I ■

The Origins and Nature of Old Thinking

> A cleansing of the collective memory was carried out . . . through the physical annihilation of living witnesses to history. Systematic terror destroyed one stratum after another of the Russian intelligentsia. . . . After this, regular purges began of the new generation of humanists. And each time the nation was deprived of a portion of its collective memory, of part of its history, and in its place there took hold a remembrance of something that had never actually happened—an artificial memory. Alexander Nekrich, *Foresake Fear*

> A mass psychosis was rampant. . . . Who was guilty for the fact that we lived so badly, worse than anyone else? At first the spies were the guilty ones. Then the foreigners. Various internal aliens . . . and finally, the Jews. . . . Raisa Orlova, *Memoirs*

To understand the emergence of new thinking, it is first necessary to apprehend the old. Major intellectual change is a very complex and difficult process, even on an individual level. When it is the core beliefs of larger groups or elites are at issue—as in the case of new thinking—then attention to the processes by which "basic values, cognitions and emotional commitments" are learned is doubly important.[1] And when the old worldview emerged from the traumatic experiences of war, terror, and socioeconomic upheaval, of strict isolation and overweening ideological indoctrination, then appreciation of the cultural and social inertia with which new beliefs and values had to contend is even more essential.

The old thinking was a worldview or identity built upon several precepts that governed "definitions, perceptions and diag-

noses" of the USSR and its place in the world.[2] First was that of a world irretrievably split into irreconcilable camps; second was belief in capitalism's innate hostility and abiding threat to socialism; and third was a faith in Soviet superiority—its expansion and ultimate triumph over the West—in an amalgam of Russian messianism and Bolshevik internationalism. This identity is summarized in its essentials as "hostile isolationism."[3]

Xenophobia had deep roots in traditional, peasant Russia, and even the "Europeanized" intelligentsia was sharply divided over the Western path of development. But it was only after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, with the ensuing civil war and foreign intervention, that such Leninist concepts as a two-camp world and "hostile capitalist encirclement" seemed emphatically confirmed in mortal combat. Simultaneously, such non-Leninist currents as "great-power chauvinism" surged to the fore.

In the 1920s, intellectual life regained a margin of freedom; while pressure on the old Westernized elite was great, it was not yet murderous. In the Stalinist 1930s, what remained of this elite was largely liquidated. New cadres lacking worldly exposure were brought up in the hothouse of xenophobia and Russian nationalism. Trained in isolation from foreign ideas and cultures, they began professional life in a cauldron of terror predicated on ceaseless Western plots. They knew only an outside world of capitalist exploitation and aggression. Their own world, a maelstrom of intrigue in which they fought to survive, fostered a political culture of "combat" and "conspiracy."[4] And so their inner world—values, symbolic attachments, ways of speech and thought—was also "radically restructured."[5] Thus, while building on isolationist, anti-Western currents from both the recent Bolshevik and the distant tsarist past, Stalinism raised both to unprecedented heights in forging the hostile-isolationist identity.

A generation that came of age in the civil war, and made their careers under Stalin, dominated the political-intellectual elite through the mid 1980s. It would be wrong to argue that, 30 years after Stalin's death, his ideology remained the chief determinant of policy; by then it was rather more like "imperial preservation." But neither was the old worldview entirely spent, for its beliefs and values continued to shape the identity and international outlook of Soviet elites. The paranoid extremes had faded, and Brezhnev's

"offensive détente" was far removed from Stalin's cold war. But the old thinking's core isolationist, anti-Western precepts remained strong enough to block any more significant East-West rapprochement than détente and eventually to undermine even what modest progress had been achieved. And that is why, in a critical sense, Gorbachev's new thinking had to contend less with Brezhnev's legacy than that of Lenin and Stalin.

The West and Russia Under the Old Regime

More than a century before asking "What is to be done?" Russia's thinkers were already struggling with another of their country's seemingly eternal questions: "Where is Russia's place between East and West?" This question came to the fore in the early eighteenth century with the changes wrought by Peter the Great (1683–1725). Hitherto politically, culturally, and economically backward—as Renaissance Europe progressed toward the Enlightenment, mere survival pushed old Muscovy in the opposite direction—pre-Petrine Russia remained a realm apart from the West. But in the space of two decades, Russia's first emperor forcibly injected Russia into the European balance of power and no less forcefully opened his country to European ways.

For a great majority of Russians—the rural masses—Peter's "revolution from above" was a huge step *away* from progress and enlightenment; the peasants were largely ignored except where, in support of a growing military-bureaucratic state, ever more of them were bound into serfdom. But even for those at whom Peter's Westernizing efforts were aimed—the nobility—the results were ambiguous at best. The fierce resistance that met forced changes in dress, manners, and worship are well known, as was the opposition of those required to accompany the tsar's court from ancient, "Asian" Moscow to Saint Petersburg, Russia's new "window on Europe." More central to Peter's efforts, but equally contradictory in impact, were his requirements that the nobility be educated and pursue civil or military careers. While grants of land (and serfs) benefited them materially and freed them for lives of service to the state, the freedoms that they lost were no less consequential. For even as their European counterparts gained liberties vis-à-vis the crown that were vital to future political and economic development, the

Russian nobility was now bound to the autocracy no less than the peasants were to the soil.

The intent of Peter's reforms was not to create slaves but rather to transform his nobility from an uncultured, hedonistic, inward-looking class into a modern, educated, dynamic estate dedicated to uplifting Russia. But a by-product of that transformation was a growing cleavage between this increasingly "European" elite and the traditional, xenophobic peasant masses. As the former changed, the latter increasingly regarded them as an "alien race" of "foreigners" in their own land.[6] Still, Peter's concern was with the elite, and here his success in remaking their outlook and ethos was great. So great, in fact, that exactly a century later it was the nobility pushing the autocracy toward further Europeanization.

The Napoleonic Wars brought more Russians into prolonged, intimate contact with Europe than ever before. For some—the long-suffering peasants and footsoldiers—the main impact was to reinforce their traditional xenophobia.[7] But others—the officers who occupied Paris—were impressed by the contrast between its freedoms and prosperity and the "bestiality and arbitrariness" that greeted them at home. Some of them, the "Decembrists," rebelled in 1825.[8] In the near term, their revolt brought only more repression under "Iron Tsar" Nicholas I (1825–55). But it also heralded growing opinion for change inspired by European examples.[9] By the end of Nicholas's reign, these pressures together with Russia's problems had grown so overwhelming that his successor, Alexander II, launched a series of "Great Reforms" that included the abolition of serfdom. The proximate cause may have been defeat in the Crimean War (and fear of peasant revolt). But Western influence was felt in equally powerful if more indirect ways. For example, serfdom had become the shame of most educated Russians, while European models were the inspiration for decades of quiet study that preceded Alexander's legal, military, and other reforms.[10]

But with the autocracy essentially unchanged and socioeconomic progress still lagging, Russia remained apart from a Europe that had become the critical reference point of a growing intelligentsia. For some of them—the Westernizers—Russia's proper path was clear.

> In Europe, in most civilized countries, institutions have developed by stages; everything that exists there has its sources and roots in the past; the Middle Ages still serve, more or less, as the basis of everything that constitutes the social, civic and political life of the European states. Russia had no Middle Ages; everything that is to prosper there must be borrowed from abroad.[11]

For others—the Slavophiles—further Europeanization could only harm Russia's unique civilization. "In the foundation of the Western state: violence, slavery and hostility. In the foundation of the Russian state: free will, liberty and peace."[12] The Slavophiles drew a sharp contrast between the spiritual-collectivist-Christian East and the materialist-individualist-atheist West.

Despite their antithetical goals for Russia, as social-political thinkers the two groups had much in common. The Slavophiles, European-educated and cultured, were in many ways no less "Westernized" than the Westernizers. Both sought to reform Russia's stifling autocracy. Both rethought fundamental aspects of their programs as utopian dreams collided with the harsh realities of Russia's domestic and foreign situation. And, especially toward the end of the nineteenth century, both exhibited a common political culture marked by intolerance and extremism.

Fundamental elements of Slavophilism were indeed borrowed from European, primarily German, thinkers, from the idea of the "organic" nation to reverence for the traditional peasant commune.[13] The latter, Westernizer critics charged, falsely idealized a pre-Petrine rural harmony. Even more harshly criticized was the attempt to make a virtue of Russia's backwardness quite out of touch with Russia's real socioeconomic problems and possibilities. Some of these charges were borne out in the 1870s, when the Populists, "Slavophiles in rebellion," went directly to the people in seeking to inspire a kind of pastoral semisocialism. The movement failed, and the unkindest cut—more painful than police repression—was that the peasants themselves rejected the "repentant nobles" who sought to enlighten them.

Later Slavophilism seemed to lose its bearings. Partly in reaction to Russia's foreign woes—from the Crimean debacle (1853–55) and revolt in Poland (1863) to the diplomatic defeat that followed mili-

tary victory in the Balkans (1878)—the West now seemed to threaten more than just spiritual infection.

> In the future Europe will be divided into two camps: on one side Russia, with all Orthodox, Slavic tribes (not excluding Greece), on the other—the entire Protestant, Catholic, and even Muhammadan and Jewish Europe put together. Therefore Russia must care only about the strengthening of its own Orthodox-Slavic camp.[14]

Into this increasingly Manichaean view of international politics, there now entered a conspiratorial outlook: "It is high time for Russian diplomacy to become finally convinced that everything that is happening in Europe is nothing but a plot against us, against the natural moral and political influence of Russia on the Balkan peninsula, against its most legitimate claims and interests."[15] In this way, Slavophilism approached Pan-Slavism, a movement whose late-nineteenth-century rise coincided with a surge of xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Russia. Nikolai Danilevsky wrote that for Russia to follow Europe would be "contrary to all history [and to] the internal consciousness and strivings of her people."[16] But where early Slavophiles preached a *universalistic* messianism—Europe would eventually join Russia on the one, true path—Danilevsky saw the Slavs as a distinct "cultural-historical type" with a *separate* destiny. Many Slavophiles also now embraced the Pan-Slav goal of an expansionist foreign policy.[17]

Simultaneously, the views of many Westernizers were also in flux. Dostoevsky, once an ardent admirer of Europe, came to foresee an apocalyptic clash following which "there will remain on the continent but one colossus. . . . The future of Europe belongs to Russia."[18] Beyond the collision of imperial interests, close encounters with European life were often disillusioning because "it was more the imaginary West than the real West that they admired."[19] Such was the case with the early Westernizer Alexander Herzen, who, in European exile, grew disgusted by petty bourgeois attitudes under which "the ideal of the knight was altered into the ideal of the small shopkeeper."[20] Peter's opening to the West, which Herzen once hailed, he later described as "a civilization that had been ordered from abroad and bore upon it a German trademark."[21] This distaste for European materialism and individualism—the founda-

tion of the liberties and prosperity that they sought for Russia—echoed through much of later Westernizer thought, culminating in the early-twentieth-century views of the *Vekhi* (Signposts) group of political philosophers. Peter Struve judged bourgeois democracy deeply flawed, while Nikolai Berdyaev argued that capitalism "dehumanizes human life, turns man into . . . an article of merchandise."[22] Thus, in their search for a "more Russian" path of development, many Westernizers took a large step toward the Slavophile outlook.

In large part, as the *Vekhi* authors themselves argued, the evolution of both currents was explained by a common intellectual culture of intolerance and extremism: "The Russian elite tended to convert Western ideas and notions into absolutes whose validity was not to be questioned."[23] As Berdyaev later wrote,

> What was scientific theory in the West, a hypothesis or in any case a relative truth, partial, making no claim to be universal, became among the Russian intelligentsia a dogma, a sort of religious revelation. Russians are always inclined to take things in a totalitarian sense; the skeptical criticism of Western peoples is alien to them.[24]

The liberalism that tolerated private greed for public good, or venal governance for the sake of political stability, was anathema to those engaged in "a passionate search for ethical ideals."[25] The "down-to-earth, non-spiritual way of life revolts the Russian intellectual," who is chiefly distinguished by his "otherworldliness, his eschatological dream about . . . a coming kingdom of justice."[26]

By the 1890s, some believed that such a society could be created only through Marxism, and educated youth were "universally absorbed" in the new philosophy.[27] While backward, semifeudal Russia was a poor candidate for proletarian revolution, many were drawn to Marxism's "Europeanness," its appearance as a radical successor to Westernism (as Populism had been a radical offshoot of Slavophilism). Marxism *was* Western thought, and Russian Social Democrats certainly saw themselves as scientific, progressive, Western thinkers.[28] But Marxism's rise in Russia can be fully understood only in light of certain non- or anti-Western characteristics of the intelligentsia's political culture.

Some, paradoxically, were attracted to Marxism because of its portrayal of capitalist horrors that they hoped Russia could escape.[29] Its scorn for bourgeois society and "philistine" values, and its mes-

sianic promise to overturn the world for a radiant future, were also appealing. Neither early socialism nor Western liberalism offered the utopian sweep so attractive to "the characteristically Russian search for an integral outlook which will give an answer to all the questions of life."[30] But even if sharing this cultural affinity for the new philosophy, Russia's Marxists also had serious differences. And it is in viewing these differences that the greater complexity of Russian Marxism's relationship with the West is revealed.

Europe-oriented Marxists, of primarily Menshevik affiliation, were surprised by Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin's praise of the early Populists and his messianic claim that, by deposing the tsar, backward Russia would leap to the head of the world proletariat, Asian *and* European.[31] With Lenin's focus on heroic individuals, a "vanguard party," and the necessity of accelerating the historical process, more orthodox Marxists found his variant a perversion. Already in 1909, *Vekhi* author Semyon Frank noted that in Bolshevism the "all-consuming populist spirit has swallowed up and assimilated Marxist theory."[32]

This cleavage is seen by contrasting the views of Lenin and Georgy Plekhanov, the "father of Russian Marxism." While Plekhanov had only contempt for the reactionary peasants—and saw the village commune revered by the Slavophiles not as primitive socialism but the bulwark of "Asiatic despotism"—Lenin rated the peasantry highly as revolutionary allies. Where Plekhanov stood for cooperation with Western-oriented liberals, Lenin detested and rejected them. And while Plekhanov unapologetically argued that Russia needed much more "Westernization" before the preconditions of socialism would be achieved, Lenin worked tirelessly to accelerate revolution. Such "Jacobin" impulses, Plekhanov warned, would lead to a despotic "Peruvian socialism." Bolshevism, said Plekhanov's Menshevik ally Yuli Martov, was something "Asiatic."[33]

Lenin split irrevocably with most European Social Democrats when they supported their countries' efforts in World War I. In *State and Revolution*—which elaborated a rationale for taking power and establishing a proletarian dictatorship—Lenin excoriated them as "traitors" and "lackies of the bourgeoisie," guilty of "selling their birthright for a mess of pottage."[34] In *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism,* Lenin attacked the resurgence of European nationalism and called for international workers' solidarity. But in so doing,

he also laid the foundation for the later "two-camp" worldview; while Marx had seen capitalism as promoting international stability, Lenin held that it was necessarily imperialist, with war inevitably growing out of the struggle over markets and resources.[35]

Russia was changing rapidly in the twilight of the old regime: economic growth accelerated; the autocracy granted a parliament and rudimentary constitution; and even the peasants' world of poverty and ignorance began changing with efforts to break down the old communal structures and create a class of independent farmers. These years saw "the most enthusiastic and unqualified Westernism in Russia's history," whose economic representative was a growing middle class and whose political supporters were the liberal Cadets (Constitutional Democrats).[36] Many believe that Russia had now decisively embarked on the European path of development, a path that promised success had World War I not intervened.

But "enthusiastic Westernizers" were still a small minority atop an impoverished working class and angry peasantry. Much of the intelligentsia, too, was skeptical of European models, and felt a deep foreboding about Russia's future. Influenced by the apocalyptic views of religious philosopher (and political Westernizer) Vladimir Solovyev, for example, the "Scythian" writers emphasized Russia's Asian identity—savage and chaotic—in confrontation with Europe.[37]

> You're millions. We're hordes and hordes and hordes.
> Just you try and fight with us!
> Yes, we're Scythians! Yes, we're Asiatics!
> With slant and greedy eyes![38]

In the coming decades, the tumult of revolution and war together with the mistakes, compromises, and ambitions of the country's new leaders would bring Russia's "Asiatic" heritage to the fore and sweep away a still-fragile Westernism.

International and National in Revolution and War

Although the most "national" of Russian Social Democrats, the Bolsheviks were still dedicated Marxists whose horizons remained broadly international. The collapse of the old order was the spark

that would set Europe aflame, and the building of socialism would be a worldwide enterprise. Their faith in European revolution was so strong that little thought was given to how a socialist state might interact with capitalist neighbors. Leon Trotsky, the first Bolshevik commissar of foreign affairs, reflected this optimism in his comment that "all there is to do here is to publish the secret treaties. Then I will close the shop."[39]

But instead of revolution abroad, war came at home. With Russia's collapse, Germany occupied Ukraine and threatened the heart of the new Soviet state. Then in early 1918, even as the Bolsheviks swallowed the bitter Brest peace, there began a civil war that would last three bloody years and include the Western allies' intervention. And even as civil war raged, another foreign conflict—with Poland—further threatened the new regime.

It was during this time, as the Bolsheviks doubted their very survival, that the first precepts of Soviet international relations theory were enunciated. Their state suffered in a "hostile capitalist encirclement," a hostility that Lenin's *Imperialism* had explained was inherent in capitalism and so made long-term coexistence "unthinkable."[40] And while official policy could shift rapidly—from confrontation to "peaceful coexistence" abroad, and from harsh "War Communism" to the liberal New Economic Policy (NEP) at home—the years of revolution and war left a deep impression. In many Party and intellectual quarters, Marxist internationalism was supplanted by an increasingly anti-Western Russian nationalism.

While Lenin's Marxism did draw on various traditions of Russian radicalism, he was nevertheless a confirmed internationalist; chauvinism was "alien to Lenin's makeup."[41] Save the legacy of Russia's early revolutionaries, he found little to admire in a history of oppression and backwardness. The old empire was a "prison of nations" whom Lenin promised self-determination.[42] And while deposing the tsar would propel Russia into "the vanguard of the world proletariat," this would be only temporary; socialism's success in Russia was "unthinkable" without aid from revolution in Europe.[43]

Stalin, even before the revolution, offered a different view. It could be Russia that "blazes the trail to socialism" and "the outworn idea that Europe alone can show us the way" should be discarded.[44] After October, such views were echoed by other top

Bolsheviks. Mikhail Pokrovsky claimed that Russian workers—superior to the English or Germans—had made Moscow a "Mecca" for other nations.[45] In conflict with White and later Polish armies, "Rally around Russia" drowned out proletarian solidarity in the Bolshevik lexicon. The memory of 1812 was invoked as the regime sought support through an unabashed appeal to Russian national pride. And as the wars were won, historical parallels were proudly drawn; Pokrovsky and Mikhail Kalinin compared Lenin to Peter the Great, while Karl Radek argued that "our Civil War was always national, it was a regathering of Russian lands."[46]

Radek's was an allusion to Ivan Kalita's fourteenth-century "gathering of lands" that had forged the early Muscovite state. In the event, the Bolsheviks "regathered" not only Russia proper but most of the old empire as well. Here, in subjugating the non-Russian periphery, latent national-imperial attitudes were revealed. Pokrovsky wept upon learning that the Brest peace would leave Ukraine under its own national government.[47] The criticism that greeted Lenin's decision not to fight to keep Finland was parodied by Lenin himself: "Those were good fisheries and you gave them up!" "Scratch certain communists," he added, "and you find a Great Russian Chauvinist."[48] Nikolai Bukharin argued that self-determination was fine for Hottentots, Bushmen, Negroes and Hindus," but not for the Finnish or Polish bourgeoisie.[49] Lenin, recognizing Russia's weakness, counseled patience: "We shall conquer power, wait awhile, and then go as far as you want."[50]

Still, Lenin and Bukharin were probably the least nationalistic of the Bolsheviks. For them, it was not a matter of rebuilding the Russian empire but of liberating others from bourgeois oppression. But for those charged with extending Soviet power to the periphery—exporting a *Russian* revolution to non-Russian lands—the distinction was easily lost.[51] Their task was huge: creating proletarian rule where there was no proletariat, and establishing a Bolshevik regime where the Party had minimal support at best and where cadres even had to be imported from Moscow.[52]

Not surprisingly, nationalism came to the fore. Many Bolsheviks continued the tsarist practice of identifying peoples as Russians or *inorodtsy* ("other races" or "peoples").[53] Most regarded the new "federation" as a Russian (*Rossiiskoe*) state, like the old empire, and some even noted the parallel with approval; Sergo Ordzhonikidze,

criticized for his heavy-handed treatment of national minorities, argued that "even obtuse Russian tsarism" understood the need for a strong central administration.[54] National hubris did serve a tactical purpose as patriotism was used to rally popular support; we must be "national," argued Anatoly Lunacharsky, or risk appearing as "a band of conquerors in a foreign country." But more than just tactics was behind Lunacharsky's exuberant claim that Dostoevsky had been "a Russian national prophet" who correctly foresaw that Russia was to be "the liberator of all humanity."[55]

In early 1918, Maxim Gorky lamented the rise of "Moscow Neo-Slavophilism" and criticized Bolshevik policy as "profoundly national" for glorifying backward, barbaric Russia while turning away from advanced, cultured Europe.[56] "Neo-Slavophilism" was widespread among the cultural elite as writers of diverse perspectives celebrated various anti-Western, imperial, and messianic themes. The avant-garde Left of poet Vladimir Mayakovsky rejoiced in revolutionary destruction and joyfully anticipated building a new world. As for Russia's neighbors, Mayakovsky predicted the following: "The Germans will look on in confusion at the Russian banner flapping in the Berlin sky while the Turkish sultan will see the day on which the Russian shield will be glimpsed over the gates of Constantinople."[57] Boris Pilnyak extolled the revolution not for its promise of a new future but as a return to Russia's pre-Petrine past, for its elemental peasant fury and rejection of decadent Europe. He and other "Scythian" writers celebrated Russia's Asian heritage, "a whirlwind that will overwhelm the old West."[58] These writers were close to the "Eurasian" historical-cultural school that rejected "kowtowing before Europe" and viewed Bolshevism positively as a product of Russia's Asian half.[59]

Writers such as Gorky, sympathetic to the revolution but firmly oriented toward Europe, worried that the new Bolshevik culture was "organically tied to . . . Russian prerevolutionary culture."[60] But others, less concerned about cultural life than that of the state, saw a different sort of continuity, and hailed it. Poet Valery Briusov wrote, "This ancient space is once more closed up under a common banner."[61] Such views were reflected in the *Smena vekh* (Change of Signposts) movement launched by a 1921 symposium of emigré writers who urged the old intelligentsia, Cadets, and former Whites to support the new regime in rebuilding Russia.[62] Rather than a destruc-

tive alien ideology, Bolshevism was now seen as a deeply national movement that was restoring a mighty imperial state.[63] Nikolai Ustrialov, the *Smena vekh* leader, wrote that Russia must be "powerful, great, and frightful to her enemies. The rest will follow of itself."[64] Others saw Bolshevism working toward Russia's "historical objectives—the advance to the Bosporus, hegemony among the Slavs, pressure on India . . . the cleaving of new roads to the open sea."[65]

This celebration of imperial revival—not Mayakovsky's passion for revolution nor Pilnyak's longing for old Russia—drew far-Right support for the Bolsheviks. *Vekhi* author Sergei Bulgakov noted that for reactionaries, "the very thought of a Cadetized [liberal-democratic] Russia is abominable . . . the Bolsheviks are better."[66] Cadet leader Pavel Miliukov wrote that "two extremes, the Red and the Black, came together and seemed to understand each other better than their opponents from the moderate center."[67] Lenin himself confirmed the impact of these right-wing currents at the 11th Party Congress in 1922: "We must say frankly that the things Ustrialov speaks about are possible. History knows all kinds of metamorphoses. *Smenavekhites* echo the sentiments of [the many officials] who manage our New Economic Policy. This is the real and main danger."[68] While Lenin was stressing the danger of NEP's degenerating into capitalism, others at the congress worried more about a revival of Russian chauvinism. Ukrainian Mykola Skrypnik argued that *Smenavekhites* in the government behaved as if the new Soviet state were simply "Russia, One and Indivisible."[69]

Smena vekh also profited from official encouragement and even support. In the early 1920s, many of its prominent emigrés returned to sow their views on fertile soil. *Smena vekh* writings were subsidized, imported, and distributed by the Party, whose bureaus were often among the subscribers.[70] And in their own speeches and editorials, the Bolsheviks found much to praise. Lunacharsky hailed the "knights of *Smena vekh*," former Whites who "took arms against us because they saw us as the ruiners of Russia," but who now realize that Bolshevism "serves the interests of Russia as a great power."[71]

By their 12th congress in 1923, resurgent Russian nationalism had become a burning question for the Bolsheviks. Delegates from Georgia, Ukraine, and Turkestan protested policies of "Russification" and "colonization."[72] They accused the Kremlin of ignoring local party bodies, denigrating national customs and lan-

guages, and building center-periphery ties that resembled imperial exploitation.[73] "Young Russian comrades," sent by Moscow, ran roughshod over local cadres and behaved like "tsarist gendarmes."[74] As Lenin saw it, the problem was that "Great-power prejudices, imbibed along with their mothers' milk, were instinctive for many." But the Party was also at fault for encouraging "former tsarist officials" whose imperial attitudes influenced "Soviet workers who do not understand the national question."[75] Stalin, too, gave a report critical of chauvinism, noting that "*Smenavekhism* has gained a mass of supporters" and that "creeping" chauvinism was changing "the spirit, the very soul, of our [Party] workers."[76]

Stalin's congress report, though accurate, was hardly sincere.[77] As nationalities commissar, he had been responsible for some of the worst abuse of non-Russians.[78] And now as the Party's general secretary, said Skrypnik, "Stalin is implanting *Smena vekh's* 'one and indivisible' yearnings in our apparatus." If Stalin prevaricated, others did not in describing a Russian "Gulliver with the Lilliputians—Armenians, Georgians, Muslims, Azerbaijanis—all underfoot."[79] A majority of delegates agreed; Bukharin noted that when Russian chauvinism was faulted, the hall was "nearly silent," but when the national minorities were criticized, "thunderous applause rang out."[80]

Bowing to Lenin's authority, the congress passed a resolution against chauvinism. But little changed in practice. Instead, especially after Lenin's death in 1924, the Russian national line in political-intellectual life grew stronger. In history, "a totally new and Russocentric genealogy emerged."[81] Literature, too, was soon "howling in a 'genuine Russian' fashion," lamented Bukharin.[82] Minority Communists who protested Russian chauvinism were demoted, expelled, or even arrested for "nationalist deviations."

Outwardly, this was a time of calm and progress. The NEP economy was recovering strongly and relations with the West were improving. But the changes described above had troubling implications for the future. As Grigory Zinoviev warned,

> Great-Russian chauvinism . . . is backed up by 300 years of monarchy and imperialistic policies, tsarist policies, the entire foreign policy of tsarism. . . . When you are showered with compliments from the camp of the Smenavekhites, who say: "Yes, we're for the Comintern, because the Comintern does the bidding of the

> Kremlin and puts into practice the idea of Russia, One and Indivisible" . . . that is dangerous.[83]

Lenin, too, had worried that "the infinitesimal percentage of . . . sovietized workers will drown in that tide of chauvinistic Great-Russian riffraff like a fly in milk."[84]

In fact, the danger was even greater. The old attitudes alone portended a return to the earlier empire: chauvinistic, somewhat expansionist, but not intrinsically anti-Western. Most purveyors of old-regime beliefs were educated elites who saw Russia as part of Europe.[85] But the new "sovietised workers" were tempered by no such Westernization. Ill-educated, xenophobic, and militant, they had emerged from the bitter crucible of war—with capitalist aggressors abroad and class enemies at home. And the danger was no longer that they would "drown in the tide of chauvinsim," for their ranks so swelled, especially after Lenin's death, that they became a tide in themselves. Rather, it was that the two would merge, joining the most militant and xenophobic element in Bolshevism with the most chauvinistic and illiberal strain of traditional imperialism—the "red and the black"—in a more powerful and dangerous new current.

Forging a New Bolshevik Elite

In early 1927, noting the Faustian bargain that the Bolsheviks had earlier struck with Russian nationalism, Bukharin warned:

> Smenavekhism's "National Russian" aspect was . . . a bridge that enabled a part of the bourgeois intelligentsia to be reconciled with the Soviet system system. . . . That we Bolsheviks had gathered Russia together in the fashion of Ivan Kalita was regarded in a positive light by the Smenavekhites. We tried to use them, direct them, lead them. . . . However, it happens that . . . the steering wheel is slipping from our hands.[86]

Political control was not the issue, for the Party's command was firm. Neither was the restoration of capitalism Bukharin's main concern, for he himself was now the main exponent of NEP. Rather it was the return of old attitudes and beliefs. As Lenin observed, "a vanquished nation imposes its culture upon the conqueror."[87] A

duel of cultures was now under way, one fought over the central issue of how the new Soviet state was understood—its relation to the old empire, and its place in the world.

> For the old *intelligentsia* who offered their services to the regime, it was a natural continuation of old Russia. For the overwhelming *masses* of people who did not accept the new ideology or adopted it only superficially . . . the new state was likewise . . . simply the Russian empire under a new sign.[88]

But the Russia of the intelligentsia was very different from that of the masses. And the attitudes of the latter, by dint of sheer numbers, were a growing force in the Party. These "half-peasants, half-workers [brought with them] a bunch of rural . . . prejudices."[89] Most worrisome to those still faithful to Marxism's internationalist heritage, these prejudices included "a xenophobic attitude toward neighboring ethnic groups and foreign nations."[90] As early as 1922, Zinoviev noted that the new members' impact was "more and more apparent in the countryside, at provincial conferences, and now . . . even at party congresses."[91] And as the Party swelled, its ethos was increasingly marked by anti-Westernism and anti-intellectualism.[92] Unlike "bourgeois" nationalists, the new members had few ties to Europe or Russia's complex intellectual traditions. And unlike the Bolshevik elite minority, the unsophisticated new majority partook little of NEP high culture and its burgeoning ties to progressive Western currents. Instead, their essential outlook was formed in the separate world of old peasant Russia.[93]

The new Party members' "animalistic nationalism" was only heightened in the civil war.[94] Whether seen as a triumphant trial by fire that the Bolsheviks had always sought, or as a tragedy that derailed the peaceful construction of socialism, the changes it wrought were decisive.[95] By 1921, "the archetypal Communist was no longer a shabbily dressed intellectual, but rather a leather-jacketed commissar with a Mauser at his hip . . . poorly educated, theoretically unsophisticated, direct, resourceful, often brutal."[96]

How did this commissar view the world? The Party's patriotic wartime themes were broadly compatible with his Russocentrism and xenophobia, the symbiosis of which is seen in the impact of wartime propaganda. The civil war was depicted not as a struggle between opposing groups of Russians, but mainly as an outside

attempt to unseat a popular national government. Russia was suffering a foreign invasion, and the Whites were little more than pawns of the entente.[97]

Many who began Party careers at this time saw that "our country was being attacked from all sides,"[98] that the danger of a foreign-based "counter-revolutionary coup, about which Soviet propaganda trumpeted every day, seemed a reality,"[99] and that war was "thrust on us by the bourgeoisie, our own [and that of] the world at large, which was instigating counterrevolution and intervention against us."[100] As for the Polish war, it was depicted as the " 'Third Campaign of the Entente,' and that Poland concerted its actions with the White generals in order to restore tsarism."[101] Famine, too, was thrust upon Russia: "If it weren't for the cursed Allies and the blockade, we'd have food enough for all."[102] And when the Kronstadt sailors rose up in 1921—with the civil war won and foreign intervention past—it was still labeled a "White conspiracy," and Bolshevik propaganda trumpeted "fiendish calumny," that blamed the revolt on capitalist intrigue.[103]

Similarly, failed revolutions in Germany and Hungary were "betrayals" that further eroded a thin internationalist veneer to reveal a powerful anti-Western Russian nationalism beneath.[104] Altogether, the pervasive imagery of "hidden enemies, saboteurs [and] spies" fostered the "triumph of a new mentality."[105] An observer recalled the outlook of a typical new Party official "from the masses": "Revolution can only conquer by the generous use of the sword . . . morality and sentiment are bourgeois superstitions. His conception of Socialism is puerile; his information of the world at large of the scantiest. His arguments echo the familiar editorials of the official press."[106]

By 1921, these new members "from the masses" made up a majority of the Party. And while many were soon purged, their numbers rose even more sharply in the "Leninist levy" that followed the leader's death in 1924.[107] Their "puerile" views of socialism, "warfare" ethos, and crude anti-Westernism changed the Bolshevik Party radically. These "Genghis Khans with telephones" were often not only opponents of NEP and supporters of War Communist methods, but also receptive to the imagery of "internal and external enemies" that later justified a much harsher antiforeign turn.[108] And it was during the relative calm of the 1920s that they received

the education and training that constituted the third key element—beyond their native "rural prejudices" and subsequent experience of civil war—in shaping the outlook and identity of a new elite.

The possibilities of this education were already limited by what had occurred during the revolution and after, when Russia's liberal-Westernizing tradition suffered a severe blow. The flower of the intelligentsia was mostly opposed to the Bolsheviks, and many emigrated; others supported the Whites and, with their defeat and flight, also found themselves abroad. Thousands also perished, some from privation and disease, others in the Red Terror. Scientists, scholars, lawyers, and engineers suffered disproportionately for their class origins. The Bolsheviks soon eased their hostile stance toward those bourgeois professionals who remained because their skills were badly needed. But then and after, the leeway permitted the chauvinist-imperial segment of the old elite was far greater than that allowed its liberal-democratic elements. In 1922, even as the "knights of *Smena vekh*" were returning, some 150 prominent writers, philosophers, lawyers, and other professionals were deported.[109] At one stroke, the Bolsheviks got rid of their most serious liberal critics and sent a chill through those who remained.

The NEP period has been described as the "golden age of Soviet science."[110] Although largely true in the natural sciences, for the humanities and social sciences it was a time of increasing intimidation and loss of intellectual freedom. The wartime ban on the non-Bolshevik press was relaxed, but mainly to permit views neutral or sympathetic to the regime.[111] *Glavlit*, the censorship organ set up in 1922, began imposing strict controls in 1925.[112] Non-Marxist societies in fields such as psychology and economics were banned. University teaching of sociology and history was brought under tight control.[113] And the Academy of Sciences, under fire for its "foreign" orientation, suffered a loss of international contacts and a drain of talent abroad.[114]

Non-Bolshevik scholars were also attacked by militant *Komsomol* groups who objected to the remaining "bourgeois" content of their lessons as well as to the nonproletariat element in teaching faculties and student bodies.[115] In response, thousands of teachers were fired and tens of thousands of students expelled solely on the basis of class. At the same time, admissions practices were

changed to increase the percentage of proletarian students while reducing those of bourgeois origin.[116]

In tracing the fate of Russia's Westernizing tradition, this purge of "socially alien" elements is critical. The Bolsheviks meant to forge a new intelligentsia, and even the small tolerance shown the old one was to be only temporary. Lenin defended "bourgeois specialists" against their most radical critics, for the proletariat still had many skills to learn from their former masters.[117] But this reflected no affection for the old intelligentsia; on the contrary, Lenin once cursed the "lackeys of capital who fancy themselves the nation's brain. In fact they are not the brain but the shit."[118] They would be tolerated only so long as they abjured politics, and even then only until a new "proletarian intelligentsia" was ready to replace them.

To hasten this, the Bolsheviks did more than just favor the proletariat in access to higher education. *Rabfaki* (workers' faculties) were created, offering poorly prepared students a crash catch-up course, as adjuncts to most institutes.[119] Trade schools were opened, and *politgramota* (Marxist-Leninist "political literacy") was taught through a broad network of Party organs. The worldview cultivated in all this training was harsh and anti-Western.

"Everyone who joined the Party learned Marxist-Leninist science by studying Bukharin's . . . *The ABC of Communism*," recalled one graduate of political training during the 1920s.[120] Written by Bukharin and Yevgeny Preobrazhensky as a popular version of the 1918 Party program, *The ABC of Communism* was the most widely read political work in Soviet Russia. Reflecting the harsh War Communist ethos, it offered Marxism in a nutshell, a ruthless domestic program, and a chilling world outlook. Peaceful coexistence? "We might just as well hope by petting a tiger to persuade the animal to live upon grass and to leave cattle alone . . . capitalism cannot exist without a policy of conquest, spoilation, violence and war."[121] America, led by the "trickster Wilson," heads a "robber alliance" known as the League of Nations [sic]. "Its agents blow up bridges, throw bombs at communists. . . . The imperialists of the whole world hurled their forces against the Russian proletariat."[122]

Another veteran of 1920s training recalled the day a Party official admitted him to the Komsomol (the Communist Youth League):

> He gave me *The ABC of Communism*, by Nikolai Bukharin, and told me: "This contains all the wisdom of humanity. You must study it from cover to cover." I read the book through in several days and began to study it with the group. The simplicity of its concepts shocked me. . . . We received [its] ideas enthusiastically. . . . To put the manifesto into practice we would sacrifice everything, even our lives.[123]

This epiphany took place in 1922, a year *after* the Party, and Bukharin in particular, had embraced NEP at home and coexistence abroad. In fact, at this time *The ABC* was still gaining influence. Its strident view of capitalism's hostility and unremitting aggression would eventually see 18 Russian editions; it became the "Bible of Communism" for millions, enduring well into the 1930s.[124]

Similar views were cultivated in higher education—including the military and industrial academies—though the level of knowledge and sophistication was considerably higher at a few institutions such as the Communist Academy and the Institute of Red Professors. There, students were taught by leading Party intellectuals, such as Pokrovsky, and they also produced major research works—some of significant quality, but much highly slanted and crudely anti-Western.[125] At these elite institutes, Bukharin and his NEP-oriented *Historical Materialism* (1921) attracted many students,[126] though they, too, struggled with "a political culture . . . of polemic and purge" that quickly transformed their schools into the "intellectual equivalent of an armed camp."[127] At most other institutions, Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism* (1924) was more widely read, and his thinly disguised chauvinism and view of "politics as combat" were far more popular.[128]

In general, a majority of the new Bolsheviks were less influenced by NEP's brief intellectual-cultural revival than by the synthesis of old Russian nationalism and new anti-Westernism so prominent in their experience of the early-to-mid 1920s. A striking example of this symbiosis is seen in a lecture, given by a former tsarist general, at the Soviet General Staff College. Since Peter the Great, he argued,

> the Russian empire has been irresistibly drawn toward . . . the Indian Ocean. And Russian expansion . . . has always been blocked by the British. [We fought] in Persia and Central Asia . . . but the British Empire stood always behind our adversaries. The victories

> of Russian armies in the Balkans were frustrated by British intrigue. You will ask why I am telling you this when the revolution has cast out imperialism . . . to liberate oppressed peoples. . . . But the most serious obstacle in the way of this liberation is British imperialism. If we want to give the peoples of Asia their freedom, we have to break the power of British imperialism. It is still our deadliest enemy.[129]

Enemies, Terror, and the Conspiracy Worldview

By the later 1920s, the decade of the moderate NEP, this deadly enemy was the capitalist power whose good graces—and economic investment—the Foreign Commissariat most assiduously sought. More important than a turn in policy, however, was a change in the political climate, and consequent expectations and outlook, of many in the Party. By 1927, a decade since the revolution and seven years since the end of the civil war, the attitudes born of that era had moderated with time and the intervening calm in foreign and domestic life.

The earlier beliefs were hardly gone. On the contrary, for many the "military-heroic" epoch remained their defining experience. Moreover, the view of a divided world, with capitalism's inherent aggression making indefinite coexistence impossible, remained the official ideology—written, broadcast, and taught. Just as NEP (whatever its successes) remained ideologically tenuous because its capitalistic aspects clashed with so many fundamental beliefs and so much painful experience, so, too did peaceful coexistence. Still, the salience of these contradiction eased with the years of foreign calm and domestic progress.

The *vydvizhentsy*, the new generation now occupying the Party's middle- and upper-middle ranks, were focused mainly on NEP's domestic priorities.[130] Though their experience rendered them of two political mindsets, continued calm portended further deradicalization. But when this calm ended, the old attitudes quickly resurfaced and helped decide a leadership struggle in favor of the contender—Stalin—who best exploited latent Russian-national, antiforeign attitudes. And under Stalin's terror, the subsequent decade took the hostile-isolationist identity to new heights.

NEP's (and Bukharin's) immediate problem was a slump in growth, a serious dilemma given the Bolsheviks' shared commitment to swift industrialization. NEP's critics, particularly Trotsky and the "left opposition," had never been reconciled to the restoration of private markets. Now it seemed that these methods could not even deliver rapid development. With their martial spirit, they saw NEP's domestic focus as sacrificing the ultimate goal of world revolution.

So long as Stalin supported NEP, its continuation was not seriously at issue. But even as he stood by Bukharin, Stalin differed on several points whose importance would soon grow. One was his case for the viability of "socialism in one country," which was doctrinally opposite Trotsky's emphasis on world revolution as a necessity for Soviet survival. Another was his stress on foreign threats, a theme that linked domestic and foreign policy via the need for heavy military industrialization.[131] So despite his support of NEP, Stalin was simultaneously stressing a position that—depending on the imminence of a foreign threat—called the long-term possibilities of peaceful coexistence into question. And a threat was already materializing.

In early 1927, the decimation of Chinese Communists was trumpeted by the Left as a revolutionary "betrayal." Worse, the Soviet Union itself was now vulnerable because the fiasco "freed the imperialists' hands for war against the USSR."[132] Shortly thereafter, a sense of real crisis developed following London's severing of relations with Moscow and the assassination of the Soviet ambassador to Poland. While troubling, these events did not stem from any concerted effort by the country's enemies. But this was increasingly the view in Moscow as arguments were heard that "the breathing spell was ending" and "war was inevitable in the near future."[133] There now ensued a "war scare" that would strongly influence the pivotal 15th Party Congress in December 1927.

The war scare sharply changed the political atmosphere and revived fears reminiscent of the civil war era: "hostile capitalist encirclement" soon became the "ever-present background to politics."[134] Even some in the leadership reportedly believed that war was imminent.[135] Many young cadres—the executors of NEP and coexistence policies—once again felt keenly the loss of "revolutionary spirit" and the compromises required for "living on neighborly

terms" with capitalism.[136] On the congress's eve, the left opposition (demonstrating their own public support) staged large rallies denouncing betrayal of world revolution.

Both Stalin and Trotsky thus had their constituencies. Both "socialism in one country" and "world revolution" were predicated on a foreign threat.[137] Yet Stalin defeated Trotsky, in part because his stance better reflected the simplistic, Russocentric views of the Party majority. Stalin did not deny that European revolution was ultimately necessary to ensure security; rather he argued that the road to Europe lay through a mighty Russia. Trotsky, in fact, was the enemy of world revolution; his "disbelief" in Russia's ability to build socialism on its own created a "spirit of capitulation" that would "extinguish foreign workers' hope for the victory of socialism in Russia, which would in turn delay the outbreak of revolution in other countries."[138] In this way, Stalin's appeal to latent nationalism scored a "triumph of subtle phrasing and satisfied almost everybody," recalled one observer. His "casuistry covered two different mental attitudes—that of those who believed in a revolutionary international policy and that of those who favored a strategy of withdrawal."[139] But while wooing the former, Stalin clearly emphasized the views of the latter; the choice was between being "an appendage of the future revolution in the West . . . without any independent power" or "an independent power, capable of doing battle against the capitalist world."[140]

Stalin also profited from the "siege mentality" that, while dormant through years of peace, flared anew during the war crisis. Many *vydvizhentsy* suppressed doubts over the political struggles in order to maintain Party unity in the face of a perceived threat; the "forces of counterrevolution" seemed near, and so, "like many others, I supported [Stalin] only because I hoped thus to end the sapping struggle . . . only as a measure necessary to insure the safety of the state."[141] Nikita Khrushchev, a first-time voting delegate at the congress, recalled another view of how the issues appeared to many new provincial elites: "I don't remember exactly what the differences were. . . . Rightists, opportunists, right-leftists, deviationists—these people were all moving in basically the same political direction, and our group was against them."[142] The fantastic belief that various opposition currents were all "basically the same" reflects the ignorance of the new Bolsheviks that played to Stalin's advantage;

so, too, did their fear of Western aggression: "I thought to myself, "Here is a man who knows how to direct our minds and our energies toward the priority goals of industrializing our country and assuring the impregnability of our Homeland's borders against the capitalist world."[143]

Over the years 1928 to 1933, as Stalin now bested Bukharin and NEP yielded to violent collectivization and forced industrialization, struggle with "enemies" became the hallmark of politics. In the *Shakhty* and *Prompartiia* cases, show trials were used to expose the "wrecking" of domestic and foreign plotters. These cases also marked the end of cooperation with bourgeois specialists and the severing of ties abroad.[144] Experts in agriculture, industry, and medicine were accused of sabotage. Entire fields were declared "bourgeois" and their leading figures disgraced. And there followed "an unbelievable display of obscurantism and attacks on anything sophisticated or refined" while "everywhere the status of cranks and militant ignoramuses rose sharply."[145] Just as science had no need of "groveling" before the West, neither had culture and the humanities, and so artists and writers were cut off from foreign ties. The avant-garde in literature and theater suffered as national-patriotic themes rose and Russians became the "first among equals" of the Soviet peoples.

Russocentrism also soared in philosophy and history. Tsars from Ivan the Terrible to Peter the Great were hailed for building a mighty state in struggle with traitors and foreign aggressors, while Marxists from Engels to Pokrovsky were criticized for misunderstanding the progressive role of tsarist imperialism. Tellingly, the recent past, too, was reinterpreted: the civil war even supplanted the October Revolution as Bolshevism's most important "legitimizing" triumph.[146] Leninism was not repudiated, but Stalin's constituency among the *vydvizhentsy* grasped simple historical analogies better than complex Marxist theories about capital or markets. Hence, his infamous 1931 speech to Soviet industrial managers:

> To reduce the tempo is to lag behind. And laggards are beaten. No, we don't want that! The history of old Russia consisted, among other things, in continual beatings for her backwardness. She was beaten by the Mongolian khans. Beaten by the Turkish Beys. Beaten by the Swedish feudals. Beaten by the Polish-Lithuanian nobles. Beaten by the Anglo-French capitalists. Beaten by the Japanese barons. Beaten by them all—for her backwardness.[147]

The themes of "external and internal enemies," and the methods of "exposing" conspiracy, together reached their apogee in the great purge trials of 1936–38. Nearly a decade in rehearsal, show trials were now employed on a grand scale to reveal sinister plots linking political, industrial, and military elites to foreign imperialists. The terror swiftly struck down tens of thousands—and would soon engulf millions—as "the apparently inexplicable turmoil . . . represented a permanent threat to the security of virtually any Soviet citizen."[148] But this turmoil, and the accompanying "frenzy in the Bolshevik mentality," was indeed explicable in the context of the traditional popular culture and especially of those beliefs and fears cultivated since 1917.[149] Among the new industrial workers, subjected to endless "campaigns and mobilizations . . . predicated on emotional appeals against class enemies, both inside and outside the country," the regime fostered a new social (and political) identity in which "the exertions of every worker at the bench were inscribed in an international struggle."[150] The *vydvizhentsy,* too, even more relentlessly propagandized and terrorized, could not help "rationalizing the regime's internal conflicts through the representation of a 'struggle' with 'enemies.' "[151] Like the workers, these future political and academic elites were also a class being created largely ex nihilo, and so their still-malleable identity was shaped by "the unpredictable, incomprehensible, and treacherous daily reality of the system [that] fed perceptions of omnipresent conspiracy."[152]

On the whole, "Stalin engineered the revolution of belief with substantial success."[153] Central to this was "a paranoid political culture, galvanized by themes of external encirclement, internal subversion and pervasive treachery."[154] So deeply ingrained were such attitudes that most arrested innocents saw their cases as isolated "mistakes" that did not undermine broader belief in the existence of nefarious foreign and domestic plots against the USSR. When the terror's scope and contradictions no longer permitted blind belief, equally improbable rationalizations were found.[155] And at its height, Soviet people received what they had lacked since Bukharin's fall: a primer to serve as the new Bolshevik catechism. The *Short Course*, published in 1938, outdid *The ABC* in its demonization of the West and in its portrayal of politics—foreign and domestic—as mortal combat.[156] Its impact was great; Soviet society had by now been "well prepared" for a treatise that "brought the

outward speech and inner thought of everyone—from the plumber to the professor—down to one [primitive] level."[157] Naturally, the *Short Course* also revised *The ABC* entirely in its lionization of Stalin.

In fact, Stalin was probably more successful in cementing paranoid, antiforeign beliefs than in canonizing himself. In many accounts, the doubts that persisted more often centered on the Stalinist personality cult than the Stalinist worldview. One survivor recalled that, even after his father's arrest, it was the time of the "brightest hopes of my youth." Though skeptical of Stalin's infallibility, his view of the world was dominated by the fact of a hostile capitalist encirclement: "If we don't fulfill the plan we'll be defenseless, we'll perish, we won't be able to fight if attacked—this was absolutely clear. . . . Stalin stood for rapid industrialization and he achieved it . . . for me, his correctness was beyond question."[158]

As always, ignorance was critical in cultivating such views. "The regime's monopoly on information," in the judgment of a rare survey of popular attitudes during the Stalin era, was central to success in creating a view of "America [and the capitalist West in general] as aggressive and bent on world domination." In most cases there was "complete acceptance of official propaganda with regard to foreign affairs . . . foreign news as put out by the regime is accepted more readily than domestic news, chiefly because the Soviet citizen has a scant basis on which to check the inaccuracy of what he reads about foreign countries."[159] Khrushchev, as one of the new elite, put it more bluntly: "We'd been cut off, we didn't know anything."[160]

Khrushchev's recollections are important not only because he would be Stalin's successor, but because he was a typical member of the *vydvizhentsy* who would dominate official life for 30 years. But they would not reach the top just yet; in the terror, the vacancies they filled were not those of the old Bolsheviks but of a second generation who had worked closely with them. And it was by annihilating these second-echelon leaders that Stalin severed most remaining links to the Party's Western, social-democratic heritage.

This transformation of the elite was repeated in all fields that had any bearing on the world abroad; cultural, scientific, military,

and diplomatic circles were ruthlessly purged. As consequential as Bukharin's fall was that of the young "Red Professors" close to him and his views. Similarly, the 1939 dismissal of Foreign Commissar Maxim Litvinov rid Stalin of an advocate of ties to the democratic West (and eased rapprochement with Hitler), but the diplomatic purge that followed served the larger purpose of making room for newcomers ignorant of the world by liquidating Litvinov's "Europeanized" corps.[161]

Despite the many anti-Western aspects of their beliefs, the old generation had been drawn to Marxism by its "Europeanness."

> It came from Europe, blew in from there with the scent of the new, fresh and alluring, not our moldy, homegrown ways. Marxism . . . promised that we would not stay semi-Asiatic but instead . . . become a Western country . . . the West beckoned us. Our group read every history of Western civilization and culture, surveys of foreign life in the thick journals, and painstakingly searched for any traces of a Western current in Russian history.[162]

By contrast, the *vydvizhentsy* came to the 1920s defined by rural prejudices and regime propaganda. NEP had hardly eliminated early beliefs based on xenophobia, nationalism, and War Communist militancy. And Stalinism now raised them to new heights. While their elders, however radical, were products of Petrine-European Russia, the new elite was "reminiscent of the ruling class of Muscovy in the XVI century."[163]

> The Old Bolsheviks . . . were able to modify the distortion [of their propaganda] because of their own education and personal residence abroad. However, the new generation . . . lacked the knowledge and sophistication of their predecessors . . . had little contact with foreigners and foreign societies, and . . . lived in a most rigidly controlled community.[164]

Bukharin, notwithstanding his early radicalism, was always a thoughtful student of Europe. For him and his "Red Professors," the rise of fascism and the destruction of German culture were deeply troubling.[165] For the mass of *vydvizhentsy*, who knew little of Europe and understood only the Stalinist view that all capitalist states were equally hostile, the Nazis' triumph over the Social Democrats mattered little.

The War and After: Opening, and Iron Curtain

Beyond exposing Stalin's tragically erroneous equation of fascism and social democracy, World War II cracked his wall of isolation and gave many Soviet citizens their first glimpses of the outside world in a generation. The very fact of alliance with the democratic West was crucial, far more corrosive of official views than had been the brief and cynical alignment with Hitler; this, after all, was genuine alliance in a life-and-death struggle. Moreover, it brought tangible images that countered the decades of invective. Negative propaganda eased, and even some positive views were permitted. For example, U.S. films were now sometimes shown, to significant effect.[166] Even greater was the impact of lend-lease aid: airplanes, automobiles, foodstuffs, and other goods that conveyed impressions of a land of plenty.[167]

But perhaps most eye-opening were the personal observations of Soviets whom the war brought to Europe—the soldiers who fought to Berlin, and the occupying forces and support personnel who followed.[168] They were "amazed to learn that, over there, it was nothing like what we'd been told for so many years before the war. They lived more dignified, richer, and freer lives than we did."[169]

> The contrast between our standard of living and Europe's, which millions of soldiers had seen, was a moral and psychological blow that wasn't easy to take even though we'd triumphed. . . . Millions of them were telling millions more what they, the victors, had seen there, in Europe.[170]

These soldiers "represented danger number one for the Stalinist regime."[171] And in confronting this danger, Stalin as always was mindful of history. This time the lesson was that of the Decembrist officers who had rebelled against the autocracy after tasting European liberties in the post-Napoleonic occupation of Paris.[172] Stalin had good reason to fear when his agents reported on such private conversations as the following between generals Vasily Grodov and Filipp Rybalchenko:

> RYBALCHENKO: Everyone says that there's going to be war.
> GRODOV: Those conferences in Paris and America went nowhere. . . .
> RYBALCHENKO: It's awful how our prestige is falling . . . nobody's for us.

GRODOV: What's there to do Filipp? . . . Maybe get out of here, go abroad somewhere? . . .
RYBALCHENKO: Before, other countries helped us.
GRODOV: Look at what we've come to! Now they give us nothing. . . .
RYBALCHENKO: There's no chance for better, we're completely isolated.
GRODOV: What we need is real democracy.[173]

These officers were shot, and millions of returning prisoners of war were treated little better. Since, by Stalin's order, falling into enemy hands was treasonous, soldiers not only were driven to fight desperately but were also subject to arrest when they returned from captivity (civilians who had lived, however briefly, under German occupation were also subject to investigation and arrest).[174] Many of these, too, were shot or sentenced to hard labor, but most were later released after passing through brutal "filtering" camps where they were warned: " 'Keep silent. You whiled away your time in captivity on fascist grub.' And they did keep quiet."[175]

But even had they not, a generation of hostile beliefs could not be undone in a few years. Triumph at such a terrible price suppressed many doubts and stirred national-patriotic feelings that were often far from liberal or magnanimous.

> For a long time I remained an incorrigible "Red Imperialist." In my consciousness ripened a symbiosis, highly typical for the period, of Soviet patriotism and Russian nationalism. Perhaps the main proof of Stalin's genius for me were his annexations. After, we got back everything we had lost of the former great Russia, and had added more. We stretched from the Elbe River to the China Sea. They were all real victories, and victors are not judged.[176]

Stalin's authority grew, and for most, even apart from official glorification of his genius, the fact of the surprise German attack itself seemed to confirm his correctness in warning of enemies and forcing spartan five-year plans.[177] For others, "the absence of a second European front until June, 1944, was a primary cause of [the post-Stalin generation's] enduring mistrust of the West."[178] And among the political elite, as Litvinov frankly warned, storm clouds hovered because of "the ideological conception prevailing [in Moscow] that

conflict between the communist and capitalist worlds is inevitable."[179]

Perhaps most ordinary Soviets came out of the war with more positive than negative new impressions of the West, together with hope that alliance could continue and contribute to a better life at home. In the event, Stalin quickly dashed these hopes with familiar methods: a return to rigid isolation, a new barrage of hostile propaganda, and the build-up to another round of terror. As before, intellectuals were seen as most dangerous to the control of minds. The creative professions were struck first, with Stalin's henchman Andrei Zhdanov viciously attacking writers Akhmatova and Zoshchenko and composers Shostakovich and Khachaturian.[180] Soon it was "impossible to find a single work of postwar literature where there are not clear or concealed enemies: the black-and-white schemas of those years simply could not exist without them."[181] Such lines as these, from popular writer Konstantin Simonov, were a warning to the naive:

> To many of us it seemed, especially toward the end of the war, that, yes, the last shot will have been heard and everything would change. Of course, in a way, people are right: everything has changed, there is peace, the cannons are silent. . . . But they thought that there would be friends all around for the rest of their life. And all around there are enemies.[182]

A particular threat to the hostile-isolationist worldview came from some specialists in politics and economics. In mid 1945, Petr Fedoseyev, editor of the Party's main theoretical journal *Bolshevik*, wrote that the capitalist world included "peace-loving" states as well as naked imperialists, and that the USSR could make common cause with the former.[183] In 1946, Yevgeny Varga, director of the Moscow Institute of World Economy and World Politics (and a Comintern survivor) began arguing that postwar capitalism could regulate its contradictions and that popular forces in the West could restrain imperialist tendencies.[184]

Such views were permitted a brief latitude because Stalin—at least publicly—sought continuation of the wartime alliance. But his private plans for cementing power in Eastern Europe and hostility toward the West pointed to cold war instead, and ideas such as Varga's were soon under attack. Zhdanov's 1947 address at the founding of the Cominform represented Stalin's "official declara-

tion of permanent cold war against the West."[185] And as that war grew hotter with the Berlin and Korean crises, Stalin had the pretext for an even harsher crackdown at home. There ensued a campaign against "kowtowing" and "servility before the West," and the demonization of all things foreign. "Friends and enemies, they and us, the red and the white, the positive and the negative heroes: this is the basis of our . . . confrontational, mythologized consciousness."[186] "Rationality yielded to emotional aggressiveness in an atmosphere of mass psychosis."[187] A new wave of Russocentrism in philosophy and history surpassed even that of the 1930s. This chauvinism—and its perversion of Marxism—reached record heights in the unlikely field of linguistics, Stalin's latest pastime:

> No one who does not know Russian and cannot read the works of the Russian intellect in the original can call himself a scholar. . . . It may be seen in the history of mankind how . . . the world's languages succeed one another. Latin was the language of antiquity . . . French was the language of feudalism. English became the language of imperialism. And if we look into the future, we see the Russian language emerging as the world language of socialism.[188]

Writers and journalists who praised anything foreign did so at their risk, while scholars who tried to publish abroad or even correspond with foreign colleagues were in peril. Cybernetics, genetics, and other fields were attacked for "idealistic" and "bourgeois-reactionary" trends.[189] The international isolation of Soviet intellectual life was virtually complete.

In 1949, Varga's institute was closed for harboring "no few state criminals and traitors to the motherland," and Varga himself was found guilty of authoring the anti-Leninist idea of "capitalist planning."[190] To correct these errors, Stalin's 1952 *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* made it clear that "inter-imperialist rivalries" remained severe and crisis unavoidable. Capitalism's aggression was untamable, and so war was inevitable. To end this threat, "it is necessary to abolish imperialism [i.e., defeat the West]."[191]

Jews were a particular target, at Varga's institute and throughout the academic world. By 1950, *cosmopolitan* was the official term for things foreign, anti-Russian, and traitorous; unofficially it was a synonym for *Jewish.* In late 1952, the exposure of a "plot" by mainly Jewish doctors to assassinate Soviet leaders signaled a new round

of terror. Only Stalin's death in March 1953 halted the planned unmasking of more "internal and external enemies."

■

By most accounts, Stalin's postwar campaign to demonize the West was broadly successful. Even among the best informed, a "majority . . . were deformed by pervasive ideology, propaganda and fear."[192] For those who knew less of the world, Stalin's cold war rationale was not seriously questioned. Physicist Andrei Sakharov recalled the paranoid, militarized atmosphere that caused him and other scientists to be "possessed by a true war psychology" so intense that they shut their eyes to the brutal tableau of convict labor employed on their projects.[193] And even many of those who had glimpsed Western prosperity were still inclined to blame "the machinations of a hostile encirclement" for Soviet backwardness:

> This is what caused such dissatisfaction with the results of the war and resentment of the allies who, it appeared, were solely responsible not only for the growing international tensions (as the initiators of the cold war) but also for our domestic difficulties. And so doubts emerged as to whether the war had really been pursued "to a victorious end" and sometimes you even heard that "It was a mistake, that we didn't crush our 'allies' after taking Berlin. We should have driven them into the English Channel. Then America wouldn't be saber-rattling now."[194]

As confrontation worsened abroad, and hopes for a better life at home were dashed with announcement of a new five-year plan reminiscent of the militant 1930s, "people's attention was successfully distracted from analysis of the real causes of social ills and directed along the false trail of a search for 'enemies.' "[195] Party committees and work collectives resounded with such comments as

> "The peace is over, war is coming, and so of course prices are rising. They're trying to hide it from us, but we know what's what. Prices always go up before a war" . . . "America has broken the peace treaty with Russia, there'll soon be war. They say that the first echelons have already reached Simferopol, that there are wounded. . . ." . . . "I heard that war is already under way in China and Greece, where America and England have intervened. And tomorrow or the next day they'll attack the Soviet Union."[196]