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# Comment

## How about some real dialogue with Soviets?

Editor, *SIU courier*:

A few months back I was watching a TV talk show when a Soviet commentator, a frequent guest on the program, stepped into the spotlight. He spoke with that peculiar admixture of confidence, low-key rhetoric and appeal to common sense which has marked the Kremlin style of handling Western audiences in recent months. He called for dialogue and urged the shared responsibility of our countries for the fate of the world.

Then the conversations turned to human rights and the issue of reciprocity.

Why don't we let Sakharov go to the West? That would be a violation of the non-proliferation treaty, for he is in possession of atomic bomb secrets.

Soviet Jews? They have always occupied prominent positions in the Soviet Union and have no reason to be dissatisfied.

Can the U.S. government advertise in the USSR? The question is moot—we don't have advertisement. Besides, just recently the American Ambassador addressed our people on Soviet TV.

Some dialogue, I thought. If you do not have advertisement, how about political commentary? Would you let Americans publish in *Pravda* as your journalists do in *The New York Times*? What about "the scheduling problems" that have forced the Soviets to cancel the American Ambassador's address in the past?

To my disappointment the panelists did not pursue the issue. Briefly, the conversation turned to Afghanistan, but it fizzled out too, speedily and uneventfully. And so did the promised dialogue.

I saw this pattern repeated many a time since then: an authorized Soviet spokesman gets in front of the camera, calls for a dialogue between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and then does everything possible to block the dialogue the moment the conversation turns to human rights.

With the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Geneva yielding few tangible results besides the promise of more dialogue in the future, some pertinent questions about the feasibility of Soviet-American dialogue are clearly in order.

Should the Soviets be given full access to the U.S. media when Soviet airwaves, press and TV remain effectively closed to messages from the West? The answer is yes. Even if the Soviets refuse to reciprocate, they should be able to air their views in the United States, and their opinions should be treated with the courtesy accorded to our friends and foes alike.

Should we avoid questions that can embarrass the other side? The answer is no. If the Soviets want "to play strictly by the local rules," as one of their spokesmen put it the other day, they should learn that publicity is a double-edged sword that can hurt the one who wields it.

Which mode of questioning is appropriate in dealing with the Russians? The same as in dealing with anybody else: it should be tough, aim at controversial subjects, and reveal internal contradictions and double-standards in the thinking of the opponent.

What should be the immediate goal of Soviet-American discourse? To sensitize the participants to the fact that dialogue is indivisible, that it cannot be limited to the issues of one's liking, and that whatever each side extracts from the opponent it must be ready to grant in return.

How can this goal be achieved in practice? It works like this: Americans complaining about Soviet penetration in the Western hemisphere place themselves in the shoes of the Russian people and imagine how they must feel living in the shadow of American missiles. The Russians sending a request to interview the imprisoned American activist, Leonard Peltier, take the role of the Americans and ask themselves if it is fair to deny them the right to interview the exiled Soviet dissident, Dr. Sakharov. Then the exercise is repeated with respect to short-wave broadcasts, anti-satellite weapons, Afghanistan, Grenada, etc., etc.

Is Soviet-American dialogue feasible? Some say no, because we inhabit incommensurable universes of discourse. I think there is hope, as long as we pledge to do unto others as we would like others do unto us and watch for the self-contradictions into which we invariably run when we ignore this maxim. The interview with the U.S. president recently published (albeit with cuts) in the U.S.S.R. and the interruption of Soviet jamming during Reagan's address to the Soviet people suggest that the Soviet leaders are not oblivious to this maxim.

The stilted exchange between Soviet and American pundits on the TV screen epitomizes the ills of Soviet-American dialogue at large, which all too often resembles the dialogue of the deaf. If we are to establish true discourse, we have to cut through this sterile practice. To be sure, genuine dialogue can be painful but it has its own healing powers: it helps each side to take the role of the other, it teaches respect for the opponent, and in the long run it transforms the participants in the discourse.

The Russians have stressed repeatedly their desire for a dialogue with us, and we should take them at their word. But precisely because we take them seriously, we should keep pressing them on the issues of utmost concern to us, and hope one day they'll hear us. By the same token, we need to learn to listen to the Russians. They have queries of their own that make good sense and must be dealt with squarely. Once we get this dialogue under way, the other pieces of the puzzle in disarmament talks may start falling into place.

DMITRI N. SHALIN

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# 'Reform' in the USSR: Muckraking, Soviet-style

By Dmitri N. Shalin

A hefty bundle of newspapers and magazines from the USSR landed on my desk the other day [thanks to a friend]. As I waded through the gruesome tales of corruption, red tape and drunkenness now ubiquitous in the Soviet press, I got the nagging feeling that the charges sounded vaguely familiar. A particularly graphic story about a warehouse manager dumping hundreds of kilograms of spoiled fish onto unsuspecting consumers caught my attention, reminding me of Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle," and then it suddenly clicked: muckraking, Soviet-style!

Indeed, the debunking campaign now underway in the Soviet Union is reminiscent of the muckraking in the Progressive Era of American history.

As all analogies, this one could easily be pushed too far. The Soviet press is careful to avoid the sensationalism pervading muckraking journalism of the early 20th Century; the campaign for *glasnost* [openness] in the Soviet Union is directed from the top; some subjects are clearly off-limits for Soviet journalists. Still, the parallels are instructive.

Doesn't Mikhail Gorbachev remind you of a Yankee reformer who believes in temperance, self-reliance and character-building ["Reconstruction starts with oneself"] as the way to a better society?

"Efficiency," "scientific management," "popular initiative," "open forum," "social justice," "reconstruction"—these catchwords of the Progressive Era are now the shibboleths in the lexicon of Soviet reformers.

Every Wednesday the USSR turns to *Literaturnaia Gazeta* for its weekly installment of exposes, and when



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this newspaper [whose fame rivals that of the old McClure's magazine] speaks, the public and politicians take note.

The corrupt city council officials tirelessly exposed by Soviet muckrakers bring to memory the exploits of William Tweed and Tammany Hall. Conservation, once the showpiece of the progressive legislation, is at the center of attention of the ecology-minded Soviet reformers. School reforms just passed in the USSR, with their emphasis on vocational training and character-building, emulate the spirit of progressive education.

Nothing comparable to the issue of trusts has

emerged so far in Soviet politics, though some Moscow newspapers have begun to decry the "virtual monopoly" of local stores and have called for "competition" in consumer services.

What are we to make of it? What is Gorbachev really up to?

Much of what is going on in the Soviet Union, critics say, is just rhetoric. Granted. The same can be said about the progressives. It is also true that while Gorbachev speaks about breaking new ground, his vision of the future comes straight from the past. Lenin's policy of *glasnost* and the economic liberalism of the 1920s are his chief inspiration, much as the fabled virtues of Jeffersonian democracy once were for the American reformers. It would be wrong, however, to dismiss this forward-looking return to the past as conservatism.

The Soviet government's decision to free dozens of political prisoners and to reconsider the plight of others is hardly inconsequential. The same is true for the unprecedented offer of *Literaturnaia Gazeta* to publish an interview with Andrei Sakharov. Whether or not these reforms will add up to a genuine reconstruction remains to be seen. Major setbacks, even reversals, like the one that befell Hu Yaobang, the general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, are all too possible. But if the fate of progressive reform in the U.S. is a guide, the zeal of Soviet reformers need not be taken lightly.

"Reconstruction is a matter of revolutionary transformation of society," Gorbachev declared at the recent meeting of the Central Committee in Moscow. Many inside and outside the Soviet Union would like to believe that. Should Russian reformers succeed in one thing only—creating an open forum where the country's problems are discussed freely—they will have accomplished a lot. That, after all, was the major achievement of America's Progressive Movement. One hopes this is a portent for the Soviet future.

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# 'Amerika': An Uncertain Trumpet

By Dmitri N. Shalin

Controversy surrounding the ABC television miniseries "Amerika" has generated considerable publicity, mostly negative, still much welcomed by the ratings-hungry producers. It also guaranteed that viewers would come to their TV sets with their prejudices unsheathed.

My own biases were set in motion long before the show. Having lived 20-odd years in a country where the borderline between art and propaganda is deliberately blurred, I have an exceedingly low threshold of tolerance for the ideologically supercharged narrative.

The first few hours of watching America under Soviet domination seemed to confirm my worst expectations. The ruthless police wearing "Darth Vader" helmets; the enemy officials styled after Nazis; the cynical party apparatchiks luxuriating in royal suites provided a curious counterpart to the popular shows about Yankee imperialists I used to watch back home. All I needed to dispose of this blockbuster as a piece of Cold-War propaganda was the message that Godless liberals lost America and that nothing short of bringing prayer back to the school would do if we are to recapture our lost pride.

Oddly enough, the message never came. The authors were in no hurry to furnish a remedy for saving America. Nor were they particularly explicit on who had lost it in the first place. The more I watched, the clearer it became that there was more to this endeavor than good old Russki-bashing.

The thing I found redeeming about the show was that it did not try to reduce messy political realities to a neat formula, to take refuge in the ideologi-

cal verities of the left or the right. A skeptic might dismiss this as ideological hermaphroditism: a nod to liberals, a wink to conservatives — a hodgepodge of tired ideological clichés designed to please everyone. A more apt description of the show's political stance, I believe, is ideological ambivalence.

Ambivalence has not figured prominently in this country's recent political discourse. It was wanting in the Vietnam era, when liberal crusaders knew exactly what was wrong with the world and questioned the motives of those who



questioned their assumptions. It was conspicuous for its absence in the conservative reaction that followed the Vietnam debacle and that produced an overdose of foolproof recipes for bringing America back. While ideological purity was in fashion, ideological ambivalence was in short supply.

Ideological certainty has many virtues: It yields sharp pictures, spares thought and affords clear guidelines for action. It also never fails to do violence to the indeterminacy of the real world. How do you describe the workings of the communist system without reducing Russia to an Evil Empire? How do you

grasp the nature of capitalism without losing sight of its perennial iniquities? This is the problem I face when I try to explain to my students in a class on the Soviet and American societies why I chose the indignities of the free market over the cruelties of the commissars.

What makes "Amerika" stand out among perfectly forgettable TV shows is that its authors dare to be uncertain. It is a welcome sign that such card-carrying liberals as Donald Wrye and Kris Kristofferson would risk their credentials by lending their hand to this ideologically ambivalent project. The fact that the show is criticized from the left and the right suggests that its creators must have done something right.

What, then, is the message "Amerika" offers to Americans? That much as we may abhor ideological ambiguity, we have to learn to live with it; that the time may be ripe for the "conservative left" and the "liberal right" to join forces in making America a more humane society; that the essence of democracy is an open forum in which everyone must have a say; that cultivating democracy is a Sisyphean labor that begins anew the moment it is complete.

Or as John Dewey put it, "Every generation has to accomplish democracy over and over again."

My reservations about the miniseries "Amerika" won't go away. Its preposterous premise, heavy-handed symbolism and familiar Hollywood trappings have received well deserved drubbing. It would be unfortunate, however, if "Amerika"-bashing drowns the sound of this uncertain ideological trumpet.

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# commentary

## Gorbachev's Openness Is For Real

By Dmitri N. Shalin

It was some two years ago that Mikhail Gorbachev startled the world with his call for *glasnost* (openness) and promised *perestroika* (reconstruction) of Soviet society. As he emerged recently from the Communist Party meeting in Moscow, more powerful than ever, with his economic reforms endorsed, the question was raised in many a head, "Can he deliver?"

No one knows now how much of his rhetoric will be converted into reality, but it is fair to say that there is more substance to match his new style than anybody anticipated just a year ago.

You do not hear Gorbachev thundering about the inevitable clash between capitalism and socialism any more. Rather, he is harping about the "interdependent world" and a "dialogue with the West." This shift in rhetoric has been matched by action in Geneva, where the Soviets endorsed a "zero-option" for intermediate-range missiles. It has been backed up by the Soviet pledge to meet the verification requirements in future arms agreements demanded by the West. And it may well be reflected in the renewed efforts by the Soviets to find a formula for pulling their troops out of Afghanistan.

The superiority of the socialist system is still an official dogma in the U.S.S.R., but you hear less about "mature socialism" these days and more about "market mechanisms." Taking their own advice, Soviets have clipped the wings of bureaucracy, allowed limited private enterprise, endorsed higher salary differentials and invited capitalist firms to join forces with Soviet companies.

The talk about social justice is another interesting portent in Gorbachev's Russia. As it has found its way into public discourse, some of the more egregious abuses in the Soviet power system have been curtailed. More than 100 dissidents have been released from prisons. For the first time in memory, KGB

officials were exposed in the press and taken to court for illegal actions. The removal of D.A. Kunaev, the Kazakhstani party chief, sent a strong signal to party bosses that arbitrary rule and patronage privileges can be checked.

"Democratization" is yet another shibboleth in Gorbachev's rhetoric that promises to leave its mark on the system. Of all precincts in the local elections that took place in the U.S.S.R. last month, 5 percent featured more than one candidate.

One more area where Soviet behavior has been changing lately is mass media. Food shortages, drug addiction, the privileges of party apparatchiks, even the

government. Soviet society is still awash in half-truths and is pathetically inadequate in meeting its members' needs. It would be a mistake, however, to dismiss Gorbachev's reform as a gimmick.

What has been going on in the Soviet Union is a "revolution in style," a massive attempt to reform society by revitalizing public discourse. The rhetoric of *glasnost* is sweeping the country, leaving in its wake changes no one thought possible a year ago. And even though these changes fall short of genuine reconstruction, they prove that rhetoric and reality cannot be far apart.

Style is often perceived as some sort of wrapping that could be readily replaced, while substance is likened to wine that can be poured into a new glass with its properties unchanged. Yet there is no such thing as styleless substance, any more than there is substanceless style. When politicians forgo old rhetoric, they put the substance of their old policies on the line, and when they challenge the status quo, they look for new rhetoric. Not even communists are immune to this dialectic. The attitude I would urge toward Soviet reforms is one of cautious pessimism. I am pessimistic because Gorbachev is facing formidable odds. Balancing the escalating demands of liberals against the mounting resistance of conservatives will tax the new Soviet leaders' political savvy to the limit.

I am cautious in my pessimism because history is full of serendipity, because, as noted historian James Billington observed, "Remarkable changes may well be in store, and could come with the unpredicted suddenness that is so characteristic of Russian history and is invariably later seen to have been predictable." So, let's take heart, watch for changes in Soviet rhetoric and hope Russian history has more surprises in store for all of us.

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deployment of the SS-20 missiles in Eastern Europe are now open to public discussion. Caught in their own rhetoric of a dialogue with the West, Russians have granted Western spokesmen some access to Soviet TV and stopped jamming BBC and Voice of America broadcasts in Russian.

It would be wrong to infer from the above that the gap between Soviet reality and rhetoric has disappeared. *Glasnost* is a sham to the political prisoners of the Perm labor camp No. 36, few of whom have been released under Gorbachev's amnesty. *Perestroika* means very little to the Jewish refuseniks waiting for an exit visa to be issued by the Soviet



# ... But also the immutable past

By Dmitri N. Shalin

Space bridges—satellite-transmitted exchanges between Soviet and American audiences—are old hat now, but one that took place the other week was different. For the first time the dialogue was broadcast live in both countries and featured not amateurs but top legislators and foreign policy experts.

Misunderstandings stand in the way of better relations between our countries, lamented Evgeni Velikov, vice president of the Soviet Academy of Science. Cut down on disinformation spread by the U.S. media about the Soviet Union, and the cause of peace and disarmament would be greatly advanced.

Soviet and American people have much in common, echoed Rep. Claude Pepper of Florida. Didn't we fight on the same side in World War II? Don't we all share a huge stake in peace? Let's cast aside Cold War rhetoric and get on with the serious business of disarmament.

One cannot doubt the sincerity of these declarations. Misconceptions concerning the other side abound in both countries. Statistics about Americans who believe the Soviets were allied with Hitler in World War II are alarming, as is the notion spread by Soviet propaganda that the AIDS virus was engineered by the CIA. Yet, even more alarming, particularly when voiced by professional politicians, is the idea that clearing misunderstandings can secure trust between our countries.

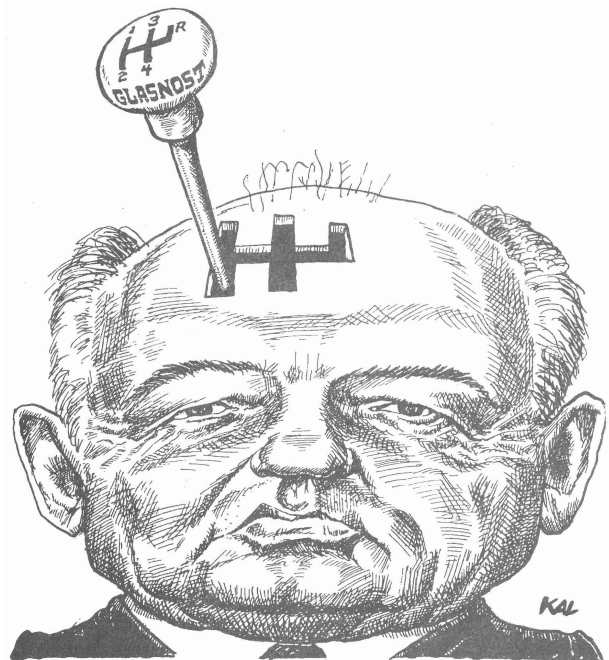
Underlying this view is what sociologist Paul Hollander called the "therapeutic approach" to Soviet-American relations. According to its proponents, there is a basic symmetry between the superpowers; international tensions stem chiefly from misunderstandings; anti-Soviet sentiments are largely irrational; the Cold War is a product of right-wing paranoia; and the best treatment of the international malaise is the talking cure.

Those embracing this approach are apt to forget that the cause of the Cold War—the failure of the Soviet Union to grant Eastern Europe free elections mandated by the Yalta Accord—is as real today as in Stalin's days. The fact that Cold War rhetoric was used for spurious purposes, such as suppressing political dissent in the U.S., in no way changes this fact.

Cultural exchanges, sports competitions, personal contacts are all fine, but they will not fill the ideological gap between a one-party state hostile to any form of organized opposition and Western democracy founded on political pluralism. No amount of communications can rationalize the psychiatric abuses in the USSR. Nor can they justify the Soviet

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KAL/The Economist, London (C&W Syndicate)

refusal to grant exit visas to its citizens. The sad truth is that although the USSR has no monopoly on evil, it remains one of its strongholds in the modern world.

Improving communication is a worthy goal. We have to understand that its function is chiefly diagnostic, though. Just as it helps to identify areas of agreement, communication highlights our differences, many of which are fundamental and largely immune to trust-building measures. That is to say, to know the Russians is not necessarily to love them. Or as Rep. Les Aspin has put it, Americans best informed about the Soviet Union are the ones least inclined to trust it.

The *glasnost* campaign is important because it shows Mikhail Gorbachev's willingness to address the real issues dividing us. By releasing political prisoners, terminating the Soviet Interior Department's jurisdiction over psychiatric hospitals, permitting more than one candidate to run for the same office and allowing rudiments of free enterprise, Gorbachev has begun to lay the foundations of trust between our countries that no talking cure could have furnished.

It is in the wake of these changes that the U.S.-Soviet agreement on medium-range nuclear missiles has become possible. Its military significance is questionable, given the number of nuclear warheads still in service and the overwhelming superiority of the Warsaw Pact in conventional weapons. The accord is welcome as a portent for the future, however, provided we understand that truly significant cuts in both nuclear and conventional weapons are feasible only if trust-inspiring changes in the Soviet Union continue.

# A Test of the Moscow Spring

## Let Soviets, Though Violators, Host Human-Rights Forum

By DMITRI N. SHALIN

Just a few years ago, the idea that Moscow could host an international human-rights conference would have seemed bizarre. Not any more. An exchange on human rights, broadcast live in the United States and the Soviet Union a few weeks ago, underscored this point.

An estimated 150 million people in the Soviet Union watched the satellite-transmitted debates between Soviet and American legislators. The picture of themselves that the Soviets gleaned from the stern lectures by Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) and Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.) was not a pretty one. It must have been jarring for Mikhail Gorbachev's fans, to say nothing of his foes. Remarkably, the panel in Moscow listened, conceding, if only grudgingly, that the Americans' criticism was not without merit.

Here are some further signs that the times they are a-changing in Moscow.

—Vadim Zagladin, top Kremlin policy-maker, publicly confirmed that Article 190, under which dissidents have been sentenced in the past for anti-Soviet activity, might be dropped from the criminal code, while Article 70, covering anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, would be narrowed in scope.

—Although reports about psychiatric abuses continue, the practice of treating political dissent as mental disorder may be coming to an end. All psychiatric hospitals previously supervised by the Interior Ministry are being transferred to the jurisdiction of the Health Ministry.

—Five percent of all precincts in the local Soviet elections that took place in June featured more than one candidate. Noteworthy also is the fact that top

management positions in a growing number of Soviet enterprises are filled with the workers' consent.

—The Federation of Socialist Clubs, a loosely knit association of independent grass-root organizations, held its first meeting last August in Moscow. Its organizers vowed to fight all remnants of Stalinism, demanded the right to nominate candidates in local elections and hinted at the possibility of forming independent political parties in the future.

—Emigration from the Soviet Union has picked up pace in recent months, its current rate being at least 10 times what it was last year. Some veteran refuseniks such as Vladimir Slepak and Ida Nudel have finally been granted exit visas by the Soviet government.

—Without much publicity, the Soviet Union has been opening its doors to Jews who left in the 1970s and 1980s. They are now welcome to return, not as prodigal sons but as plain tourists. Soviet citizens with immediate relatives abroad can obtain travel passports and exchange rubles for dollars.

The first swallow does not the spring make, nor does the second or third. But at some point the West may have to acknowledge that the Moscow spring has arrived and make reciprocal moves. One gesture toward Gorbachev would be choosing Moscow as the site for the conference on the Helsinki accords.

The chief objection to this idea is that letting Moscow host the conference on human rights would bestow on it unearned honor. Indeed, it is quite possible that the Soviets would try to use the conference for propaganda purposes. But the risk is worth taking. It would be a mistake to demand that, before the Soviet Union could have

the honor, it has to become a full-fledged political democracy. Some conditions should be met, however.

—The amnesty marking the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution must be extended to cover all political prisoners held under articles of the Criminal Code.

—Soviet citizens married to foreigners and wishing to go abroad should be reunited with their spouses.

—All would-be emigrants denied exit visas because of their access to state secrets must be provided with a written statement indicating the maximum period of time that they could be denied permission to leave.

—Representatives of Soviet dissidents should have access to the conference and be allowed to take part in its deliberations.

No one is suggesting that Moscow is a paradise for human rights. Its ways are still in flagrant violation of the U.N. Human Rights Charter. But the Iron Curtain has opened a crack, and the winds of change are sweeping through its Russian side. The day may be near when Andrei Sakharov, the Nobel Peace Prize winner and symbol of the worldwide struggle for human dignity, will be able to address the international forum on human rights.

To mark these changes—and to encourage the Soviets to follow through—are reasons enough for holding the international human-rights conference in Moscow. Without further delay, let's convey to Soviet leaders the minimal conditions under which a Moscow conference could take place and gear up for a serious exchange.

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# Democracy In The Hands Of The People

By Dmitri N. Shalin

**T**he closest I ever got to a flesh-and-blood politician in the Soviet Union was during the Revolution Day demonstration, when along with fellow citizens pressed into endless columns I filed past local luminaries waving hands atop the makeshift reviewing stand on the Palace Plaza in Leningrad.

It's been years since I emigrated to the United States, but until now my knowledge of grass-root politics in this country had been mostly second-hand. So when a friend offered a ticket to a fund-raiser for Sen. Paul Simon, I decided to go. Not that paying \$100 for the chance to hear a politician had a particular appeal to me. But then for someone who teaches a course on American and Soviet society, I thought, this could be a welcome opportunity to observe American politics in the making.

Fifteen hundred guests packed the student center at Southern Illinois University on that Saturday evening — businessmen, academics, local politicians, civil servants, farmers in working uniforms, campaign officials with red bow-ties and lots of other folks with a stake in Simon's victory. The talk revolved around Simon and his bid for the U.S. presidency.

"He is a long shot, isn't he?" the lady in front of me said to her companion in an apparent reference to the Illinois senator. "How can he lose?" her companion retorted. "If he is lucky, he is president of the United States. If not, he is a U.S. senator with a national following." How true, I told myself. Then I thought about the plight of Sens. Gary Hart and Joseph Biden, and my certainty ebbed.

Moving down a narrow corridor toward the main ballroom, I ran into commotion. By the way people's faces lit up, I knew Simon was nearby. That was my first chance to observe at close range an American politician in action.

A man of average build and unremarkable appearance, (except for the bow tie), Simon was working the crowd with consummate skill. Holding onto your hand with both of his, he would focus just long enough to make you feel special before shifting to someone else. Occasionally, he would pause and strike a conversation. He especially delighted in singling out a person by name, which he would announce loudly for every one to hear. One farmer in overalls attracted his attention. The two chatted for a while, slapping each other on the back. I couldn't tell if they had met before, but this might well have been their first encounter.

How much can one enjoy shaking hands with strangers,

sharing food with casual acquaintances, handling somebody else's babies? I am not sure I could have gone through this ritual once. And yet, there is something humbling about it, and certainly far more democratic than the grandstanding of the now ubiquitous political TV ad. Pressing the flesh is to democracy what waving hands atop Lenin's tomb is to plutocracy. Both are tokens, yet one affirms that ultimate power rests with people, the other that it belongs to their self-appointed representatives.

The "Simon Special," as the event was billed in an oblique reference to Harry Truman's Whistle-Stop Campaign, was moving apace. The main event started amid loud cheers and the deafening sounds of Dixieland. A few things stuck in my memory from this noisy celebration: a 13-year-old girl singing a campaign song she composed for the occasion; the campaign chairman's line, "Remember folks, by helping Simon you help yourself."

All in all, however, the gala's formal part proved to be a disappointment. An endless parade of up- and down-state politicians touting their wares, lavishing praise on each other and swearing allegiance to Simon, the next president of the United States. The Illinois attorney general outdid everyone, his oration rivaling in zeal that of all but a few of Southern Illinois' best known evangelical preachers.

Simon's appearance brought a welcome relief. He spoke with the ease of a politician who needn't worry about impressing the home crowd and who knows how to be forceful without being shrill. In a deep, sonorous voice Simon talked about an America that is a little more humane, a trifle more rational, and in the process managed to convey that most coveted by men and women of his profession: the image of a person who really cares.

The occasion ended, as it began, with a sermon. A preacher called on the audience to pray to God the almighty for Simon's victory. People stood in silence, many with heads bowed in a gesture of reverence.

On the way home I thought about the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. The man sure is a quick study. Look how deftly he mixed with the crowds on the streets of Washington during the U.S.-Soviet summit. He still has a lot to learn about democracy from his counterparts in the West, but pressing the flesh and listening to people is not a bad way to start.

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# For Marxism, a Problem of National Proportions

## Old Ethnic Antagonisms Are Testing Gorbachev's Goals, Durability of Glasnost

By DMITRI N. SHALIN

Oppressive regimes are most vulnerable to popular revolt when they give up their coercive ways and embark on liberal reforms. The nationalist tide now sweeping Mikhail S. Gorbachev's Soviet Union is the latest example of this paradox:

—Dec. 16, 1986. Moscow replaces the native party chief in Kazakhstan with an ethnic Russian. Normally, such actions would raise few eyebrows among Soviet citizens, but this time thousands of students take to the streets of the capital of Kazakhstan. Rioters assault the militia, overturn cars, burn a store. Heavy reinforcements are called in to discourage further protests.

—July 25, 1987. Three hundred Crimean Tatars stage a demonstration at the Kremlin wall. They demand the right to return to their homeland from which they were evicted in 1944 on the trumped-up charges of collaboration with the Nazis. Bewildered police watch as the protesters chant "Motherland or Death!" The demonstrations are broken up, but not before the government forms a commission to investigate the grievances.

—Aug. 23, 1987. Five hundred Lithuanians assemble in Vilnius to mark the anniversary of the secret Stalin-Hitler pact that allowed the Soviet Union to annex three Baltic states. The demonstrations quickly spread to neighboring Latvia and Estonia, where crowds gather to hear defiant speeches honoring the victims of Stalin and decrying creeping Russification. The authorities denounce the peaceful gatherings but elect not to use force.

—Feb. 11, 1988. Hundreds of thousands of people fill the streets in the Armenian capital of Yerevan demanding an end to Azerbaijani control over the predominantly

Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh region. Gorbachev meets with Armenian activists and pledges personal attention to their complaints. The nationalists agree to call a one-month moratorium on demonstrations.

In former times Soviet authorities would nip each uprising in the bud and spare no force to teach the culprits a lesson. In the era of *glasnost*, the government eschews openly repressive measures, yet alternatives consistent to the Marxist creed are hard to come by.

Nationalism has always posed a problem for Marxists, who welcome it as a force against imperialism but decry it as a barrier to internationalism. The Second Communist International broke down in 1914 after socialist parliamentarians voted to support their governments' efforts in World War I. Ever since, Marxists have had difficulties explaining why class solidarity among workers takes a back seat to their nationalist and religious aspirations.

To be sure, ethnic fissures predate communist revolutions. People in Kazakhstan have not forgotten how their nomadic ancestors were slaughtered by the czarist troops during the campaign of forced settlement. The Armenians still bristle at the indignities that their Muslim neighbors once inflicted on them. The Russians have their own horror tales to recite about the 250 years of Mongol-Tatar rule. But communist policies often did little to heal these ancient wounds.

While Lenin deplored Russian chauvinism and at least in theory urged a sensitivity to ethnic feelings, his successors showed no tolerance for nationalist sentiments. Stalin was particularly ruthless, ordering the wholesale extermination of national elites, banishing peoples from their ancient homelands and decreeing Russian as the language of instruction in

ethnic schools.

In recent decades nationalist discontent has focused on economic issues, with the mineral-rich republics trying to move industries closer to resources and Moscow resisting the move because it might exacerbate the employment situation in the industrial areas of the Russian Republic.

There is no neat solution to ethnic divisions in the Soviet Union. But then the problem is hardly unique to the Soviet Union. The conflicts between American Indians and European settlers, Irish Catholics and Protestants, Afrikaners and blacks in South Africa show that the West has no monopoly on virtue in the national-ity question.

Nationalism is among the most potent social forces in the modern world. It offers a glimmer of hope to the oppressed, a ready source of meaning to those overwhelmed by the irrationalities of daily life. It also stirs passions that easily turn ugly and self-defeating. Only a great statesman can master this primeval social instinct and turn it into a constructive force for change.

Whether Gorbachev is up to this challenge, no one knows. Two things work for him in the present situation: He is acutely aware that the task he faces is a formidable one, and many nationalists understand that pushing their demands too hard could bring down the regime without alleviating their problems.

In the meantime, Gorbachev has to ponder specific options. He can fall back on the policy of repression, putting his *glasnost* campaign on hold, or he can offer concessions to the nationalists and risk the ire of the ideological watchdogs. In either case his statesmanship is due for what could be the toughest test of his political career.

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# From lies to half-truth in the USSR

By Dmitri N. Shalin

A few years after I left my native Russia, I came across the memoirs of Werner Heisenberg. In this remarkable book ("Physics and Beyond," Harper and Row, 1971), the German physicist recounted the 1933 encounter with his colleague, Max Planck. The talk revolved around the agonizing choices both faced in Hitler's Germany.

"You cannot stop the catastrophe, and in order to survive you will be forced to make compromise after compromise," confided Planck to his friend. "But you can try to band together with others and form islands of constancy. You can gather young people around you, teach them to become good scientists and thus help them to preserve old values."

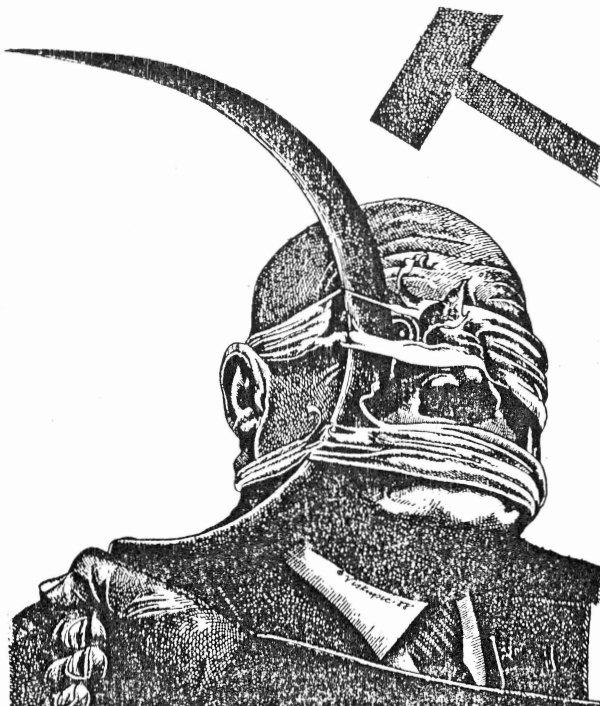
"Naturally, I cannot blame anyone who decides [to emigrate], who finds life in Germany intolerable, who cannot remain while injustices are committed that he can do nothing to prevent. But in the ghastly situation in which Germany now finds herself, no one can act decently. Every decision we make involves us in injustices of one kind or another."

Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet Union little resembled Hitler's Germany. Yet the choices the Soviet intelligentsia faced in the 1970s were not unlike the ones the critically minded Germans faced in the '30s. Those who declined to challenge the system or leave the country were driven to internal emigration. The rationale Soviet intellectuals had to offer for carrying on was the familiar one.

"Think about the next generation," a good friend of mine, an economist, used to say. "The official wisdom in this country is that '2 times 2 is 10.' In my public lectures, I show that it is closer to 8, and a handful of my students will learn that it is actually 4. No one knows how long I can get away with this, but then you won't find out unless you try."

Taking refuge on "islands of constancy" did not spare one from official hypocrisy. Compromises had to be made, injustices glossed over, humiliations endured. As an oft-quoted line from a Russian poet went, "There have been times when life was harsher, but never meaner than today."

Sometimes it was fairly innocuous stuff, like attending political rallies and pretending to listen to local party hacks. Worse, you had to witness, silently, your friend's expulsion from a professional organization for ideological infractions. Or you could be confronted by a KGB official who, after inquiring about progress on your dissertation, discreetly asked you to keep an eye on your colleagues. Everyone had to decide for oneself where a decent compromise ceased to be such.



Heisenberg encountered a similar situation in Hitler's Germany: "At the beginning of each lecture you had to raise your hand and give the Nazi salute. . . . And then you had to sign all official letters with 'Heil Hitler' . . . . We were expected to attend celebrations and marches, but I felt it ought to be possible to get out of quite a few. A compromise here, a compromise there, and where did you draw the line? . . ."

A few of us, myself included, embarked on a different path. External emigration, we soon discovered, didn't spare anyone from injustices, and humiliations there were aplenty. No matter how quickly a job was found, new friendships formed and language barriers surmounted, it felt like hell at first.

As generations of immigrants before them, the newcomers from the Soviet Union learned to feel at home in the West. Some made it big. But most knew by heart what Max Horkheimer, a refugee from Hitler's Germany, meant when he referred to the immigrant's existence as "damaged life." Emigration is the ultimate divorce: You are cut off not only from loved ones, but from your language, culture, background, home.

The situation is different today in the Soviet Union—the Moscow Spring has finally arrived. The range of issues opened for discussion has increased dramatically; the blank pages of Soviet history are being filled; scores

Chicago Tribune, Thursday, August 25, 1988

of people unjustly treated in the past have their good names restored to them; and even Soviet citizens who left the country in the Brezhnev years are undergoing a rehabilitation of sorts. But the scars left from years of internal and external emigration have not healed.

In an article last year in the journal *Sociologicheskie Issledovaniia*, Leonid Ionin compares the mood in the country with the one that pervaded Germany after Hitler's fall. *Schuldfrage*, the question of guilt, the author maintains, today confronts the Soviet intelligentsia. It is not a question about some Stalin, Beria or Brezhnev who could be blamed for past indignities. It is about ourselves, compromises we made with our conscience, a mindset we inherited from the past that hinders *perestroika*.

Pages of Soviet periodicals are filled with heated polemics about the "stagnation years," the euphemism for the Brezhnev era. An unlikely spectacle unfolds before the eyes of the bewildered public, where, for example, yesterday's outcast scolds the head of the Soviet Composers Union.

Soviet citizens are encouraged to meet their compatriots abroad. Earlier this year, the Moscow News published a favorable account of a meeting between Soviet and ex-Soviet writers in Copenhagen. Even more startling, last June in a New York City hotel Soviet officials discussed current Soviet reforms with a panel of emigres in front of 400 ex-Soviet citizens.

Were those who claimed truth would out in Mother Russia right? Perhaps, although not quite yet.

We used to live the lie in the Brezhnev years. To stay alive, one had to compromise—even in the Gulag. Today, Soviet people are allowed to live half-truth. That is to say, 2 times 2 is no longer 10—it is somewhere between 8 and 6. One has to call this progress, I suppose. Yet, from the vantage point of 13 years abroad, I can't help feeling ambivalent about what is going on in my homeland.

Socialism is still unassailable. One-party rule is beyond reproach. Arrests for political reasons continue. Freedom of assembly exists mostly on paper. The right to leave the country is curtailed. And the deadly grip of bureaucracy seems stronger than ever. With all due respect to Mikhail Gorbachev, I believe he still presides over a system of enlightened totalitarianism . . . well, make it enlightened authoritarianism, but that hardly changes a thing.

As long as *glasnost* is construed as the party's gift to people and not an inalienable right, somebody will always be a stranger in his own land, an emigrant, internal or external, with a damaged life to live.

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# After 13 Years Apart, an Airport Reunion Is Proof That Perestroika Is No Gimmick

By DMITRI N. SHALIN

Television cameras, an oversize crowd, the Russian language heard everywhere in the international-arrival terminal at Kennedy Airport—all indicators pointed out that hers was no ordinary flight. As mother explained to me later, this was the first joint Aeroflot-Pan Am venture in the wake of improved Soviet-American ties, and the commemorative plaque that she proudly produced for everyone to see underscored the historical nature of the occasion.

Flight 31 marked a turning point in more ways than one. Thirteen years ago, when I left my native Russia, I wondered if I'd ever see my mother again. Now, what seemed impossible for so long was about to come true.

I stood at the gates for half an hour as passengers came and went, greeted by joyous shrieks from the waiting crowd, but my mother was nowhere in sight. An old lady clutching a cart with a few pieces of luggage in it caught my attention. I followed her for a while before my gaze turned elsewhere. Then, suddenly, I heard someone yell "De-e-e-m-a-a!" and the sound of my nickname jolted me out of my stupor. I looked back toward the elderly lady. Gray hair, face full of wrinkles, the yellowish hew around her cheeks—could she have changed so much? And then she smiled at me with that rascalish look that I remembered so well: "We've made it, haven't we!" This was my mother, after all, as irrepressibly young inside as I ever knew her.

On the way to Manhattan she talked nonstop: Lev's dissertation, Uncle Miron's helath, the state of Galia's marriage, our neighbors from the old communal dwelling on Lesnoi, the wallpapering saga in mother's new apartment—there wasn't news trivial enough to brush aside.

We jumped from one subject to another, her hands in mine, trying to cram 13 years worth of news into one taxi ride from Kennedy to uptown Manhattan. With the big picture in place, some significant details started to loom large.

I knew that mother had problems after my departure. A year or so thereafter, she felt compelled to quit her job at the Pushkin Museum in Leningrad where she had lectured for 20 years. Not that anybody blamed her directly for her son's "treasonous behavior," but after I applied for an exit visa many friends and colleagues grew visibly distant.

Things certainly have changed since then. What used to be a shameful liability turned into a proud

asset once the Moscow Spring began to gather force.

"The thing is," mother told me matter-of-factly, "if the stagnation under Brezhnev was anywhere as bad as it is now portrayed, emigration must have been an honest option, perhaps more so than staying put and keeping one's mouth shut. This isn't just my opinion: The Moscow News has published commentary to that effect—I have the issue somewhere in my luggage."

I knew that the Soviet government was making overtures to some émigrés, but I hadn't seen anything as bluntly stated in the official Soviet press. Coming from my mother, a member of the Communist Party, who fought my decision to leave the country back in the '70s, this was a stunning admission.

"So now every week," she continued, "somebody's calling me and asking, 'How's Dima? Any news from the States? When is he coming home?' By the way, when are you coming home?"

The ambiguity of her question didn't escape me. "You mean as a tourist—or for good, as a prodigal son?"

"Either way, you might get a hero's welcome. You simply wouldn't believe what has been happening in the last year or two. People are getting out of jails, emigrant writers are back in print, even Solzhenitsyn's name is no longer taboo. And you know what? Remember Igor Semenovitch, your dissertation adviser? He was finally allowed to visit the States, and he wants to meet with you!"

I knew exactly what she was so excited about. News from Russia reaching here lately infused me with the same mixture of wonderment, disbelief and hope. At last something was stirring in my God-forsaken homeland—confusing, fragile, to be sure, yet ever so exciting.

In the weeks ahead we would tackle this subject again and again, but for the moment I needed no further proof that *perestroika* wasn't just a gimmick: the miracle of my mother, sitting next to me in this yellow cab, ready to be swallowed up by the Big Apple, was proof enough.

More news about life back home followed. I tried to concentrate, but my mind kept wandering. I thought about mother's favorite dishes that I'd cook for her, the two grandchildren whom she'd soon meet and the America that I'd help her discover, and the feeling of well-being forgotten since childhood filled my heart.

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# For Soviets to Master the Land, Land Must Be Given to Masters

By DMITRI N. SHALIN

"Who gets up at 3 o'clock in the morning to take care of a sick cow?" For decades, the Soviets assumed that every collective farmer would rise to the occasion, should the need be. Now, it appears, they are ready to think the whole matter over.

In his landmark address last October, Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev came up with an idea that was as simple as it was revolutionary: Until the cow has a master, it won't get the proper care. Hence, the package of agricultural reforms designed to overhaul the entrenched collective farming system.

The new thinking, reiterated by Gorbachev Wednesday before a meeting of the Communist Party's policy-setting Central Committee, doesn't imply a sudden ideological conversion as much as it reflects the dire state of Soviet agriculture. Consider:

- Soviet agriculture is four times less productive than that of the United States.

- Annual food subsidies in the mid-1980s topped \$70 billion.

- 20% of all collective farms are insolvent.

- More than one-third of all crops are left to rot in the fields.

- 15% to 20% of foodstuffs stored in warehouses never reach the consumer.

Add to this that 30% of the nation's meat, nearly 40% of its vegetables and more than 70% of its fruits are produced on private plots making up 3% of the nation's arable land, and one can understand the urgent need for reform.

The program that Gorbachev is pushing allows peasants to lease land and assume full operational control over its use. The



advantages of the new system are obvious (farmers leasing land are two to three times more productive), but its heralded future as a mainstay of Soviet agriculture is in doubt. Collective farm bosses and the regional party *nomenklatura* do everything possible to sabotage the reforms. Yegor K. Ligachev, the Politburo minister in charge of agriculture, has been campaigning to maintain the collective system.

As leaseholders have discovered, the land assigned to them by local authorities tends to be marginal. They cannot count on landlords for timely help with machinery, fertilizers, veterinary services, etc. And they are the last to benefit from investments in infrastructure (such as electrification, road building and school development).

The tenure conditions are a mess. At first, the talk was of leases running from 25 years or longer. In practice, few collective and state farms grant contracts exceeding three years. With no automatic renewal

clause, leaseholders face the prospect of being reassigned to even less-productive plots. The pricing system presents another stumbling block. In the absence of large-scale private markets, leaseholders depend on state-set prices for both their products and for industrial goods. Early reports indicate that private farmers pay at least 50% more for machinery and services than what the government charges state enterprises. By contrast, wholesale foodstuff prices are low and could be further lowered by the state at any time.

Two more impediments to effective leasehold farming concern credit and insurance. Soviet banks are reluctant to lend money to individual peasants until suitable bankruptcy provisions are put in place. And no arrangements have been made to allow full-time private farmers to obtain accident insurance and retirement benefits comparable to the ones guaranteed to collective and state-farm employees.

Finally, there is the psychological lag.

The Chinese have had great success with collectivizing their agriculture because many peasants could draw on experience with private farming from the days before the 1948 Communist takeover. By contrast, after 60 years of collective farming, Soviet peasants have little wherewithal or appetite for private enterprise.

Are the Soviet agriculture reforms doomed? Not necessarily. What Gorbachev and his aides have to understand is that "returning master to the land" is impossible without "returning land to the master."

This means long-term leases. It also means the establishment of guaranteed wholesale prices, favorable credit terms and equitable insurance policies. Above all, it means wresting control over the reforms from the local authorities with the vested interests in the obsolete farming system.

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# Soviet Economy Advancing to the Rear

By DMITRI N. SHALIN

The miners' strike that began in Siberia's Kuznets Basin before spreading this week to the Ukraine is by far the biggest in recent Soviet history. But it is hardly an isolated incident.

In recent months, labor problems have sprung up in Leningrad, Eisk, Klaipeda, Vorkuta and dozens of other Soviet cities. Nor is the unrest confined to urban areas. Besides the coalfields of Siberia and the Ukraine, strikes have also been reported on collective farms throughout the Soviet Union.

There is a certain irony in the fact that Soviet workers have turned to confrontation just as President Mikhail S. Gorbachev has begun to press for liberal reforms. Yet the reasons for this are several.

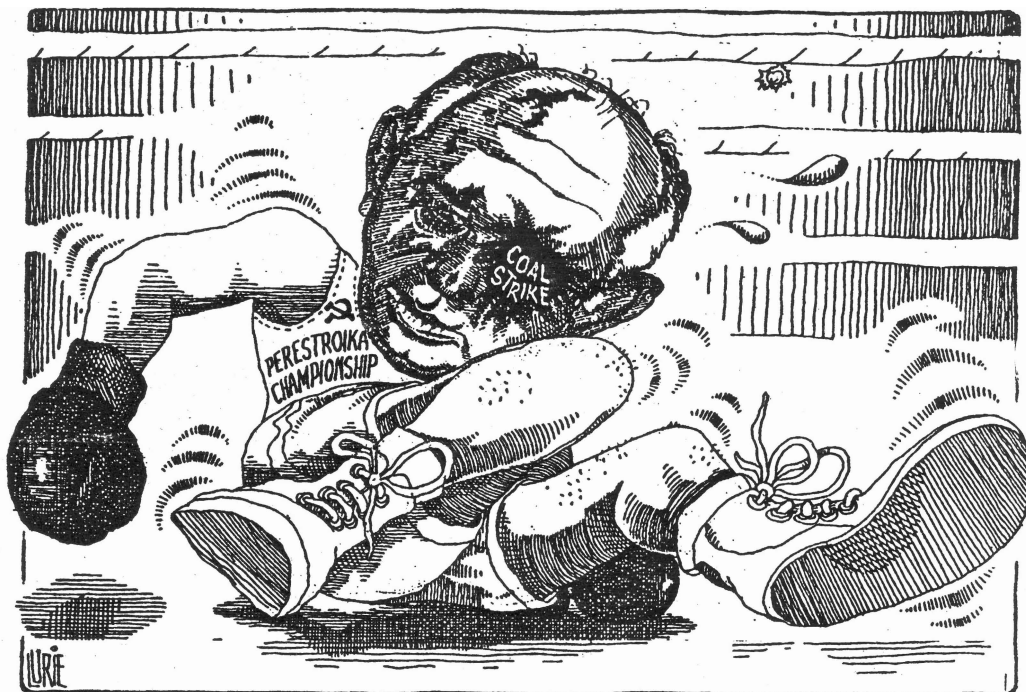
Work stoppages were rare in the past because participants faced harsh reprisals. Dissatisfaction was expressed through absenteeism, low productivity and labor turnover. In the *glasnost* era, with Soviet newspapers printing daily the accounts of corruption in high places, strikers stand a good chance of being heard. And some even get what they want.

S. Krodiv, correspondent for Literary Gazette, concluded his story about a collective farm strike near the Crimean city of Bakhchisaray with a ringing indictment of "the marionette leadership, corrupted by repressions against dissenters" and praised strike organizers who "refused to quit, as did so many before them, but continue to fight for justice at home."

Labor unrest in the Soviet Union offers us an unusual insight into the human cost of the current economic reforms. New rules placed a heavy burden on managers to show a profit, without offering them the requisite freedom to secure supplies and market their products. These constraints forced some authorities to cut salaries and raise production quotas, leaving workers to hold the bag.

In Kuznets, metal glazers staged a slowdown to dramatize the hardships they faced after they were ordered to speed up their production. In Eisk, bus drivers went on strike after they discovered that their monthly pay was cut without much warning from the authorities, who simply told them that the rates had changed and now they would have to work harder to earn their wages.

Soviet managers have their own horror stories to tell about "self-financing," as the new Soviet economic system is called. They are particularly unhappy about the



arbitrary pricing system. For instance, textile industry managers are allowed to bring higher-priced goods to the market and earn larger profits, even if there is no visible increase in quality. In the coal mining industry, by contrast, prices are fixed by the state and stay low, while production costs continue to rise, leaving workers few chances to make headway.

Potentially even more troublesome is the prospect of unemployment, which looms ever larger since Gorbachev unleashed his drive to increase productivity and cut down to size the managerial staff. According to the Soviet journal Sociological Research, the Dagestan Autonomous Republic has 170,000 unemployed. The Republic of Byelorussia projects that 200,000 workers will lose their jobs in the next few years.

Laid-off workers are entitled to alternative job offers, but this provision masks an ugly reality. Workers transferring to new jobs may lose the housing provided by old employers and, in some cases, a city residence permit. The forced transfer is usually accompanied by an income loss.

No wonder Soviet workers began to form their own labor organizations, such as the Labor Initiative Club at the Krasnaia Zaria factory in Leningrad, to challenge the official trade unions as the spokesmen for workers' welfare. More importantly, workers are beginning to press for political reforms. Miners in Siberia and the Ukraine

now want to revise the constitution, have greater control over the operation of the mines, cut the bureaucracy down to size and reverse the disastrous ecological problems in their regions.

Gorbachev may have sought to combine the best of socialism and capitalism, but for the time being he has achieved pretty much the opposite: Inflation, job insecurity and labor unrest are now added to the familiar list of Soviet economic woes—long lines, pervasive shortages, goods of shoddy quality. The social contract that has bound the party and the people for decades—"we keep in you in food and clothes, you don't ask questions and let us govern"—is clearly unraveling.

Let us not forget, however, that Gorbachev's program includes "democratization" as one of its goals. This is where he has something to show for his efforts. The case in point is the outline of the new labor legislation published in May, which provides for independent trade unions and acknowledges a limited right to strike.

If the new Soviet legislature passes this law, we may yet see current reforms pushed beyond the half-measures envisioned by Gorbachev. Indeed, this might be the best hope left for the Soviet economy.

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# Settling Old Accounts

By **Dmitri N. Shalin**

**S**OVIET readers have a great appetite for historical narrative these days. That's understandable in a nation that long suppressed the truth about its past. Yet this passion for history has its darker side.

The explosiveness of history is seen in a furor raised by a release of minutes from a 1958 writers' meeting condemning Boris Pasternak for publishing "Doctor Zhivago" overseas. Many were shocked to find admired names among the condemners.

Vladimir Soloukhin, a popular poet and writer, had the misfortune to speak at that fateful gathering.

He has tried to lay the issue to rest in an article, "Time to Settle Accounts," but succeeded only in touching off a bitter dispute that has been raging for months, and still goes on.

Soloukhin's position can be summed up thus:

Everybody acted under duress at the time. Of the 500 writers present, none had the courage to defend Pasternak. It is the times that should be placed on trial, not individual participants forced to act unjustly. If we are to repent, then repent collectively.

Younger liberal writers felt the most incensed by Soloukhin's argument. They found it insensitive and self-serving and called on all those with a hand in the Pasternak affair and subsequent campaigns against dissidents to resign their offices in the Writers Union.

But the old guard refused to budge. "Who are you to teach us morality?" retorted Felix Kuznetsov, long-time head of the Moscow Writers' organization. "Why hadn't you spoken out then? He who kept silence before *perestroika*, has no right to be sanc-

timonious today."

Emboldened by the argument, conservatives counterattacked:

They reminded Bitalii Korotich, editor of the daring weekly "Ogonek," about a glowing review he wrote of Brezhnev's memoirs. Korotich defended himself, pointing out it was doctored by his superiors. But the fact he waited until it was safe to say so did not escape notice.

Evgenii Averin, another reformist author, was accused of being a onetime aide to Grishin, a despised Moscow party organization boss who made life miserable for Moscow intellectuals.

Tatiana Zaslavskaya, a sociologist and a force behind Gorbachev's campaign against bureaucracy, was taken to task for earlier writings which appear to have laid the rationale for a cruel campaign to transfer people from so-called "non-viable villages" to bigger agricultural centers.

The names of Evtushenko, Voznesenski, Burlatski, and other liberals have been mentioned among those whose conduct in the past did not always square with the standards espoused by the Russian *intelligentsia*.

Wading through the litany of charges and counter-charges, I remembered what my old teacher said in the '70s, before I left my native Russia: "By today's standards, you are a decent man if you feel disgusted with oneself every time you do something indecent."

The sad truth is that rulers with unlimited power make us tacit accomplices in their crimes, with shame often the last thing left to shield one's moral core. Does this mean that attempts to weigh personal responsibility are somehow superfluous? I don't think so.

Not everyone summoned to the Pasternak trial showed up. Veniamin Kaverin called in sick and stayed home despite stern warnings from a party secretary —

a courageous act at the time.

Nor did everyone take the podium. Of those who did, some stuck to low-key rhetoric and avoided calls for Pasternak's expulsion. Boris Slutski was one.

Scores of those who took part in this ignominious affair deeply regretted it later and said so publicly. Soloukhin never did.

Nor can we forget that in the worst times, some had courage to fight the system: Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, Voinovitch. Without them, the moral revival now under way wouldn't be possible.

Figuring out who said or did what — and when and how — is the brutal task facing Soviet intellectuals. It could be a healing process, provided one doesn't look for ways to pass blame around. Benedict Sarnov, a literary critic, put it well when he said nobody has a moral right to shame others until one has felt ashamed of oneself — not even if you were too young.

The question Soviet intellectuals ponder today is akin to the *Schuldfrage* that Germans grappled with after Hitler. The key issue in both cases is how much responsibility a person bears for the historical ruptures that transcend personal lives. It is telling that in both cases the discussion has led to Judeo-Christian ethics.

Words like "sin," "guilt" and "shame" now crop up frequently in Soviet discourse. The movie that has captured the nation's spirit is called "Repentance." It is significant that Gorbachev conceded the primacy of universal human values over class morality when meeting with the Pope.

Ethics cannot solve the major problems confronting Soviet society today, but settling moral accounts and rebuilding one's moral universe is a right step.

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# No Meat, No Soap—And Now, a Crime Wave

By DMITRI N. SHALIN

When the Ministry of Internal Affairs released the first detailed data on crime in the Soviet Union last February, the figures confirmed what many had suspected for some time: Crime is on the rise. As citizens clamored for action, the ministry promised extraordinary measures to fight the crime wave. It has kept its promise but nevertheless failed to stem the tide.

Indeed, 1989 may turn out to be the worst year in Soviet criminal history (not counting political purges), despite such highly publicized actions as the setting up of anti-crime committees, the assembling of special KGB teams and the mobilizing of citizen patrols. In the first 10 months of the year, crime went up in every major category compared with the same period of 1988: rape 25%, homicide and attempted homicide 28.4%, racketeering 32%, aggravated battery 42.4%, robbery 99%, motor vehicle theft 158%.

Several new developments raise particular concern, none more so than violence in public places. Much violent crime occurs in streets, parks and playgrounds, sometimes in broad daylight with passersby looking the other way. Violence is often motivated by no other reason than the desire to humiliate and cause bodily harm. A series last fall in the newspaper *Sovetskaya Kultura* created a stir in Moscow with its graphic depiction of sadistic crimes committed in the nation's capital.

Racketeering is another relatively new phenomenon. As cooperative and private enterprises have mushroomed, so has organized crime. Soviet papers are full of stories about kidnapping, extortion, money laundering, dealing in counterfeit currency and the like. Now that travel regulations have been relaxed, organized crime in the Soviet Union is forging ties to the West, most notably the U.S. and Israel.

A growing problem is crime against foreigners. More than 2,000 visitors were vic-

timized in Moscow during the first six months of 1989. One common scam involves a taxi driver picking up tourists, with his buddies following in another car and staging a hold-up in a back street. Gary Basmadzhanian, a French art collector visiting Moscow at the invitation of Culture Ministry, vanished from a Moscow hotel last July. Kidnapping was at first suspected, but now murder is feared. Mindful of the effect such incidents could have on tourist industry, the authorities have announced stepped-up police patrols around spots favored by visitors.

One more unwelcome portent is the growing backlog of unsolved cases. According to *Izvestia*, 35% of all criminal cases registered in 1989 have been closed, at least temporarily, due to the "lack of viable clues." While crime rates went up, the number of arraignments and indictments fell precipitously, and so did the prison sentences handed down by the courts. The prison population in the Soviet Union dropped from 1.5 million in 1986 to about 800,000 at present.

Ironically, it is *glasnost* that is in part to blame for the disquiet crime creates among the population. The number of homicide cases projected for 1989—about 19,000—just about equals the number for 1979, a year that produced no public outcry. Now that crime statistics are published in every paper, the public realizes the problem's true extent and feels vulnerable.

The crime wave has affected mostly urban areas, with the bulk of felonies (73.7%) reported in major cities, where residence has always been restricted. These are the crimes that used to be cause to revoke an offender's residence permit, forcing the most dangerous criminals to settle elsewhere. Now that residence laws are less vigorously enforced, many criminals are finding their way back to the cities.

Behind the statistics one can discern a return to the old patterns of alcohol con-

sumption. Violent crime dropped between 1986 and 1987, at the peak of the anti-drinking campaign, but it shot up in the following years, when the restrictions on alcohol sales were lifted. In the first 10 months of 1989, the crime rates went up 34%, while alcohol sales increased 28%.

Special mention must go to the sorry state of law enforcement. According to *Izvestia*, the nation's average annual expenditure on police is about eight rubles per citizen, compared with about \$100 in the U.S. A Soviet law enforcement officer earns an average of 160 rubles a month, 74 rubles below the average national salary.

Finally, the economic reforms may well have aggravated the situation. Sociologists know that during transition periods, when old norms have shaken off and new ones haven't yet taken hold, deviant behavior tends to increase. Ill-defined and ever-changing laws haven't helped, nor have the chronic shortages of food and other basic items.

As long as the country remains in the throes of a painful economic transformation, crime rates probably will remain high. Still, there is much that can be done—investing in law enforcement, streamlining the law, setting up a peer jury system, reinforcing the statute that makes alcohol intoxication an aggravating factor in crime, and above all, pushing through economic reforms. These measures will not turn things around over night, but they will reassure the public and undermine the argument that the country is out of control.

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# Glasnost and Sex

By Dmitri N. Shalin

**S**urely, sex in the Soviet Union predates perestroika. But the eroticization of popular culture now afoot has glasnost written all over it.

New portents are everywhere: a pictorial in Playboy magazine on "The Women of Russia," an erotic art exhibit in Moscow, a nude-photograph show in Leningrad, a special on sex in the U.S. cinema at the 16th International Moscow Movie Festival.

The latter event created quite a stir among Muscovites. A flashy guide printed for the occasion featured on its cover nude photos of Marilyn Monroe and Natalia Negoda, a rising Soviet star. Many moviegoers left disappointed, however. American classics of the 60's and 70's looked tame compared with what Soviet cinema has to offer these days.

There is "Little Vera," a path-breaking picture about changing mores in a provincial Soviet town. Another crowd-pleaser is a movie version of "Lady Macbeth from Mzensk," which features explicit sex scenes that would earn solid "R" ratings anywhere in the West. My favorite is "Local Emergency," a bitter satire about the Communist Youth League, featuring a sauna scene with youth organizers mulling over business amid a sex orgy.

Soviet theater doesn't lag far behind. Nude actors and actresses now routinely strut their stuff before gasping audiences. Even stodgy Russian classics are no longer immune to novel treatment. Last summer, for example, a 19th century play known to every Soviet high school student, "Enough Simplicity for Every Wise Man," shocked the viewers with nude scenes. Soon, a critic for Literaturn-

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## The new openness has started a belated revolution.

aia Gazeta said recently, there will be no audience for any show without "an obligatory copulation scene."

The popular press is also scrambling to keep up with the times. Premarital sex, contraceptives, abortion, venereal disease, prostitution and like subjects once considered taboo are now open for public scrutiny.

With premarital sex increasingly common among Soviet youth (two-thirds lose their virginity by the age of 21), unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases are turning into a serious problem.

According to the Communist Youth League newspaper, Komsomolskaia Pravda, 6.5 million abortions were performed in the Soviet Union in 1988. If this figure is right, one out of 10 Soviet women of child bearing age terminated a pregnancy that year. Roughly one-fifth of all abortions involved teen-agers.

The main reason for these gruesome statistics is unreliable or nonexistent contraceptives. Diaphragms come in only three sizes. There is no spermicidal cream. Condoms are in short supply. Last year, according to Komsomolskaia Pravda, "one item" cost 4 rubles, or \$6, on the black market. Now, the price is closer to \$10. No wonder abortion remains the chief birth-control option.

Venereal disease is a growing nuisance. Cases of sexually transmitted disease in Moscow tripled between 1982 and 1986 and continue to rise.

One fresh concern is AIDS. The problem is not nearly as severe as in the West (only a few dozen officially reported AIDS-related deaths so far), but this simply reflects the country's late start on the sexual revolution.

Carriers of any sexually-transmitted diseases are considered criminal offenders under Soviet law and face forced hospitalization. Thus, since many victims understandably shy away from help, the official numbers understate the problem.

Prostitution attracts particular attention in today's press. The problem is an old one, but with a new twist. Sovetskaya Kultura, a weekly newspaper, reports that girls as young as 13 and 14 now find their way into the profession. By last year the situation had gotten so much out of hand that the Education Ministry felt compelled to issue a special decree on prostitution among high school students.

A movie about the life of a prostitute, released last fall and clearly meant as a cautionary tale, has proved counterproductive. The magazine Semia cites a poll in which girls 16 to 18 consider prostitution a prestigious occupation, rivaling in popularity modeling, movie acting and being a professor's wife. "At least I sell what is mine and don't steal from the state," was the widely publicized reply that a young prostitute gave to her parents.

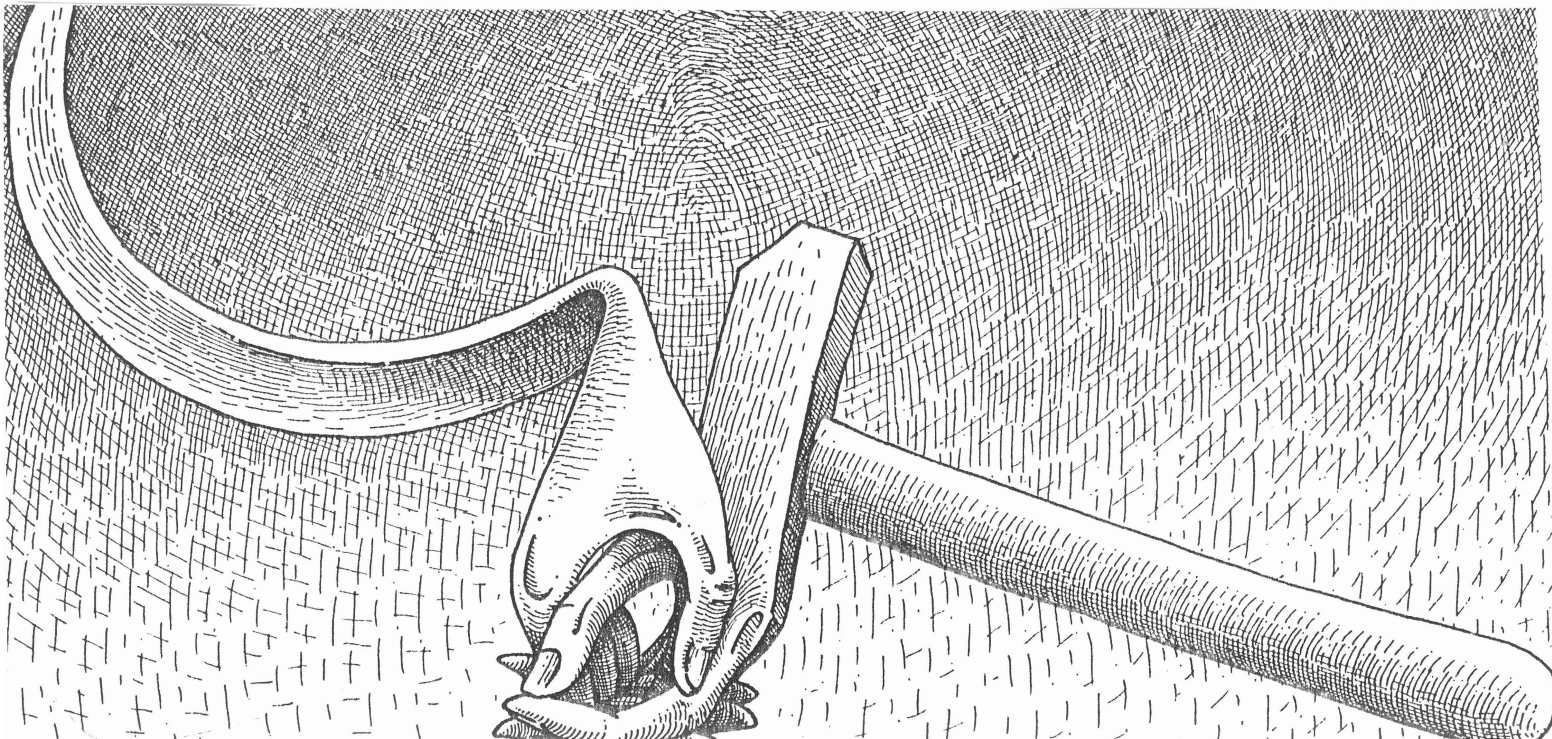
With the country in the throes of this sexual revolution, sexual morality is becoming a political issue. For conservative forces, laxity in sexual matters is an epitome of everything that is wrong with perestroika: lack of direction, self-indulgence, contempt for traditional values. For liberals, the main issue is the state's inability to meet people's basic needs: the very conditions that spurred reform.

Is there anything the West can do to help this hidden front in the battle for perestroika? I think so. Forget about exports of advanced technology. Send condoms, not computers, so that Soviet women can rely less on abor-

## Venereal disease abounds, and birth control is rare.

tion; donate anesthetics — now in extremely short supply — expressly for abortions, which are often done without even local anesthesia; deliver disposable syringes to allay fears of AIDS infection; bring in family planning and sex education experts.

These measures may or may not help Mikhail Gorbachev stay in power, but they would earn the heartfelt thanks of millions in the Soviet Union. □



# A Giant Headache for Mother Russia

LOS ANGELES TIMES

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1990

■ **Soviet Union:** An intellectual boost to nationalistic soundings cannot give much comfort to Gorbachev—or others.

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By **DMITRI N. SHALIN**

Spectacular developments on the periphery of the Soviet empire have, until recently, obscured the rise of Russian nationalism. Yet ethnic unrest in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic may well grow into the biggest headache yet for Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

Early warning signs cropped up two years ago when the ultra-nationalist organization *Pamyat* blamed the country's ills on "the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy." The group didn't make much headway then (its candidates lost in last year's elections for the Congress of People's Deputies), mainly because it failed to attract support from the Russian intelligentsia. Now the situation has changed.

Igor Shafarevich, a world-renowned mathematician and respected dissident, is one prominent Soviet intellectual who has lent his authority to the nationalist cause. His provocative essay, serialized in the literary magazine *Nash Sovremennik*, begins with the unobjectionable premise that ethnic Russians are entitled to national pride just as any other ethnic group. He rejects as russophobic any attempts to explain Russian history in terms of servility, intolerance and a craving for strong authority, pointing out—correctly—that any such charge addressed to other groups would be judged racist.

Inexplicably, however, Shafarevich refuses to follow his own advice and proceeds to blame Jews for the misfortunes that Russia has suffered in this century. His arguments are as old as they are spurious: The dominant role that Jews gained in revolutionary organizations at the turn of the century caused Russia to abandon its predestined historical path; after the revolution, Jews effectively controlled repressive institutions in the country; the horrors that Russian people suffered under the Marxist regime are due largely to vengeful sentiments imparted to Jews by the Talmud.

"Either remain foreigners without political rights," counsels Shafarevich to the "non-indigenous" elements residing in Russia, "or accept Russian citizenship based on love of homeland."

One finds among the intellectuals who have caught the chauvinistic bug the names of prominent current writers such

as Valentin Rasputin, Vladimir Soloukhin, Vasily Belov and Vadim Kozhinov. On various occasions, these authors have intimated the need to purge political, social and artistic institutions in the Russian republic from alien influences.

Uri Bondarev, the powerful secretary of the Russian republic's Writers' Union, charged last fall that Russian writers are being pushed to the edge in their own land. Liberal magazines such as *Ogonyok*, *Neva* and *Zvezda*, he said, give far too much space to non-Russian writers; it is time for ethnic Russians to claim supremacy in the affairs of their own republic.

One after another, speakers at the union's plenary meeting rose to condemn "cosmopolitan intellectuals" and swore to stamp out their pernicious influence. Some thanked Shafarevich for "the courageous stand" he took in the face of Jewish dominance. Anatoly Builov went further than anybody else in his avowed anti-Semitism: If life in the Soviet Union has been miserable for so many decades, he asked, wasn't it because so many Jews, some hiding under Russian identities, have occupied leading positions in the Soviet hierarchy?

The ethnic purity espoused by Russian ultra-nationalists smacks of racism. Alexander Pushkin, a Russian literary icon, was descended from an Ethiopian slave brought to Russia by the Peter the Great. Boris Pasternak, the author of "Dr. Zhivago," was a Jew. Osip Mandelstam, arguably the greatest Soviet poet, also was a Jew. Can anybody deny their contribution to Russian culture?

Russian nationalism is not tenable as a political movement, particularly when it is fastened to dormant anti-Semitism, which is bound to breed racial hatred and violence.

Whatever the future of Russian nationalism, its immediate prospects are unsettling. The situation in the country brings to mind Germany in the waning years of the Weimar Republic, where the populace, worn down by an economic malaise and political uncertainty, cast about for scapegoats and clamored for a *Fuehrer* to spur the nation toward better times. We know what happened next: Hitler, the Holocaust, World War II.

Those who think that the true legacy of Russian intelligentsia is not a quest for racial purity but a heightened capacity for compassion had better speak out now.

*Dmitri N. Shalin is a visiting scholar at Harvard University's Russian Research Center.*

# The Limits on Gorbachev's Power

*Still, he's too much the party's man to inspire hope*

**By Dmitri N. Shalin**

ONCE again, Mikhail Gorbachev has proved himself a master politician. Defying his opponents on the left and the right, he pushed his agenda through at the Congress of People's Deputies and became the first president of the Soviet Union. This time, however, his victory may prove pyrrhic.

The mood in the country has rarely been more dour. Nearly 50 percent of Soviet citizens polled in recent days said they had lost hope in the future. The Soviet leader's personal popularity continues to slip, as more people conclude that the prospects for meaningful reform no longer ride on Gorbachev's political fortunes.

Several recent developments feed this pessimism, none more so than the widening gap between legislative activism and law enforcement. Take this minor yet highly symbolic episode. During the First Congress of People's Deputies, Evgenii Evtushenko proposed to abolish waiting rooms reserved for deputies in Soviet airports and urged that the areas be given to women with children. The motion carried unanimously. However, this didn't prevent home-bound parliamentarians from cashing in on their privilege. Months later, waiting rooms for dignitaries are still a standard feature at Soviet airport terminals.

Many legislative actions have faced a similar plight. The right to lease land is now guaranteed under Soviet law, but few farmers can exercise it. Cooperatives are

legal, yet their members face harassment. Racism is outlawed, but attacks on Jews by anti-Semites go unpunished. People continue to be fired for voicing public criticism, even though stifling dissent is illegal.

In theory, a strong presidency should help close the gap between legislative initiatives and everyday reality. It is unlikely to happen, however, until Gorbachev quits his post as the party head and dismantles the *nomenklatura* class.

There are several million party apparatchiks in the Soviet Union who, using their formidable power, have effectively whittled down the most promising reforms. So far Gorbachev has given few indications that he's ready to take on this mighty strata and surrender his position as

the party's general secretary. "The party is sacred to me," he said recently.

Doubts mount inside the Soviet Union about Gorbachev's ability to inspire and lead. The manner in which he conducted the Congress of People's Deputies has left even sympathetic observers uneasy.

It isn't simply that Gorbachev once again dodged submitting his candidacy to a popular election (though this certainly doesn't strengthen his mandate). Rather, it is the heavy-handed way in which he guided the proceedings, recognizing some deputies, ignoring others, brushing aside criticism, berating his opponents, and scolding alternative programs as "demagoguery." When Sergei Stankevich, a liberal deputy, pointed out that there can be honest differences of opinion, Gorbachev impatiently dismissed his remarks.

The question that Gorbachev's behavior raised is, Is he the right man for the job?

We tend to forget today that Gorbachev came to power as law-and-order man. It took him nearly a year to reveal himself as a born-again reformer, and ever since he has been flip-flopping on policy matters.

To shore up discipline, he embarked on the draconian anti-drinking campaign, then suddenly called it off. He ridiculed the multiparty system as "rubbish," then

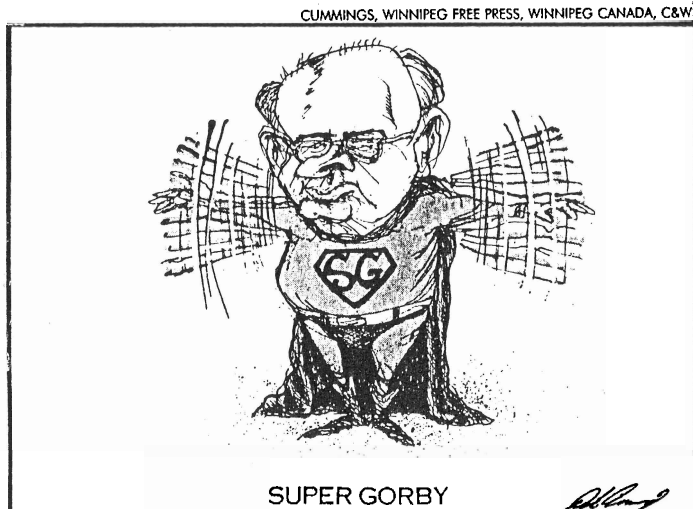
embraced it as inevitable. He vowed to keep the Soviet Union together, then promised a "divorce law" for the republics clamoring for secession. He pledged that the presidential election would be contested, then agreed to run unopposed. Some might see these reversals as the sign of pragmatism. A more apt description, in my view, is opportunism.

Gorbachev is sometimes likened to Moses: He delivered his people from Stalinist captivity, but he might not be the one to see the promised land. According to the Bible, it took the Jewish tribes 40 arduous years to find their way through the desert before they reached the promised land. It might take the Soviet people even longer to climb out of the hole dug by seven decades of communist rule — unless they find moral leadership.

With all due respect to Gorbachev — and I do think that he is a world-historical figure — he seems to lack the qualifications. He is too much of a party man to carry the torch much further. His skills were invaluable for political infighting, outfoxing his conservative opponents, getting the reform process started. But to lead the nation's moral rebirth, a different kind of leader is needed — someone like Vaclav Havel, who can offer a vision, heal moral wounds, and lead by personal example.

I do not doubt that Russia is capable of producing such leaders, though Gorbachev might not be the one.

■ Dmitri N. Shalin is a visiting scholar at the Russian Research Center at Harvard.



# Perestroika's Ugly Brother, Anti-Semitism

■ **Soviet Union:** Recent reforms have revived Jewish life, but have also freed the forces of Russian xenophobia.

By **DMITRI N. SHALIN**

A scrappy Moscow magazine, the 20th Century and the World, published an article in 1988 that provoked a lively debate among Soviet intellectuals. This piece, titled "Why We Are Staying," was written by two Jewish scholars who argued that *perestroika* offered a chance for Soviet Jews to take an active part in shaping the nation's future without surrendering their Jewish identity.

Nearly two years later, the mood among Soviet Jews is palpably different. Many have concluded that there is no future for Jews in the Soviet Union. More than 70,000 left the country last year. This year's emigration figure is expected to top 150,000. If this trend continues, half of the Soviet Union's 2 million or so Jews will have left the country within five years, and the Jewish population will dwindle to the tens of thousands by century's end.

This trend is ironic, given the renaissance that Jewish culture has enjoyed under Mikhail Gorbachev. Indeed, there are seven Jewish newspapers and magazines printed in Moscow; a dozen more appear in Tashkent, Tallin, Riga, Vilnius and Kishinev. The Yiddish language is winning new recruits among Jewish youth, who have a chance to learn their heritage in private seminars and publicly funded programs. Jewish theater is making a comeback; several well-publicized shows have been staged in the past two years to popular and critical acclaim.

The Congress of Soviet Jewish Organizations held in Moscow last December furnished more proof that Jewish life in the Soviet Union is gaining in strength. And yet the future of Soviet Jewry is in doubt.

While state-sponsored measures directed against Jews have ceased, popular anti-Semitism is rising, to the point where the Communist Party newspaper Pravda has issued a strong denunciation of the trend, calling it "an attempt to disrupt the process of social consolidation." Soviet Jews now routinely suffer verbal abuse. Among Jews in Leningrad, 81% report they have experienced anti-Semitic outbursts in the past six months. Still more—94%—fear physical violence.

Rumors of imminent pogroms have so far failed to materialize, but several recent events have dampened morale in the Jewish community. There was a particularly ugly incident last February, when a few dozen Russian nationalists disrupted a meeting of liberal writers in Moscow, threatening to use force against those present unless they renounced the "Jewish conspiracy."

The ultranationalist organization Pamyat is increasing its popular following. Less than 5% of the Soviet people supported it in the past, but according to Tatiana Zaslavskaya, head of the Center for Public Opinion Research in Moscow, its approval rating has jumped to 19%. She suggested the rating could be a fluke ("Some respondents might have confused the right-wing Pamyat with the liberal Memorial, both meaning 'memory' in Russian," she speculated), but the willingness to blame Jews for current difficulties is all too obvious.

Leonid Gozman and Alexander Etkind, who wrote "Why We Are Staying," still refuse to emigrate, but even they acknowledge the change in the nation's mood. They have noticed a tendency among liberal newspaper editors to shun authors with Jewish-sounding names. Soviet Jews are increasingly urged to use pseudonyms, keep their names off the front pages of signature-bearing petitions and generally keep a low profile in the reform process.

Russian Jews have always sided with the forces for social change. In the 1870s they welcomed reforms that delivered them from the ghetto. In 1917 they joined the Revolution, which promised to do away with Czarist oppression. Now they gather under the banner of *perestroika*. But will Soviet Jews escape their forefathers' plight? History doesn't offer much solace.

The 19th-Century liberal reforms ended in bloody pogroms. A vibrant Jewish life came to a standstill after the Revolution and Stalin nearly succeeded in carrying out his own "final solution" to the Jewish question. Now the role of Jews in the reform process is questioned by those on the right, who view *perestroika* as another Jewish conspiracy, and those on the left, who are afraid that an open association with Jews could undermine their cause.

Meanwhile, the exodus from the Soviet Union continues. Bowing to psychological, political and economic pressures, hundreds of thousands in the Jewish community have taken first steps toward emigration. Even those unwilling to leave for good have begun to explore opportunities in other countries—if not for themselves, then for their children.

There may not be time to reverse this process, but it is certainly time for Russian intellectuals to jettison whatever ethnic bias they might harbor. The future of Soviet Jewry, if not the fate of *perestroika*, may depend on the candor with which they address the issue.

*Dmitri N. Shalin is a visiting scholar at Harvard University's Russian Research Center.*

# A malaise that plagues the Soviets

By Dmitri N. Shalin

For decades, the Soviet Union has measured its progress by comparing itself to the West. "We'll catch up with and overtake America," read the popular slogan, and official propaganda furnished ample statistics to back it up. Now the Soviet press drives home a different message: the USSR is a Third World country, forever doomed to lag behind the West.

*Argumenty i Fakty*, the Soviet weekly claiming the largest circulation in the world, is particularly adamant about this point. Personal-computer production in the USSR, it tells its readers, is just 1 percent of the U.S. level; infant mortality rates are 2.4 to 5 times higher than in the West; agricultural productivity is lower than in Bangladesh and Nicaragua; and standards of living are barely on par with those in Barbados and Portugal. The Soviet Union is "an Upper Volta with rockets," concludes the weekly, a country that combines a world-class military with a Third World quality of life.

The chance to travel abroad and sample the capitalist ways that came with *perestroika* has reinforced this message. It isn't just the material abundance that wows Soviet visitors. What struck Mikhail Zhvanetsky, a popular standup comedian, during his trip to Japan is the abundance of smiling faces, the ubiquity of good will, the ever-present civility—qualities he sorely missed at home.

"I am angry with my country because it left me standing here in awe, feeling ashamed of myself," writes Zhvanetsky. "Sure, I love my homeland, as one loves his mother, whoever she is. But I am angry with her because she brought me up lazy, rude, cynical and pathetic. As 16th Century beggars, we are roaming about, devastated by some calamities, licking our wounds, unable to sever the bond with the past."

Preferential treatment accorded to foreigners in the Soviet Union adds insult to injury. Decent housing, fine food, courteous service can be bought for hard currency only, which is why ruble convertibility is more than an economic issue for Soviet people—it is

the question of dignity, the chance to walk tall in their own homeland.

Meanwhile, Soviet people wait in endless lines to buy their meager staples, to purchase train tickets, to petition bureaucrats. . . . Few believe that the Shatalin-Yeltsin economic recovery plan will turn things around. According to the polls, two-thirds of the population have given up on *perestroika*. Millions of refugees are expected to flee the Soviet Union in the next five years. Eight percent, or some 20 million people, would emigrate immediately, given the chance.

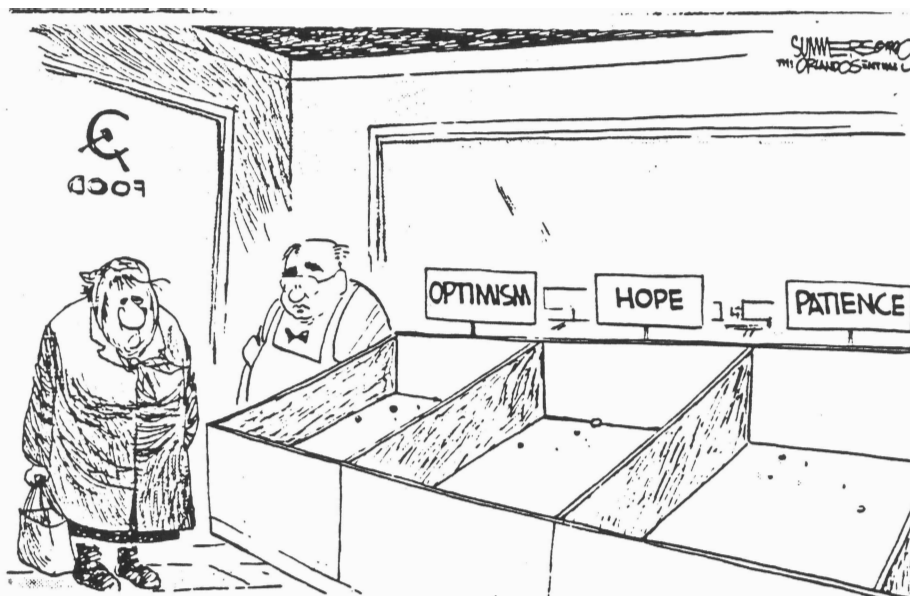
The relentless barrage of negative statistics and gruesome tales of past crimes are taking their toll on the Soviet psyche, which appears to be suffering from a delayed stress syndrome: feelings of anger and shame bred by the belated recognition that communist rulers had abused their power and led the country astray. There is a real danger here: soul-searching could easily turn into self-hatred or vengefulness.

The malaise that plagues the Soviet psyche is not unique. It is familiar to many post-revolutionary regimes, which turn society upside down only to discover that the system's roots are deep, and then embark on a massive re-education campaign to weed out the old ways. What Soviet reformers are learning is that the system is inside, in the ways we think, feel and act, and these cannot be readily legislated. At last they are confronting the real enemy: Soviet culture that has been bred into people's bones for 70-odd years and that is bound to persist long after the coercive structures supporting it have crumbled.

*Perestroika* is a quest for a better life in which several generations take part but which will bear fruit for generations to come. It is a story about peoples trapped in history, sucked into a system they despise, yet unsure of the way out. If progress to date has been disappointing, it is not necessarily because the reformers have charted a wrong course.

It took one day for the Israelites to exit Egypt, 40 years to reach the promised land. A new generation had to come into its own—one unschooled in the old ways and raised in a new culture—before this could happen. Soviet people won't find much solace in this biblical tale, but if they are serious about leaving their past behind, they ought to take it close to heart.

*Dmitri N. Shalin is an associate professor of sociology at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.*





# Ethics of Survival

*Many Soviet scholars once  
chose to subordinate conscience*

**By Dmitri N. Shalin**

OUTWARDLY, Leningrad hasn't changed much since I left it 15 years ago. Long lines grew longer, empty shelves became emptier, and the place seemed a bit shabbier, but the city I dreamed about all these emigrant years looked, felt, and smelled like home.

What has changed is the mood. Now that the Soviet people know the truth about their country's plight and the corrupt treatment they received from the communist rulers, they feel victimized, humiliated, embittered. But at last they can talk about the past and express their feelings openly, and this is the best therapy for a nation suffering from delayed stress syndrome.

Painful memories of the past crept into all my exchanges in Leningrad, though one conversation in particular stuck in my mind. It took place in the Institute of Sociology, where I went to see my colleagues after a 15-year absence. Six or seven of us old-timers sat in the conference room, remembering the old days.

The official rules by which we had to play in those days left little room to maneuver. Want to get into college and become a sociologist? Join the Young Communist League. Interested in the department leadership? Sign up for the Communist Party. Your colleague is fired for an ideological infraction? Again, be sure to keep your feelings to yourself — or not only your career, your very sanity could be questioned.

What made Andrei Alekseev, a brilliant sociologist, different was that he refused to play this game. In the early '80s, he quit his position in academe and went to work as a laborer. I asked Andrei, a soft-spoken man in his 50s, if he had any pangs about the past. He said yes. "My stance was chiefly ethical then; I hadn't the strength, courage, whatever it takes to make a political move. I didn't protest Dr. Sakharov's exile to Gorky, nor did I quit the Communist Party. It took me a long time to bridge the gap between my ethical and political life."

While Andrei struggled to align his political action with his moral stance, most people were ready to settle for less. "Live not according to lie," Solzhenitsyn urged his countrymen. "Refuse to take part in official hypocrisy." Even this modest imperative placed some in a moral bind.

When I applied for an emigration visa, my colleagues were summoned to a department meeting and called upon to sit in judgment on my act. The person who headed the Communist Youth cell in our office denounced me as a traitor and an ideological turncoat. By the way she now talked about "the need to put the past behind and renew the old friendship," I knew she had a guilty conscience.

By contrast, Vladimir Yadov, our department head, surprised everybody when he refused to cast me as an enemy and simply expressed his regret that I was

quitting our research team at an inopportune time. By the standards of the time, this was a courageous act. No wonder Yadov was later accused of "raising ideologically polluted cadres for Soviet sociology" and forced to leave the field he had helped to found.

ALTHOUGH few people dared to emulate Alekseev and Yadov at the time, their acts set off a moral resonance that spurred younger sociologists into action. "You learn to think one thing and say another," explained Oleg Bashkov. "But there comes the time when you just cannot stand it any more. One day I rose at the institute's gathering and lashed at our director Sigov for his inane policies. Funny thing, they never fired me."

Leonid Keselman, who joined our research team a year or two after me, was less fortunate. After Alekseev's resignation, he did a lot of soul-searching and eventually became the administration's toughest critic. "If I have any respect for myself now, it is because I felt ashamed of myself then. That is, until I decided to speak out." For his insubordination, Leonid was relieved from his duties, charged with "professional incompetence."

I was mostly a listener and a questioner in this conversation, until Andrei turned the tables: "What about your emigration? Wasn't it a cop-out? Didn't you leave us to hold the bag?"

I didn't have an answer to this query. To be sure, I let Yadov know about my plans to emigrate months before I made them public, and even resigned my position to cushion the effect, but the results were dreadful, nonetheless. In the late '70s, the widely respected Leningrad school of sociology was decimated, its leaders' failure to instill ideological zeal into young sociologists being cited as one reason. How do we square consequences that are public with decisions that are subjective and personal?

We mulled over the ethical issues involved for quite a while. The very fact that we could talk about them felt cathartic. The delayed stress syndrome must have been part of my psyche, too.

It was just a few years ago that glasnost made its way into the Soviet lexicon, yet it has changed my friends' life thoroughly. Alekseev is back at the institute, heading a research team. Yadov is now the institute's director and vice president of the Soviet Sociological Association. Keselman does opinion surveys for the Leningrad City Council. As to the ethics of survival in a totalitarian state, it is giving way to a new creed, one that doesn't presume a chasm between personal morality and political engagement.

On July 24, 1990, sociologists at the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Sociology, USSR Academy of Science, left the Communist Party and moved to dissolve their party cell.

■ Dmitri N. Shalin is associate professor of sociology at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

# All U.N. Edicts Are Not Created Equal

*Occupation Of Kuwait Differs Greatly From Israel's Occupation Of Territories*

By Dmitri N. Shalin

**T**he Persian Gulf War is history now, but the nagging question persists: Hasn't the United Nations used a double standard by authorizing force to drive Saddam Hussein from Kuwait and doing nothing to end the Israeli occupation of Arab lands?

The issue comes up again and again. Yet the question is badly posed, for it falsely equates Security Council Resolution 660 — which calls for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait — with Resolution 242, which deals with the Israeli occupation. It also disregards persistent attempts by the Arab countries to thwart the will of the United Nations.

Ever since the U.N. General Assembly authorized independent Israeli and Palestinian states in 1947, Arab leaders have vowed to drive Israel into the sea. Their repeated attacks on their Jewish neighbor violated Resolution 181, which stipulated that the United Nations considers "a threat to the peace . . . any attempt to alter by force the settlement envisaged by this resolution."

But isn't it Israel that snubs the Security Council by refusing to withdraw from occupied Arab lands?

Not quite. Resolution 242 links the Israeli withdrawal to "acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries."

Three months had barely elapsed since the Security Council passed 242 when Arab leaders assembled in Khartoum and enunciated their notorious "three nos" policy: "no peace with Israel, no negotiations with Israel, no recognition of Israel."

Only Egypt has since broken with this rejectionist stance. The rest of the Arab world has failed to deliver on its part of the bargain.

But, critics counterattack, hasn't the PLO accepted the U.N. position?

The PLO Covenant proclaims, "The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of the state of Israel are entirely illegal. The Arab Palestinian



people, expressing themselves by the armed Palestinian revolution, reject all solutions which are substitutes for the total liberation of Palestine."

Not every provision in this charter, which the PLO has steadfastly refused to revamp, is so negative. Here is Article 24: "The Palestinian people believe in the principles of justice, freedom, sovereignty, self-determination, human dignity and in the right of all peoples to exercise them."

Noble words, indeed. But how do they play in Kuwait these days? What about 20 million Kurds scattered through Arab lands and crying for justice? And is it too much to ask that these lofty principles be extended to Jews?

Israel will not exchange territory for peace, skeptics persist. It will never return to prewar borders.

Perhaps. But compare the language of 242 and 660. The latter "condemns the Iraqi invasion" and demands that Iraq "immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its forces to the positions in which they have been located on Aug. 1, 1990." The former issues no condemnation and conspicuously omits "the" or "all" when it calls on Israel to withdraw "from territories occupied in the recent conflict."

As this studied ambiguity suggests, the Security Council members understood that war was forced on Israel and that secure boundaries in the region might require territorial compromises. The Gulf war is the latest proof that the concern for security shown by Israelis is no paranoia.

Bear in mind, also, that when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat made peace with Israel, he got the Sinai back. Ever since, Israelis have virtually begged Arabs to negotiate. Not one Arab leader has obliged. Never mind Resolution 338, adopted in 1973 after the Yom Kippur War, which mandated that "immediately and concurrently with the cease-fire, negotiations start between the parties concerned."

But haven't Israelis spurned the idea of a Middle East peace conference?

They did until now, and for good reason: While negotiations produce mutual agreements, conferences result in majority decisions. Being outnumbered 26 to 1, Israel is not eager to face Arab countries across the conference table.

Recently, however, Israelis have indicated their willingness to participate in a regional peace conference — provided that it serves as a conduit for bilateral negotiations rather than their substitute.

Still, my opponents conclude, U.N. Resolution 181 remains in force, and Israelis will have to honor its provision concerning the Palestinian state.

Agreed. The plight of Palestinians is intolerable. And so is the moral toll the occupation takes on Israelis. Sooner or later, Palestinians will have a state of their own. But not before Arab leaders accept all Security Council resolutions, stop equivocating about Israel's right to exist, engage it in serious negotiations and satisfy Israel's legitimate security needs.

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*The fledgling movement for sex education and sexual-minority rights has hit hard times in the Soviet Union*

## The sexual counterrevolution

**DMITRI N. SHALIN**

Vendors still pedal thinly disguised pornography in Leningrad, and the Center for Sexual Culture advertises its services for Moscow youth, but the sexual revolution that has swept the Soviet Union under the glasnost banners is running into opposition.

Things began to heat up late last year, when the Moscow City Council agreed to register the Association for Sexual Minorities, an organization of gay and lesbian people. The official Soviet news agency TASS answered with a scathing attack on the council, hinting that its liberal leaders were out to subvert Soviet youth.

Sovetskaya Rossiya and several other conservative newspapers reprinted the TASS article. Some added juicy details of their own. Stodgy Pravda quoted an anonymous cleaning lady who complained that she found used condoms in the building that houses the council.

Soon, U. I. Borodin, the Supreme Soviet deputy, was denouncing Moscow liberals for their collusion with "necrophiles, pedophiles and zoophiles" and calling for immediate action to stem the moral decline.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's decree, "On the Extraordinary Measures for Safeguarding Public Morality," added urgency to the matter, and things finally came to blows in April, when the Supreme Soviet took up legislation against pornography.

One after another, the conservatives rose to denounce "the pornography lobby" and demanded to clamp down on the 16-billion-ruble-a-year smut industry. Valentin Rasputin warned that liberals are plunging the nation into a "spiritual Chernobyl." Some deputies urged prison sentences for the purveyors of filth, and at least one called for the death penalty to stop the corruption of youth.

Only the passionate appeal by Nikolai Gubenko, the Soviet Union's culture minister, dissuaded the Supreme Soviet from adopting harsh measures. He told the deputies that for decades Soviet art has suffered from "castration," that there is a fine line separating "erotic art from obscene expression," and that a commission is needed to look into the matter before any punitive law against pornography is passed. In the end, his proposal carried the day.

Even though the Soviet Parliament put off the final decision until after the panel submitted its recommendations, its widely publicized proceedings had an immediate effect. Prices in Moscow porn markets have risen sharply, and the police have been far more aggressive in making arrests and issuing summonses to street vendors. While 34 percent of Soviet adults see no cause for alarm, nearly 40 percent now say that pornography peddlers should be punished.

Not only sellers of girlie magazines and promoters of stag films are affected. The fledgling movement for

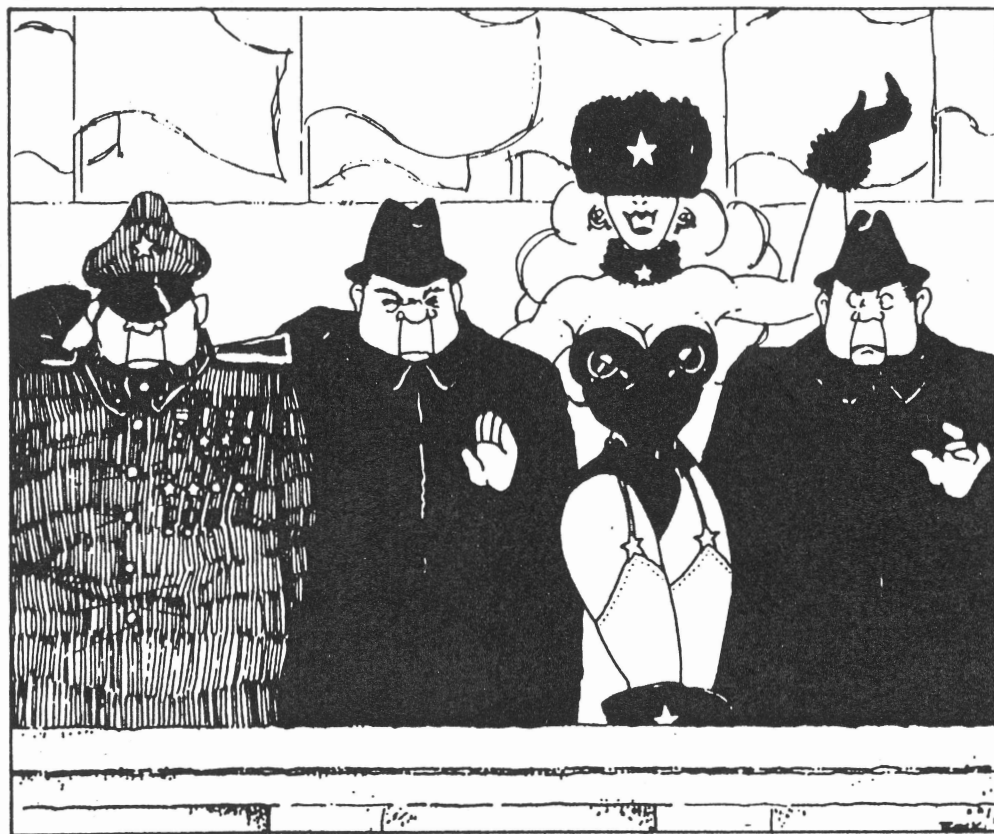
sex education and sexual-minority rights is also falling on hard times.

In the past few years, progressive reformers have made strides to bring basic knowledge about sex to Soviet people. "The Sexual Encyclopedia" for children was published by the Children's Fund. The Center for Sexual Culture pioneered seminars on human sexuality for young people. Planned Parenthood recently signed an agreement with the Soviets to share its expertise on family planning.

Now these achievements are threatened. The publishers of "The Sexual Encyclopedia," a praised translation from French, are accused of promoting unhealthy interests among children. The Center for Sexual Culture faces cutoffs of its already meager budget. And the prospects for family-planning outlets remain uncertain, as the authorities adopt a wait-and-see attitude.

The plight of homosexuals is also worsening. For a while, it seemed that a coalition of physicians and lawyers would succeed in its drive to void the punitive laws (homosexual acts between consenting adults are punishable in the USSR by three years in jail), but in the present atmosphere this seems unlikely. V. Kuchanov, a Moscow police investigator, is on record as saying that homosexuality is a moral scourge threatening Soviet youth. Not surprisingly, attacks on homosexuals are increasing throughout the country.

Those with sexually transmitted



ELIZABETH ROCK ILLUSTRATION

diseases are also threatened. While STD carriers are culpable under the criminal laws, for some time Soviet patients have been able to visit clinics and obtain help without revealing their identities. Now newspapers have resumed printing letters from readers who had to endure forced hospitalization and name their sex partners.

Sex is becoming a political issue in the Soviet Union. While the rapprochement between Gorbachev and the liberals has given the reformers more breathing space, attacks from

the conservatives are likely to intensify. To protect their achievements, liberal reformers have to rethink their strategies. For one thing, they might want to examine pornography laws and zoning regulations in the West. They also need to amend their approach, which follows the all too-familiar Soviet pattern where incredible sophistication coexists with even more incredible backwardness.

Sex-reassignment operations are a luxury for a country where women still suffer archaic abortion procedures. Publishing the Marquis de

Sade is hardly an urgent task when reliable information about birth control is scarce. And it is prudent for the Center for Sexual Culture to concentrate on basic sex education and leave soft-porn movies to video salons. Sticking to fundamentals is a sound policy for a developing country, which the Soviet Union undoubtedly is as family planning and sex education are concerned.

*Dmitri N. Shalin is an associate professor of sociology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.*

## SEXUAL POLITICS IN THE USSR

By DMITRI N. SHALIN

"Dear Editor! I am engaged in private enterprise—prostitution," writes Nina H. to the popular Soviet magazine *Argumenty i Fakty*. "Are people in my profession entitled to a pension? And since this is a hazardous occupation, do you think I can retire at the age of 50?"

A few years ago, such a letter would have landed its author in jail, or at the very least, prompted a criminal investigation. Now it occasions a detailed reply from a Soviet law-enforcement officer, who weighs the pros and cons of legalizing prostitution in the Soviet Union.

My recent trip to the Soviet Union has confirmed that sexual morality is changing fast there. Vendors in Leningrad now offer a dazzling display of once forbidden literature—anything from how-to manuals to treatises on astrology and sex. Video saloons show thinly disguised pornography. And Soviet TV airs midnight specials that make the guardians of public mores cringe.

But serious efforts also are under way to raise people's consciousness about matters of sex. Moscow's House of Sexual Culture recently opened its doors to Soviet youth. The Sexual Encyclopedia for schoolchildren was published by the Children's Fund. A popular magazine *Eros* is scheduled for publication later this year. And gay and lesbian rights groups have sunk roots in Moscow and elsewhere.

While reforms are noticeable in many areas, the advance is slow and met with strong resistance.

Take sex education. Some schools now offer classes on "family life," but questions about birth control are likely to draw blank stares from teachers. State authorities loathe the idea of sex education and refuse to update curriculum.

Soviet teachers are ignorant in sexual

matters. Having gone through college without a single course in sex education, they rely chiefly on scare tactics to impart sexual morality. Even when birth control is taught, the impact is marginal, since contraceptives are hard to find.

With 6% of the world's population, the Soviet Union accounts for 25% of the world's abortions. An average Soviet woman can expect up to five abortions during her lifetime. Nine out of 10 first pregnancies are artificially terminated. Only one of seven Moscow women used contraceptives during their first sexual encounter, and one-third used none after the first abortion.

Prostitution is another topic that stirs controversy in the Soviet Union. N. Loginova, a commentator for *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, quotes a poll that shows that one-third of high school female students wouldn't mind exchanging sex for hard currency. "My own study," Loginova notes tersely, "suggests that this figure is understated."

With the number of prostitutes increasing rapidly, calls are heard to legalize the profession. A. Gurov, an official of the Moscow Vice Department, is against legalization, however, because "many prostitutes will continue to operate outside the state-controlled bordellos." Rather, he wants to increase fines for first offenders.

One area where Soviets appear to be making headway is the attitude toward sexually transmitted diseases. Newspapers continue to publish letters from readers who had to endure forced hospitalization and name their sex partners. But in Moscow and other cities, one can visit clinics that offer help without asking patients to reveal their identities and sex partners. A coalition of physicians and legal experts have mounted a strong campaign that is expected to succeed in voiding

the current laws penalizing sexually transmitted disease carriers.

A drive to decriminalize homosexuality is also under way, though its outcome is less certain. Homosexual acts between consenting adult males are punishable by three years in jail (lesbianism is not considered a crime, because authorities deem it nonexistent).

The forces for change gather around Igor Kon, the preeminent Soviet authority on human sexuality. One interesting point Kon makes is that, in contrast to the West, sexual contact has been a negligible factor in spreading AIDS in the Soviet Union, where the HIV infection is due largely to contaminated blood supplies and the lack of disposable syringes.

The conservative forces, headed by Vasilii Belov and Valentin Rasputin, wage bitter wars against those who "promulgate sexual permissiveness" and "destroy traditional values." Liberal reformers have held their ground so far, but tough battles lie ahead. To be more effective, they need to rethink their priorities and amend their approach, which follows an all too familiar Soviet pattern where incredible sophistication coexists with even more incredible backwardness.

Publishing the Marquis de Sade is hardly an urgent task for a population that knows little about birth control and cannot buy condoms. Sex change operations are a luxury in a country where women still suffer archaic abortion procedures. Sticking to fundamentals is a sound policy for a developing country, and when it comes to family planning and sex education, the Soviet Union is definitely a developing nation.

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# Can Yeltsin Be Trusted?

By Dmitri N. Shalin

**B**oris Yeltsin is about to plunge Russia into radical economic reforms by privatizing land, liberalizing prices, slashing state subsidies and denationalizing state enterprises. His commitment to a market economy is no longer in question.

What is less clear is how fully Yeltsin is committed to political democracy. His Philippics against the country's totalitarian past seem at odds with his recent attempt to strongarm the Chechen-Ingush republic, as well as his decision to suspend for a year all elections and reserve for himself the right to dismiss and appoint officials.

The rationale for subordinating legislative power to executive fiat in present-day Russia isn't hard to fathom. The economy is in ruins; labor is restive and largely unsympathetic to market reforms; Russia's neighbors are increasingly turning to economic warfare while ethnic fissures inside the Russian federation begin to undermine its integrity. The country is spinning out of control, and strong executive power seems like the only way out for the besieged reformers.

But then, we know how fickle executive power unfettered by a democratically elected legislature and an independent judiciary can be. Germans once chose a strong executive to rid themselves of the Weimar Republic's disarray. We know what happened next.

Can Yeltsin be trusted to use his newly acquired powers wisely? He has proven himself a courageous man who faced down the putschists. He is a politician who picks his advisers carefully. His readiness to admit that he made a mistake when he proclaimed an emergency decree in Chechen-Ingushetia is also reassuring. Still, a look at Yeltsin's past leaves room for doubt.

Consider Yeltsin's decision to ban the conservative press after the failed August coup. In essence, it differed little from the junta's ban on the liberal press. An anecdote making the rounds at the time had Yeltsin boasting to the West, "Only the free press is now tolerated in Russia, the rest is banned." Now, there is a distinct possibility that as economic woes multiply and the opposition to market reforms gathers force, Yeltsin might



**BOBIS BOBIS BOBIS**

be tempted to silence dissent under the pretext that critics undermine his reforms and play into the hands of communist sympathizers.

Or take Yeltsin's directive to suspend the Communist Party and seize its property. It seemed like a popular decree, but the manner in which it was carried out reminded one of the old nomenklatura's greedy ways. The unseemly spectacle of Yeltsin's aides and ministers squabbling over the cars that once belonged to the party central committee offended his supporters. True, the spoils go to the victors, and every government is a form of organized racket operating under the protection of the state, but if Yeltsin doesn't curb his underlings' appetite, his credibility will suffer.

Yeltsin's approach to policy-making has undergone some unwelcome changes, too. In his early career as a reformer, he earned a lot of credit for attracting first-rate aides, but after the coup his relationship with the Cabinet and the Parliament leaders became strained, as once-trusted allies found themselves shunned by the president. Nowadays, the Russian president increasingly relies on the old-boy network from Sverdlovsk, where he started his career as a party boss. It is on the advice

of his old buddies that Yeltsin issued the ill-conceived emergency decree on the Chechen-Ingush republic.

The Russian president's ability to follow through is also a cause for concern. The case in point is Yeltsin's decision to take time off for a vacation when the country was rapidly sliding into chaos. Another example is the cease-fire in Nagorno-Karabakh that Yeltsin helped to negotiate. Hopes were riding high after a settlement was reached, but with little follow-up from the president's office, violence in the region has climbed back to the old levels. Now the danger is that without a follow-through, Yeltsin's reforms will dissipate before they can show positive results.

Whether Yeltsin is the man to lead Russia from its present morass is debatable. The job may well defy any human efforts. But if he is to measure up to it, he needs to understand his limitations and learn from mistakes.

Yeltsin's commitment to democracy will be severely tested by his attitude toward the press. With the legislature hampered by the president's power to issue decrees and oust elected officials, the free press becomes the ultimate bulwark against executive abuse.

The integrity of Yeltsin's government will be threatened unless he spreads the spoils of victory more equitably. Schools and hospitals, not state bureaucrats, should have first take on cars, buildings, sanatoriums and other property seized from the Communist Party and the now-defunct Soviet state.

Yeltsin needs to rein in his lieutenants who act as gate-keepers and drive a wedge between the president and the Russian Republic's elected officials. To get good advice, he must keep recruiting the best and the brightest for his team.

Finally, he has to remember that while political democracy cannot flourish outside a market economy, capitalism can coexist with oppression. The problem is how to accomplish one without sacrificing the other. It remains to be seen whether Yeltsin has an answer to this question.

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# Former communists may never reach the promised land

By Dmitri N. Shalin

Special to the Review-Journal

**T**he Jewish exodus from Egypt is an apt, if tired, metaphor for changes the Soviet people have undergone in recent years. Russian pundits have special fondness for this biblical story, which they invoke every time reforms take a dramatic turn.

In its early years, perestroika struck many as a God-sent chance to shake communist slavery, and what better way to light up hope for freedom than the rhetoric of exodus?

Then, reform leaders began to dawdle, and soon enough the pundits were serving notice on Gorbachev-the-Moses: "You delivered the nation from the Stalinist captivity, but you might not be the one to see the promised land."

A jubilant mood swept Russia after the failed coup but it soon fizzled out. And as the problems facing the fledgling democracy continued to mount, commentators reminded their readers that it took one day for the Israelites to exit Egypt and 40 years to reach the promised land.

Now the ancient tale is being given yet another and by far the darkest spin: "Only the new generation was allowed to enter Israel — all those born in captivity withered away during the 40-year wondering in the desert."

This latest reading captures the mood in Russia today. More than 90 percent of respondents surveyed in a recent poll complained about their chronically foul mood. My own experience from a recent trip to Russia bears this out. Grumpy faces, menacing demeanors, violent outbursts — emotional littering has become an eyesore on the streets of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Russia's physical environment is as polluted as its spiritual landscapes. Evgenii Beliaev, Russia's health minister, cites a degraded environment as a major threat to public health. Eighty percent of school-age children in Russia show signs of a physical or mental ailment. Incidents of infectious diseases have doubled in the past 12 months. Remarkably, the crisis is less acute at the nation's periphery than its center.

According to a recent survey, 15 percent of fish, 10 percent of milk and seven percent of meat in Moscow food markets pose serious health hazards. Two-thirds of Moscow's drinking water supplies go untreated. Toxic waste dumping at the Izhorsky plant near St.

Petersburg is even more brazen today than in the past. In some cases, the law enforcement seems to have stopped completely.

A few months ago the Interior Ministry released crime statistics which stunned the nation. More homicides were committed in Russia during the first six months of 1992 than in all of 1991. Rapes, burglaries, car theft, aggravated battery — every major crime category has registered a dramatic increase. Letters to the editor published by the newspapers bitterly complain about the police refusing to answer calls for help ("No patrol cars available," explain the officials).

As the country continues its slide into chaos, more and more Russians lose faith in democratic institutions. Boris Yeltsin's ratings have slipped below 25 percent. His political allies have gone on the defensive. What bothers people is that corruption in the democratically elected governments is every bit as rampant as in the communist era. The popular weekly *Ekonomika i Zhizn* reports that for every embezzlement and bribery case in the private sector, six to 10 are committed in the municipal governments and state-run enterprises. Resentment is building against so-called "perestroika intellec-

***“Grumpy faces, menacing demeanors, violent outbursts — emotional littering has become an eyesore on the streets of Moscow and St. Petersburg.”***

tuals" who have found cushy places for their children in the West, seize every opportunity to travel abroad, shop in hard currency stores, and seem otherwise oblivious to the price those less fortunate are paying for reform.

Alas, the Russian people no longer wish to defer gratification and exert themselves on behalf of future generations. They've been sacrificing for decades. A little decency is all they crave, and more than a handful are now willing to follow any leader who promises to deliver it in their lifetime.

There is much truth to the exodus story, which teaches us that habits of the heart endure for generations, that changing old ways takes more than good will and wise decrees, that those

who served the Pharaoh are ill-equipped to lead a free nation. The Jewish Midrash gives us a particularly heart-rending version of this tale, which seems pertinent today.

In the month of Ab, the Midrash tells us, the exodus generation would leave its desert dwellings and start digging graves. After tearful farewells and last confessions, everyone proceeded to lie in the ground. Next morning Moses would rise and cry, "Let the living separate themselves from the dead." Those destined to die remained in their graves, those still alive returned to their homes. The scene was repeated for 40 years. By then everyone born in captivity, except for Joshua, the son of Nun, was dead. At last, the curse was lifted and the new generation went on to claim the promised land.

Would that communists-cum-reformers get the message and voluntarily relinquish their power? The old nomenklatura culture bred into their bones is irrepressible. This wouldn't change the exodus generation's sorry plight, but this might help the new generation to come into its own and find its way to a decent future.

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# Yeltsin Deserves American Support

■ **Russia: He's the only reformer with a national following; don't be deceived by the Congress' smoke screen.**

By **DMITRI N. SHALIN**

Boris Yeltsin's decision to sidestep the Parliament and appeal directly to the Russian people for support has thrown the country into a severe constitutional crisis. Although controversial, his emergency decree is on solid historical, legal and moral grounds.

To begin with, Russia's constitution was adopted in 1978 at the height of the Brezhnev era. It has been amended since, but its core reflects the spirit predating the August Revolution that toppled the Communist regime. The constitution continues to treat the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a legal entity, proclaims "Soviet power" and "socialist democracy" as the foundation of its political order and uses the hammer and sickle as the national insignia.

That the Congress of People's Deputies, the country's highest legislative body, would refuse to dispense with these anachronisms should come as no surprise. It was elected before the Communist Party lost its stranglehold on the political process. Eighty-six percent of its members were card-carrying Communists in 1991, and many remain committed to the cause. The Congress' efforts to derail reform and restore to power the old *nomenklatura* only show how historically obsolete this institution is.

Nor should one be blinded by the legalistic smoke screen that Russian legislators set up to cover up their hidden agenda. The Congress' reading of the constitution is highly selective. Its own legislative measures violate key constitutional provisions, most notably Article 3, which establishes the separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers, and Article 5, which reads, "The most important questions pertaining to state matters are to be handed over for deliberation to the entire people and submitted to the national referendum."

The Congress disenfranchised the Russian people by failing to endorse the

national referendum on private ownership after its supporters gathered 2 million signatures. It also unilaterally backed out of an agreement to hold a national referendum on power-sharing that was reached earlier to break the constitutional impasse and that was sealed by the president, the constitutional court and the Congress. Worse, it systematically undermined the executive branch and its reform policies.

The Congress refused to appoint Yegor Gaidar, chosen by the President to head the Council of Ministers; it encouraged local authorities to ignore their tax obligations to the federal government; it spurred hyper-inflation by offering unlimited

receive and freely distribute information." Nor did the court exercise its authority to restrain the anti-Semitic Pamyat movement that violates Article 7 prohibiting organizations that "promote social, ethnic and religious hatred."

Valery Zorkin, who heads the Russian Supreme Court, has been playing politics, issuing express opinions on complex constitutional matters and siding mostly with the Congress. He declared the emergency decree invalid even before it was formally reviewed by the 15-member Supreme Court, as mandated by the constitution. The subsequent court ruling against Yeltsin is not surprising, but its binding power is questionable, given the transitional—even revolutionary—nature of the period and the court's failure to address the Congress' infringement on the constitution.

To be sure, Yeltsin is aware that his drastic measures set up a dangerous precedent in a country working its way to democracy and struggling to establish the rule of law. This is why he chooses not to dissolve the Congress and carefully spoke about "a special regime of governance in a short transitional period." But given the Congress' selective approach to the constitution and the court's half-hearted effort to enforce it, these legal niceties may well be superfluous. The Russian constitution is historically and morally obsolete, and so is the Russian Parliament. Both must be replaced as soon as possible.

It's hard to predict where Yeltsin's gamble will lead, but it might pay off yet. The public seems to favor the president over the Congress. The early move in the Supreme Soviet, the second branch of the Parliament, to start the impeachment process failed (only 40% voted for the measure). The military and security agencies have sworn to stay out of politics. The international community is solidly behind Yeltsin, and President Clinton is finally ready to offer a substantial aid package to Russia.

Clearly, now is not the time to second-guess Yeltsin on legal grounds. He is the only proved Russian reformer with a national following. We should support him.

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credit to failing enterprises, and it severely limited the President's capacity to carry out market reforms by cutting his power to issue decrees. Yeltsin is right when he charges that the Congress positions itself to take over the executive prerogatives, but wants the president to answer for all failures.

The Constitutional Court plays a key and not always constructive role in this drama. When Ruslan I. Khasbulatov, the Speaker of the Congress, made a clumsy attempt to reign in the recalcitrant press, the court did nothing to uphold Article 43 of the constitution protecting "the right to seek,

# Yielding center stage

By Dmitri N. Shalin

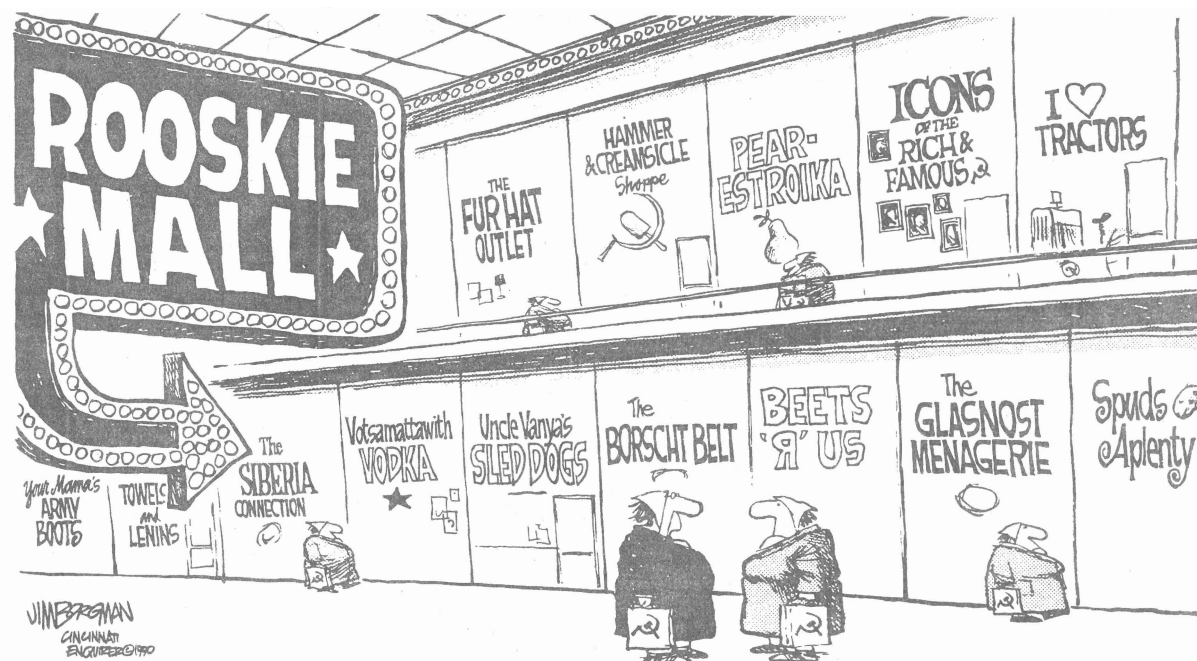
Special to the Review-Journal

An unheralded meeting took place in Moscow last summer between an ex-Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, and several Russian intellectuals, all veterans of glasnost and perestroika. The mood was grim, harsh words flew back and forth, but the nostalgia pervading the assembly underscored the high stakes that Gorbachev and his intellectual allies had in perestroika and the dramatic reversal of fortunes they suffered since its demise.

Hardly ever did intellectuals enjoy a greater influence in Russia than during Gorbachev's reign. Perestroika assured them the right to free speech, unprecedented artistic freedom, wide access to the mass media, the chance to be elected to the Soviet legislature and to serve in government. At one time, half of Gorbachev's cabinet members and aids boasted top scientific degrees or strong artistic and journalistic credentials. Many more wielded power through state-appointed committees, research think-tanks and artistic boards previously dominated by party bureaucrats.

Perestroika delivered to intellectuals the freedoms capitalism spawned while preserving the economic security they had come to expect from socialism. What other society would lavish funds on its artists, no strings attached? Never mind that the product was often a financial flop — the state was always there to foot the bill.

Russian movie makers shot three times as many films in 1991 as in 1988, while theater attendance was halved during this period. Out of 100 films purchased by Moscow between January and July of 1991, 42 were never released to the public. Countless writers, composers, painters and others from the so-called "creative intelligentsia" could count on orders from the state, simply by virtue



"FRANKLY, COMRADE, I THINK THESE CHANGES ARE COMING TOO QUICKLY..."

of their membership in professional unions.

The "scientific intelligentsia" had its field day, too. Although funding for research had not increased and in some cases dwindled, scientists were freer than ever to define their priorities. Scholars who had long ceased to be productive and switched to other pursuits continued to draw salaries from the National Academy of Sciences.

Soviet intellectuals turned out in droves to defend the Russian Parliament against the August 1991 coup and cheered the loudest when the old guard was dealt its ignominious defeat, but their victory proved pyrrhic. The communist era is history now, and so is the great Russian intelligentsia.

For all their hatred of the state, Russian intellectuals owed it their high status and economic security. Intellectuals who loathed the officialdom managed to carve out a comfortable niche in it. Others found safe havens in scholarly centers which tolerated considerable intellectual, if not ideological, diversity. With the omnipotent state lying in ruins, the Russian intelligentsia has lost the bulwark against the market forces it's helped to unleash and is beginning to feel their devastating impact.

My recent visit to Russia confirms that intellectuals are among the hardest hit groups in the Russian population. Gone

are the heady perestroika days when the state subsidized artistic creativity. Many artists are no longer able to eke out a living by their craft. The world-renowned Bolshoi Ballet is facing bankruptcy. High-brow newspapers and literary magazines which once boasted circulation in the millions, cannot sell enough copies to stay in business. I met artists who had been raising potatoes, selling their belongings, and sub-letting their flats to supplement their meager incomes. No longer fettered by censorship, Russian artists have discovered that they are not free from the market forces which now determine whether their work has artistic merits.

The change has been rough on scientists, too. The country's research centers are laying off their staff, forcing top scholars to seek employment outside Russia and others to look for alternative careers. University professors have seen their pay dwindle from 10 times the national average under Stalin to the present day paltry 30,000 rubles (\$30) a month — a salary of a freshly minted tram operator.

Looking back at the Russian intelligentsia, one could see that its strengths and weaknesses were nurtured by the authoritarian political system, by the very oppression intellectuals fought since the early 19th century. It was in opposition to the

arrogant state that Russian intellectuals developed their radical commitment to justice, concern for the disadvantaged and intense spirituality. Somewhere along the line, they convinced themselves that they were the salt of the Earth, that the state owed them a comfortable living, that they knew the best what the public good was and which sacrifices could be exacted to bring it about.

Swept into power on the wave of glasnost, intellectuals proved ill-prepared for the responsibilities that come with it. They have learned the hard way that political dissent cannot pass for a coherent policy, that moral absolutism is incompatible with prudent compromise required by democracy, that power corrupts even most dedicated civil servants. Boris Yeltsin's democrats show all the overconfidence that marked the Russian intellectuals in the past while continuing to gloss over their massive failures.

Now their time is up. The great Russian intelligentsia is finally yielding the center stage, its battled-weary warriors turning into professional politicians, shrewd bureaucrats, market-savvy artists, cost-conscious scientists and other interest groups with agenda of their own. Alas, its historical mission has been accomplished.

Dmitri N. Shalin is an associate professor of sociology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

# Emotional Barriers to Democracy Are Daunting

■ **Russia:** Trust and goodwill must replace the self-hatred and cynicism bred by communism.

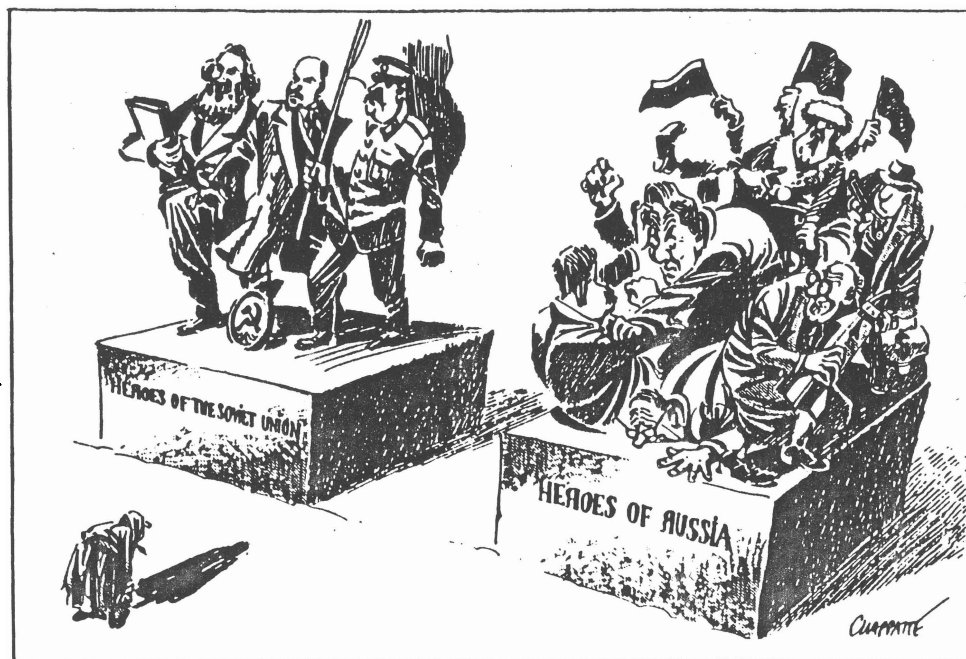
By **DMITRI N. SHALIN**

While Russia's democracy has survived another coup and is heading for a free election, its long-term prospects remain uncertain. Boris Yeltsin's clumsy attempt to reinstitute censorship is ominous enough, but this is not the biggest challenge. There is a deeper malaise plaguing the nation's psyche and blocking its passage to democracy—the rising cynicism about the democratic process.

Many Russians today openly profess their disgust for politics and have withdrawn from the public arena. There has also been a marked increase in emotional violence that people casually heap on each other in their political and daily lives. Experts blame economic and political instability, but this is hardly the whole story. Anger, self-hatred and disenchantment common among Russians are akin to post-traumatic syndrome—a delayed emotional response to a harrowing experience suffered in the past.

The Russians who survived the communist reign did their time in the emotional gulag known as the Soviet Union. Whether or not they were humiliated personally, they knew someone abused or destroyed by the system. The Soviet people grew up surrounded by violence—political, intellectual, aesthetic—and this systematic coercion left an indelible mark.

If Russian intellectuals seem particularly susceptible to emotional excesses, it is because their egos suffered the most in past ideological purges. They were persecuted as "enemies of the people," "rootless cosmopolites," "abstract humanists," "abstractionist artists," and each new campaign underscored the intelligentsia's po-



PATRICK CHAPPATTE, L'Hebdo, Lausanne, Switzerland

litical powerlessness. You didn't have to be directly involved in political violence—witnessing the ideological blood bath was enough to damage your inner core. A courageous few stood up to the regime only to be crushed by it. Others repressed their moral feelings or sublimated their anger into black humor.

But ironic detachment also served to cover up the intelligentsia's moral impotence, to sublimate the rage its members felt when yielding to encroachment. Like the hero in Barbra Streisand's film, "The Prince of Tides," Russian intellectuals have learned to mask their pain with cynicism and sarcasm.

Commentators insist that the "anecdote culture" is dying in Russia. You don't hear many political jokes in Moscow and St. Petersburg these days. What you hear is a

muffled cry from the people who no longer have to hide their feelings and deny abuse they had suffered in the past.

There is a lesson to be learned here, and not just by the fledgling democracies in Russia and East Europe.

Free speech, multi-party politics, constitutional checks and balances are necessary but not sufficient conditions for a viable democracy. For democracy is also an emotion or "experience," as philosopher John Dewey used to say. It thrives in the emotional culture that promotes trust, tolerance, prudence, compassion, humor, and it wilts when overexposed to suspicion, hatred, vanity, cruelty and sarcasm. Emotional sanity is as central to democracy as discursive political rationality.

Mistaken are those who pin their hopes on correct political "signals" and dismiss

emotional littering as mere "noise." The emotional medium is very much the message when it comes to politics. While emotions that confer dignity on the other are democracy's lifeblood, violent emotions that hold others in contempt subvert its sacred thrust. This is why public discourse must be guarded against political and emotional distortions.

But can it be done? It's hard enough to treat an individual who survived abuse. What are we to do when an entire nation needs rehabilitation, when violence is deeply rooted in the nation's history, when society's infrastructure has collapsed?

Now that the Second October Revolution (as the latest coup was dubbed in Moscow) has petered out, the country has a chance to break its constitutional deadlock and bring cynics back into the political process. Getting reforms back on track and restoring economic vitality will also give people something to cheer about. But we need to remember that the relationship between structural and spiritual changes is not a one-way street. Politics is fueled by emotions; economics feeds on moral feelings. Therefore, press for political/economic reforms and look for ways to dress emotional/moral wounds.

Anton Chekhov, the 19th-Century Russian writer, urged his countrymen to practice political sanity and cultivate emotional intelligence. His advice still rings true: Start with yourself, reach out to your neighbors, communicate to others your goodwill, give credit to your enemies wherever it is due, have courage to admit when the problem has no ready solution, avoid grandstanding and take up small deeds. In sum, make sure your emotions are intelligent and your intellect is emotionally sane. That is one test a democracy can ill afford to fail.

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# Can Solzhenitsyn Break a Deadlock?



He will no doubt be a powerbroker, and his moderate nationalism can take care of the neo-fascists.

By **BORIS M. PARAMONOV**  
and **DMITRI N. SHALIN**

Alexander Solzhenitsyn is about to end his 20-year exile and return to his native Russia. "I hope I can be at least of some help to my tormented nation," he recently told a town meeting in Cavendish, Vt. Many in his homeland harbor similar hopes. The desperate conditions Russia faces today make his entry into politics not only feasible but also desirable.

The political process in today's Russia is hopelessly deadlocked. It is immaterial who is heading the government, for the state currently has no power to carry out a coherent policy or enforce its decrees. A recent proof is Boris Yeltsin's embarrassing failure to block the release from prison of his political foes. But the ultra-patriots have failed to capitalize on Yeltsin's weakness. As Yeltsin's ratings slip, so do Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's.

The economic situation in the country remains gloomy. Political pressure compels government to step up subsidies to money-losing enterprises. Cross-breeding between state bureaucracies and organized crime is proceeding apace. Private companies add little to the nation's manufacturing capabilities and are tied primarily to service, inflation-driven financial speculation and dumping raw materials on world markets. Those entrepreneurs who are willing to invest in production are saddled with taxes on profit exceeding 80%.

The public's patience is strained to the limit. Workers in state enterprises go for months without pay and see their salaries devoured by inflation. Although retirees have their pensions indexed to inflation, they are doomed to subsist close to the poverty line. All vital

indicators—crime, ecological calamities, increasing suicide rates, negative population growth—point to a country in distress.

The yearning for a bold leader and a powerful state has never been stronger in Russia. Calls for law and order are heard not only from the red-brown (communists/ultranationalists) alliance but also from labor, business and the clergy. Even some liberal politicians wonder if market mechanisms alone would suffice to bring a viable market economy and functioning democracy to Russia. Once firmly opposed to authoritarian rule, Russian liberals now mull over the "Chilean model" and remind themselves that Augusto Pinochet brought in American economists to restore his country's market economy.

That's the backdrop against which we must view Solzhenitsyn's possible entry into Russia's politics. Can he assume the strongman's mantle? Should the West fear him as a new Ayatollah Khomeini or welcome him as a bulwark against Russian fundamentalism? While he is unlikely to run for a public office, Solzhenitsyn is certain to use his authority to break the country's stalemate. Hence, the need to take a closer look at his statements.

Solzhenitsyn's critics charge that he disdains the West, overstates Russia's

uniqueness and espouses veiled anti-Semitism. He has strenuously denied such charges. Moreover, he pointedly refused to endorse pseudo-patriotic factions that fan hatred in Russia. Solzhenitsyn criticized the West for its litigious ways and pursuit of unlimited economic growth, but he has never favored autocracy over democracy or renounced Western civilization.

In domestic politics, Solzhenitsyn comes across as a regionalist. An admirer of Switzerland's canton system, he wants to see Moscow delegate as much power as possible to local administrations. Solzhenitsyn's foreign policy would block efforts to restore the Russian empire and encourage a loose federation of Slavic states emerging from the gradually renewed ties between Russia and its neighbors.

In the economic sphere, Solzhenitsyn urges a shift from unsustainable economic expansion to the post-industrial agenda combining a controlled growth, environmentally sound development and concern for the economically disadvantaged. Since his days in the gulag, Solzhenitsyn has harbored contempt for professional criminals and is certain to clamp down on organized crime, which intimidates local producers.

Solzhenitsyn's social policies are more problematic. His moral rigorism, contempt for mass culture and orthodox religious convictions make Western-style liberals wonder if he will tolerate alternative lifestyles and show sensitivity toward religious minorities. He may be uneasy about feminism and have little taste for rock music, but that does not mean he will use state power to impose his personal preferences on others.

It is wishful thinking to paint Solzhenitsyn as Russia's would-be savior. Still, we need to lay out scenarios for the future that could alleviate human suffering. Given the current deadlock in Russia, Solzhenitsyn is bound to emerge as a power-broker, and his impact on his nation's politics could be positive. His moderate nationalism is sure to cut the neo-fascists down to size. His foreign policy would be welcomed by the West. Even his puritanism might be what Russia's nascent capitalism needs to legitimize itself in the public mind. At 75, Solzhenitsyn has no time to waste.

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RANAN R. LURIE, New York City



# The Case for Yeltsin, Given the Alternative

■ **Russia:** A Zyuganov victory must be avoided at all costs—even annulling the election if he wins.

By **DMITRI N. SHALIN**

If you listen to Russian democrats, the principal choice in the coming presidential election is between the pseudo-democrat, Boris Yeltsin, and the national-Bolshevik, Gennady A. Zyuganov. And it is no longer evident to many reformers that Yeltsin is the lesser evil.

Yegor T. Gaidar, the former acting prime minister, mused in a recent interview that it was academic who finally derails the economy, the Communist Party or Yeltsin's government. Leonid Batkin, a respected liberal and a friend of Andrei Sakharov, openly welcomed a communist victory because it could finally unite the democratic forces. Perhaps most damaging to the Yeltsin cause has been the open letter written by the former head of the Presidential Human Rights Commission, Sergei A. Kovalev, who charges Yeltsin with betraying Russian democracy.

The list of Yeltsin's sins against democracy is long: the brutal war in Chechnya, the failure to rein in corrupt officials, the purge of reformers from the government, the reliance on the security forces beholden to the president. So, when Kovalev resigned his position earlier this year, several liberals in Yeltsin's camp followed suit. Ever since, democracy in Russia has been in a state of crisis.

The most often mentioned alternative to Yeltsin is Grigory A. Yavlinsky, head of the pro-reform Yabloko Party, who recently joined forces with two other independent presidential candidates, Stanislav Fedorov and Gen. Alexander Lebed. Together, they can draw 20% of the vote—an impressive number in the factionalized world of Russian politics, but hardly enough to stem the communist challenge.

The brightest luminaries in the Russian democratic constellation are unable to offer their supporters a coherent rationale for action. If Yeltsin and Zyuganov move into the second round (nobody is expected to garner an outright majority), the democrats will face a familiar choice. But is it really so onerous as the Russian liberal press would want us to believe?

Listen to Marietta Chudakova, one of the few intellectuals who didn't resign her position on the Presidential Council. A liberal, a renowned literary scholar and an avowed anticommunist, Chudakova told her audiences on a recent U.S. tour that the democrats shouldn't give up on Yeltsin.

True, the Russian president made bad mistakes, most notably in Chechnya, but he protected the multiparty system, resisted the temptation to rein in the recalcitrant press, kept on track economic reforms, strengthened East-West cooperation and pledged to complete Russia's break with its Soviet past.

The case for Yeltsin grows stronger when we look closely at post-Soviet communists and their outspoken leader. In his latest book, Zyuganov does nothing to dispel his reputation as a Bolshevik. He sings praises to Stalin's social policies, hailing him as the greatest nation builder. Had Stalin lived a few more years, says Zyuganov nostalgically, his "ideological pere-stroika" would have been "irreversible."

The latest revelations about the Communist Party's "maximum program" that envisions the renationalization of industry and the restoration of the Soviet Union do nothing to alleviate our fears. Nor do comparisons with Eastern Europe where the left-wing parties were recently swept into power. The murderous records amassed by Russian communists, their failure to own up to their past and the penchant for crypto-Stalinist rhetoric belie their attempts to cast themselves as born-again social democrats.

I asked Chudakova what Yeltsin should do if Zyuganov wins. Her answer: "Hitler came to power through democratic elections. Would you have let him take over the presidency if you'd known what he was about to do? [If Zyuganov wins] . . . annul the election results." This scenario wasn't yet formally discussed, Chudakova stressed to me. It is strictly her personal opinion. But that a member of the Presidential Council who has Yeltsin's ear is willing to discuss this option in a for-the-record interview is a portentous sign.

The dearth of decent options facing Russian democrats today is uncanny. However, there is a clear choice, and all democrats inside and outside Russia should not hesitate to make it. The democrats must unite behind a single candidate. This is the only chance to forestall the communist victory. They should canvass the electorate the way communists have done in the last two years, bring the young voters and dispirited liberals to the polling stations, do everything to defeat Zyuganov, and if their efforts fail, be ready to use extra-constitutional means to save the constitution that the communists swore to trash as soon as they come to power.

This is a troubling option for all those who believe that democratic ends must be achieved by democratic means. Annuling the presidential elections is sure to set Russian democracy back. But can we afford to dismiss this scenario, knowing what we do about Russian communists and their neo-Stalinist leader?

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# NATO expansion could topple Yeltsin regime

By Dmitri Shalin  
Special to the Review-Journal

**B**oris Yeltsin tried to sound upbeat after the Helsinki summit, but the news didn't play well back home. Bill Clinton's concessions could not offset the fact Yeltsin failed to forestall the NATO expansion into Central and Eastern Europe.

This fateful decision is having a peculiar impact on the Russian political

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scene: It has brought together the pro-Western elites and their anti-Western opponents, historic archrivals who are setting aside their differences and uniting in their opposition to what they perceive to be Western ingratitude and encroachment.

Ever since Peter the Great began to modernize Russia, pro-Western intellectuals mused about their place in Europe. Russian Westernizers saw in their country an easternmost flank of Occidental culture and swore to defend its values against the Asian menace. Whether they hailed the Enlightenment, socialism or human rights, Westernizers did so in the hope that some such Western scheme would help transform Russia into a mainstream European nation.

By contrast, Slavophiles pictured Russia as the westernmost plank of Eastern civilization, superior to its Western rival. The Russians' concern for ethics is a cut above the Western preoccupation with law; their preference for communal living beats Western individualism; and their aversion to private property is loftier than bourgeois philistinism, contended Slavophiles. The opening to the West could only undercut Russia's unique mission among Christian nations.

These competing ideologies have left their mark on Russian foreign

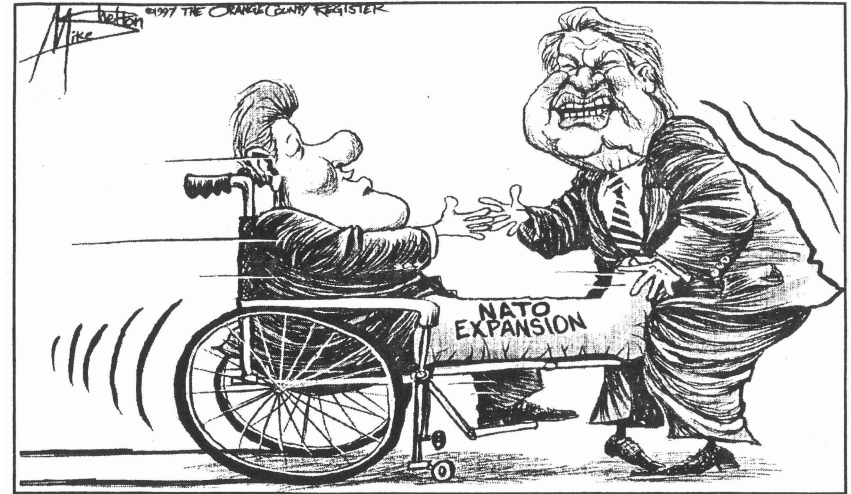
policy. Depending on which faction wielded influence at the moment, the Russian government sought a rapprochement with the West or raised an iron curtain to protect its indigenous culture.

Deep cuts in the nuclear arsenal, reductions in conventional forces, international summitry, cultural exchanges — Mikhail Gorbachev's foreign policy showed a clear pro-Western bias. Boris Yeltsin built on this legacy, urging Russia's speedy integration into the international community. Now he finds himself on the defensive as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is poised to expand eastward.

The opposition to the NATO plans cuts across the familiar divides in Russian politics. Liberals hailing from Andrei Sakharov's camp, moderate nationalists nurtured by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, populists with ties to Alexander Lebed, Gennady Zyuganov's Communists — all cultural/political elites in today's Russia deplore NATO's efforts to enlist new members.

Westernizers feel betrayed by the West. The desperate messages they send to the Clinton administration warn of the disastrous consequences that its policy spells for the liberal camp. After the Soviet empire willed itself into oblivion — an unprecedented case in world history, Westernizers claim — the fledgling Russian Republic deserves a better treatment.

Neo-Slavophiles are gloating. They heap scorn on hapless liberals and demand to restore Russia's waning glory. The West failed to appreciate the ultimate sacrifice Russia made on behalf of the European unity, Slavophiles contend. This truly Christian act won them no reprieve from their enemies, who hasten to take advantage of Russia's dire conditions and entice its historical allies into a hostile military pact.



This overwrought rhetoric is a touch self-serving. After all, it is Stalin's imperialism that spurred the North Atlantic Treaty. Eastern European nations have reasons to fear Russian expansionism. And the likelihood that the enlarged NATO would strike Russia pre-emptively is negligible.

Still, it is a mistake to treat the Russian concern as "an issue of primarily of perception, of political sensibility," the way Strobe Talbott, President Clinton advisor, did in a recent policy statement.

Rationales for the NATO expansion are more than a bit confusing. We hear that NATO is no longer chiefly a military alliance, that it is a political association promoting democracy, that it poses no military threat to any nation. At the same time, we are told that the threat from the East is real, that NATO should maintain a credible deterrence, and that bringing Eastern Europeans into NATO without fully integrating them militarily would offend their feelings.

These two sets of reasons are at cross-purpose. If NATO is now primarily a political organization promoting democracy, then all European nations should benefit from it. Russia is a European country that needs a helping hand with its democratic reforms more desperately than Poland, Hungary or the Czech Republic. Give all interested parties the

same associate membership status, go easy on the military integration, and there will be no need to worry about offending anybody's sensibilities.

If NATO remains a military alliance par excellence designed to thwart the Russian menace, then bringing the Eastern European armies into the NATO command structure should be a priority.

As the Clinton administration decides on NATO's *raison d'être*, it might want to ponder history. Many in the West remember the Cuban missile crisis, when John Kennedy humiliated Nikita Khrushchev into withdrawing Soviet nuclear missiles from Cuba. Few people are aware of what Russians called the European missile crisis — NATO's successful program to install nuclear weapons along the Soviet borders. This double humiliation gave Khrushchev's conservative opponents the ultimate rationale for routing his regime.

What an irony it would be if the double humiliation facing Russia today — its failure to maintain a superpower status and to prevent NATO from expanding eastward — gives Yeltsin's opponents the final rationale for toppling his regime.

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## **VLADIMIR PUTIN: Firm grip on power not near an end**

**Instead of communism, he embraces 'KGB capitalism'**

**By DMITRI SHALIN**

**SPECIAL TO THE REVIEW-JOURNAL**

The year 1996 began inauspiciously for Vladimir Putin, an aid to St. Petersburg Mayor Anatoly Sobchak, who had just lost his bid for re-election. After declining a post in the new administration, Putin laid low for a few months before a telephone call from Moscow summoned him to a higher duty.

What followed was a spectacular rise to power that saw Putin assume increasingly demanding responsibilities as deputy chief of the President's General Affairs Administration, head of the Inspector General's Office, director of the Federal Security Agency, secretary of the National Security Council, prime minister of the Russian Federation, and after Boris Yeltsin abruptly resigned on December 31, 1999, Russia's acting president. With the presidential election slated in three months, Putin sat down for a series of hastily arranged interviews that were published in early 2000 under the title *First Person*. True to the genre, the book is filled with campaign promises, glowing testimonies from friends and carefully selected snippets of the politician's character building youth. In spite of its sampling-by-anecdote and validating-through-hearsay approach, this campaign biography makes for compelling reading now that Putin is nearing the end of his last term in office.

The story begins with Putin-the-roughneck eager to become "the king of the courtyard," then learning to channel his ambition into legitimate pursuits like Judo wrestling and political activism. "I was a hooligan, I was a really bad boy," Putin tells the interviewer. By the end of middle school, however, he gets himself elected head of his Young Pioneer cell.

Next, we read about Putin-the-budding-spy, a starry-eyed ninth-grader, visiting a local KGB office to inquire about how he can prepare himself for a career with the agency. Following the expert advice, he works hard to improve his grades, enrolls in a law school and finally gets a call to join the KGB. Asked by a friend what his new duties entailed, Putin replies: "I am a specialist in human relations."

Then, there is Putin-the-strategist taking Henry Kissinger for a drive through his native city, lamenting the collapse of the U.S.S.R. and echoing the elder statesman's misgivings about Mikhail Gorbachev's hasty retreat from Eastern Europe. "All decent people got their start in intelligence. I did, too," Kissinger tells the Sobchak's trusted aid after learning about his background.

A defining moment for Putin-the-statesman came with the collapse of the Berlin Wall, when angry crowds, fresh from ransacking the offices of the hated Stasi police, converged on the Soviet intelligence building in Dresden. An urgent call for help to the Berlin headquarters brought no relief: "We cannot do anything without orders from Moscow. And Moscow is silent," Putin remembers being told at the time. "I got the feeling then that the country no longer existed. ... It had a terminal disease without a cure -- a paralysis of power."

This unsettling experience informed the emergency program that Putin unveiled in May 1997 at a closed-door press conference. To avoid a complete collapse, the nation must turn to the security agencies, Putin told the invited audience. It should engage the KGB cadres, the only force in the country immune to corruption and able to rein in restive regions.

Boris Yeltsin bought into this program, but not Galina Starovoitova. A member of the Russian parliament and a co-chair of the Democratic Party, she pressed for a statute that would make it difficult for party functionaries to re-enter politics and "bar ex-KGB officers for life."

In an interview posted on the UNLV Center for Democratic Culture Web site, Starovoitova explains why such a bill was vital for Russia after 70 years of communist rule and describes the strenuous opposition to her legislative initiative and the round-the-clock FSB surveillance she was subjected to in recent years. Asked what she would do if served with an arrest warrant, Starovoitova responded: "What are you talking about? You don't know our opposition -- this time they will be shooting on the spot."

These words proved prescient. On November 21, 1998, four months after Putin took over as the FSB director, Starovoitova was murdered in the doorway of her apartment building. It is doubtful Putin personally commissioned the murder, but there is no doubt as to what he thought about the critics of the security agencies. He made this clear in his interviews, where he railed against those who "proposed opening up the lists of agents and declassifying (KGB) files." The Starovoitova assassination was the first in a string of unsolved murders and suspicious deaths that claimed the lives of Putin's opponents.

In his 2000 campaign biography Putin sought to reassure the public about his intentions. "I am not a dictator," he told the interviewers. "We are part of Western European culture." "(Ours) is the path of democratic development." "We have to preserve local government and a system of election for governors." "The demands to confiscate and nationalize property (are wrong). That's definitely not going to happen."

Putin's pledge to respect private enterprise was exposed once he went after Yukos, the biggest privately owned oil company in Russia, which was taken over by a state corporation and businessmen close to the president. Other business oligarchs were spared the expropriation after hastily swearing their loyalty to the Kremlin and ceding to the state controlling stakes in their businesses.

Key aids in the Putin administration now preside over corporate boards of major Russian companies. Where else would you find the first deputy prime minister (Dmitri Medvedev) chairing the board of directors of the nation's leading gas corporation, the defense minister (Anatoly Serdiukov) presiding over a major chemical company, and the minister of economic development (German Gref) overseeing an investment firm?

Nor did Putin's promise to respect civil society survive the test of time. Gubernatorial elections were phased out after terrorists seized a school in the city of Beslan. Opposition parties are now routinely denied registration. Human rights groups are dogged with frivolous tax investigations and pressured to cease their activities. And psychiatry is once again pressed into service to silence Russian dissidents.

In 2004, Putin ordered the Yuri Andropov commemorative plaque to be attached to the Lubyanka building and lavishly celebrated the 90th birthday of the ex-KGB chief. Add to this his successful campaign to restore the Soviet-era national anthem, to place the hammer and sickle back onto the state regalia and allow the red star as an official symbol of the Russian armed forces, and you will understand why Russian democrats are wary of Vladimir Putin.

No, he is not scheming to restore the Soviet Union and communist party rule. We can glean his design from the fact that nearly three quarters of the top officials in the Putin administration have an intelligence background -- the very people Galina Starovoitova sought to ban from government.

Putin's legacy is "KGB capitalism," the system with intelligence operatives in charge, vast profits going to loyal friends and liberal opponents subjected to continuous harassment by patriotic mobs.

George W. Bush once intimated after meeting Vladimir Putin that he looked into his eyes, saw his soul, and knew he could trust him. It doesn't seem like President Bush has figured out his Russian counterpart, or he wouldn't have entertained him at his private estate at Kennebunkport, the honor he withheld from other Western leaders.

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