorsed plans for a Central Committee plenum to be devoted to national relations, it was clear that a major reconsideration of the whole framework of nationality policy was necessary. Not only did the Party face growing demands for changes in language and cultural policies, for border rectifications, and for increased economic autonomy; serious clashes among national groups were becoming a growing danger. Furthermore, the broader political reforms under discussion, including a proposed reorganisation of the USSR Supreme Soviet, would have important consequences for the way in which republic and nationality interests would be represented.

In his speech to the Conference Gorbachev went a step further than previously in acknowledging that questions involving the treatment of national languages, cultures, history, historical monuments and the environment had been neglected in the past, and that nationalist excesses were in many cases a result of the failure to respond to emerging needs in a timely way. But his remarks also reflected the increasing gravity of the situation: preserving the unity of the peoples of the USSR, and harmonising the interests of each nation with the concerns of the larger Soviet community, could no longer be taken for granted. It had become the central challenge.

It was only at the Central Committee plenum held in July 1988 that the broad agenda for the meeting on relations between nationalities was finally published, and that the leadership's current views on the subject were spelled out at some length. Seeking to explain the reasons for the exacerbation of inter-ethnic relations, Gorbachev's remarks

were more sharply critical of past practices than ever before. While singling out inattention, over many years, to the specific social, economic, and spiritual needs of the nations and nationalities of the country, and abuse of power by officials in conditions of insufficient accountability to the population, Gorbachev's acknowledgement of past errors was also joined to the accusation – one he would return to repeatedly – that corrupt groups were manipulating and exploiting national conflicts to impede the process of restructuring.[48] (His comments also reflected a more general disposition toward scapegoating, in which a wide variety of social problems – from shortages of soap to murders of ethnic minorities – were blamed on the manipulations of anti-perestroika forces.) In this case Gorbachev proposed to deal with the problem by increasing the penalties for preaching racial or national exclusiveness, or fanning national discord.

The most notable feature of Gorbachev's speech was its unusually sympathetic treatment of national-cultural needs, a virtual paean to multiculturalism:

> I do not have to talk about how attentive we must be to the development of native languages and national cultures, to environmental protection and historical monuments, and to everything that defines the uniqueness of each nation and nationality and its inimitable contribution to the general treasure-house of Soviet culture, which is characterised by its multifaceted nature and a polychromatic picture of national colours.[49]

The sweeping agenda for the forthcoming plenum outlined in Gorbachev's speech, and incorporated in the conference resolution 'On Relations Between Nationalities', made it clear that the leadership was now prepared to contemplate a significant set of changes in Soviet nationality policy as well as in the structure of the Soviet federation.[50] Responding to the broad array of grievances and demands emanating from republic elites, emerging sociopolitical groups, and writers and scholars, as well as to the specific crises with which it found itself grappling, the leadership proposed a broad framework for restructuring nationality policies along more permissive lines. It called for important changes in language and cultural policy, including support for expanding the role of national languages within the republics. It also directed particular attention to the needs and grievances of nationalities living outside their 'own' republics or lacking them, presumably a gesture in the direction of Russian settler communities as well as indigenous

minority groups. The proposals also embraced changing the structure of the Soviet federal system itself, calling for a demarcation of the jurisdictions of the centre and the republics, and promising a considerable expansion of republics' powers.

The need for far-reaching changes was justified to a wider Party constituency by invoking Lenin himself. Arguing that in the course of Soviet history Leninist principles of nationalities policy had been progressively undermined, and acute problems were ignored or repressed, the resolution affirmed that the task ahead was to cleanse Leninist norms of all 'artificial encrustations and deformations'. Acknowledging that 'present-day nationalities policy needs thoroughgoing scientific and theoretical elaboration', the resolution called on specialists to pool their efforts in this undertaking and proposed that consideration be given to establishing a national research centre devoted to the study of national relations.[51]

These decisions can be taken as a renunciation, by the party leadership, of any remaining illusions about the scope and depth of interethnic tensions, and a recognition of the serious challenges the situation posed. It was also an attempt to enlist the support of more conservative segments of the establishment in the effort by portraying it in Leninist terms. But Gorbachev's grave speech to the Supreme Soviet in November 1988 was a direct and powerful statement of the situation unadorned by ideological embellishment:

> Restructuring has literally blown up the illusory peace and harmony that reigned in our country during the years of stagnation, has given impetus to wide-ranging and unrestricted debate, and has brought many urgent and even painful questions to the surface. It is necessary that the enormous energy of this social process not be dissipated or squandered to no purpose, and especially that it not take the shape of social and national strife, but that it be applied to realistic undertakings and directed wholly toward the achievement of truly revolutionary, constructive goals. We are now confronted by immense and complicated tasks. It is important not to lose heart when faced with the scope of innovation or with the diversity of the opinion and emotions that have spilled forth.[52]

The significance of these decisions also lay in the fact that a restructuring of national relations was now explicitly incorporated into the agenda of political reforms.[53] Their adoption marked an important further step in recognising the scope and seriousness of

the problems and their destructive potential, and in contemplating more far-reaching measures to address them.[54]

But events would once again move far ahead of the leadership's ability to shape them. The spring and summer of 1989 were marked by a further escalation of national tensions: the increasing political assertiveness of national movements in a number of republics, including the growth of explicitly separatist tendencies; the tragic attempt, not sanctioned by Gorbachev, to use military forces to suppress a nonviolent demonstration in Tbilisi on 9 April which resulted in the death of nineteen young people and produced a wave of bitterness directed against Moscow; a virtual civil war over Nagorno–Karabakh which Moscow appeared unable to control and which resulted in a massive wave of refugees; and outbreaks of terrifying violence against ethnic minorities in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. In an urgent appeal to his people on nationwide television, Gorbachev voiced what had by now become the ultimate nightmare: 'What if inter-ethnic strife spreads and embraces regions where millions of people of other nationalities live alongside people of the indigenous nationality?'[55]

As the party leadership prepared for the long-awaited and much-postponed Central Committee plenum on national relations, it confronted yet one additional crisis. On 23 August the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact was marked by the formation of a human chain across the three Baltic republics to protest against Soviet annexation of the region, which had just been declared illegal by a special commission of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet. Responding to what it viewed as an overt challenge to the territorial integrity of the Soviet state, and to the legitimacy of Soviet power, the Central Committee issued a harsh denunciation of the 'national hysteria' that had infested the Baltic region like a virus and warned ominously that 'the fate of the Baltic peoples is in serious danger'.[56]

The crisis in the Baltic republics, which culminated in Lithuania's declaration of independence and Moscow's institution of a blockade against the republic, reflected in microcosm the fundamental dilemma of the Gorbachev reforms. To deal effectively with the country's problems, the leadership was forced to progressively distance itself from important features of previous assumptions and policies. But in pursuing political reform and democratisation, the Gorbachev leadership had also unwittingly unleashed and encouraged at the grassroots level new forms of sociopolitical mobilisation around national issues that could not readily be accommodated within the existing structure of power or within prevailing mindsets.[57] The effort to encourage the process of

democratisation, while at the same time rejecting the demands for genuine self-determination which were its outcome, or to support a restructuring of the federation without acquiescing in the transfer of significant powers and resources to the republics, placed Gorbachev yet once more in the role, as more than one commentator put it, of both Luther and the Pope,[58] alienating himself from conservatives and radical reformers alike.

In the following months, an increasingly embattled Gorbachev struggled to hold together a centrist coalition amidst growing political polarisation over a broad range of domestic as well as foreign policy issues, and in the face of growing challenges from the Russian republic leadership headed by Yel'tsin. Throughout 1990–91 the struggles and alignments over the 'national question' and over republic sovereignty were inextricably entwined with intensifying conflicts over a whole range of key issues, including economic and political reform and the role of the Communist Party, as well as over the 'new political thinking' in foreign and security policy and the political revolutions in Eastern Europe. On the one hand, conservative forces within the Party bureaucracy, the KGB, and the central ministries, increasingly alarmed at the loss of control over events, not to mention the potential contagion from the revolutions which had swept Eastern Europe, pressed for decisive action to curtail the turbulence and to use repression where necessary to reassert central control. On the other hand, Gorbachev's credibility in reformist circles was undermined by his perceived reluctance to support the more far-reaching economic and political changes they believed the situation demanded, and to directly challenge the central ministries and the Communist party establishment. Efforts to paper over these opposing conceptions by endorsing the slogan 'a strong centre and strong republics' satisfied no one.

Toward a new union treaty

All these contending views about the future of the Soviet system came to a head in the struggle to frame a new Union Treaty, and in the attempted coup of August 1991 which sought to forestall its adoption. The platform approved by the Central Committee plenum in 1989 had taken the position that a new union treaty was unnecessary, and that the existing Constitution was sufficient. Nonetheless, the mounting 'war of laws' and the inability to solve the crisis in centre–republic relations through decrees emanating from the centre persuaded Gorbachev that a new approach was indeed essential. In June 1990 Gorbachev

took the momentous decision to throw his support behind the demands for a new union treaty, in the hope that pressure for greater republic sovereignty could be reconciled with preserving a reformed Soviet state through direct negotiations between the centre and republics. These negotiations became the focal point of a bitter political struggle over the shape of a reformed federation and the mechanisms by which the changes should be effected.

Although Gorbachev had supported the creation of a Council of the Federation in 1990, a new government advisory body composed of representatives of the fifteen Union republics, he had left the preparation of the initial draft of a treaty to the central party and state apparatus with only ritual consultation with republic authorities. Predictably, the resulting document – which adopted the language of republic sovereignty but in fact provided for only a limited devolution of powers by the centre to the republics – failed to satisfy their demands. At the same time, Gorbachev initially supported, but then backed away from, a competing approach favoured by Yel'tsin and the Russian republic legislature and embodied in Stanislav Shatalin's 'Five Hundred Days Programme'. The product of direct horizontal consultations among republics, the Shatalin plan combined a framework for radical economic reform with a restructured federation along the lines of the European Community, with the republics delegating to the centre only those powers necessary to the pursuit of common economic, foreign policy and security goals. Turning against the proposal after first cautiously welcoming it, and charging his opponents with advocating the disintegration and 'Lebanonization' of the USSR, Gorbachev called on the Communist Party to struggle against nationalist and separatist forces in favour of integration in 'up-to-date forms'.[59]

Gorbachev's retreat from the '500 Days Programme', which further intensified his estrangement from former supporters and advisors, most notably Aleksandr Yakovlev, was part of his broader 'shift to the right' in the fall of 1990. The threat of an open collision between reformers and resurgent conservatives was made all the more palpable by the dramatic resignation of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in December 1990 as a protest against impending dictatorship, and by the resort to violence in Vilnius and Riga in January 1991. The deaths in Vilnius, and Gorbachev's slowness to condemn them and remove those responsible, further estranged Gorbachev's liberal supporters and nearly prompted the resignation of two close aides, Vitaly Ignatenko and Anatoly Chernyaev. In a letter to Gorbachev he ultimately withheld, Chernyaev pointedly commented: 'You started the process of

returning the country to the path of world civilisation, but the process has been stalled by your own maxim of "one and indivisible'", a clear reference to the motto of prerevolutionary Russian imperialism. [60]

When Yel'tsin directly challenged Moscow by making common cause with the Baltic leaders and appealing to Russian troops in the Baltics to refuse to fire on civilians, and then by calling for Gorbachev's resignation, Gorbachev launched a campaign by the apparatus to remove Yel'tsin from office. Confronted by massive rallies in February and March 1991 in support of democracy and Russian sovereignty, culminating in a demonstration by half a million Yel'tsin supporters in Moscow on March 28, Gorbachev faced a profound crisis. With economic chaos mounting, political support for both socialism and Gorbachev plummeting, and centrifugal trends among the republics accelerating, it was clear that Gorbachev could not impose his own vision of a Soviet federation, and preserve the territorial integrity of the union, without the use of massive coercion. Such a resort to force, however, would undermine both his domestic reforms and his international support and aggravate the accelerating economic crisis without resolving the fundamental issues. Confronting this stalemate, Gorbachev stepped back from the brink and once again shifted course. On April 23 he met with Yel'tsin and the leaders of eight other republics at a dacha at Novo–Ogarevo, outside Moscow, and pledged to work with them on a new union treaty and on serious economic reform.[61] This '9-plus-1' process held out the hope that an acceptable compromise could still be found.

Meanwhile, the rapidly changing political and international environment was reflected in Gorbachev's discourse as well as his policies. Gorbachev's effort to win public opinion to his side and to resist the mounting pressures for a more radical devolution of power and resources to the republics, had already led him to formulate novel ways of legitimating the preservation of a still centralised, if no longer omnipotent, Union. Faced with the challenge from the Baltic republics, Gorbachev had initially sought to head off pressures for independence by appealing to economic self-interest, providing elaborate statistics intended to demonstrate the mutual interdependence of the republics and warning against the dangers of self-isolation. As economic disintegration and spreading economic autarky weakened the argument, and gave additional impetus to the republics' quest for foreign partners, markets, and supplies, Gorbachev sought to argue that the potential benefits of enhanced economic ties with the West depended on political stability and predictability, the preservation of a single national market,

and the undisputed authority of a single central government. Foreign businessmen, he warned, would turn away from economic dealings with a multiplicity of warring authorities.

Gorbachev increasingly also sought to draw on the experience of the European Union as an argument against separatist tendencies. Sidestepping the fact that the process of European integration had involved a voluntary and gradual transfer of functions to new supranational institutions by already well-established sovereign states, Gorbachev asserted that it was living proof of a global trend toward ever larger economic–political formations. The breakup of larger entities into smaller ones, he argued, was a retrograde tendency.

Gorbachev also turned increasingly to a statist vocabulary in defence of preserving the Union. Emphasising the need for a strong central authority to maintain law and order, he sought to refute charges that the central government either failed to deal effectively with communal violence, as in the case of Nagorno–Karabakh and the continuing blockade of Armenia, or contributed to it, as in the case of the bloodshed in Tbilisi. Gorbachev warned repeatedly that any weakening of the centre's powers invited escalating violence and bloodshed. Indeed, he now began to hold out the prospect – for foreign as well as domestic audiences – that the dispersion of military forces, including nuclear forces, would be a consequence of any serious redistribution of power, notwithstanding the fact that no republics had up to that point demanded control over nuclear forces and that several had explicitly declared their desire to become nuclear-free zones. Seeking to build on his growing ties to Western leaders, and their clear support for the preservation of a unified Soviet state (albeit without the three Baltic republics), Gorbachev emphasised that the preservation of Soviet territorial integrity and centralised power was essential if the Soviet Union was to be an active and reliable partner in building a new international system. Implicitly and explicitly, he asked Western powers to resist appeals for diplomatic support or recognition from a number of republics, and hinted that support for his position was essential to guaranteeing continuing Soviet co-operation in the international arena.

Statist arguments occupied a particularly prominent place in Gorbachev's campaign for a favourable vote in the referendum of March 1991, a referendum which he had organised in an effort to demonstrate widespread popular support for preserving the Union. Challenging Yel'tsin's effort to counterpose Russia's interests to those of the Soviet 'centre', Gorbachev sought to appeal to Russian voters by

conflating the two. His glorification of the centuries-long history and achievements of the Russian state was intended to strengthen support among Russians for preserving the Union:

> Our 'yes' will preserve the integrity of a state that is 1,000 years old and has been created by the labour, intellect, and innumerable sacrifices of many generations. Of a state where the destiny of peoples, millions of human destinies, our destinies are inextricably interwoven. Our 'yes' means respect for the power (*derzhava*) that has repeatedly proven its ability to uphold the independence and security of the peoples who are united within that power.[62]

Despite the ambiguity of the referendum's phrasing, which spoke both of a 'renewed union' and of 'sovereign republics', the results of the referendum provided far less than the ringing endorsement Gorbachev had hoped for. Six of the fifteen Union republics refused to conduct it altogether, holding separate polls to demonstrate support for independence. In the other nine, while some 76 percent voted in favour, the strongest support for preservation of the union came from the more rural and less developed regions of the country, particularly the Central Asian republics, while in some of the urban areas of Russia and Ukraine close to half the voters voted 'no'.[63] The results of the referendum thus confirmed the impasse in which Gorbachev found himself, and the threat that the five major republics would proceed to conclude a treaty among themselves provided additional impetus for a new approach.

The Novo–Ogarevo agreement between Gorbachev and nine republic leaders committed the participants to work together to draft a new union treaty and to avert imminent economic collapse. Gorbachev in effect acquiesced in the demand for a loose federation of 'sovereign states', to be negotiated directly with the republics, bypassing the Party apparatus, and to be followed by a new constitution and elections which would radically alter the composition of the central government.

The key challenge in the protracted 9-plus-1 negotiations which ensued was to reconcile, or at least paper over, the fundamental differences between centralists and autonomists, and to define the legal status of republics which might refuse to sign the treaty. Several key issues proved particularly contentious: the precise name and state identity of the new union, with the final draft eliminating both 'socialist' and 'soviet' from its title; the status and powers of the autonomous republics and whether they, along with the Union republics, would

also be signatories to the treaty – an arrangement supported by Gorbachev and the central Party apparatus but unacceptable to the Union republic leaders, who viewed it as yet another effort by the centre to dilute their political power; and above all the precise demarcation of power between the centre and the republics, including control over budgets, taxation and natural resources.[64]

By early August an agreed text had been hammered out with the nine republics, but it was a text which papered over or postponed a number of critical and contentious issues.[65] Not only was the meaning of 'sovereignty' left undefined; ambiguity on such fundamental questions as the federal power of taxation was the price of agreement. (For example, it was stipulated that both the preparation of the federal budget and the republics' contribution to it would be the subject of ongoing, and presumably annual, negotiation.)[66] Moreover, six republics (the three Baltic states, and Georgia, Armenia and Moldova) had announced their independence or were well on their way to it, with no deference to the 1990 Soviet law on secession, and although the draft treaty left open the opportunity for non-signatories to join the new Union subsequently, Gorbachev's apparent belief that some combination of carrots and sticks would draw them back was highly unrealistic. Meanwhile, the treaty's prospects were further clouded by the announcement of the Ukrainian government that it would postpone consideration of the treaty until later in the year, pending a referendum and adoption of a new constitution. Finally, the procedures for ratification, which required discussion and votes in each of the respective legislatures, were highly vulnerable to the volatile political climate and were likely to be protracted and contentious.

Not only were key provisions of the proposed treaty contested or unresolved; the entire framework was unacceptable to key constituencies. Conservatives considered it a recipe for the destruction of the country, while a number of prominent reformers, and the Democratic Russia movement itself, appealed to Yel'tsin not to sign the treaty because it preserved too many features of the Soviet state. Notwithstanding these considerable complications, the signing ceremony was planned for 20 August 1991.

The debates surrounding the drafting of the new Union Treaty not only provided the focal point for the articulation of a whole spectrum of political views; they also reflected new ideological and political alignments. First and foremost was the ongoing weakening of Gorbachev's reformist coalition. Disappointed by the Party's resistance to change, and by Gorbachev's reluctance to embrace more radical

measures, a number of Gorbachev's early advisors and supporters resigned from the Party, left his entourage, and in many cases shifted their support to Yel'tsin.

A second trend was the widening cleavage within the reformist coalition itself over the wisdom of pursuing Russian sovereignty. While a number of prominent figures associated with the Democratic Russia movement viewed Russian sovereignty as a precondition for more radical economic and political reform, other liberal reformers gravitated toward statism. Many critics of Marxism–Leninism and of the Communist Party were at the same time less than sympathetic to the demands of national movements and increasingly alarmed about the looming disintegration of the Soviet state. Aleksandr Tsipko, to take one prominent example, feared the potential 'domino effect' of Russia's declaration of sovereignty, arguing that there was not, and could not be, a Russian state apart from the Russian–Soviet state, and that Russia was itself vulnerable to the same centrifugal forces that were threatening the Soviet Union. The evolution of liberal reformers into statists and in some cases Russian imperial nationalists, a trend given impetus by the controversies surrounding the new Union Treaty, would further accelerate in the Russian Federation in the years after 1991.

But the most dramatic of the new ideological and political realignments occurred within the Communist Party itself, and resulted in the emergence of a novel Communist–nationalist (or 'red–brown') coalition seeking to unite all 'patriotic forces' in defence of the Soviet fatherland. This realignment began to take shape in the spring of 1990, as opponents of Gorbachev's reforms within the Soviet Communist Party formed a conservative counter-movement to create a new, genuinely orthodox Russian Communist Party. This effort, backed by a cluster of provincial secretaries and Russian nationalist writers, attracted support from a then obscure apparatchik named Gennady Zyuganov. Harsh criticism of *glasnost'* and perestroika for aiding the efforts of foreign intelligence services to discredit and destroy the Soviet state propelled Zyuganov into the position of ideological secretary of the Russian Party, a position he used to conduct a strident campaign directed against Aleksandr Yakovlev in particular.[67]

The novel fusion of Communist ideology and Russian patriotism, based on a shared hostility to the West, strongly resonated among conservative opponents of a new Union Treaty in the party apparatus, the KGB, the central economic ministries, and the military, who believed that only immediate and drastic action could forestall the imminent destruction of the country. In a dramatic public appeal 'A Word to the

People', published in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* on 23 July 1991 and foreshadowing the August coup attempt, Zyuganov, conservative journalist Aleksandr Prokhanov, and a number of other figures – two of them high government officials and others whose names would shortly appear as members of the State Committee for the State of Emergency – charged the leadership with betraying the country on behalf of foreign patrons and called for a broad nationwide alliance among all social classes, the army, and the Orthodox Church, to save the country from destruction and ruin. As Prokhanov would explain this startling ideological alliance of 'patriots' and 'Communists', and the complete abandonment of Marxism–Leninism by his Communist partners:

> As for the patriots and their code of honour – the most important thing: if forced to choose between freedom and the state idea – then we will all renounce personal freedom. Let this freedom disappear into the abyss: on the one hand a matter of a few newspapers not coming out, on the other the survival of the state. For the Russian Communist Party the state idea was also the most important one. Who spoke about Marxism? Who talked about surplus value? Everyone talked about the state and civic peace … This is what brought us together.[68]

The planned signing of the new Union Treaty on August 20, 1991 galvanised the conservative and Communist oppositions. In an effort to avert what they portrayed as the impending betrayal of the fatherland, a group of top leaders embracing elements of the military, secret police, central Party apparatus, and military–industrial complex – all of whom had been named to their positions by Gorbachev himself – attempted to impose emergency rule. The defeat of this attempted coup by a democratic opposition rallied by Yel'tsin discredited and further weakened the core institutions of central Soviet power – the Communist Party apparatus, the KGB, and the military – and accelerated the shift of power and initiative from Gorbachev to Yel'tsin and from the centre to the republics. The coup was a severe, if not completely fatal, blow to hopes of a renewed Union.

Although the negotiations on a union treaty would resume in the aftermath of the coup, the terms of the discussion had been radically altered by these events. Recognition of the independence of the Baltic states in the aftermath of the coup was largely a foregone conclusion. Most of the remaining republics declared their independence within weeks after the coup, although the precise meaning of these

declarations varied from case to case. The Communist Party was banned and disbanded; Gorbachev was politically compromised by his own patronage of the coup plotters and by his impolitic reaffirmation, on his return from Foros, of the need for socialist renewal; and the 'centre' was progressively stripped of key instruments of power and of control over major economic facilities by increasingly assertive republic governments, whose frustration with ineffective central economic institutions encouraged them to bring ever broader areas of economic policy under their own control. The entire negotiating framework for a Union Treaty shifted from federal to confederal arrangements, and attention now urgently focused on how to preserve a rapidly eroding common economic space.

The signing of a Treaty on an Economic Community of Sovereign States on 19 October was hailed by Gorbachev and others as a significant achievement, but once again it left unresolved the core issues in dispute: the status and power of the Community's institutions, ownership and property rights, the role of a central bank, and the responsibility for the Soviet foreign debt. In the words of the recently departed American ambassador, Jack Matlock, it was 'little more than a promise to continue negotiating'.[69] The disagreements were further compounded by the general lack of relevant knowledge and expertise. The long years of isolation from the outside world had left Soviet-era officials and intellectuals poorly informed about such key issues as mechanisms for co-ordinating economies not based on centralised planning and control, the workings of federal and confederal institutional arrangements in other political systems, or the norms of the international system itself, including the meanings attached to such terms as 'sovereignty', 'independence', or being 'a subject of international law', all of which expressed the desire for a direct relationship to the international community not mediated through Moscow. Invocations of the European Union as a model for the future revealed how little its actual structure was understood.

If the negotiations on inter-republic economic relations were exceedingly difficult, those on a political community were even more complex. There remained the expectation that some elements of economic, political and military union among the remaining republics could be preserved, and that with the Ukrainian election behind him, the Communist-turned-Ukrainian nationalist Leonid Kravchuk would also be prepared to seek a compromise. Gorbachev had plunged into the effort to preserve the union with renewed vigour all Fall, seeking to enlist massive Western financial and political support on his behalf.

Until mid-November, Yel'tsin appeared to share Gorbachev's commitment to some form of union,[70] although it remained unclear how both the union and its constituent sovereign and independent states could all simultaneously be subjects of international law.[71] Moreover, the decision of the Russian government to launch a programme of radical economic reform on its own territory highlighted the growing divergence of economic interests among the republics and made the prospects for Union-wide co-ordination of economic and monetary policy even more remote. By the end of November, the negotiations were once again faltering over the question whether the new entity would be purely confederative, as Yel'tsin and others now appeared to be advocating, or would have central institutions of its own.[72]

The Ukrainian referendum of 1 December 1991, in which over 90 percent of eligible voters supported independence, dealt the final blow to the effort. In a historic move, the Russian government officially recognised Ukraine's independence, despite its domestic political cost. The Ukrainian parliament meanwhile voted to annul the 1922 treaty forming the Soviet Union, to refuse to sign any union treaty, and to create its own military forces. In a desperate effort to avert a dangerous breach between Russia and Ukraine, and at the same time deal a final blow to Gorbachev's power, Yel'tsin seized the opportunity to reach a dramatic agreement with the leaders of Ukraine and Belarus – the Belovezhsky Forest accord – to create a new Commonwealth of Independent States in place of the USSR, and then to open its membership to other republics that might wish to join. Proclaiming the end of the Soviet Union, Yel'tsin requested international recognition of Russia as its legal successor.

From union to commonwealth: the demise of the USSR

The Commonwealth agreement which was ultimately signed by the leaders of eleven republics in Almaty on 21 December 1991 had two key features: it rejected the creation of any supranational institutions, and it committed the signatories to recognise and respect each other's territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders. The agreement thus created a *fait accompli* which smoothed the way for the speedy and universal international recognition of the new states, which in turn solidified and legitimised the agreed-upon arrangements and deterred or prevented destabilising challenges to them. It also avoided a situation in which international actors could be blamed for imposing a particular set of arrangements, Versailles or Dayton-style. In short,

despite the understandable criticism it provoked, the commonwealth agreement, and Gorbachev's statesmanlike, albeit reluctant, acquiescence in it, made a significant contribution to conflict-prevention, stability and regional security at a moment of considerable danger.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of these momentous developments was the relatively peaceful way in which the USSR's dissolution took place, particularly in comparison with the experience of Yugoslavia. Notwithstanding apocalyptic predictions by Gorbachev himself, and by countless analysts and political figures in the region and in the West, that the breakup of the Soviet state would profoundly disrupt the international system, provoke dangerous interstate and interethnic conflicts over borders and territory, including the threat of nuclear conflict among the successor states, and unleash floods of refugees, the Belovezhsky agreements facilitated a constructive process of mutual accommodation among the successor states and contributed to the striking degree of statesmanship and restraint demonstrated by their leaderships in managing potentially explosive issues. While the region has not escaped without violence, most of the conflicts – with the exception of the civil war in Tajikistan – have involved secessionist efforts by autonomous regions within the former republics which antedated the dissolution of the USSR. Republic borders have been largely observed, Soviet troops were withdrawn from the Baltic states, the peaceful and co-operative denuclearisation of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan was successfully implemented, and the noisy territorial claims emanating from nationalist politicians have not been endorsed by top leaders and have been delegitimated by international organisations. Indeed, in view of all the unresolved conflicts in the region, and the long accumulation of historical grievances and perceived injustices, the very haste and secrecy in which the Belovezhsky agreements were concluded played a decisive role in forestalling protracted, open-ended, and inflammatory public wrangling over borders, territories and minority rights. It also averted the potential danger of large numbers of contending actors simultaneously competing for domestic political advantage in each of the republics, all of which might well have exacerbated internal political conflicts and poisoned relationships among the republics while depriving them of the protection of the international community.

The efforts of the Gorbachev leadership to shed deeply-ingrained ideological assumptions and define a new approach to the 'national question', to transform a highly centralised state into a genuine federation, and to deal with a variety of movements for national

self-determination involved challenges of a complexity that would have been difficult to conceptualise, let alone to manage, under the best of circumstances. But the effort to define the foundations of a new political community while confronting the simultaneous challenges of economic crisis and transformation, a breakdown of political institutions and authority, and a revolution in foreign and security policy, all contributed to a massive overload of demands on a divided political leadership under constant attack from both ends of an increasingly polarised political spectrum.

Gorbachev and his associates, as has already been noted, acknowledged that they had been slow to recognise the nature of the national challenge to the Soviet system. Given the rhetoric and the insistence throughout their political lives that nationalism was a reactionary phenomenon and that the 'national question' had been solved, it is not surprising that to learn otherwise took time and some bitter experiences. What they failed to recognise was the way in which the very reforms that they were introducing in the Soviet Union, and the revisions that they were prepared to introduce in the classic Marxist–Leninist verities, albeit initially in the name of a return to true Leninism, helped undermine the legitimacy of the existing Soviet state. Once the process of reform was under way, however, the problems they confronted had no easy answers. A generation ago, the American political scientist Dankwart Rustow made the important observation that a fundamental and necessary prerequisite for the development of democratic institutions is prior agreement on the boundaries of the state and on membership in the political community.[73] There is no democratic procedure, he noted, by which these could be determined. When the process of democratisation set in motion by Gorbachev catalysed dramatic shifts in attitudes and identities, and coalesced into political movements which called into question the existence of a single Soviet community and demanded that its constituent Union republics be recognised as sovereign states, it created dilemmas that no contemporary states have found easy to resolve. It is arguable that had the Baltic states been treated as an exception early on, as a case of restoration of independence rather than of secession, it would have deprived other national movements of a 'heretical model' and radically altered the political dynamics. In addition, the unwillingness of the leadership to elaborate reasonable criteria for secession, and to create high barriers but not impossible ones, contributed to the process of radicalisation. But even if Gorbachev and his advisors had been prepared to adopt such a strategy, deepening cleavages within the Soviet

leadership, exacerbated by the revolutions in Eastern Europe, placed severe constraints on their freedom of manoeuvre.

Moreover, the considerable confidence of Gorbachev and many of his associates that the renewal of socialism would avert potential crises and elicit widespread popular approbation, that in effect a revolution from above would forestall a revolution from below, led to an overestimation of public support for the system.[74] Particularly in a situation in which attitudes and identities were being rapidly transformed, and demands were escalating with each passing day, even a less sclerotic decision-making process would have been challenged to keep pace with the extreme dynamism of the situation. If in March 1991 the Kremlin could take the results of the referendum as a distinct, if not unambiguous, endorsement of the search for a new and more perfect union, by 1 December – after the August coup and the recognition of Baltic independence – sentiments in Ukraine had shifted decisively in favour of independence.

There are many – including Gorbachev and some of his staff – who have argued that (to cite the title of a voluminous and valuable collection of documents and memoirs) 'the Union could have been preserved'. In essence, they blame Yel'tsin for precipitating the collapse of the USSR in his ambition to replace Gorbachev rather than to share power with him. While Yel'tsin's actions were indeed decisive in the final stages, this chapter contends that the whole sequence of contingent events cumulatively undermined that possibility. It is by no means clear, as we have argued, that the Union treaty in the form agreed upon in August was really workable, that it would have been ratified by a significant number of republic parliaments, or that it would have provided more than a breathing spell. Gorbachev also appears to have had no workable solution to the challenge posed by the secession not only of the Baltic states but of Georgia, Armenia and Moldova as well. Nor was he prepared, as Yel'tsin was, to acknowledge the changed political situation in Ukraine and to deal with it creatively.[75] Above all, the failure of the leadership to develop a coherent programme of economic reform that would arrest and reverse the continued collapse of the Soviet economy was a major factor propelling the demands for republic sovereignty and ultimately in destroying the possibility of a unified economic space.

But what it would have taken, particularly after the August coup, to preserve the Soviet Union was a willingness to use force and potentially on a massive scale. There are indeed a number of analysts and political actors, in Russia and in the West, who blame Gorbachev for

failing to do so, even invoking the image of Abraham Lincoln fighting a long and bloody civil war to save the American Union.[76] It is worth noting that the use of force, albeit on a modest scale and not necessarily with Gorbachev's support, had already been attempted – in Tbilisi, Baku and Vilnius – and had been demonstrably counterproductive, intensifying the hostility toward Moscow in the republics, discrediting Gorbachev among reformers, and threatening his support among Western leaders and publics. Even assuming that Soviet military forces would have been prepared to obey orders to turn on the civilian population in major Russian cities, the danger of plunging the country into civil war was sufficiently alarming even to conservative figures to deter the coup plotters themselves. But the decisive factor was the fact that the use (or threat) of massive force would have been fundamentally in conflict with everything Mikhail Gorbachev stood for, both domestically – where he believed deeply in a renewed and democratic socialism capable of eliciting broad public support – and internationally, where he sought to create an environment which would permit a reordering of domestic priorities and return the USSR to Europe.

If Gorbachev's refusal to use force to preserve the Union was one of the key factors in averting a Yugoslav scenario in the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the other was the historic role of Boris Yel'tsin in redefining Russian identity in non-imperial and non-ethnic terms. In stark contrast to Milosevic's manipulation of an aggressive Serbian nationalism, which brought massive violence and bloodshed to Yugoslavia's dissolution, by re-imagining a Russian statehood in liberal and democratic terms, repudiating key features of the Soviet imperial legacy, and supporting the creation of a commonwealth of independent states, Yel'tsin created the foundation for constructive co-operation among the former Soviet republics and helped facilitate their peaceful integration into the international community.

Nation and state-building in post-communist Russia

Ironically, it was Russia's role in accelerating the demise of the Soviet Union that created the daunting challenges to nation and state-building that Russia itself faced after 1991. The dissolution of the Soviet Union left in its wake a massive ideological and political void and a Russian state lacking any clear and coherent conception of its national and state identity, as well as of its novel borders, populations, internal structure, relations with neighbours, and its place in the international system. Moreover, the centrifugal forces that had contributed to the dissolution

of the Soviet Union were not confined to the 15 Union republics, but extended to the ethno-territorial units within them as well. In leading the struggle for Russian sovereignty during 1990–1991 Yel'tsin had not only challenged the overcentralised and unitary features of the Soviet state; he had also championed a doctrine of sovereignty 'from the ground up', supporting an expansion of the rights of local and regional units and encouraging local elites to 'take all the sovereignty you can swallow'.[77] In the aftermath of the Soviet collapse, political weakness and economic chaos were contributing to a snowballing process of state formation by ever smaller ethnic groups and regions, and threatened – in the view of many observers – to bring about the disintegration of Russia itself. The widespread, if exaggerated, anxiety about Russia's own future was well captured by the title of an article by a leading Russian specialist on nationality issues: 'Will Russia Repeat the Path of the Union?'[78]

Broadly speaking, Yel'tsin sought to navigate the uncertainty and instability of the early years by adopting a relatively conciliatory stance toward assertions of local autonomy. The Federation Treaty, signed by all but two republics (Tatarstan and Chechnya) represented the high tide of the process of sovereignisation and federalisation. It officially acknowledged republican sovereignty and was premised on the principle that all powers not explicitly delegated to the federal government remained the prerogative of constituent units. While the Treaty was initially intended to be incorporated into the new Constitution, by the time the Constitution was adopted in 1993 a more centralised conception of Russian statehood was already gaining ascendancy.

Indeed, by the mid-1990s a growing reaction against many of the trends set in motion by perestroika was visible among Russian political and intellectual elites. The dissolution of the USSR, increasingly blamed on national movements and on ethno-territorial federalism and sovereignisation, and continuing anxieties about the possible disintegration of Russia itself, contributed to the rising hostility toward various manifestations of federalism and nationalism. The conception of the Russian republic as a voluntary federation largely disappeared from view, references to republican sovereignty were dropped from the new Constitution, no provisions were made for any right of secession, and constituent units were granted only those powers not assigned to the federal government. Moreover, efforts were made to minimise the distinction between ethnic republics and purely territorial regions by enhancing the status and rights of the regions.

Nonetheless, the outcome did not represent a full victory for the advocates of a highly centralised government or a purely territorial federation. Significant powers were to be exercised jointly by the central and republic (and regional) governments, including the protection of human rights and the rights of ethnic minorities, ownership of land and mineral resources, and environmental protection within the republics' territory. In addition, the republics (and regions) were awarded limited powers of independent legislation and taxation, and the right to establish state languages, to mention just two of the most important. But the adoption of the Constitution could not and did not provide a definitive and final resolution of a whole range of key issues, all of which remained subject to continuous renegotiation and to behind-the-scenes bargaining between central and local authorities. In practice, Yel'tsin pursued a strategy of 'selective appeasement', seeking to conciliate and co-opt republican and regional elites by striking a series of informal and often secret bilateral deals over budgetary and tax issues and other prerogatives which supplemented, and in many cases ignored, federal legislation.[79]

The most critical issues of both nationalism and federalism faced by the Yel'tsin government during this period involved policy toward Tatarstan and Chechnya, which were the focal point of resistance to the new centralising trends. The peaceful resolution of the conflict with Tatarstan was the Yel'tsin government's most singular achievement, and the failure to similarly resolve the conflict with Chechnya its greatest failure. Following difficult and protracted negotiations with Kazan a treaty was finally signed in February 1994 that recognised Tatarstan as a sovereign republic and granted Tatarstan considerably broader competencies and rights than had been granted to other subjects of the federation, including significant economic concessions and the right to its own economic relations with foreign states. This agreement was criticised – from opposite positions – both in the republic and in Moscow, but the process of mutual accommodation through negotiations served to defuse separatist sentiments, enhance the loyalty of republic elites, and avoid the deadly use of force. The failure to reach a political solution over the status of Chechnya, and the resort to military force to bring the republic to heel, was not only a product of institutional weakness and intra-elite conflicts in both Moscow and Grozny but also a testimony to the fragility of Russian federalism itself.[80]

The agreement with Tatarstan was the first of a long series of bilateral treaties that were negotiated between Moscow and the republics

and regions in subsequent years with differing terms corresponding to the distinctive features of each case. Admittedly this process was not without its serious problems; the proliferation of bilateral treaties conferring different rights on different constituent units arguably weakened the development of a single and uniform legal order and economic space for the Federation as a whole. Yet on balance this asymmetrical federalism in Russia represented a constructive and flexible response in a period of great fluidity to a Soviet legacy that created aspirations, expectations and institutional arrangements that could not readily be dismantled without risking destabilising consequences. It tailored centre–periphery relations to the varying needs and demands of different subjects of the federation, allowing for a useful degree of diversity and experimentation in a country as large and diverse as the Russian Federation. It also created a framework for satisfying the aspirations of major ethnic groups for recognition, security, and meaningful political participation, and opportunities for the preservation or enhancement of ethnolinguistic and cultural diversity, thereby defusing the potentially separatist connotations of republic sovereignty and transforming it into a legitimate form of regionalism. It located decision-making on some key issues closer to the ground, and facilitated co-operation between moderates and pragmatists in Moscow and their counterparts in the regions and republics, while helping to marginalise or isolate extremists on both sides. Proposals to abolish the ethnic republics and replace them with purely territorial administrative units along the lines of the Tsarist *guberniya* – an approach endorsed by former Prime Minister Primakov – was widely perceived, by the general population as well as by republic elites, as both unrealistic and needlessly provocative.

But mounting criticism of the Yel'tsin government, and growing concern about the weakness of the Russian state, was accompanied by growing support for circumscribing the rights and powers of regional and republic authorities. The financial crisis of 1998 had compelled regional authorities to adopt a series of autarkic measures in an attempt to shield their own populations from its consequences, although it also highlighted the ultimate dependence of regional authorities on Moscow.[81] With the appointment and subsequent election of Vladimir Putin as President, Russian policy moved sharply toward the reassertion of central power.

A renewal of the war in Chechnya, this time framed as a struggle against terrorism, played an important role in propelling Putin to the Presidency and reflected his preoccupation with curtailing centrifugal

trends and restoring and strengthening Russian state power.[82] Indeed the new war has been pursued with greater determination and brutality, with even less regard for civilian casualties, and with a more sophisticated military and public relations strategy designed to minimise media access and forestall public criticism.

Although President Putin has stopped short of actually abolishing existing regions and republics, he has also taken a number of steps which weaken significantly the federal arrangements created in the first years of Russia's independence and sharply circumscribe the political, juridical and economic powers of regional and republic authorities.[83] Seven federal 'super-districts' – corresponding to the existing military districts – were superimposed on the existing federal structure, each headed by a Presidential representative charged with enforcing the primacy of federal laws and co-ordinating the activities of federal agencies. Five of Putin's seven appointees were generals drawn from the armed forces or security services. The Federation Council barely escaped dissolution but was radically restructured to eliminate governors and republic presidents from its membership, and the President was given the right to dismiss elected regional and local officials who failed to bring their laws into conformity with federal legislation, or who were the objects of a criminal investigation. A massive campaign was launched to compel recalcitrant republics to bring their laws and constitutions into conformity with federal legislation. In addition, the status of existing bilateral treaties was called into question, and the central government announced a new plan for budgetary allocations which would increase the share of tax revenues controlled by the centre at the expense of regional authorities.

As republic and regional elites were compelled to acquiesce one after another to the new demands emanating from Moscow, Tatarstan remained a focal point of resistance to centralising trends and its leadership mounted an energetic defence of federal arrangements. What many in Moscow viewed as an aggressive and separatist strategy was perceived in Kazan as defensive and protective: an effort to preserve a degree of local control in the context of a Russian-dominated state and culture.[84] But the fact that the republics of the RSFSR were relatively small and isolated islands in a larger Russian sea, rather than – as in the case of the USSR – the constituent units of a federal state, sharply distinguished the situation of Russia after 1991 from the Soviet Union and limited the prospects for broader resistance to these centralising trends.

Putin's effort to strengthen the central state at the expense of the republics and regions, and to enhance the powers of the presidency, was accompanied by the creation of a new political movement, Unity, subsequently merged into United Russia, which sought to unite a broad spectrum of political orientations under the banner of a single pro-government party. At the symbolic level as well, Putin's nation-building strategy in Russia sought to synthesise Communist, Russian nationalist and traditional statist ideologies.

Whether in the adoption of a new Russian national anthem that was largely based on the Soviet anthem, or in the design of new flags or in the increasingly prominent role accorded the Orthodox Church, Russian symbols and policies have moved away from an earlier emphasis on the multinational and federal character of the Russian Federation to an increasingly unitary stance based on the conception of Russians as a state-forming people and the Orthodox Church as the foundation of its civilisation.

The early years of Russian state-building after the demise of the USSR were marked both by the general weakness of state institutions and by the influence of liberal, pluralist and democratic values. Over time, however, Russian political and intellectual elites have become increasingly preoccupied with rebuilding the power and authority of the Russian state and increasingly hostile to expressions of nationalism, federalism and sovereignty emanating from non-Russian republics and nationalities, which increasingly tend to be equated with separatism. The growing influence of statist mentalities, and the assault on pluralism in ever more arenas of Russian political life, has been given additional force by the attitudes and policies of the Putin administration. At the same time, as the legacy of Marxist–Leninist ideology has weakened, and many of its tenets explicitly rejected, so too have the constraints on expressions of Russian chauvinism and xenophobia. A rising tide of hate crimes against minorities and foreigners reached such alarming proportions as to prompt the government to introduce new legislation to combat extremism.

Even prior to Putin's presidency, Russian federalism remained embryonic and incomplete, and lacked the key legal and institutional underpinnings of genuinely democratic institutions.[85] A constitutionally-based division of powers between federal and local authorities, and credible guarantees that these arrangements would be respected, was largely absent. Also absent was a clear consensus on what are in fact the constituent units of the Russian federation and how they should be represented at the federal level. More importantly, republics and

regions lacked an independent financial base of their own as well as significant independent spending authority. They remained dependent on decisions taken in Moscow, and on the patronage of government officials, for the allocation of tax revenues and mandated expenditures on social services.

The ability of President Putin unilaterally to initiate far-reaching changes in federal arrangements, and to abrogate earlier agreements and treaties with republic leaders, is a clear indication that that the institutional and attitudinal underpinning of Russia's embryonic federalism has remained weakly developed and highly vulnerable to a concerted assault by the central government. A return to the high degree of centralisation and uniformity characteristic of the Soviet period is unrealisable under today's conditions, but it remains unclear how far current trends toward recentralisation are likely to go. Leading figures in the Putin administration, including Vladimir Zorin, the minister responsible for nationality affairs, have made no secret of their desire to eliminate the existing ethno-federal arrangements completely and to offer national minorities no more than the opportunity of cultural expression. The combination of an increasingly authoritarian political system with a statist and Russocentric conception of Russia's identity represents a departure not only from key elements of Marxism–Leninism but also from the liberal, pluralist and democratic values that came to prominence in the Gorbachev and Yel'tsin years.

Notes

1 *We/My*, no. 6 (1–14 June 1992).
2 Anatoly Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), p. 108. Gorbachev tended to attribute problems to the bureaucratism of officials and their lack of respect for national differences, a view that Chernyaev argues was relatively progressive by comparison with the chauvinistic views of Gorbachev's predecessors as well as colleagues.
3 Gorbachev was hardly alone among the Soviet leadership in underestimating the potential of national sentiments. Even Shevardnadze, who as a Georgian and as First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party organisation might have been particularly sensitive to these issues, has said that in 1985 he 'believed that the nationalities issue … had been resolved', and that Gorbachev and his associates 'never expected an upsurge of emotional and ethnic factors'. Shevardnadze interview, 17 September 1991, cited in Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 257.
4 For a more extensive treatment of the way in which Marxist–Leninist ideology shaped these assumptions, see Gail W. Lapidus, 'Ethnonationalism and Political Stability: The Soviet Case', *World Politics*, vol. 36, no. 4 (July 1984), pp. 555–80.

5 V.I. Lenin, 'K voprosu o natsional'nostyakh ili ob 'avtonomisatsiyi', 30 December 1922,; *Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniy*, 5th edn. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1970), vol. 45, pp. 358–60. There is a striking parallel between Lenin's attacks on manifestations of Great Russian chauvinism with respect to the 'national question' and on Russian male chauvinism in relation to the 'woman question', and his support for elements of 'affirmative action' in both cases.

6 The 'nation-creating' argument is advanced in the writings of Ronald Suny and Yuri Slezkine, among others; the 'nation-destroying' view is most powerfully advanced by Robert Conquest. All these authors, however, tend to generalise from particular cases and particular time periods, ignoring considerable variations in the treatment of different groups depending on the perception of the political threat they posed.

7 See Grey Hodnett, 'What's In a Nation?', *Problems of Communism*, vol. 16 (1967), no. 5, pp. 458–81.

8 For several examples of new approaches, see Y.V. Arutyunyan, 'Konkretno-sotsiologicheskoe issledovanie natsional'nykh otnoshenii', *Voprosy filosofii*, no. 12 (1969), pp. 129–39 and *Sotsial'noe i natsional'noe: Opyt etnosotsiologicheskikh issledovanii po materialam Tatarskoi ASSR* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973); L.M. Drobizheva, *Dukhovnaya obshchnost' narodov SSSR: Istoriko-sotsiologicheskii ocherk mezhnatsional'nykh otnoshenii* (Moscow: Mysl', 1981); G. Starovoitova, 'K issledovaniyu etnopsikhologii gorodskikh zhitelei', *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, no. 3 (1976), pp. 45–56; Y.V. Bromley (ed.), *Sovremennye etnicheskie protsessy v SSSR*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Nauka, 1977); and V. Kozlov, *Natsional'nosti SSSR: Etnodemograficheskii obzor* (Moscow: Financy i statistika, 1982).

9 I. 1. Krupnik, 'Mnogonatsional'noe obshchestvo (Sostoyanie natsional'nykh otnoshenii v SSSR i zadachi nauki)', *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, no. 1 (1989), pp. 53–4. For a broader treatment of these constraints, see Alexander Dallin and Bertrand Patenaude (eds), *Soviet Scholarship under Gorbachev* (Stanford: Russian and East European Studies, 1988).

10 These debates are treated at greater length by the author in 'Ethnonationalism and Political Stability: The Soviet Case', *World Politics*, vol. 36, no. 4 (July 1984), pp. 555–80; and 'The Nationality Question and The Soviet System' in Erik Hoffmann (ed.), *The Soviet Union in the 1980s* (New York: The Academy of Political Science, 1984), pp. 98–112.

11 *Pravda*, December 1982.

12 R.I. Kosolapov, 'Klassovye i natsional'nye otnosheniya na etape razvitogo sotsializma', *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya*, no. 4, 1982. These views were also presented at a major conference in Riga in June 1982, on 'The Development of National Relations in Conditions of Developed Socialism'.

13 *Ibid*.

14 *Pravda*, 26 February 1986.

15 *Pravda*, 28 January 1987.

16 Major personnel shake-ups took place throughout the region from 1985 to 1987. The first party secretaries of Kirgizia, Tadzhikistan and Turkmenistan were replaced in late 1985, as were the heads of several republic KGB organisations. More than half of all Central Committee members of the Central Asian parties were ousted, with the figure reaching 80 per cent in

Uzbekistan. Continuing investigations of corruption were accompanied by a media campaign exposing the crimes of local leaders.

17 Mark Beissinger, 'Ethnicity, the Personnel Weapon, and Neo-Imperial Integration: Ukrainian and RSFSR Provincial Party Officials Compared', *Studies in Comparative Communism*, vol. xxi, no. 1 (Spring 1988), pp. 71–85.

18 *Pravda*, 8 January 1989. The new edition of the party programme also omitted any reference to the special role of the Russian people, or to the former 'backwardness' of other peoples of the Soviet Union, a major step forward in sensitivity.

19 Although accounts of these demonstrations vary, it appears that several thousand demonstrators, many of them university students and young people, took to the streets shouting 'Kazakhstan is only for Kazakhs', and broke into the local party headquarters as well as two prisons. Troops with armoured cars occupied the university and the riots were finally put down by detachments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. At least 2000 young people were subsequently punished for their involvement in the riots, including 271 who were expelled from educational institutions and 787 from the Komsomol (*Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 18 July 1987). See also Michel Tatu, 'Les dérapages de la Russification', *Le Monde*, 21–22 December 1986, p. 1.

20 Gorbachev interview, *Moskovskiy komsomolets*, 28 June 1995, as cited in Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 260–1. According to Gorbachev's later account, Kunaev himself had encouraged the appointment of a Russian in an effort to block the promotion of a Kazakh rival, Nursultan Nazarbaev, but he acknowledges that 'in light of subsequent events I think we made a mistake. In spite of Kunaev's advice and the consent of the republic leadership, we should have realised that it would be difficult for Kazakhs to accept a Russian in this position. We were at the beginning of perestroika, but to some degree we were still following the old ways. The consequences of our decision were absolutely not what we expected.' Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), p. 331.

21 For a more extended treatment, see Gail W. Lapidus, 'State and Society: Toward the Emergence of Civil Society in the Soviet Union', in Seweryn Bialer (ed.), *Politics, Society and Nationality Inside Gorbachev's Russia* (Boulder: Westview, 1989), pp. 121–47.

22 *Pravda*, 28 January 1987.

23 *Pravda*, 14 August 1987.

24 The term 'sovereignty' was a vague and elastic one in Soviet usage, but came to be embraced by republic elites to express the desire for greater economic and political power over decisions affecting their own populations. For a detailed account of this process, see Gail Lapidus, 'Gorbachev and the National Question: Restructuring the Soviet Federation', *Soviet Economy*, V, no. 3 (July–September, 1989), pp. 201–50.

25 Yel'tsin's views about Russian identity appear to have been importantly influenced by his membership in the Inter-Regional Group of Deputies, a grouping of democratic reformers within the Congress of People's Deputies, and of his association there with Andrey Sakharov and Galina Starovoitova, among others; conversations of the author with Starovoitova in 1990–1992.

Their approach rested upon the crucial distinction (lost in the English language) between the terms 'russkiy' and 'rossiyskiy', the former denoting Russian ethnic identity and the latter all citizens of the Russian Federation, of whatever nationality. Carrying this distinction to its logical conclusion, Valery Tishkov has proposed that the Russian Federation be renamed 'Rossiya'. For a useful treatment of the development of a liberal variant of Russian nationalism, see Roman Szporluk, 'Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism', *Problems of Communism* (July–August 1989), pp. 15–35.

26 See, for example, G.I. Kunitsyn, 'Samoopredelenie natsii – istoriya voprosa i sovremennost', *Voprosy filosofii,* no. 9 (1988), and no. 5 (1989), pp. 66–86; K. Khallik, *Natsional'nye otnosheniya v SSSR i problemy perestroiki* (Tallinn: Dom politprosveshcheniya universiteta Marksizma–Leninizma TsKPP Estonii, 1988); A.P. Nenarokov, 'Za svobodnyi soyuz svobodnykh narodov', *Istoriya i politika KPSS*, no. 3 (1989), pp. 3–64.

27 Interviews by the author, May and August 1989.

28 See, for example, the discussions at the meeting of the Kirgiz Writers' Union, on 23 June 1988; and of the Uzbek Writers' Union, on 24 June 1988; *RL* 309/88, 12 July 1988.

29 These developments also brought to the surface longstanding territorial conflicts. To cite just two examples, it encouraged Armenian elites to reassert their claim to Nagorno–Karabakh on the grounds that Stalin had arbitrarily violated agreements which assigned the territory to Armenia; it prompted Moldovan activists to reclaim the areas of Bukovina transferred to the Ukrainian SSR during the Second World War.

30 Interview on BBC television series 'The Second Russian Revolution', programme 5: 'Breaking Ranks', as cited in Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 223.

31 Account of the Politburo meeting with the Baltic Communist Party leaders on May 11, 1989 in *Soyuz mozhno bylo sokhranit – Belaya kniga: Dokumenty i fakty o politike M.S. Gorbacheva po reformirovaniyu i sokhraneniyu mnogonatsional'nogo gosudarstva* (Moscow: Aprel'-85, 1995), pp. 51–5.

32 See, for example, the argument by a distinguished Soviet ethnographer, Sergey Arutyunov, that 'any disappearance of an ethnos is a tragic phenomenon … The concept of ethnic pluralism should have its communist variant.' ('Natsional'nye protsessy v SSSR', *Istoriya SSSR*, no. 6 (1987), p. 94). The most eloquent statement of this newly legitimate view by a leading political figure came in an address to a Central Committee plenum by Vaino Valjas, First Secretary of the Estonian Communist Party, who argued that the nation is the basic form of human existence, and that national culture is the foundation of universal human values (*Pravda*, 21 September 1989).

33 *Pravda*, 8 January 1989.

34 This current of thought is well-captured in Roman Szporluk, 'Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism', *Problems of Communism* (July–August 1989), pp. 15–35.

35 'Yuridicheskaya literatura', *Novye zakony SSSR*, Vypusk 1, Moscow (1990), pp. 83–90.

36 Reformers sharply disagreed on whether the fifteen Union republics alone should enjoy the right of national self-determination, or whether it should

extend to autonomous republics and regions as well. A new Constitution proposed by Andrey Sakharov and Galina Starovoitova would have eliminated the Soviet ethno-territorial hierarchy altogether.

37 The reformers were themselves divided over these issues. Some reformist leaders, most notably Yel'tsin and Afanas'ev, supported the right of national self-determination even to the point of secession, while others feared it would jeopardise perestroika itself. Reform-minded economists such as Abalkin feared the fragmentation of a national market, and many believed that national tensions were largely the consequence of economic deterioration, and would be sharply reduced by successful economic reform.

38 Some also argued – invoking the American model – that the individual rather than the national group was the proper subject of political rights. But the relationship of human rights to national rights was a difficult issue across the Soviet political spectrum; reformers concerned with protecting and expanding human rights were themselves concerned with the danger that newly-empowered national groups would threaten the rights of minorities.

39 The analysis of Gorbachev's approach to the nationality problem offered here is sharply at variance with that of Jerry Hough's 'Gorbachev's Politics', *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1989–90), pp. 37–41. It does not support Hough's assertion that Gorbachev approached the issue with full knowledge and appreciation of the potentially explosive force of nationalism in the non-Russian republics from the beginning; that Gorbachev's behaviour reflected a coherent and well-developed strategy of deliberately utilising inter-ethnic tensions to maintain the support of the Russian population; and that his 'policy of controlled chaos' was in fact a policy, reflecting a real capacity to control events, rather than the moves of a shrewd tactician largely reacting to events he is unable to control.

40 M.S. Gorbachev, *Izbrannye rechi i stat'i* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1985), p. 52.

41 *Pravda*, 2 July 1989.

42 Political Report to the Supreme Soviet, *Pravda*, 31 May 1989.

43 His remarks affirmed that 'a healthy interest in everything that is valuable in each national culture should not degenerate into attempts to fence oneself off from the objective processes of the interaction and convergence of national cultures'.

44 *Pravda*, 28 January 1987. Gorbachev's own effort to come to grips with the contradictory aspects of national consciousness, and his lack of a firm grasp of the problem in the earliest years of his leadership, is revealingly displayed in his remarks at a gathering with journalists the following month:

> On the one hand [he acknowledged] the cultural level of all peoples and nationalities, even the smallest, is rising, and they have developed their own intelligentsias. They study the roots of their origins. And sometimes this leads to the worshipping of history and everything connected with it, not just the progressive elements. On the other hand, new generations are entering life, and they must be reared and given up-to-date notions concerning where they live and how this highly unique phenomenon in human history was established, one in which more than a hundred

> nations and nationalities live – judging even by the long yardsticks of history – harmoniously and well. Nevertheless, this is real life, movement, development, and thus every stage may have its own contradictions. We must deal with this calmly, study it, decide things, and educate people. The only correct approach here is the Leninist nationalities policy, the Leninist spirit (*Pravda*, 14 February 1987)

He went a step further in July in affirming that 'every people has its own language and its own history; it wants to understand its roots. Can this be at variance with socialism? Of course not' (*Pravda*, 15 July 1987).

45 After blaming all the usual suspects – the mistakes of the Party, the effects of the era of stagnation, the survivals of the past, the role of enemies of perestroika and of 'speculators' in national feelings – the editorial suggested that the original circumstances of the formation of the Soviet Union (*startovye usloviya*), had created a set of structural problems which had still not been overcome. ('Internatsionalistskaya sut' sotsializma', *Kommunist*, no. 13 (September 1987), pp. 3–13.)

46 Speech to the Central Committee, 18 February 1988; *Pravda*, 19 February 1988.

47 It should be noted that nationalist mobilisation was initially a response to perceived opportunities rather than, as some have argued, to security threats.

48 This phrase echoed earlier explanations of the demonstrations in Almaty, as well as of the conflicts over Nagorno–Karabakh, and became a staple of all discussions of the sources of inter-ethnic conflict. Whether or not it had any substantial basis in fact, it reflected the difficulty in Soviet discourse of treating national animosities as a potentially autonomous social–psychological phenomenon, and outbursts of conflict or violence as having a spontaneous character.

49 *Pravda*, 30 July 1988.

50 The text of the resolution was published in *Pravda*, 5 July 1988.

51 In a speech to the Supreme Soviet on 30 May 1989, Gorbachev went even further in his analysis of these distortions: 'In the 1930s Lenin's nationalities policy was subjected to extremely flagrant distortions and deformations. An oversimplified understanding of the multifaceted nature of national relations, encouragement of tendencies toward a unitary system, denial of the specific features of national development, political charges against entire nations, with the tyranny and lawlessness stemming therefrom, the impermissible identification of people's national feelings with nationalistic manifestations – all this was part of our life … During the time of stagnation, negative processes in national relations were either ignored or driven within, which led to their increasing exacerbation.' (*Pravda*, 31 May 1989).

52 *Pravda*, 30 November 1988.

53 Gorbachev's report to the USSR Supreme Soviet on 29 November 1988 outlined a three-stage sequence of political reforms. The first stage encompassed the reorganisation of national political institutions and the electoral process. Reform of the federal system and of centre–periphery relations would constitute the second stage, and reorganisation of local government

the third, culminating in the reform of the legal and judicial systems (*Pravda*, 30 November 1988).

54 Gorbachev went further than ever before in offering assurances of his concern for national values, affirming '… we cannot permit even the smallest people to disappear, the language of even the smallest people to be lost; we cannot permit nihilism with regard to the culture, traditions and history of peoples, be they big or small. This is what we must state forthrightly at the plenum to be held this summer. And not just state: we shall have to lay down legal foundations and work out an economic and social approach to solving inter-ethnic problems'. See *Pravda*, 30 November 1989.

55 *Pravda*, 2 July 1989.

56 *Pravda*, 27 August 1989.

57 In his memoirs, Anatoly Chernyaev offers a perceptive analysis of the problem. Gorbachev's sincere impulse to persuade the Lithuanians secession was irrational was doomed because national feelings were stronger than the rational arguments he set forth, 'and this was exactly what we had forgotten, burdened by Marxism–Leninism'. Chernyaev himself favoured 'releasing' the Baltic countries two years earlier, and argues that the fear of setting off a chain reaction, or a backlash of Russian-imperial sentiments, wasn't justified. (*My Six Years with Gorbachev*, pp. 252–3)

58 Vitaly Tretiakov, 'Zagadka Gorbacheva', *Moskovskie novosti*, 3 December 1989.

59 Address to plenary session of CPSU Central Committee, *Pravda*, 9 October 1990, pp. 1–2.

60 Chernyaev includes in his memoirs the text of a letter he wrote to Gorbachev denouncing the events and announcing his resignation, but he eventually relented when his secretary refused to type it; Chernyaev, *My Six Years With Gorbachev*, pp. 320–4.

61 The first draft of November 1990, prepared largely within the Party apparatus, had proved unacceptable to almost all republic leaders. A second draft, published 21 March 1991, gave the republics considerably more powers than had the previous one, but it was rejected by Yeltsin, among others, as seriously flawed. The Novo–Ogarevo agreement gave the republics a direct role in drafting the new treaty through the creation of a Preparatory Committee.

62 Televised speech of 15 March 1991 as reported in *FBIS*, 18 March 1991.

63 Yel'tsin also turned the referendum to his own political benefit by adding a simultaneous RSFSR referendum on the question of whether to create a President who would be directly elected, correctly anticipating that he would be the beneficiary of a favourable vote. When in June 1991 Yel'tsin won election on the first ballot, it strengthened his hand *vis-à-vis* Gorbachev, whose leadership lacked the legitimation provided by direct election.

64 Third draft of treaty, published *Pravda*, 27 June 1991.

65 For a number of examples of the ongoing controversies, see the documents and records of discussions in *Soyuz mozhno bylo sokhranit – Belaya kniga: Dokumenty i fakty o politike M.S. Gorbacheva po reformirovaniyu i sokhraneniyu mnogonatsional'nogo gosudarstva* (Moscow: Aprel'-85, 1995), pp. 160–84.

66 Indeed, at the G-7 meeting in London in the summer of 1991 several foreign leaders expressed their concern about excessive devolution of central authority to the republics and urged Gorbachev to insist on the right of federal taxation, and well as on federally-financed and controlled armed forces. Pavel Palazchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoirs of a Soviet Interpreter* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 298. I should like to thank Archie Brown for emphasising this point.

67 For an insightful treatment of these developments, see Veljko Vujacic, 'Gennadiy Zyuganov and the "Third Road"', *Post-Soviet Affairs,* 12, no. 2 (April–June 1996), pp. 118–54.

68 *Komsomol'skaya pravda,* 3 September 1991, as cited in Vujacic, pp. 135–6.

69 Jack Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire: the American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 623.

70 While Yel'tsin has been accused by numerous analysts and commentators of efforts to undermine any union after the August putsch in order to destroy Gorbachev's power, this view is not supported by the evidence. Well into the Fall Yel'tsin supported Gorbachev's view that a single army and a central structure for foreign policy-making were needed. In his own memoirs, foreign policy advisor Andrei Grachev, who served as Gorbachev's press secretary after the August putsch and participated in the meetings on the new union treaty, asserts that only one month before the Belovezhsky Forest agreement Yel'tsin 'had no deliberate intention of destroying the structures of the Union or of refusing to sign the new Union Treaty'. Andrei Grachev, *Final Days: The Inside Story of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Boulder: Westview, 1995), p. 95.

71 An indication of the confusion as well as ambiguity surrounding these discussions was the proposal advanced by Pavel Palazchenko, Gorbachev's English-language interpreter, that all the republics be offered seats in the United Nations; Pavel Palazchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoirs of a Soviet Interpreter* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 323.

72 In his recently published memoirs, Kravchuk argues that during the month of November he had prolonged discussions with Yel'tsin and the leader of the Belarusian republic, Stanislav Shushkevich, in which they agreed 'that the USSR was doomed, and should be replaced by a temporary non-state structure'. Stephen Mulvey, BBC News Online, 30 December 2001.

73 Dunkwart Rustow, 'Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model', *Comparative Politics*, 2/3 (April 1970), pp. 337–63.

74 In his insightful study of Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe Lévesque comes to a similar conclusion, pointing out that even after the victory of Solidarity in the Polish elections Gorbachev failed to recognise that the Polish Workers Party was a spent political force; Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 126–7.

75 Perhaps the most telling evidence of Gorbachev's difficulty in acknowledging the power of national sentiments was his reluctance, even after the dissolution of the USSR, to acknowledge that Ukraine and Russia were not organically inseparable, as in his image of a family, and that close ties

between Ukraine and Russia did not necessarily require their membership in a single state. Conversation with the author, Stanford University, June 1992.

76 See, for example, Jerry Hough, *Democratization and Revolution in the USSR* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1997), pp. 21, 498–9.

77 *New York Times*, 2 September 1990. Yel'tsin also suggested he was willing to give the autonomous republics ownership of the natural resources in their territories. (Bill Keller, *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 23 September 1990.)

78 Leokadiya Drobizheva, 'Povtorit li Rossiya put' Soyuza?' in Lilia Shevtsova (ed.), *Rossiya segodnya*: *Trudnye poiski svobody* (Moscow: 1993).

79 See Daniel Treisman, *After the Deluge: Regional Crises and Political Consolidation in Russia (*Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Steven L. Solnick, *Stealing the State* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), and Solnick's 'Federal Bargaining in Russia*', East European Constitutional Review,* 4:4 (Fall 1995).

80 For a more extensive treatment of the causes and consequences of the first war in Chechnya, from 1994–1996, see the author's 'Contested Sovereignty: The Tragedy of Chechnya', *International Security,* vol. 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998).

81 Gail W. Lapidus, 'Asymmetrical Federalism and State Breakdown in Russia', *Post-Soviet Affairs,* vol. 15, vol. 1 (January–March 1999).

82 For a discussion of the second war in Chechnya, see Gail W. Lapidus, 'Putin's War on Terrorism: Lessons from Chechnya', in *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 18, no. 2 (April–June 2002); and 'Ten Assumptions in Search of a Policy: Russia's Second Chechen War', *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 4, August 2000.

83 For a more detailed account of these changes, see Eugene Huskey, 'Overcoming the Yeltsin Legacy: Vladimir Putin and Russian Political Reform', Jeff Kahn, 'What is the New Russian Federalism?', both in Archie Brown (ed.), *Contemporary Russian Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Peter Reddaway, 'Is Putin's Power More Formal Than Real?', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 18, no. 1 (January–March 2002) and Eugene Huskey, 'Political Leadership and the Center–Periphery Struggle: Putin's Administrative Reforms', in Archie Brown and Lilia Shevtsova (eds), *Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin: Political Leadership in Russia's Transition* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2001).

84 Among the issues in dispute were the division of tax revenues between the centre and the republic, the republic's right to establish republic citizenship and to determine its own language and educational policies, as well as the use of Latin script, the role of Islamic religious instruction in state schools, and the preservation of the term 'sovereignty' in the republic's constitution. Under pressure from Moscow the republic's constitution was substantially amended, but as of this writing some 50 provisions were still considered to be in violation of federal laws.

85 For an insightful treatment, see Alfred Stepan, 'Russian Federalism in Comparative Perspective', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 16, no. 2, April–June 2000, pp. 133–76.

6

The Rise of New Thinking on Soviet Foreign Policy

Alexander Dallin

The Gorbachev years saw a series of fundamental changes in Soviet foreign policy behaviour. They were accompanied, explicated, and to some extent heralded by equally fundamental changes in Soviet 'thinking' about international affairs.[1]

Especially during the middle years of the Gorbachev era, roughly 1986–9, the formula, 'New Political Thinking', was widely used by Soviet officials and academics to describe the distinctive approach to international affairs that characterised the Gorbachev cohort. Subsequently, the use of the term began to fade (though Shevardnadze, as Foreign Minister until his sudden resignation in December 1990, continued to use it), but its key elements were by no means repudiated, and both Soviet conduct and the analysis of world affairs appeared to be broadly congruent with the essence of the 'New Political Thinking'.[2]

Its instrumental uses as a Soviet propaganda weapon – first and foremost, to impress others with the novel and benign nature of Gorbachev-era policy – are not of immediate interest to us here, except to note that in general the concept and its content were successful in helping to transform the image of the Soviet Union abroad; however, they had less than total success in eliciting a symmetrical response – in particular, a conceptual response – from the United States. In any event, this was neither the primary nor the sole purpose of the New Political Thinking.

What was the new political thinking?

There was never a precise or authoritative Soviet enumeration of what, for the foreign policy establishment, were the essential elements of the New Political Thinking.[3] Nonetheless, they can be pieced together

from Soviet writings and pronouncements. While the term, as it was used in the Soviet media, had attributes of publicistic fuzziness, there was in fact a good deal of intellectual coherence and logical consistency to the general approach that is identified by the term and to the more specific propositions and policy implications associated with it.

Whatever its ancestry and paternity – which are controversial – the formulation of new foreign policy thinking, after Gorbachev took over, apparently started from a desire to remove the sense of antagonism that had characterised Soviet relations with the non-communist world. The general orientation of 'New Thinking' was to normalise the Soviet approach to, and the Soviet role in, the international system. Most concisely, this durable sense of hostility – often accompanied by an assumption of ultimately inevitable conflict – had been reflected in three formulae that were abandoned by the Gorbachev team:

1. The so-called two-camp view, which had divided the world into two hostile camps (corresponding to the underlying doctrinal dichotomy between the forces of progress and reaction);
2. The class approach to international relations, which strove to interpret diplomatic and security relations between nations in Marxist–Leninist terms as a geographic projection of the class struggle (a perspective that had required repeated distortion in explaining world affairs but which was so deeply embedded in Soviet thinking that it proved to be the most difficult concept to abandon);
3. The Leninist formula of *kto kovo*, which in contemporary parlance corresponds to a zero-sum game approach, that is, the assumption that in any relationship one side must ultimately be the total winner, and the other the total loser, rather than allowing (more than tactically) for the recognition and pursuit of shared interests.

Taken together, jettisoning this ballast of orthodox doctrine implied also abandoning the recurrent formula, 'the worse, the better', which had dialectically welcomed a worsening of conditions in the enemy camp as inevitably bringing nearer both objective and subjective conditions for a revolutionary situation.

The postulated hostility between 'world systems' had also contributed to a general policy of autarky that had isolated the Soviet Union from the international economic system and kept it from fully sharing in world science, technology, and culture – trends that were recognised in the Gorbachev era to have been costly and wrong.

Abandoning these concepts, the new theorists instead came to view coexistence as a more genuine, enduring, and interactive relationship than had previously been sanctioned. The central thrust was (as David Holloway correctly put it) 'Learning to live and let live'.[4] The key was the novel emphasis on interdependence – in particular, interdependence between Soviet-type and non-Soviet systems – in security affairs as well as in economic and environmental matters. Mutual security – for instance, the novel view that the security of one superpower depended on the perceived security of the other – was illustrative of the new stress on the priority of 'all-human', 'global' (rather than class) interests and values. Such global, non-class issues presumably included the environment, epidemics, and energy, as well as poverty and terrorism.

Implicit in the argument was the search for political rather than military solutions to international problems, and the renunciation of the use of force in the pursuit of political objectives abroad (prompting in turn not only the pursuit of arms control agreements but also a reduction of military budgets and deployments to the level of 'reasonable sufficiency').[5] It also implied a reduction in Soviet expectations in the Third World and in commitments to 'national liberation' movements there.[6]

What did it amount to?

There was a good deal of uncertainty abroad – and some bitter disagreements – over the significance of the rhetoric that was identified with the New Political Thinking. True, over time the initial scepticism (generated in large measure by the repeated disappointment with earlier Soviet overtures) was disspelled as Soviet actions – from Afghanistan to Berlin to Iraq – dramatically bore out the 'unity of theory and practice'.

But even if the notion that the new thinking was a clever trick or purely a public relations operation was largely dismissed, there remained the question whether it was meant merely as a temporary 'breathing-spell' (*peredyshka*), such as had occurred on earlier occasions in Soviet foreign policy, or as a lasting, fundamental change in the Soviet outlook.[7] There was also the question whether it amounted to an ideological *aggiornamento* within the framework of Marxism–Leninism or marked a far-reaching departure from the traditional canons of ideology.[8] Some, in and out of the Soviet Union, would indeed see the 'New Thinking' as evidence of a betrayal of the faith by the incumbents in the Kremlin.

Meanwhile it became clear – as the New Political Thinking itself evolved over time – that in its full-blown version it did indeed mark a fundamental departure from the earlier Soviet world view. The general thrust to normalise foreign relations reflected a sense of realism that self-consciously abandoned both the utopian goals and the hitherto mandatory ideological scaffolding that had so often distorted Soviet perception. As Eduard Shevardnadze remarked in a revealing comment with regard to Eastern Europe (prior to the autumn of 1989), until then the Soviet Union had sought to remake the people there; now it had concluded that it was easier to remake its policies.

What brought it about?

The New Political Thinking is best seen as the product of several coincident processes. Most obviously, it dramatised the linkage between domestic and foreign policies and perspectives, in this case demonstrating the primacy of domestic over foreign affairs (something Gorbachev and others made quite explicit). Of course, policy decisions had not been the pure product of theoretical ratiocinations, no more than is the case in other countries. Situational factors, at home and abroad, were crucial in triggering the articulation of 'New Thinking' and the implementation of what might be called the new practice.

The major trigger for the formulation of these views was the perception of potentially critical and destabilising problems within the Soviet Union, beginning with the disastrous state of the economy, and the changing relationship between state and society. Challenges in the Soviet Union's international environment likewise added to the pressures for change. First, all these tension areas showed the Soviet Union to be considerably weaker than had earlier been assumed. Secondly, at a time of stressful domestic transformation the Soviet Union had a strong interest in keeping the international environment as stable, predictable, and benign as possible. And thirdly, under conditions of exceptional tautness in resource allocation, prudence dictated a foreign policy that could produce significantly smaller defence and foreign aid budgets.

The crisis experienced in the Soviet economy and the tensions perceived by Soviet society had remarkably weakened the USSR. In turn, the awareness of that weakness contributed to the willingness of Soviet circles, official and unofficial, to rethink the ideological bases of Soviet policy. And the unprecedented willingness to admit and deplore the many past misperceptions, miscarriages of justice, mistaken expectations,

and misjudgments in domestic priorities and in foreign policy – all these injected a dose of humility and candour that had been so strikingly absent from Soviet conduct for most of the twentieth century. In particular, the policy of *glasnost'* enabled Soviet writers to deal with topics that had long been taboo. Thus, another element was the general atmosphere of openness, reformism, and pluralism, in which – as the rest of this book indicates – ideas and orientations that had long been repressed could at last surface as 'New Thinking' was welcomed and encouraged in a variety of fields.

But in addition to these situational factors, the success of the New Thinking was greatly helped by a new generation of Soviet international affairs specialists and diplomats who, during the preceding years, had become acquainted with Western thinking and practice and who had, cautiously and sporadically, begun to integrate the lessons of this experience into their own world view.

In other words, even if the perceived crisis in Soviet policy and society provided an essential trigger for the change of 'thinking', the New Political Thinking was not merely a response to newly-perceived strains and shortages at home.

In this setting a learning process that had quietly been under way for some years could become manifest, particularly as a new generation of actors – officials and academics – acquired access to, or even attained, decision-making levels. Now the New Thinking could be spelled out.

But why should 'mere' words have mattered to a regime as hard-boiled as that ruling in Moscow? For those reared in the milieu of official Marxism–Leninism, with all the attention paid to careful formulations, and subtle changes in these formulations, and the hazards of deviation from the official course, it was self-evident that words mattered greatly, even if, ironically, the very changes taking place marked a fundamental exit from the universe of obligatory doctrinal ritual. The theoretical propositions cited above, and others like them, were important to Soviet foreign policymakers and interpreters. By all indications, they helped to structure the thinking, the perceptions and the analysis of world affairs by Soviet observers and practitioners.

It is not clear whether the changes in Soviet foreign policy behaviour after 1985 were set in motion before the doctrine was formulated or whether some general structure of 'New Thinking' preceded (or, more likely, accompanied) the changes in policy; it appears that new theoretical formulations were required to legitimise new policy orientations within the Soviet leadership, and in fact significant elements of the New Political Thinking were articulated as early as 1985–6.

Actual Soviet behaviour was in many regards congruent with this body of thought. Thus the withdrawal from Afghanistan; the decision not to use force in Eastern Europe; the effort to settle regional disputes, from Namibia to Nicaragua to Cambodia; the improvement in relations with China; and the general Soviet–American normalisation, including arms control agreements and the realignment with the United States in the Gulf crisis, were all in accord with the new orientation. So was the fresh emphasis on international organisations and Soviet efforts to join new ones, particularly those linked to the promotion of trade and credits.

No doubt not all Soviet foreign policy behaviour followed from, or vindicated, the New Political Thinking. The unification of Germany was something Moscow had not anticipated and had hoped to avoid. Radical critics in Moscow pointed to Gorbachev's silence over the Tiananmen Square massacre as an example of the regime's hypocrisy. The effort of what had been Union republics, such as the Baltic states, to establish diplomatic and commercial links abroad created unforeseen awkwardness for the Soviet foreign ministry. By and large, however, Shevardnadze's deeds echoed the same orientation as his words.

Where did the new thinking come from?

There remains the task of tracing the etiology of the New Thinking. It can be shown that many of the ideas advanced since 1985 had been expressed – in more or less public fashion – prior to the Gorbachev era. In this sense the New Political Thinking did not constitute a total hiatus but rather marked the completion, systematisation, and publicity of previously adumbrated ideas, and the official endorsement of them, at the expense of other, 'older', political thinking. Thus, the priority given to the control and reduction of strategic weapons was not new: some Soviet specialists had keenly perceived the threat of nuclear war and annihilation since the 1950s. The Leninist belief in the inevitability of war had been abandoned a generation before Gorbachev. The two-camp approach, too, had been tacitly dropped back in the Khrushchev era. Disappointment with 'national liberation movements' in the Third World was voiced by a number of Soviet observers well before 1985. The crystallisation of interests shared by the superpowers was not unprecedented.

However, other elements – most notably, the explicit abandonment of class analysis – were distinctly new; so was the general atmosphere

lacking in the traditional animus toward the West and in fact seeking to borrow and copy from it. Above all, views and perspectives that had hitherto been awkwardly interpolated into ritual rhetoric and presented piecemeal in academic circumlocutions, now were made a part of an explicit, reasoned, systematic, and official argument (amounting to a new ideology, some observers abroad would insist, but clearly and importantly one that allowed for far greater flexibility and pragmatism).

Politics and public opinion

Within the Soviet Union, the New Political Thinking was not unanimously or wholeheartedly accepted by the attentive public, although it wrought considerably less havoc than some of the 'New Thinking' on economic affairs. Some officials had difficulty in jettisoning the 'old thinking'; for instance, seeing the world in Manichean terms of 'us' and 'them' had been second nature to many. Others emphatically disagreed with significant parts of the new 'thinking', such as its Western (and Westernising) orientation. In most instances, there was a close linkage between foreign and domestic policy preferences of particular actors: an individual's willingness to accept and assimilate the principles of the New Thinking correlated positively with his or her favourable orientation toward the general reform outlook of the Gorbachev era (such as *glasnost'* and the establishment of a law-governed state), but there were exceptions to this rule.

The new body of ideas and its consequences were part of the skein that the orthodox die-hards in the Soviet Communist Party attacked – at first, mostly behind the scenes or by indirection, and then, openly, as Soviet politics polarised. In particular, former Politburo member Yegor Ligachev voiced his dissent from the priority of all-human over class interests: 'We proceed from the class nature of international relations. Any other formulation of the issue only introduces confusion into the thinking of Soviet people and our friends abroad.'[9] Quite logically, in 1990, Ligachev and his political allies accused the reformists of having surrendered Eastern Europe, having permitted the strengthening of Japan and the reunification of Germany, having cut the defence budget, and having contributed to the disintegration of the Soviet state.[10] If the Soviet Union loomed less formidable in 1990 than it had in 1980 or 1970, this was blamed on the outlook of the Gorbachev team.

It would be fairer to suggest that the change in perceptions reflected an unpublicised shift of values and priorities: the reformist leaders (like Eduard Shevardnadze and Aleksandr Yakovlev) by implication did not

believe that the continuation of the war in Afghanistan or the forcible suppression of dissent in Eastern Europe was worth the price; in reactions in the West, in resources committed, in other opportunities and benefits foregone, and in political costs at home.

But this was no longer an esoteric debate among a few insiders. One consequence of the political changes in the Soviet Union was the replacement of the traditional façade of monolithic unanimity by the celebration of pluralism of opinions, which was extended to foreign affairs as well (though somewhat less than on domestic matters). Another consequence was the mushrooming of public opinion research, conducted with varying but increasing sophistication and reliability.

One study of particular relevance to our topic was that directed by Andrei Melville and Alexander Nikitin (both then with the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada in Moscow) in co-operation with Brown University. The results of a survey of 120 international affairs specialists, scholars, journalists, and diplomats were published in 1989.[11] A second phase was conducted in Moscow and Kursk with a sample of 1200 persons representing (or intended to represent) all strata of Soviet (urban) society.

The data showed broad support for the priority of 'all-human' interests and values, ahead of state, class, or other narrower interests.[12] Almost 80 per cent disagreed with the statement that the principal aim of Soviet foreign policy must be to assist the spread of socialism as a system on a world scale. Some 77 per cent believed that the prevention of nuclear war should be the principal aim of Soviet foreign policy, ranked ahead of any 'class' purposes. When the interviewers structured a hypothetical conflict between the interests of proletarian internationalism and all-human interests, only 9 per cent of the respondents felt that internationalist help to progressive forces abroad must have the top priority. 71 per cent of the citizens and 87 per cent of the specialists gave, in such a conflict situation, priority to all-human values and interests.

In terms of the assimilation of the substance of the 'New Political Thinking', the available data suggested the existence of some six distinct groups within the Soviet 'attentive public'. This typology is based both on a reading of the Soviet press (general and specialised alike) and on a series of interviews conducted by this writer in Moscow in the spring of 1990.

1. There were the real, convinced 'new thinkers', both the creative ones and others who had sincerely internalised the concepts. A number of academics as well as practitioners belonged here. While they differed among themselves, these tended to be people who

were, firstly, relatively 'unideological' in their belief systems, that is, undogmatic, flexible, and capable of learning; and, secondly, relatively comfortable in Western political and social science environments. Some of them stumbled upon elements of the 'New Thinking' by acquaintance with the outside world in the 1960s and 1970s. Most of them came out of the official Soviet/CPSU milieu but had become disappointed or even alienated prior to 1985. An important part of this group was made up of those who cut their political teeth in the Khrushchev days (the group of 'consultants' like Fedor Burlatsky, Oleg Bogomolov, and Aleksandr Bovin are a good example), but increasingly this type was also represented by the next younger group.

2. A different category consisted of people who were typically compliant converts to the New Thinking but had difficulty fully letting go of earlier beliefs. Some, for instance, were reluctant to jettison a basically dichotomic view of the world even if they eagerly identified with the new Soviet–American connection. The class struggle was something else they had difficulty letting go of in foreign affairs. And yet they eagerly embraced 'global issues', even if they were unsure what to do with them. Some people in this group may have had sincere difficulty in squaring the New Thinking with an equally sincere Russian patriotism. There were some such people in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and elsewhere in the government and Party.
3. Then there was the category of obedient, though sometimes sullen and reluctant, members of the establishment who mouthed the tenets of the New Thinking indifferently, without particular conviction, just as they pronounced the false verities of earlier days with an equal lack of conviction and with an equal show of dedication (or self-interest). Without always being clear about this in their own minds, they may have assumed that the New Thinking was an instrumental, temporary business, to be succeeded some day by another phase of Soviet foreign policy concepts, and the whole trick was to remain alert, responsive, and loyal to the authorities, quick to learn the arguments that made any given phase – new thinking included – indisputable truths in their time. This group included a good many people who for many years shone in their anti-American dedication and had difficulty fully shedding it; it also included some who worked with or on the East European 'fraternal' parties and states and had difficulty accepting their abandonment and disappearance.
4. Harder to pin down was the group of 'old thinkers' who were now trying to hide their beliefs. The 'New Thinking' turned out to be

particularly difficult to swallow for those who had professionally been committed to work that became downgraded (for example, people in some of the departments and institutes attached to the Central Committee). Typically, along with a rhetorical acceptance of the New Thinking, for instance, as an instrumental device to increase the Soviet appeal abroad, they continued to stress the contradictions and conflicts within the capitalist world and to speak of the bright future of socialism. In fact, some of them were not aware of continuing to mouth some of the 'old' rhetoric.

5. And then there were the 'real old thinkers' who remained prepared to put across their orthodox views in so far as they found it politic or safe in the late Soviet environment. The classic case may well be Yegor Ligachev's strictures, cited earlier (1988), and his charges that the Gorbachev policy had strengthened the hand of the imperialists (1990). The reactions at the Founding Congress of the Russian Communist Party in June 1990 indicated that among die-hards and true believers there was some sympathy for this view of the New Political Thinking as a betrayal of the faith. Some Soviet military figures made clear that they likewise had reservations – generally, not so much the 'thinking' as its practical pay-off, such as unilateral arms reductions, the 'surrender' of Eastern Europe, a new defensive doctrine, and a lowering of defence expenditures. Similarly, there were those who charged the leadership with abandoning comrades and clients abroad.

   Speaking up on foreign and defence policy issues at a party congress was virtually unprecedented in the memory of that generation and had to be seen primarily, not as an effort to change foreign policy thinking or behaviour, but as part of drawing up a comprehensive indictment of the Gorbachev regime.

6. By 1990–1 one more opinion group was just beginning to take shape – those on the radical end of the Soviet political spectrum for whom the Gorbachev team was too hesitant, too compromising, or too rigid.[13] These observers were inclined to stress the frequent divergence of Soviet practice from professed principles, be it on dealings with China after Tiananmen Square, or Soviet aid to North Korea or Cuba. They were also likely to press for a greater role in foreign affairs for the Supreme Soviet, for political parties, and for the Union republics.

   All in all, however, with all the ups and downs in public support, the foreign policy of the Gorbachev regime and the 'thinking' undergirding it appeared to have been accepted with varying degrees of

conviction and intensity but also with relatively little open dissent from either left or right.

Who done it?

Three groups seem to have had a special role in the formation and acceptance of the New Political Thinking. First of all, it benefited substantially from the emergence on the political arena of a new generation – both practitioners and academics, mostly in their thirties and forties – who had had the opportunity to serve or travel abroad and had acquired not only broader general education and better linguistic skills, but also familiarity with Western writings in the social sciences and international relations, as well as different methodologies of research and styles of argument and debate.

While this cohort included some older officials with diplomatic experience in the United States or at the United Nations (such as Vladimir Petrovsky) and some 'fast learners' without the benefit of such service (including Eduard Shevardnadze), the bulk of 'New Thinking' came in the form of memoranda and briefings from younger men (mostly in academic institutes, in the foreign service, or in journalism) whose skills, polish, and mode of thinking for the first time rivalled those of their Western counterparts, who for many of them did indeed serve as an explicit or implicit reference group. Increasingly accompanied by a sense of shame and frustration caused by the perceived backwardness of their own country and expressions of anger about the sacrifice of generations to a tissue of fictions and falsehoods, these were important cadres for the fresh approach.

It appears that their collective role was decisive in effectively putting forward – in conversations, in drafts of official documents, and in memoranda to their superiors – many of the ideas that came to be identified with the New Political Thinking.[14]

Secondly, a more senior group close to the new leadership advised the decision-makers in the same vein. This group included political scientists who were all products of the Khrushchev era, like Georgy Shakhnazarov (later, personal adviser to Gorbachev), Yevgeny Primakov (later, a member of the Politburo and subsequently a member of Gorbachev's Presidential Council) and Fedor Burlatsky (later, editor of *Literaturnaya gazeta*).

And thirdly, some key policymakers (notably, Eduard Shevardnadze and Aleksandr Yakovlev) had to be prepared to listen and to accept

new formulae and approaches. The coincidence of these three groups (and the smaller number of actors at the core of foreign policy decision-making) made the appearance of the 'New Thinking' in foreign policy relatively smooth and simple, compared to the more bitterly contested issue areas like economic reform or the future of the Communist Party. Moreover, the later complaints of hardliners like Ligachev that they had been by-passed in the formulation of new foreign policy principles (complaints that ring true) suggested that Shevardnadze was able to keep the official formulation of the New Political Thinking away from those whom he had reason to suspect of hostility to it.

Conclusion

The New Political Thinking, it became apparent, was itself not a constant. Under conditions when there was no longer a 'general line' dispensed by the ruling party, and when individual scholars and publicists could give alternative views and versions of such a body of doctrine, it was natural, healthy, and disconcerting that its operational meaning remained somewhat elusive and fluid. Soviet 'roundtables', published in prestigious political journals, recognised that Soviet thinking was full of unanswered questions – especially because standard 'socialist' beliefs were usually not explicitly cast out but rather remained in ambiguous coexistence with the new world-order notions.

And yet, while it thus suffered as a body of abstract ideas, and while its fate was tied to that of Soviet politics writ large and the fate of the Soviet Union itself, the 'New Thinking' had signalled a profound change of values and attitudes precisely where the 'old thinking' had been most troubling to the outside world. Whatever would happen subsequently in Russia, some of the 'New Thinking' was virtually certain to remain valid for future foreign policymakers and analysts in Moscow.

Notes

1 There is by now a considerable literature on the 'New Political Thinking' in foreign and security affairs. One continuing controversy among Western observers has concerned the level, or the depth, of changes – whether what changed was rhetoric, doctrine, ideology, theory, or thought. See, for example, Vendulka Kubalkova and A.A. Cruickshank, *Thinking About Soviet 'New Thinking'* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1989) and sources cited therein; Seweryn Bialer, '"New Thinking" and Soviet Foreign Policy', *Survival*, July–August 1988, pp. 291–309; Robert Legvold, 'The

Revolution in Soviet Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs: America and the World*, 1988–9, pp. 82–98; Allen Lynch, 'The Continuing Importance of Ideology in Soviet Foreign Policy', in *Harriman Institute Forum*, 3:7 (July 1990); Margot Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988), Chapter 10; Cynthia Roberts and Elizabeth Wishnick, 'Ideology is Dead! Long Live Ideology!', *Problems of Communism*, November–December 1989, pp. 57–69; and Sylvia Woodby, *Gorbachev and the Decline of Ideology in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Westview 1989). In addition see *How Should America Respond to Gorbachev's Challenge? A Report of the Task Force on Soviet New Thinking* (New York: Institute for East–West Security Studies, 1987). In my view what mattered most was the nature and the substance of the change, rather than definitional squabbles. See also notes 7 and 8 below.

2 There are several possible explanations as to why its use went on the decline. Critics at times blamed the New Political Thinking for unwelcome consequences (such as the reunification of Germany). Perhaps, in the face of a rather chaotic reality, the leadership moderated its efforts to portray the changes in Soviet conduct as the carefully thought-out products of 'New Thinking'. Moreover, it became recognised that the diversity of views bracketed by the 'New Thinking' had left a number of 'contradictions' unresolved.

3 Different Western writers have come up with different enumerations of what they consider the essential elements of the New Political Thinking, the number varying from three to ten. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' number. See, for example, Kubalakova and Cruickshank, *Thinking About Soviet 'New Thinking'* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1989); Boris Meissner, '"New Thinking" and Soviet Foreign Policy', *Aussenpolitik* (English edn), no. 2, 1989, pp. 101–18; David Holloway, 'Gorbachev's "New Thinking"', *Foreign Affairs: America and the World*, 1988–9, pp. 66–81.

4 David Holloway, 'Learning to Live and Let Live', in Abraham Brumberg (ed.), *Chronicle of a Revolution* (New York: Pantheon, 1990), pp. 145–160.

5 For discussions of 'New Thinking' in security matters, see, for example, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, 'Gorbachev, The New Thinking of Foreign-Security Policy and the Military', in Peter Juviler and Hiroshi Kimura (eds), *Gorbachev's Reforms* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1988), pp. 115–47; Stephen Meyer, 'The Sources and Prospects of Gorbachev's New Political Thinking on Security', *International Security*, vol. 13, no. 2 (1988), pp. 124–63; Stephen Shenfield, *The Nuclear Predicament* (London: Chatham House Papers, no. 37, 1987); Matthew Evangelista, 'The New Soviet Approach to Security', *World Policy Journal*, Autumn 1986, pp. 561–99; Bruce Parrott, 'Soviet National Security Under Gorbachev', *Problems of Communism*, November–December 1988, pp. 1–36; and Raymond Garthoff, *Deterrence and the Revolution in Soviet Military Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1990). See also Richard Smoke and Andrei Kortunov (eds), *Mutual Security: A New Approach* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1990). On the implications of the 'New Thinking' for the Soviet view of international law (including the Soviet position on international arbitration), see William E. Butler (ed.), *Perestroika and International Law* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1990).

6 Soviet writings on the Third World have been amply and ably analysed in the publication of, among others, David Albright, Francis Fukuyama, Jerry Hough and Elizabeth Valkenier. See also Galia Golan, *Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' on Terrorism* (Washington Papers, no. 141, New York: Praeger, 1990).

7 For examples of the sceptics, see Gerhard Wettig, 'Gorbachev and "New Thinking" in the Kremlin's Foreign Policy', *Aussenpolitik* (English edn), no. 2, 1987, pp. 144–54; William Odom, 'How Far Can Soviet Reform Go?', *Problems of Communism*, vol. 36 (November–December 1987), no. 6; and Stephen Sestanovich, 'Gorbachev's Foreign Policy: A Diplomacy of Decline', *Problems of Communism*, vol. 37 (January–February 1988), no. 1.

8 Kubalkova and Cruickshank represented the most sophisticated but ultimately erroneous view that the New Political Thinking was but 'an attempt by the Soviet superpower to find a Marxist foreign policy foundation that is not only significantly different from that of the United States, but also will allow the socio-economically weaker USSR to establish the rules and set the pace in the next phase of the "historical struggle"' between the two systems (Kubalkova and Cruickshank, *Thinking About Soviet 'New thinking'* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1989) p. 114). They pointed, rather prematurely, to Eastern Europe, anti-Americanism, and strategic doctrine as three areas in which the New Political Thinking had not brought about any change.

9 *Pravda*, 6 August 1988.

10 See, for example, *Pravda*, 26 June, 5 and 11 July 1990; *International Herald Tribune*, 27 June 1990.

11 *SShA*, no. 9, 1989.

12 A. Yu. Mel'vil' and A.I. Nikitin, 'Konets "yedinomysliya"? Sovetskoe obshchestvennoe mnenie po voprosam bezopasnosti i mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy (typescript, 1990).

13 See, for example, A. Kortunov and A. Izyumov, 'Chto ponimat' pod gosudarstvennymi interesami vo vneshney politike', *Literaturnaya gazeta*, no. 28, 1990; 'Novoe myshlenie v mezhdunarodnykh delakh', *Kommunist* (Moscow), no. 8, 1989, pp. 98–107; Suzanne Crow, 'Moscow Looks Hard at Its Foreign Aid Programme' (Radio Liberty), *Report on the USSR*, 2:32 (10 August 1990), pp. 8–9.

14 On the role of the *institutchiki*, see, for example, Scott R. Atkinson, *Soviet Defense Policy Under Gorbachev: The Growing Civilian Influence* (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, Occasional Paper, March 1990).

7

The Development of New Thinking about World Communism

Alexander Dallin

A good deal was said and written about the relevance of the 'New Political Thinking' to Soviet foreign and security policy – the subjects of arms control, Soviet–American relations and regional problems have been much discussed. Much less has been said about the attitude of the Gorbachev regime – or popular attitudes – toward international communism, the Soviet bloc, and the prospect of 'world revolution'.

There were three major reasons for this relative neglect on the Soviet side. One was the recognition that world revolution was a most unpromising avenue for the Soviet Union to pursue or bank on, particularly at a time when attention was focused on more exciting and more urgent topics. A second reason was the fact that the 'New Thinking' and current policy were largely in the hands of diplomats, international relations and international security specialists who had little time for, and little interest in, international communism and for many of whom it has long been an esoteric and 'ideological' topic of little or no relevance to 'real' international affairs. And thirdly, in so far as the official articulation of the New Thinking was, for some years, circumscribed by domestic political tactics, it had appeared wise not to advertise the provocative departure from orthodox verities in an area where the ideologues were apt to respond with particular sensitivity and venom, for here the revisionism was bound to touch on some fundamentals of Marxism–Leninism.

By 1990 that latter effort had proved pointless. The bitter differences within the Soviet establishment were out in the open. But this was the culmination of a process that had taken time. The move toward greater candour and insight had been gradually gaining momentum since 1985. At that time old-style Soviet hardliners like

Oleg Rakhmanin (writing under the pseudonyms Borisov and Vladimirov[1]) were, if anything, tightening the net of legitimate diversity, warning of revisionism and nationalism among Communists in the face of what they claimed was an unprecedented onslaught by the imperialists.[2]

While the reformists in the saddle had other priorities, by 1987 senior independent publicists like Aleksandr Bovin were taking advantage of the new *glasnost'* to write derisively of the customary Communist attempts to depict the course of events – whatever the course, whatever the events – as being in harmony with the predicted unfolding of the inevitable. History, he wrote, 'mocks attempts to control its course'. Thus, it had to be admitted that the prospects of socialist revolution were not at all what had been expected. Bovin argued: 'Above all, it should be acknowledged that the ability of capitalism to adapt to the new historical setting has surpassed our expectations. The prospect of socialist transformations in developed capitalist countries has receded indefinitely.' As for the Third World, 'In a number of countries of socialist orientation, the situation remains unstable, fraught with the possibility of regression.' More generally, 'Both in capitalist countries and in Third World Countries, the Communist Parties, with few exceptions, have failed to become mass organisations, to win for themselves the support of the bulk of the working class, of the toilers.' One of the reasons for these failures had been the failure of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to provide an attractive model. 'The society that, by all indications, should have been an example, a model to be imitated, a stimulus in the struggle for the socialist reordering of society, has not been created in the Soviet Union.' The same had been true of China as well. Here, too, the equivalent of a perestroika, Bovin argued, at least held out a hope for the future.[3]

Such articles set out many of the themes that were to be developed in the following years. Typically the journalists spoke out first. After them came the diplomats and other practitioners, then the scholars, and finally the ideologues. In March 1988, the journal *MEMO* (*Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*) published a major article by its editor, German Diligensky, which went a good deal further and deeper in questioning traditional assumptions concerning revolutions abroad, but still from a Leninist perspective.[4] By early 1990 a Communist Party journal could devote a remarkably candid roundtable to the same subject.[5]

Themes and arguments

While they tended to become more radical and outspoken over time, most such analyses could be fitted into the same general framework. They tried to provide answers to three questions:

1. In what ways have we (or our predecessors) been wrong about the prospects of revolution (whose inevitability and ultimate success Marxists had been taking for granted)?
2. What are the sources of our errors?
3. What follows from this realisation?

There was little argument about the first proposition. In the major capitalist countries – indeed, the most highly developed ones – such as the United States, Britain, and Germany, the Communist Parties were a pitiful joke; in France and even Italy, where they had a mass following, they were losing support. In the Third World, countries of allegedly socialist orientation were turning elsewhere instead. Well before the crisis in Eastern Europe in the autumn of 1989, Moscow recognised that even within the 'socialist commonwealth' there were serious problems that required study and reform. But in regard to the second and third points above opinions varied. Moreover, while the gloves were off, for some time there remained the prudential convention that no one turned overtly against the very idea of a socialist revolution (although its essence and meaning could be, and were widely, questioned, and it no longer needed to be equated with 'proletarian' revolution or indeed any violent revolution at all).

The search for the sources of erroneous past (and present) analyses led the writers into the labyrinth of Marxism–Leninism.[6] This reopened the linked issues of the nature of capitalism, the socialist model, and the future of the Third World. It was no longer a matter of ritual or dogma that the infallibility of the 'classics' of Marxism–Leninism needed unquestioningly to be reaffirmed. Soviet writers now condemned the 'stereotype of bipolarity' – socialism and capitalism as the only alternatives – that was the product of vulgar Marxism. Others questioned the 'myth' of the victorious 'historical mission of the working class'. Now it could be acknowledged that for decades the class struggle and class antagonisms had been 'absolutised' by Communist analysts and mechanically given undue importance. Historians were arguing against the previously mandatory stress on *zakonomernost'* – the insistence that history proceeded in conformity with immutable

laws of social development – and instead pleaded for *al'ternativnost'* – room for choices and alternative paths.

It turned out that nationalisation did not in itself give workers a sense of ownership and identification with their enterprise. Another axiom that was likewise challenged concerned the equation of the interests of the international proletariat and those of the Soviet Union.

> We are being greatly harmed [declared a professor at the Central Committee's training school for foreign communists] when we try to strengthen our [international] position by referring to the fact that we, as it were automatically, represent the interests of the entire international proletariat – all 670 million people. That is simply incorrect. The scope and the diversity of the interests of the working class cannot be represented by any one party or movement … One must not automatically arrogate to oneself the ability to represent all the aspirations of the international working class, especially those beyond the borders of our country.[7]

Soviet publications conveyed, to a greater degree than personal interviews did, an instrumental, utilitarian approach: to what extent must the old ideological baggage be jettisoned in order to rescue the essence of the cause? At least in print some authors – especially those in official Soviet positions – reaffirmed that, in spite of all, the class struggle was not just fading away; that the working class remained essential as the architect of historical change; that sooner or later it must pass from defence to offence; that since current conditions favoured evolution rather than revolution and 'global' rather than 'class' objectives, international communism had to stress working together with different groups such as social-democrats and 'greens'.

Others, however, much more candidly admitted the bankruptcy of Communist thinking. After the many years of glossing over all unpleasantness and the repetition of abstractions and stereotypes removed from real life, it was not too much to speak of 'pessimism, disappointment, and disorientation' among Communist analysts, of a 'crisis' in world Communism (words used in publications of the later perestroika years on the subject). While a few commentators (like Aleksandr Tsipko) dismissed Marxism altogether for its utopias and myths that they hold responsible for the distortions of the Soviet era, a greater number found it convenient to stress the changes that had intervened since Marx's or Lenin's days. Thus, the working class was no longer what it had been. On the one hand, it was argued, it had

become more conscious, more sophisticated, more 'civilised', more inclined to favour gradualism and to reject violence in favour of 'parliamentary, peaceful, and democratic' forms of struggle. Labour had become less emotional and more rational in its political attitudes, it was argued; indeed, it tended to be suspicious of all -isms. (In fact, large segments of the workforce in developed and developing societies were on the far right, politically. How could this be explained?)

On the other hand, the working class in the West (and that is where most of the attention of Soviet analysts was) had undergone important structural changes – and here different Soviet analysts had their own explanations – be it the inclusion of 'scientific workers' and the vast expansion of white-collar workers or the qualitative stratification within the working class(es). Some analysts found it hard to say what interests all types of labour had in common that distinguished them from all other strata of society.

At the same time, capitalism was no longer the brutal exploiter. Soviet observers, it was commonly agreed, had underestimated the vitality of Western capitalism and the ability of the state to introduce reforms that seemingly went against the interests of the ruling class. The areas of alienation and exploitation had been reduced, and so consequently had the workers' hostility to the system. The government had typically imposed elements of social responsibility, welfare, and security that mitigated the potential effects of economic crises. Moreover, internationalisation of production and international co-operation among capitalist states rendered the old images of intra-capitalist conflict obsolete. (Soviet authors were slower to tinker with the Leninist notion of imperialism, but some – including Bovin – cast it overboard, if only, they argued, because imperialism had changed fundamentally since Lenin's days.)

There was some implicit disagreement over the question whether or not the changes had an 'objective' basis that could somehow be integrated into a Marxist perspective. Some commentators attributed the change in the working class primarily to the 'scientific–technological revolution' that had recently intervened. Others associated the priority of global values with the advent of nuclear weapons.

More cruel critics, by contrast, candidly stressed the basic error of Communist categories and axioms. One result, once this was recognised (a historian suggested) was that Communists now had no answers other than reformism, that is, they now found themselves groping for political space already occupied by others. The working class in advanced societies, another argued, had changed qualitatively, including its culture and values and had no use for

Communists as they had come to know them in the past. Others argued that the root of the problem was more basic: to begin with the error was the Marxists' assumptions. A.I. Volkov, a historian, declared at a roundtable on this subject:

> A realistic assessment of contemporary capitalism, its development, its vitality, is in fundamental conflict with the assumptions of Communists – so to speak, with our genetic code, which consists of the notion that human happiness can be achieved only by means of revolution, which is understood as the forcible redistribution of property and power. This is an illusion, since hopes can be tied not to redistribution but only to some higher form of production. Today's developed societies have demonstrated the possibility, in principle, to solve social problems far more painlessly and more effectively, permitting these societies to rise to a higher level of development not by means of destruction but by building and assimilating the best of the achievements of earlier generations and forms of organisation of social life.[8]

One old-timer declared that international Communism had always lagged behind the times. It had lagged in recognising that capitalism had recovered in the 1920s, it had lagged in identifying fascism as enemy number one, it had lagged in identifying the national-liberation movements as a promising ally, it had erroneously attacked Euro communism as anti-Leninist, and so forth: all in all, what was called for was a 'reconsideration of many ideological positions of the communist movement'. In 1917–19, another observer remarked, the worldwide victory of socialism had been expected in months. 'Then months turned into years, and years into decades. The current vision of the emergence of socialism measures this process in hundreds of years.'[9]

One historian was mindful of the prominence world revolution had had in the early days of the Soviet regime, as Lenin himself had acknowledged. Arriving at the Finland Station, Lenin had proclaimed, 'Long live the world socialist revolution!' The 1924 Constitution of the USSR provided for the inclusion of all future Soviet republics in the Soviet Union, the final goal being the 'uniting of the toilers of all countries in the World Socialist Soviet Republic'. It was true that Stalin, in his interview with Roy Howard (1 March 1936), had hypocritically denied that there had been such a goal: 'We never had such plans or intentions … This is the fruit of … tragicomical misunderstanding'. All the more reason now to get the story straight.

Types of responses

While the positions of different commentators were in flux in the last years of the Soviet Union, one may suggest a typology of responses to the shared recognition of a crisis in the 'international labour movement' or, more properly, in the Communist world. In simplest terms, they divided into those who believed one of the following propositions:

1. In all essential respects Marx and Lenin were right and their theories remained largely valid, though their application had at times been faulty.
2. Marxism–Leninism was correct in its day, but the world had changed in significant ways, which required a fresh look and a new political orientation. Thus, instead of appealing to the working class, Communists needed to appeal to the entire society. Though Lenin attacked social-chauvinism and social-opportunism, this did not have to mean the rejection of reformism for all times. Similarly, a fresh look was in order with regard to the Third World (a topic on which Soviet observers divided, but on which Soviet observers increasingly acknowledged their disappointment and a recognition that developments in even 'progressive' societies had scarcely lived up to Soviet expectations).
3. In a number of fundamental respects, Marxism–Leninism turned out always to have been in error. Serious doubts were in order about the whole notion of historical inevitability. Marxism was deficient in lacking moral categories. It was impossible effectively to direct a world movement from a single centre, just as it was impossible for Gosplan effectively to direct the entire Soviet economy. Or putting it more gently, there were in Marxism serious contradictions that needed to be highlighted, exposed, and amended, though they did not require abandoning socialism *in toto*.[10]
4. Never mind the theory, which could always be manipulated; what was needed was new guidance to practice – for example, an appeal to the Socialist International to work together (that is, neither to ostracise it nor to merge with it). The narrowest, most utilitarian approach was to argue that since Communists abroad were doing so poorly, what was needed was a broad coalition of social forces (read: political parties and movements).
5. International Communism had been a vast failure – misleading and expensive at that – and it would be wise for the Soviet authorities to disengage from it as undramatically and as elegantly as possible, writing it off as the product of an earlier era.

All in all, world communism and world revolution had by 1990 receded, in the minds of most Soviet observers and policymakers, to a distant, dubious, and dependent role – compared to urgent and immediate needs, compared to domestic priorities, and compared to international security, economics, and diplomatic tasks, in a general atmosphere of 'de-ideologisation'.[11] In all these regards, the place assigned to world communism and world revolution in the context of the New Political Thinking represented the logical though important next step in a process of evolution that began with the first doubts soon after the October Revolution. Not so the dominant reaction to events in the 'socialist camp'.

The socialist camp

Curiously, the 'New Political Thinking' – focusing first and foremost on Soviet–American relations – had little to say about Soviet relations with 'socialist countries'. True, Mikhail Gorbachev in his UN General Assembly speech in December 1988 stressed freedom of choice for all countries – presumably, including allegiance and development path. In November 1986 he had distributed to his colleagues a memorandum, discussed at a working meeting of the leaders of ruling communist parties in Moscow, which dealt with equalising relations among the 'fraternal countries'. Gradually a sense developed that the tolerance of diversity – pluralism – within the Soviet Union also applied to relations within the socialist camp (provided that diversity was limited to 'socialist' systems and did not jeopardise security relations).[12]

A large part of the Soviet elite perceived that there were troubling aspects to Soviet relations with Eastern Europe; the Polish events of 1980–1 had caused particular concern. But the general feeling, in the 1980s, was that the East European governments had gained, or were gaining, legitimacy at home; that there was no crisis at hand; and that problematic issues (such as the Nazi–Soviet deal of 1939, or Soviet responsibility for the Katyn massacre) were finally being addressed. In the words of a leading Soviet party official:

> The elements of 'paternalistic' relations, in which we, as it were, played the role of patron, are gone. The need for strictly observing the equality principle, which was advanced before, has been reaffirmed in the spirit of New Thinking by the conclusion that no party has a monopoly on the truth of socialism, and only the strengthening of socialism in practice can serve as criteria of this

> truth. It is no longer viewed as harmful to the unity of socialist countries that there exist different ideas of how to build a new society and that individual socialist countries may have their specific national and state interests. In [the] light of New Thinking we have fully realised that the most reliable way to unity lies not in the mechanical unification of these countries, but in the persistent search for solutions based on a balance of their interests, and our common socialist foundation provides the most favourable conditions for this.[13]

True, 'it is obvious that the increasing democratization of mutual relations brings out more clearly than before the existence of certain contradictions between socialist countries because at times their national interests do not coincide on some specific issues'. In fact, 'an analysis of the situation indicates that cooperation with our friends has not yet reached a true turning point'.[14] A few months later Vitaly Zhurkin, Director at that time of the Institute of Europe of the USSR Academy of Sciences, could recall:

> some time in the past we arrived at a consensus on the inevitability of reforms in Eastern Europe. But we all believed quite sincerely that they would take ten to fifteen years and would come about gently, advancing at a leisurely pace. Yet what happened was explosions[15]

In 1989 Soviet officials, from Gorbachev on down, had made public declarations that what in the West was called the 'Brezhnev Doctrine' was no longer in force. While this was a bit of a charade (if only because there never had been a Brezhnev Doctrine), it was none the less significant in marking the Soviet renunciation of the use of force in regard to Eastern Europe – and was so understood.[16]

By all indications, the sequence of events in Eastern Europe that led to the ouster or replacement of governments from East Berlin to Bucharest surprised the masters in Moscow as much as it did observers in the West – and this, in spite of the fact that it was Soviet signals that were crucial in triggering the whole chain of events. What is of particular interest in the context of this chapter is the conceptual response. The reformist wing in Moscow did not hesitate to express their approval. What took place in Eastern Europe, wrote Vladimir Lukin, a prominent foreign affairs specialist and subsequently Chairman of the International Relations Committee of the Russian Supreme Soviet (and a post–Soviet Russian Ambassador to

the USA), was 'the result of a series of sweeping antitotalitarian democratic revolutions':

> The Soviet Union's reaction to the events in Eastern Europe has been most reassuring. We seem to be learning – better late than never – to tell the interests of genuine national security from a desire to keep 'our people' in power in neighbouring European capitals.[17]

It was true that events in Eastern Europe went further than even Soviet reformers would have wished, but consistent commentators dismissed this as within the range of the tolerable: once Moscow had agreed not to intervene, the consequences had to be worked out without an active Soviet role. For some people, another commentator explained, the events in Eastern Europe were a cause for euphoria; for others they were a source of pain and bitterness: 'To my mind, what happened had to happen. A positive process is taking place, mirroring a world-wide tendency. Its essence is the transition from totalitarianism to parliamentary pluralism, civil society, and a state of law'.[18]

And yet, a good many members of the Soviet foreign affairs community seemed to have lost their power of speech. No doubt it was a serious ideological and political embarrassment to be obliged to acknowledge that the inevitable course of history had been reversed and Communist governments were forced from office, from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Indeed, it took some months for serious theoretical treatments of the events to appear; Soviet journals acknowledged that 'regrettably, no coherent conceptual analysis' of the events had been offered.

But the bitterness ran deep. After being variously hinted at for months, an overt attack on the policy – and the outlook – that had brought about the collapse of the East European bloc, and with it, of the Warsaw Pact, came in June 1990 from the same quarters who had attacked other elements of the New Political Thinking and now found a responsive audience at the Founding Congress of the Russian Communist Party; it was repeated at the Twenty-Eighth Party Congress the following month. Yegor Ligachev charged the new thinkers – presumably including Gorbachev and certainly including Shevardnadze – with selling out the comrades and betraying the principles of Communist solidarity. General Albert Makashov dwelt on the security implications of the setback. Both voiced alarm at the prospect of a formidable new united Germany that the Soviet people had fought so hard to defeat. If this was the result of the New Thinking, it was a danger to the health of the Soviet Union (as was, the hardliners argued, Gorbachev's policy toward the Soviet nationali-

ties).[19] Curiously, most of the arguments – on both sides – were couched in terms of national security and patriotism, not in the traditional jargon or rhetoric of 'proletarian internationalism'.

Perhaps the most powerful reply to the various charges came from Shevardnadze, who likened the innuendo of Soviet criticism to Senator Joseph McCarthy's campaign in the United States that had asked, forty years earlier, 'Who lost China?'

> Strange as it may seem, recently we too have had similar accusations. One gets the impression that some people would love to conduct an investigation on 'Who lost Eastern Europe?' Some people seem to look on Eastern Europe as spoils of war, with chauvinistic and insulting remarks, for which I must apologise to the peoples of Eastern Europe. It is high time to understand that neither socialism, nor friendship, nor good-neighbourly relations, nor respect can be built on a foundation of bayonets, tanks, and blood. Relations with any country must be based on taking account of mutual interests, mutual benefit, and the principle of free choice.[20]

Shevardnadze managed to fight off his critics, but characteristically did not even seek to be re-elected to the CPSU Central Committee; having been made a member of the Presidential Council and remaining at the head of the Foreign Ministry until his dramatic resignation in December 1990, his fate reflected the shift in power at the apex of the Soviet pyramid, as well as the malaise in Communist Party circles increased by the East European events.

The Soviet view of the remaining 'fraternal countries' was no less confusing. Presumably all – from China to Yugoslavia, from Albania to Cuba, from North Korea to Laos – were now acknowledged to be socialist (though what this meant was another question; as Nikolay Shishlin remarked, 'You know, we wonder whether we ourselves are a socialist state).'[21] But by what criteria that determination was made – and whether it any longer mattered – was left unclear. For those planning to sort out Soviet concepts and perspectives, on ruling as well as non-ruling Communist Parties, a lot of work remained unfinished.

Disorientation: organizational costs

Compared to the general propositions of the New Political Thinking, official Moscow showed far greater disarray and defensiveness with regard to the communist world. If previously the growth of the Soviet

bloc had been proclaimed inevitable, now its collapse was, a bit shamefacedly, presented as equally inevitable.[22] As for the 'fraternal' parties elsewhere in the world, the Soviet establishment seemed to be giving them less thought, attention, or resources than ever before.

The clearest expression of this unprecedented sense of failure and depression concerning world Communism was to be found in the area of 'organisational consequences'. In the spring of 1990 the one 'international' Soviet-sponsored publication aimed at all foreign Communist Parties, *Problems of Peace and Socialism* (also published in English as *World Marxist Review*) ceased publication.[23] The monthly journal sponsored by the Institute on the International Labour Movement, *Rabochiy klass i sovremennyy mir* (The Working Class and the Contemporary World), became a political science journal, presumably as part of the general scramble by those who had taught or propagated Marxism–Leninism to find legitimacy now in the newly-sanctioned field of 'politology'.

Of the institutions attached to the CPSU Central Committee, the Institute of Social Sciences (*Institut Obshchestvennykh Nauk*), whose major function had been the training of Communists from abroad, terminated this activity in 1990. Its rector (Yury Krasin) and pro-rector (Aleksandr Galkin) sought to find new research tasks for themselves and to shift to the training of non-Communists. The USSR Academy of Sciences' Institute on the International Labour Movement, under Timur Timofeev, faced an uncertain future, as it was devoting substantial efforts to domestic social problems. Meanwhile the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System, which had dealt most heavily – and most seriously – with Eastern Europe (under the direction of Academician Oleg Bogomolov), redefined its task in geographic rather than ideological terms.

All these were part of an effort within the Social Science Division of the Academy of Sciences to reconsider the priorities, the organisation, and the funding of relevant research, caught as they were (as so much else in the Soviet Union was) between traditionalists and innovators, amidst bureaucratic in-fighting and a budget crunch.[24]

From 1917 to 1991

At the time of the October Revolution, Lenin had described world revolution as 'essential' for the survival of the Soviet state. Three generations later, there was not a word of protest or excitement when, in a discussion of a new flag in the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, a woman deputy (an editor of *Molodaya gvardiya*) declared on 22 May 1990, 'The

formula, "Workers of the World, Unite" on our flag has long been – you will agree – an absurdity'.

An outside observer might describe the process that had intervened as a slow though characteristic response to cognitive dissonance 'when prophecy fails' (to borrow the title of a familiar monograph). Another way to characterise it would be to think of it as a protracted learning process in which ideological axioms and imperatives were gradually overridden by a perceived need for realism. In either case, the expectation of world revolution either had to be abandoned or else removed into so distant a future as to lose all operational significance. Similarly, belief in the inevitability of the victorious march of the 'working class movement' through history was either tacitly cast aside or else so attenuated as to become a (shaky) article of faith that required neither validation nor individual exertion.

Thus, while Soviet analysts had managed to face the real world of diplomacy and international security with a well-ordered (though at times improvised) system of precepts, the vision of world revolution had been eroded, the future of world Communism proved strikingly fuzzy, and – amidst unprecedented candour in the atmosphere of *glasnost'* – there was a lack of new concepts to characterise the collapse of Communism.

Notes

1 O.V. Borisov, 'Soyuz novogo tipa', *Voprosy istorii KPSS,* no. 4, 1984, pp. 34–9; O. Vladimirov, 'Vedushchiy faktor mirovogo revolyutsionnogo protsessa', *Pravda*, 21 June 1985. See also I.M. Krivoguz, 'Strategiya i taktika kompartii stran srednego urovnya razvitiya kapitalizma', *Rabochiy klass i sovremennyy mir*, no. 5, 1985, pp. 143–57 and *MEMO*, nos 4 and 5, 1985.

2 'Revisionism' and 'nationalism' were of course terms of opprobium in international Communist rhetoric.

3 Aleksandr Bovin, 'Perestroyka i sud'by sotsializma', *Izvestiya*, 11 July 1987. See also Yevgeniy Plimak, 'Novoe myshlenie i perspektivy sotsial'nogo obnovleniya mira', *Voprosy filosofiy*, no. 6, 1987:

> Even relatively recently, Communists believed that the twentieth century would be the century of the worldwide triumph of socialism. Now, however, it is clear that – no matter how great the natural desire of revolutionaries to bring nearer the hour of victory, this goal is receding into the distant future. The truth is that we underestimated the ability of capitalism to adapt to new conditions … and at the same time we overestimated the speed with which the influence of socialism might spread.

Bovin was later appointed Ambassador to Israel.

4 German Diligensky, 'Revolyutsionnaya teoriya i sovremennost', *MEMO*, no. 3, 1988, pp. 15–25; English translation also in Steve Hirsch (ed.), *MEMO*

(Washington, DC: BNA, 1989), pp. 30–45. See, in addition, Diligensky, 'Theory of Revolution Today', in Institute of World History, USSR Academy of Sciences, *Revolutions and Reforms in World History* (Moscow: Nauka, 1990), pp. 236–53. On the same general topic, see also interview with Vladlen Sirotkin, Professor at the Diplomatic Academy of the Foreign Ministry, 'Revolyutsiya v soznanii', in *XX vek i mir*, no. 7, 1988, pp. 17–24; also Sirotkin in Yury Afanas'ev and Marc Ferro (eds), *50/50: Opyt slovarya novogo myshleniya* (Moscow: Progress, 1989), pp. 70–2, 86–9.

5 *Dialog*, no. 3, 1990, pp. 91–8, with the participation of Vadim Zagladin, Yury Krasin, Aleksandr Galkin *et al*.

6 This and the following paragraphs are based on the sources cited in the preceding footnotes as well as some forty interviews conducted by the author in Moscow in April and May 1990. There are few other Western analyses of this subject. See, however, Steven Kull, 'Dateline Moscow: Burying Lenin', *Foreign Policy*, no. 78, Spring 1990, pp. 172–91.

7 Yu. Kuznets, in 'Novoe myshlenie v mezhdunarodnykh delakh: kruglyy stol', *Kommunist*, no. 8, 1989, p. 100.

8 *Dialog*, no. 3, 1990, pp. 91–8.

9 Yury Krasin, 'Towards a new vision of socialism', in Global Research Institute, Institut Obshchestvennykh Nauk pri TsK KPSS, *The Phenomenon of Socialism: Essence, Regularities, Perspectives*, English edn (Moscow, 1990), p. 8. Krasin was Director of the Institute of Social Science attached to the CPSU Central Committee, the principal training programme for foreign Communists. In the post-Soviet period he has worked at the Gorbachev Foundation.

10 For an 'authoritative' version of this position, see Igor' Pantin and Yevgeniy Plimak, 'Idei K. Marksa na perelome chelovecheskoy tsivilizatsii', *Kommunist*, no. 4, 1990, pp. 28–45.

11 On the latter point, see, for instance, Georgy Shakhnazarov, 'Vostok-Zapad: k voprosu o deideologizatsii mezhgosudarstvennykh otnoshenii', *Kommunist*, no. 3, 1089, pp. 114–23; Yevgeny Stepanov, 'Ponyatie "interesy" vo vneshney politike', *Problemy dal'nego vostoka*, no. 3, 1990, pp. 63–72.

12 For earlier Soviet approaches to Eastern Europe, see, for example, Sarah Terry (ed.) *Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc*, rev. edn (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967); also Margot Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1988), pp. 145ff. For a detailed account of the changing Soviet policy, see Karen Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform: the Great Challenge*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

13 Alexander Kapto, 'Priority will be given to our Relations with Socialist Countries' (summary of a conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), *International Affairs*, English edn, November 1988, p. 29.

14 Deputy Foreign Minister Ivan Aboimov, 'Development of USSR Relations with the Socialist Countries', *International Affairs*, English edn, October 1988, pp. 38–9.

15 *International Affairs*, English edn, March 1990, pp. 33–4. See also Diligensky, 'Revolyutsionnaya teoriya i sovremennost'', *MEMO*, No. 3, 1988, pp. 23–5.

16 See, for example, Andranik Migranyan, 'An Epitaph to the Brezhnev Doctrine', *Moscow News*, no. 34, 1989, p. 6; and Yevgeny Ambartsumov, *La Repubblica* (Rome), interview, 13–14 August 1989.
17 Vladimir Lukin, '1989: The Crossroads of History', *Moscow News*, no. 52, 1989, p. 3. See also Yevgeny Ambartsumov, 'Not Agony but Turn to Life', *Moscow News*, no. 45, 1989, p. 7. For an interesting discussion of the East European experience and its lessons for the Soviet Union, see 'Ternistyi k politicheskomu plyuralizmu: problemy, konflikty, perspektivy', in *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, no. 8, August 1990, pp. 15–25.
18 Yevgeny Shashkov, 'Vostochnaya Evropa – vospominaniya i realii', *Kommunist*, no. 10, 1990, pp. 113–19. See also Valery Musatov, 'Peremeny v Vostochnoy Evrope i nasha perestroyka', *Pravda*, 14 May 1990. Musatov was a deputy head of the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee.
19 *International Herald Tribune*, 27 June 1990.
20 *Pravda*, 26 June 1990. For the charges and Shevardnadze's replies, see also *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 22 June 1990; *Pravda*, 5 and 11 July 1990; USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Vestnik*, no. 13 (71) and no. 14 (72), 15 and 31 July 1990. See also Shevardnadze's interview in *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 2, 1990, p. 2.
21 Paris *Liberation*, 11 September 1989, p. 4.
22 The new political parties and fronts (other than the CPSU) that emerged in the last years of the Soviet Union were singularly lacking in interest in the Communist world beyond the USSR, except for an occasional barbed comment about Cuba and North Korea.
23 The journal had been established in 1958, appeared as a monthly in a number of languages, and had had its editorial offices in Prague. Its internal politics, and the experience of its Soviet staff members, constitute an interesting topic that remains to be studied in detail.
24 The International Department of the CPSU Central Committee continued to handle the extensive contacts with foreign Communist Parties. But there was a growing sense in official circles in Moscow of the Gorbachev years that somehow these contacts did not matter as much as they had earlier on. Indeed, while previously it had been important which of several rival communist parties or factions in a given country (for instance, Finland, India, Japan, Greece or Spain) Moscow was prepared to deal with and in effect recognise as the legitimate one, it had become the tendency under Gorbachev to deal with all such groups, in the novel spirit of ecumenical diversity. On the Department's background and activities, see Vernon V. Aspaturian, *The Role of the International Department in the Soviet Foreign Policy Process* (Washington, DC: Foreign Service Institute, 1989).

8
Some Concluding Observations

T.H. Rigby

Marxism–Leninism, originating as Stalin's version of Lenin's adaptation of Marxism to Russian realities, and further tinkered with under each successive Communist ruler, was held to be the one true guide to understanding the world and to effecting its progressive and ultimately universally triumphant transformation. Marxism–Leninism was far more than an unchallengeable legitimating doctrine, for it was entrenched as compass and censor in every corner of political, economic, social and cultural life, and had been so for many decades. But if it was – to change the metaphor – the cement that held the monolithic order together, it was also a potential source of its disintegration. For what would happen if it could no longer be plausibly squared with manifest reality or be accommodated to urgent practical action?

It was new, Marxist–Leninist ways of thinking about Russia's and the world's problems, and the paths to their resolution, that ushered in the bureaucratic dictatorship of the Soviet Communist Party, with all its fateful domestic and international consequences, and it was ultimately new ways of thinking about these matters that ushered it out. Intended to revitalise Marxism–Leninism, Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' set the fuse for its demise. Thus both the initial triumph of Russia's Marxist–Leninist order and its ultimate collapse were wrought by a 'transformational' leadership,[1] operating in a context of mounting socioeconomic and political crisis, and offering a path away from poverty, backwardness, tyranny, obscurantism and war.

One should not overdraw the parallels. Lenin's revolution was also Russia's only successful revolution from below so far, and his thinking was thus shared with, and implemented through, a new, revolutionary political elite. Gorbachev's, by contrast, was more a revolution from above, of which there are several partial parallels in Russian history,

and his thinking was shared with, and implemented through, elements within the old elites.[2] Lenin's version of Marxism impelled him and his followers, for the ultimate sake of that communist society that alone could provide genuine human freedom, peace and well-being, to subject all existing individual and group autonomies to their political will, incorporating all spheres of social activity into a single organisational structure integrated by the party apparatus, and deploying massive coercion to prevent any non-official public communication, association or assembly, while basing all relationships with the 'bourgeois' world on the assumption that their underlying reality was one of zero-sum conflict. Gorbachev's thinking progressively led him, by contrast, to see his country's freedom, peace and well-being as requiring a *restoration* of individual and group autonomies, the emancipation of most spheres of social activity from centralised administrative direction, the tolerance of non-official public communication, association and assembly, and the attainment of accommodations with the 'bourgeois' world, since common dangers had become more fundamental than the sources of mutual conflict.

Consequently, despite important shared elements in the revolutionary thrust of Lenin's and Gorbachev's thinking, the practical measures that flowed from them were almost the mirror-image of each other. To put it so baldly may seem an injustice to Lenin. What about the *re*thinking embodied in his New Economic Policy and his deeds and writings in the final months of his active political life? And indeed, despite the partial and unsystematic character of this *re*thinking, it seems possible that Lenin, had he remained at the helm for a few more years, *might* have steered Russia decisively towards a different form of society from the mono-organisational socialism which had begun to take shape during the Civil War and was to triumph completely in the 1930s. Whatever his unrealised intentions, however, it was Lenin's earlier thinking and actions that had laid the foundations of the mono-organisational system, and two generations had to suffer the consequences of these 'mistakes' before they began to be 'corrected'.

In the latter 1980s Gorbachev and his allies and supporters moved openly to repudiate the essentials of that system, characterising it by such terms as the 'administrative-command system', 'bureaucratic autocracy', and even 'totalitarianism'. By 1989–1990 this new way of thinking was matched by decisive action, culminating in the abdication by the party apparatus of the essence of Marxism–Leninism, namely its 'leading and directing' authority over all legitimate social institutions, both official and non-official. It was this authority that

had made the system a mono-organisational one, and its abandonment was the fundamental condition for discarding such other basic components of the system as the monopoly of every sphere of activity by officially designated agencies, the command economy, the ban on alternative parties and on intra-CPSU factions, the political management of information, and the ideologisation of education and culture.

Roots of new thinking

Nevertheless, as the preceding chapters make clear, the new thinking that led to this revolutionary change did not, of course, start with Gorbachev. Its roots, in fact, go right back to the death of Stalin in 1953, when his heirs were forced to do some thinking of their own in order to safeguard the essentials of the Marxist–Leninist system while effecting a transition from tyrannical to oligarchical rule, seeking to modernise dangerously backward areas of Soviet life, and to ease internal and external pressures while these delicate changes were under way. The main elements of the resultant within-system perestroika were the de-deification of Stalin, the curbing of the arbitrary powers of the political police, the reduced demonisation of, and isolation from, the capitalist West, the partial de-ideologisation of areas of intellectual life, a new emphasis on satisfying material needs as a source of mass support, and the move to (competitive) 'peaceful coexistence' in East–West relations.

These measures proved fairly successful for their immediate purposes and they stabilised the mono-organisational system in a modified form that persisted for over three decades. They nevertheless had unintended and fateful consequences. They perforated the 'iron curtain' and dissolved the fear-engendered 'atomisation' of the population, which had never been complete, even in the worst of times. They fostered doubt and cynicism about official doctrines, values and symbols, while affording access, albeit often difficult and dangerous, to alternatives. It now became easier not only to think independently, but also to share one's thoughts within a revitalised private sphere of family and friends, both verbally and increasingly in written form as well. A many-faceted 'counter-culture' emerged, one facet of which was oriented towards political issues. Where it assumed an organised form the KGB would go into action, but it was no longer possible to nip all wrong-thinking in the bud or to prevent substantial sections of the population from becoming aware of it. The few thousands of active dissidents were therefore just the most visible part of a freely thinking

(and privately talking) public (*obshchestvennost'*), running perhaps into millions. There were innumerable inter-personal linkages between this public and the nation's various elites, and a substantial overlap with the main body of the intelligentsia, including (most fatefully) those employed in the various policy-oriented 'think-tanks' that came to the fore under Brezhnev, and in key departments of the Central Committee apparatus.[3]

All this was a necessary prerequisite to what happened under Gorbachev. On the one hand there was now an urgent felt need for new ideas to reform Soviet society, and where were these ideas to come from if not from more independent-minded *apparatchiki* and *institutchiki*? Small wonder that Gorbachev was to draw many of these people into his entourage, some of whom passed into positions of great power and influence, as Archie Brown has shown in his *The Gorbachev Factor*.[4] On the other hand, the progressive relaxation after 1986 of controls over information and public expression, association and assembly would scarcely have released such a massive explosion of political activity in the following years had the potential for this not been gestating for a generation in the submerged counter-culture. Its effect was to produce a rapidly changing and ever more sophisticated and varied context of publicly expressed knowledge, ideas and values within which the thinking of top policy-makers developed. The 'New Thinking' of 1986 soon lost its freshness and the resulting cognitive dissonance was as essential a factor as objective conditions in engendering the process of radicalisation observable in all the policy areas we have considered here.

Our examination of the origins and trajectories of late Soviet thinking in the four areas of politics, economics, foreign relations and inter-ethnic relations has revealed, however, some significant differences. Thus, while they all experienced a 'prehistory' in the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years, involving a growing if still limited *de facto* pluralism of ideas, access to Western scholarly literature, and (largely covert) 'debates', this process is shown by Archie Brown and Alexander Dallin to have been a substantially cumulative one in the case of domestic and foreign politics, while in economics, as noted by Alec Nove, it was largely a matter of exploring false panaceas for the centrally planned economy, and in inter-ethnic relations, as Gail Lapidus points out, the official shibboleths were zealously shielded from the potentially demythologising concepts and research findings of ethnographers and sociologists. In the Gorbachev era, change in both theory and practice was to become far more radical in all four policy areas, but the pattern

of radicalisation again differed. Significant change in the economic order began in 1987 and the 1988 Law on Co-operatives was a major breakthrough towards private enterprise, but the attempts in 1990 to agree and launch a programme for rapid fundamental change in the economic order failed, and this issue was left for the post-Soviet successor regimes to attempt to resolve. Meanwhile, new *political* thinking also found early expression in official politics and practices, and then, gaining reinforcement from positive domestic and foreign responses while acquiring, as Igor Timofeyev shows, an increasingly open liberal edge, it advanced step by step to transform by 1990 both the Soviet political order and the role of the USSR in the world system of states. In inter-ethnic relations the pattern is different again: the underestimation of ethnic nationalism, and consequent failure to think through the possible side effects of relaxing political controls, led to a series of improvised responses to unanticipated crises, so that actual change soon far outran thought-out policy.

I turn now to a number of conceptual and analytical points. First, while the progressive delegitimation and final collapse of the Marxist–Leninist order in the USSR can be equated with the radicalisation and triumph of Gorbachev's 'New Thinking', the latter term was applied at first mostly to new Soviet understandings of world politics, and some writers, both in the Soviet Union and abroad, maintained this more limited usage. For example, even the authors of the 1990 edition of the standard handbook for party 'activists' (approved for printing in August 1989) confined their discussion of 'New Political Thinking' exclusively to questions of Soviet foreign policy.[5] Analogously, perestroika is often identified exclusively with economic policy, *glasnost'* with information policy, and democratisation with political institutions. This looks very much like a vestige of the 'old thinking' according to which each policy area in the Soviet Union was legitimated by (and allegedly deduced from) specific doctrinal formulations closely integrated into basic propositions of Marxist–Leninist theory. Such a compartmentalisation, however, does not sit well with the content or indeed the very title of Gorbachev's *Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World*. It is clear that for him and for those close to him, 'New Thinking', perestroika, *glasnost'* and 'democratisation' were all meant to figure in the transformation process in all major fields of policy, albeit with varying emphasis.

Our account raises some difficult questions regarding the relationships between thought, word and action, the dynamics of which changed so profoundly between 1985 and 1991. In interpreting the

spoken and written word, moreover, we must bear in mind the different audiences addressed (the Politburo, bureaucratic elites, educated public opinion, 'the masses', foreign governments and publics, and so on) as well as the possibility of 'hidden agendas'. And here we should note that it was not only Gorbachev and other top leaders whose public writings and utterances might conceal their long-term or even shorter-term goals: all Soviet officials and intellectuals, including those offering advice to leaders, were habituated to a system where such concealments might be essential to the achievement, step by step, of any serious change.[6]

The discernment of motives and perceptions is no less encumbered with the problem of dissimulation and the tactical use of ideas than is the discernment of intentions. The 'classical' question here is what prompted the predominantly conservative Soviet leadership to go along with a serious perestroika of the Marxist–Leninist order in the mid-1980s. Few would contest that the most important factor was the rapidly declining effectiveness of the Soviet economic system, and this was certainly a necessary condition for perestroika; but was it a *sufficient* condition? Why did they not persist with the alternative strategy of battening down the hatches and tightening discipline and belts in a resurgent 'barracks socialism', which was the thrust of their policies under Andropov and, to some extent, in the first year of Gorbachev's incumbency? The answer surely lies mainly in changing perceptions of the nature and depth of the country's problems and of the feasibility and likely effectiveness of different remedies. The influence of such intellectuals as Abel Aganbegyan, Aleksandr Nikonov, Georgy Shakhnazarov and Tat'yana Zaslavskaya in changing those perceptions, and first and foremost those of Gorbachev, must therefore be seen as another necessary (though not sufficient) condition for the shift to systemic reform. On so much the authors of this book are unanimous, while recognising that these conditions were not immediately translatable into policy measures, but had to be mediated through the interpersonal dynamics of the top leaders and their senior officials and advisers – and here more and more light is being cast into the classical 'black box' by a steady stream of informative memoirs, some of them notable for their honesty and perceptiveness.[7]

One hotly debated subsidiary question here is the weight of military considerations in motivating the New Political Thinking, and specifically whether the strong NATO response to the Soviet military build-up of the 1970s, culminating in President Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative, by raising the stakes of military competition beyond

the capacity of the Soviet economy to match, did not deliver the *coup de grâce* to the 'old thinking'. Here we can perhaps at least agree that the New Political Thinking was not *merely* a cynically pragmatic ploy to gain time for the Soviet Union to prepare a military come-back and that a serious (if ultimately vain) attempt to re-evaluate world changes from a Marxist–Leninist perspective was involved.[8] 'Unpacking' this proposition to reveal the 'real' perceptions, motives and intentions of various individual and collective participants in dynamic interplay over a several-year period is only now beginning to look feasible, and much the same may be said for all major policy areas.

The points made in the last four paragraphs, once hotly contested, may now seem to verge on the banal, but they deserve emphasis, as they help to set the agenda for further research. The same applies to two further solvents of Marxism–Leninism released during the perestroika years.

A new political vocabulary

The first operated on the level of political semantics. The propagation of such catchwords as *glasnost'*, 'law-bound state' (*pravovoe gosudarstvo*), 'command-administrative system' (*komandno-administrativnaya sistema*), 'humane socialism' (*gumannyy sotsializm*), and so on, played a major role in both elite and popular perceptions and attitudes. The thrust of most of these terms will be familiar, but one calls for specific comment. The year 1988 saw the emergence of the phrase 'command-administrative *methods*', its speedy adoption by Gorbachev himself, and then its extension to characterise the whole traditional Soviet socio-political order as a 'command-administrative *system*'. The latter's connotation seems identical with that of my preferred term for the system, 'mono-organisational socialism', namely the running of every sphere of life through a designated hierarchy of bureaucratic command, the whole being directed, supervised and co-ordinated by the command-hierarchy of the Communist Party. This pejorative labelling of the fundamental structuring principle of the existing order was the first unambiguous signal that Gorbachev was resolved to move from restructuring *within* the system to restructuring *of* the system, and its implications struck at the hallowed 'leading and directing' role of the Party.

In addition to such highly-charged programmatic terms, the Gorbachev years saw an accelerating turnover in everyday political vocabulary, as words compromised by association with the practices of

the 'command-administrative system' were replaced by others often adopted from abroad. For example, in many contexts the standard Russian word for 'leader', *rukovoditel'*, was largely supplanted by *lider*, a word long ago borrowed from English but used in the past mostly in certain specific non-political contexts. The Soviet head of state was no longer a *predsedatel'*, but a *prezident* – although the essential meaning of both words is identical. The federal legislative body, the Supreme Soviet (*Verkhovnyy Sovet SSSR*), along with its equivalents in the republics, came frequently to be called the Soviet *parlament*, a term largely restricted in the past to international propaganda usage – and it was intended to gain in dignity thereby. Such semantic shifts cannot be dismissed as simply the latest tarting up of the façade, for they correlated with profound changes in the *roles* of particular posts and institutions. A further aspect was the new political loading carried by certain ostensibly neutral terms. Examples are the words 'normal' (*normal'nyy*) and 'civilised' (*tsivilizovannyy*) when applied to practices and conditions *not* found in the USSR, and most tellingly in the phrase 'in the civilised countries'.[9]

We see then that the political semantics of the Gorbachev era offer a rich field for further research. The same can be said of a second aspect of perestroika-era discourse, namely its value component. The new-won freedom of expression in combination with the deepening revulsion from 'real socialism' proved a deadly solvent of such official Marxist–Leninist values of the 'command-administrative system' as *partiynost'* (party-spiritedness), *printsipial'nost'* (adherence to principle) and *edinodushie* (unanimity), and so on. The values that now came to the fore were not limited to such obvious ones as freedom, justice and truth. For example, 'common sense' (*zdravyy smysl*) emerged as one of the most desirable personal and social attributes in the lexicon of many politicians, journalists and scholars. A very important aspect was the reassertion of submerged ethnically-linked values and their accompanying symbols, as we saw in Gail Lapidus's chapter. There was a deeper level too. Many Soviet people in all areas of society perceived a crying need for a spiritual renovation and not just a political and economic one. The mendacity, hate, slavishness and heartlessness engendered by Marxism–Leninism in action were seen as having left the country a moral and spiritual wasteland. The first prophets of spiritual renewal were of course to be found among the suffering 'dissidents' of the pre-Gorbachev generation, from the Sakharovs and Solzhenitsyns down to the humble Baptist carpenter unwilling to deny his faith, and their influence on the perceptions and values of the Soviet intellectual

elite on the eve of perestroika should not be ignored. But it was the growing freedom of expression after 1986 that converted such perceptions and attitudes into a mass moral–political force. Historians, sociologists, journalists, film-makers and writers held up a mirror to the spiritual face of the Soviet people, widely evoking reactions of distress, moral revulsion, even catharsis. It is significant that the dominant Marxist–Leninist lexicon offered no language to identify the precious qualities now seen as lost, and these were drawn perforce from the deeper Christian levels of the national culture. For a time two concepts proved particularly potent: *pokayanie* (repentance) and *miloserdie* (*caritas*: mercy or charity). These are matters that we cannot explore in detail in this book,[10] but future scholarship should give serious attention to the interplay between the cognitive-instrumental and moral–spiritual components in the new, and rediscovered, ways of thinking that progressively dissolved Marxism–Leninism under Gorbachev.

Today Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' may seem an abject failure. Seeking a path away from the Cold War, it led to the USSR's eclipse as a superpower. Seeking to rejuvenate Soviet society through broadening intellectual and political freedoms, it undermined the authority of Gorbachev's Communist Party and ultimately his own. Its focus on 'democratisation' and economic restructuring, without factoring in ethno-national realities and aspirations, led to the collapse of the USSR before the foundations of either a new economic order or a stable political order could be laid. The trouble with the New Thinking, one might conclude, was that it had not been thought through, and one is reminded of Oliver Cromwell's dictum that no man travels as far as he who knows not where he goes.[11]

The scope of political transformation

These incontestable facts, however, must be viewed in a wider perspective. By the mid-1980s the 'path to communism' had manifestly led into a dead-end, and the countries of 'developed socialism', a notion labelled by Gorbachev as 'a cloak for conservatism', were falling ever further behind the capitalist democracies in terms of almost all criteria of economic and social well-being. To the new General Secretary and his closest allies and advisers more or less radical change looked unavoidable. There existed, however, neither a theory nor a successful model for transforming 'developed socialism', and therefore a strategy of open-ended 'restructuring', essentially on the Napoleonic principle

of '*on s'engage, et puis on voit*', was surely what was called for. It is most unlikely, moreover, that any other Soviet leader at the time could have launched the country on such a path, and kept it on it even when the mental world and vital interests of its most powerful elites began to be seriously threatened. The fact that Gorbachev failed to achieve his dearest goals was due not to faulty thinking, but to the rigidities and essential brittleness of the old order, which made it impossible to reshape without shattering.

For the same reason, it is misleading simply to shift the blame for the failures of Gorbachev's restructuring and the disintegration of the USSR on to Boris Yel'tsin. Admittedly, it is not fanciful to see Yel'tsin as Gorbachev's nemesis, turned into an implacable foe by Gorbachev's 'betrayal' of him in 1987, and then empowered by the impact of the latter's reforms to return from outer political darkness and ultimately to thrust him aside. But if Gorbachev's supporters could accuse Yel'tsin of splitting the reform front and exploiting the issues of republic sovereignty and economic reform against him, Yel'tsin's supporters could blame Gorbachev for his tactics of manoeuvring between the reformers and conservatives, thereby exacerbating the national issue and putting off a decision on radical economic change. In the wake of the August 1991 coup Gorbachev lacked the authority to bring about a resolution of either of these great issues, while Yel'tsin now enjoyed the authority to 'solve' the national problem by acquiescing in the independence of the non-Russian republics (several of which could now have been kept in a revamped Soviet Union only by military force), thus clearing the way to tackle the issue of radical market reform head-on, which he did immediately.

To leave it at that, however, would be to understate grossly Gorbachev's contribution to the cause of reform in the USSR's prime successor state, the Russian Federation. To start with, without his *glasnost'* and perestroika some Marxist–Leninist version of 'developed socialism' might today still be entrenched in a CPSU-run USSR and a Soviet-dominated East–Central Europe, for with all its faults we can hardly assume that that system, under a resolute conservative leadership, could not have survived substantially intact for several decades longer. Furthermore, Gorbachev's legacy was built into the political life and institutions of the new Russia from the outset. It was Gorbachev who attenuated, and then in February–March 1990 broke, the policy-making and administrative power of the CPSU; it was he who at the same time created a French-style executive presidency, supplanting the decades-long sovereignty of the Politburo; it was he who in 1989

pioneered genuinely contested national elections, and who in 1990 agreed to the legalisation of non-Communist parties; and it was he who created the parliamentary structures which were copied by the Russian Republic and persist in modified form to this day. Furthermore, the spectrum of political forces and the range of issues in dispute among them were initially the same in the USSR and RSFSR parliaments, although the reformers were stronger in the latter, by virtue of the progress of democratisation between their election in early 1989 and early 1990 respectively.

This is not to deny the rare political qualities which enabled Yel'tsin to exploit effectively the opportunities offered him by Gorbachev's reforms. Gorbachev's compromises with the conservatives from late 1990 allowed Yel'tsin to appropriate the role of *the* radical reformist leader, a role presenting ever wider opportunities as the tide of reformist enthusiasm rose to its highpoint in the course of 1991. Yel'tsin, who combined a certain charisma with his notorious boorishness, now displayed the boldness and dexterity required to fill this role effectively, while building alliances with such diverse actors as the non-Russian republican leaders, the 'reform communists' under Aleksandr Rutskoy, and the Russian Orthodox Patriarch; his genuine popular appeal was perhaps unique among the regional party bosses who had emerged under Brezhnev. It was this same combination of qualities that won him election as Russia's president in mid-1991, in the country's first fully free and fair election, with a clear majority over the combined vote of his five conservative, moderate reformist and nationalist opponents. This popular mandate was to prove a crucial resource in the final rounds of his contest with Gorbachev, following the August coup. It was Gorbachev's tragedy to have employed so skilfully and courageously the powers entrusted to him within the Communist Party oligarchy, in order to subvert it and to create a more open, free and democratic order, only to be so quickly and decisively outplayed in the new political game, and excluded from any further major role in creating his country's future.

The hegemony of Marxism–Leninism was the essential foundation of the Soviet socio-political order, and we have seen how that hegemony was progressively undermined by 'New Thinking' and consequent reforms in the political order (Chapters 1, 2 and 4), in the economy (Chapter 3), in the rights of non-Russian nations (Chapter 5), and in world politics (Chapters 6 and 7). Both the state (the USSR) created by that hegemony, and the party (the CPSU) which had exercised it, were no more. That hegemony was now at an end.

Marxism–Leninism in post-Soviet Russia

Marxism–Leninism survives in the USSR's successor state, the Russian Federation, only in opposition and, even then, to but a limited extent. There was, indeed, an ironic, and arguably tragic side to Yel'tsin's victory, in that the very tactics he employed to achieve it ensured that he would inherit many of Gorbachev's difficulties in more obdurate form. Yel'tsin now became the sole major target of the Communist and nationalist oppositions, and of those within the old elites who missed out on the rich pickings afforded by the market reforms to which he was irrevocably committed. Meanwhile, his role in the demise of the Soviet state, combined with the social distress engendered by his marketisation strategy, undermined the basis of his alliance with many moderate conservatives and Russian patriots and alienated many of his democratic supporters. He thus found himself, as Gorbachev had, without a reliable parliamentary majority, was forced to govern largely by decree and then to moderate and compromise his reform policies, before being provoked into the unconstitutional and ultimately violent confrontation with his opponents of September–October 1993.[12]

Resisting suggestions that he now move resolutely to an overtly *authoritarian* modernisation of Russia, Yel'tsin instead risked all by submitting his new draft constitution to a nationwide plebiscite and calling elections to the two houses of the new parliament, the State Duma and the Federation Council. The hotly contested but peaceful and broadly free and fair election campaign was a milestone in Russia's transition to democracy, and showed how far the country had come since Gorbachev's pioneering elections barely five years earlier, but it was marred by the evidence of confusion and malfeasance in the counting and reporting of plebiscite votes.[13] Yel'tsin's reformist supporters failed to win a majority in the Duma. The dire warnings of impending economic and political catastrophe now voiced by democratic leaders as they vacated key government posts soon proved unfounded, and inflamed political passions were substantially channelled into vigorous parliamentary conflict. Two things were now plain: no major group, not even the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (on which more below), now saw a way back to 'developed socialism' in a one-party state, and all feared a slide into armed civil conflict. Furthermore, the process of social and psychological change had entered a phase where most elements of the old Soviet elite had adapted to it and found ways to turn it to their personal advantage. Conflict, therefore, was no longer over whether or not the process of

deep-going socio-economic change should be continued or reversed, but rather over who would preside over it and how the costs and benefits would be distributed. In this respect, at least, Russia was broadly following the pattern evident in most other post-Communist countries of East–Central Europe and the former USSR.

There are, however, important dissimilarities. The CPRF came to occupy a different political space than did the Marxist–Leninist parties of East–Central Europe. The latter took the social-democratic path, in some cases (notably Poland) with considerable success. The CPRF, by contrast, chose the 'national patriotic' path – a path hardly feasible in East–Central Europe, where Communism had been forcibly imposed and/or kept in power by the USSR. Since 1993, when the CPRF decisively consolidated its claim to be *the* legitimate heir of the CPSU, its 'patriotic' wing, led by Gennady Zyuganov, has been firmly in control, retaining Marx (though half-heartedly) and Lenin (more prominently) in its pantheon, and, while condemning Stalin's repressions (albeit somewhat ambiguously), lauding him for transforming Russia into an industrial and military superpower. They aim to restore Russia's greatness and revive traditional Russian values. Meanwhile, the party's junior 'socialist' wing, led by one-time CPSU Central Committee Secretary Valentin Kuptsov, has effectively blocked the emergence in Russia of a strong social-democratic party capable of curbing the excessive power of the new financial elite.[14] On the face of it this formula proved highly successful. Between the December 1993 and December 1995 elections the CPRF increased the number of its seats in the State Duma from 45 to 157, making it the largest party in the Duma and thereby winning it the speakership and the chairmanship of several important Duma committees. In the presidential election of 1996 Zyuganov received the largest number of primary votes and he gained 40.3 per cent of the vote in the run-off with Boris Yel'tsin. In alliance with a range of minor left-wing and nationalist groupings the CPRF thus became the most powerful force in the Russian parliament and ostensibly the governing party in waiting.

Could all this herald a restoration of Marxism–Leninism's dominance in twenty-first century Russia? Hardly. For one thing, the CPRF is an ageing party, and neither Marx (especially) nor Lenin has substantial appeal among younger Russians. Despite widespread social dislocation and distress, and consequent hostility towards the market reformers, there is little popular support for restoring Soviet-style socialism, nor is there for suppressing the rights and freedoms won in the Gorbachev years. Those Communists aiming to reimpose

the Marxism–Leninism of the Stalin era or even of the Brezhnev years are either marginalised in the CPRF or members of marginalised splinter parties.

Although the overall Communist vote increased slightly in the parliamentary elections of December 1999 (largely at the expense of Zhirinovsky's Liberal–Democratic Party of Russia, which had lost its credibility as an anti-establishment alternative), their numbers in the State Duma slipped to 123, thirty-four less than four years earlier. In the elections of December 2003 the CPRF suffered a still more severe setback, finishing up with sixty-one fewer deputies than in 1999. Furthermore, they could no longer count on the support of their once close allies in the Agrarian Party. This was graphically illustrated by the almost unanimous decision of the Agrarian Party's Central Committee to support Putin against Zyuganov in the April 2000 presidential elections.[15] Even closer to the bone, the CPRF lost its youth wing, the Komsomol (now called The Communist Youth Union), which accused it of being 'overly loyal' to the government, and then also went on to support Putin against Zyuganov for President.[16]

Active membership in the CPRF can still offer considerable benefits to the politically ambitious, especially in the economically most disadvantaged regions, given its uniquely strong organisational and membership resources. However, the latter cannot guarantee stable voter support, as witness the widespread defection of voters in the so-called 'Red Belt' in the same election. As A.V. Buzgalin has put it, 'all it took was a politician (Putin) to emerge in the Kremlin who was prepared not only to use the same nationalist slogans but also to take action establishing himself as a nationalist head of state in the eyes of the electorate, and many of the opposition's trump cards were rendered worthless'.[17]

If the CPRF's occasional nods in the direction of Marx are entirely perfunctory, little more can be claimed for its adherence to Leninism, with its insistence on a strict, vertical discipline, systematically monitored and enforced by a network of full-time officials, holding office at the pleasure of their hierarchical superiors. A CPRF member serving as provincial governor or as chairman of a parliamentary commission, for example, will have an eye to party interests and priorities, but no central party *apparatchik* will be 'guiding and directing' him, as was routine under everyday Marxism–Leninism till 1990. In this respect his position will differ little from that of office-holders in Western countries. Given the widespread distress, deprivation, disorientation and nostalgia in post-Communist Russia, especially among older citizens,

there could hardly fail to be a substantial constituency for a self-proclaimed successor party to the CPSU. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation has succeeded in occupying nearly all of this political space. However, as Lilia Shevtsova, writing in 1999, put it:

> ironically, the communist opposition is the force that helps Yeltsin's regime stay in power. Through its influence over a significant fraction of the dissatisfied population, the Communist Party prevents those people from becoming more radicalised or engaging in open protest against the regime. Meanwhile, it presents a distasteful alternative to the current ruling elite, which helps the latter keep its hold on power.[18]

This symbiotic element in the Kremlin–CPRF relationship has been noted by a number of scholars. Yitzhak Brudny has compared it to the antagonistic complementarity of the Imperial Chancellor and the Social Democratic Party in Wilhelmine Germany.[19] The crucial difference here, however, is that the German Social Democrats were a wave of the future whereas the CPRF is a wave to the past. Given the age profile of CPRF supporters,[20] the party will hardly survive long into the twenty-first century without shedding its Marxist–Leninist rationale. That time, however, has not yet come. The CPRF remains the only party in Russia with a mass membership (currently about half a million), and a nationwide network of active branches. It was for some years the largest party in the State Duma, with members holding several influential posts. Its share of provincial governorships – about one sixth in 2003 – showed no immediate sign of contracting. On the other hand, Putin's reforms in the upper house reduced the CPRF's influence there, while his institution of Presidential Representatives in the regions clipped the wings of Communist and non-Communist governors alike.[21] However one looks at it, Marxism–Leninism has no future in Russia.

Notes

1 See Noel M. Tichy and Mary A. Devanna, *The Transformational Leader* (New York: Wiley, 1986).
2 See T.H. Rigby, *The Changing Soviet System. Mono-organisational Socialism from its Origins to Gorbachev's Perestroika* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1990), Chapters 8 and 9.
3 Further on the 'counter-(or second) culture' and its significance, see Geoffrey Hosking, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), Chapter 4; and T.H. Rigby, 'Mono-Organisational

Socialism and the Civil Society', in David W. Lovell and Chandran Kukathas (eds), *The Transition from Socialism: State and Civil Society in Gorbachev's USSR* (London: Longman, 1991).

4 See Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), especially Chapter 4, 'The Power of Ideas and the Power of Appointment', pp. 89–129.

5 S.V. Kolesnikov *et al*., *Knizhka partiynogo aktivista: 1990* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1990), pp. 201–12.

6 A maximalist view of Gorbachev's concealed intentions is offered by John Gooding in his 'Gorbachev and Democracy', *Soviet Studies*, vol. 42 (April 1990), no. 2. Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, offers much evidence on this question drawn from interview and memoir sources.

7 The most valuable to date is A.S. Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym: po dnevnikovym zapisyam* (Moscow, 1993). This work now exists in an English translation. See Anatoly Chernyaev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), translated and edited by Robert D. English and Elizabeth Tucker.

8 This point has been emphasised from different perspectives in Robert F. Miller, *Soviet Foreign Policy Today* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), Chapter 1; Neil Malcolm (ed.), *Russia and Europe: An End to Confrontation* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994); Don Oberdorfer, *The Turn: From the Cold War to the New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983–1990* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1991; revised edn., 1998); and Raymond Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American–Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1994). On the specific influence of military-strategic rethinking, see Michael MccGwire, *Perestroika and Soviet National Security* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1990).

9 Cf. Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, p. 224.

10 For an excellent survey, see Tamara V. Samsonova, *Perestrojka der Ethik und Ethik der Perestrojka* (Cologne: Federal Institute of East-European and International Studies, Report no. 30, 1990).

11 The aptness of the Lord Protector's *mot* was noted by some Russian intellectuals.

12 For a more negative view of Yeltsin's role and significance see Jonathan Steele, *Eternal Russia: Yeltsin, Gorbachev and the Mirage of Democracy* (London: Edward Elgar, 1994). I discuss it further in the concluding chapter of *Russia in Search of its Future* (eds), Amin Saikal and William Maley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

13 On the evidence for confusion and malfeasance in the counting and reporting of plebiscite votes, see V. Tolz and J. Wishnevsky, 'Election Queries make Russians doubt Democratic Process', *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 3 no. 13, 1994, *Izvestiya*, 4 May 1994; and Lilia Shevtsova, *Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Reality* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment, 1999, pp. 96–7).

14 Cf. Geir Flikke, 'Patriotic Left–Centrism: The Zigzags of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation', *Europe–Asia Studies*, vol. 51, no. 2, 1999, pp. 275–98, and Robert C. Otto, 'Gennadii Ziuganov: The Reluctant Candidate', *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 46, no. 5, September–October 1999, pp. 37–47.

15 *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newsline*, 17 March 2000.

16 *Ibid*., 21 March 2000; *Kommersant Daily*, 18 March 2000.
17 A.V. Buzgalin, 'A Pre-declared Victory', *Prism*, vol. vi, issue 4, April 2000, p. 1.
18 Lilia Shevtsova, *Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Reality*, p. 2.
19 Yitzhak M. Brudny, 'Russian Electoral Patterns: 1999–2000', in Archie Brown (ed.), *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 157.
20 See Luke March, 'For Victory? The Crises and Dilemmas of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation', *Europe–Asia Studies*, vol. 53, no. 2, 2001, p. 269.
21 For a more sceptical view of the likely consequences of these initiatives, see Matthew Hyde, 'Putin's Federal Reforms and their Implications for Presidential Power in Russia', *Europe–Asia Studies*, vol. 53, no. 5, 2001, pp. 719–43.

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