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Advance and Retreat: New Thinking in the Time of Crisis and Transition

General Secretary Chernenko: As you know, we have decided to readmit [Stalin's Foreign Minister] Molotov to the ranks of the CPSU. . . .

Defense Minister Ustinov: In my opinion, Malenkov and Kaganovich should [also] be readmitted. . . . No matter what they say, Stalin is our history. No single enemy ever harmed us so much as Khrushchev did with his policy toward the past of our party and our state, and toward Stalin. . . .

Prime Minister Tikhonov: Yes, if not for Khrushchev they would never have been expelled from the party. He besmirched us and our policies in the eyes of the whole world. . . .

Foreign Minister Gromyko: He irreparably damaged the Soviet Union's positive image . . . thanks to him this so-called "Eurocommunism" was born. . . .

Ustinov: Shouldn't we restore the name Stalingrad to Volgograd? Millions of people would support this. . . .

Gorbachev: This proposal has both positive and negative aspects.

—Politburo meeting, July 12, 1984

By the early 1980s, the Soviet Union was in serious trouble. The economy, stagnant for more than a decade save for sales of weapons and raw materials abroad, and of vodka at home, sputtered as the flow of petrodollars that had sustained it now suddenly slowed. Socially, rising absenteeism, alcoholism, and mortality rates were just the most obvious symptoms of decay. Internationally, the "limited contingent" of troops sent into Afghanistan in December 1979 had fallen into a quagmire that brought worldwide condemnation not seen since Stalin's attacks on Finland and Poland in 1939. Soon

the latter was again in rebellion, and only the imposition of martial law in December 1981 managed to "save socialism" from the Polish workers. The world watched nervously as Soviet military might continued to grow; by 1983, large deployments of new nuclear and conventional forces had firmly united Washington, London, Bonn, Tokyo, and Peking against Moscow.[1]

The Soviet peoples suffered as food, housing, and health care were sacrificed to superpower ambitions. Better insulated against material privations than most of their compatriots, liberal intellectuals suffered in another way, watching with distress as the gains of détente now quickly evaporated. Despite its limitations, the preceding decade had seemed a steady preparation for broader integration with the West: economic, political, and cultural. Now these hopes were dashed as their country slid back into self-inflicted isolation. As with the burial of the thaw by Soviet tanks in Prague, the death of détente marked by Soviet tanks in Kabul (and along the Polish border) prompted much despair among reformers.[2]

But now the distress was far greater. In part, this was because the détente era had not simply repeated an earlier cycle but had built on the gains of the thaw to develop reformist, integrationist views much further. The infant new thinking of the 1960s had, for many specialists, reached maturity by the mid-1970s. Moreover, the alternatives were now fewer. Brezhnev had earlier been able to reject both the paths of reform and reaction, of broader integration or tighter isolation, because the system still had enormous reserves for a middle, "muddle-through" course. By the early 1980s, it was increasingly obvious that the status quo in fact meant decline. In his semi-conscious dotage, Brezhnev could not grasp this. But those who were still politically conscious—reformers and reactionaries alike—understood that their country was approaching a crossroads.

Accordingly, a struggle ensued over the Soviet future, and it raged over the prolonged transition period from 1980 to 1985.[3] First, prompted by the Afghan and Polish crises, liberals in 1980–81 launched a push for change on all fronts, domestic and foreign, that reached far beyond Brezhnev's modest détente toward broad international integration. Senior reactionaries in the Party—bureaucratically and ideologically tied to the Stalinist system and hostile-isolationist identity, and never comfortable with even the limited détente of the 1970s—responded with attacks that kept reformers on the

defensive for much of 1982. Liberals rebounded again in 1983 as Brezhnev's successor Andropov began modest reforms. But his tenure was too brief, and his horizons too limited, to realize significant change at home and halt the momentum of confrontation abroad built up over "Star Wars," Euromissiles, and the KAL 007 tragedy.[4] By 1984, the country was back on automatic pilot and Andropov was succeeded by the Brezhnev-like Konstantin Chernenko.

The Politburo had again put off urgent decisions by electing another aged, do-nothing leader. But reactionaries were not idle; throughout 1984 they exploited the vacuum at the top to strengthen their positions and mount a new offensive intended to vanquish the reformers once and for all. As domestic and foreign problems grew, the old thinkers—by virtue of their powerful places in the militarized Party-state system—seemed to hold all the cards. But the new thinkers, whose only institutional base was their fragile, academic-advisory posts that now came under fierce attack, had the power of ideas—a promising yet untried reform agenda. Their appeals, however, fell on mostly deaf ears, and defeat would have been certain were it not for a group of younger, reform-minded officials promoted under Andropov. Sharing a belief that *tak zhit' nel'zia*, Mikhail Gorbachev and several allies seized upon the new thinkers' agenda.[5] They quietly prepared for sweeping changes to come, even as the cold war reached an intensity not seen in decades.

Crisis and Activization: New Thinking to Save Détente

Notwithstanding their early awareness of looming political, social, and economic crises at home and throughout the socialist camp, many new thinkers, too, were taken aback by how quickly these problems exploded in 1980–81. Despite their own unheeded warnings of the danger to détente posed by continuing military buildup and muscle-flexing abroad, they were only slightly less shocked than the leadership at the speed with which not only the developed West, but much of the developing world too, united against the USSR. Some lamented the loss of a decade's work and hoped that "reality would prevail" upon conservative Western leaders, such as Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, to modify their new hard line.[6] Others took genuine offense at the West's "anti-

Soviet crusade" and defended Moscow's positions more than just half-heartedly. Such at least were the reactions of some liberals in the mass media, which gave little inkling of their less-visible reformist efforts. But it was just this public conformity that provided new thinkers the latitude to do their "real work"—private criticism and a renewed push for change.[7]

IEMSS director Bogomolov, whose jeremiad about socialism's "rot" was the last and boldest warning of the 1970s, began the 1980s with the same abandon. Less than a month after the invasion of Afghanistan, he sent the Central Committee and KGB an analysis of détente's demise, which, he argued, had actually begun much earlier, with the "shock effect" on the West of Soviet meddling in Africa. "Subsequent events . . . in the Arab world, our military support of Vietnam in Kampuchea and other similar actions led to further escalation of tensions. [In] Afghanistan our policy apparently went beyond admissible bounds."[8]

Militarily, the USSR now faced "a protracted war against Afghan rebels in extremely unfavorable circumstances." Politically, the invasion's backlash was even more negative.

> The USSR's influence on the non-aligned movement, especially on the Moslem world, has suffered considerably. . . . Détente has been blocked and political prerequisites for limiting the arms race have been eliminated. . . . Economic and technological pressure on the Soviet Union has grown sharply. . . . [There is] growing distrust of Soviet policy and departure from it on the part of Yugoslavia, Romania and [North] Korea. Even the Hungarian and Polish press . . . openly reveal [dissatisfaction] with Soviet action. . . . [C]urtailment of our military activity in the Third World could contribute to a gradual return to a policy of détente . . . if crisis situations do not spread to other regions, especially to Eastern Europe.[9]

Crisis in Eastern Europe, specifically Poland, was the topic of another IEMSS report a year later. Their earlier warnings having proved correct, institute analysts now examined the Solidarity-Communist Party confrontation that paralyzed Poland in 1981. But now the criticism of Soviet policy, and danger to the USSR itself, was spelled out even more bluntly.[10]

First and foremost, Poland's crisis was *not* the result of malign Western influence but had deep domestic roots.[11] The economy labored under an archaic model little changed since its postwar

imposition by Stalin. Indebtedness to the West was not the problem; on the contrary, Poland had been granted credit on highly favorable terms. The fault lay instead with overcentralization, bureaucracy, and "gigantic, prestige projects" that squandered foreign loans. Neither was private farming to blame; it was poor price-allocation decisions that plagued agriculture, not the "vestiges of capitalism." In fact, foreign ties had created the opportunity for "a systematic *perestroika"* of the economy, but the Party had done nothing.[12] As a result, shortages of food, housing, and health care bred social unrest. Deficits led to "a black market and speculation, bribe-taking, corruption, and the use of public office for private gain." But instead of reforming, the Polish leadership "grew increasingly distant from the masses . . . socialist democracy acquired a formal character, the party-state apparatus swelled . . . bureaucracy and lawlessness grew [together with] the hypertrophy of the role of the First Secretary and his entourage."[13]

Beyond these obvious parallels to Soviet woes, the IEMSS report also warned that the Polish crisis was fast coming to resemble Lenin's definition of a "revolutionary situation." Finally, blaming decades of Moscow's *diktat* for the crisis and calling for "new methods of mutual relations," the authors cautioned against repressive measures; if reforms were not undertaken soon, it would mean "the death of socialism."[14]

In contrast to Bogomolov's brutally honest (and consequently ineffectual) critique, Arbatov trod more cautiously in the first post-Afghanistan years. With ISKAN and he personally so closely identified with "a failed détente policy"—and thus, like Inozemtsev and IMEMO, busy fending off conservatives' attacks—Arbatov sought influence through his personal ties to the leadership. But his efforts to convince Brezhnev of the SS-20 folly and other "mistakes" came to naught due to the latter's near-total mental incapacity and the attendant devolution of power to Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov and the military. A subsequent appeal to Arbatov's former boss Andropov, to support a proposed nuclear-free zone in Central Europe, also failed. "What do you want me to do," Andropov testily replied, "quarrel with Ustinov on your account?"[15] In late 1980, Arbatov joined with Inosemtsev and Bovin in an effort to shape preparations of the next five-year plan (for 1981–85) in a reformist direction. Privately characterizing the draft plan as "utter fiction,"

their concerns were swept aside by Brezhnev and other conservatives as "defamatory."[16]

Elsewhere, Inozemtsev focused on the international economy in his recommendations to Brezhnev and the senior leadership. "Courageously," in light of his own worsening health and an isolationist mood that now saw East-West trade as economically and politically subversive, Inozemtsev continued to argue that "the organic participation of the USSR in the international division of labor" was necessary, given technological change and "the unifying tendency . . . of one world economy."[17] But these appeals, too, went unheeded, and as confrontation worsened and détente unraveled completely, gloom settled over IMEMO and the other reformist institutes. This atmosphere was illustrated in a 1981 analysis by Donald Maclean, the onetime British spy and a longtime member of Inozemtsev's staff. Maclean bemoaned the "unqualified" Brezhnev leadership's narrow international horizons and its "one-sided conception of the role in world politics of . . . armed forces."[18] Instead of a modest nuclear deterrent, the Soviet Union was "continually adding to overkill capacity," which brought only "seriously harmful consequences."

> The latest instance of this is the introduction, now well advanced, of a new generation of nuclear rockets targeted upon Western Europe . . . unless the Soviet Union changes its policy [the net result will be] a rise in the level of nuclear confrontation in Europe with no corresponding advantage. [Here] it is much easier to understand the behaviour . . . of the United States than the Soviet Union.[19]

The same held for conventional forces, where the USSR had "a sizeable advantage" over the West and so should agree to "disproportionately large reductions of its own forces." In Asia, too, common sense "pointed clearly towards restitution of the [Kurile] islands as a relatively small price to pay for a much larger gain."[20]

Though Maclean's reflections were not widely circulated at the time, that his views were widely shared is seen even in some of the open foreign-policy literature of 1980–81.[21] Alexander Bovin, writing in the authoritative Party journal *Kommunist*, abandoned his earlier optimism over Soviet influence in the third world and now cautiously echoed Bogomolov on Moscow's blame for the collapse

of détente; Bovin obliquely acknowledged that Afghanistan was a blunder by citing Lenin's warning against "ill-considered, hasty steps" that boosted Western hard-liners.[22] The same point, on the harm to Soviet foreign relations caused by excessive activism abroad, was also emphasized by Arbatov and Burlatsky.[23]

In the closed or specialist-only literature, as seen in a frank IMEMO overview of Western foreign policies, such arguments could be made without need of resort to historical analogies or subtle allusions.[24] Beyond the problem of Soviet expansionism, other fundamental questions were raised about the position of the third world in East-West relations. Viktor Sheinis challenged the prevailing class-based schema that saw many developing states as socialist or "socialist-oriented."[25] Another IMEMO analysis called attention to their changing economic strategies: a turn toward consumer production and small manufacturing, and away from the "catch up fast policy" (*politika dogoniaiushchego razvitiia*).[26] An ISKAN report noted that while the USSR still pushed military sales and mammoth industrial projects, the United States was responding to the third world's new priorities by facilitating technology transfer, encouraging multilateral aid and private investment, and by shifting emphasis to "basic human needs."[27]

Indirect (and sometimes direct) criticism of Soviet behavior extended to other regional issues as well. On Asia, for example, Vladimir Lukin furthered his 1970s arguments in a review of changing U.S. policy in the region. U.S. President Reagan's anti-Communist crusade was duly noted, but so were Chinese, Japanese, and the ASEAN states' fears of Soviet and Vietnamese expansion that drove them to cooperate with the United States.[28] On Europe, analysts of social democracy such as IMEMO's Daniil Proektor, Central Committee staffer Anatoly Chernyaev, and Institute of Social Sciences analyst Alexander Galkin continued their nuanced critiques of West European political, economic, and security policy.[29] On defense and arms control, in contrast to an increasingly harsh official line, there appeared a number of objective, even sympathetic ISKAN reviews of U.S. and European perspectives on nuclear issues.[30]

Specialists also pushed harder than ever for serious economic change, from adoption of cooperative or private enterprise modeled on East European innovations to pursuit of joint ventures with the West.[31] But equally noteworthy was that socioeconomic prob-

lems—and ideas for reform—raised still more sensitive issues about the nature of socialism (and capitalism). Stagnation, caused by rampant bureaucracy and rigid centralization, was seen as a *systemic* problem of "developed socialism." Boris Kurashvili, of the Institute of State and Law, wrote that the ministerial system, essentially unchanged since the 1930s and entirely inappropriate to a modern economy, required "radical" reforms.[32] But reform must not again be confused with "pseudo-reform," for needed now was a *perestroika* of the entire state mechanism.[33] Shakhnazarov, Kurashvili, and others suggested that the core issue was one of democratization.[34] IEMSS analyst Anatoly Butenko also linked democratization to economic reform; echoing his institute colleagues who saw a "revolutionary situation" looming in Eastern Europe, he described a basic "contradiction" between centralized, authoritarian structures and the need for popular initiative and participation.[35]

These diagnoses all rejected the official view that the West—through vestiges of the bourgeois past, or intrigues of the capitalist present—was largely to blame for socialism's woes. However, foreshadowing a division among some reformers that would grow acute under Gorbachev's perestroika, Butenko and Kurashvili harked back to a NEPish vision of Party-led social activization, while Shakhnazarov and Burlatsky looked forward to broader economic and political freedoms.[36] The former looked inward to an essentially Leninist or anti-Stalinist model of *socialist democracy*, while the latter searched outward for increasingly liberal or *social democratic* solutions to stagnation at home and confrontation abroad.[37]

Simultaneously, the worsening of this confrontation in the years 1980 to 1982 provided additional impetus for global-integrationist thought by shaking some of the leadership, and consequently public discourse, out of their confident complacency on military rivalry and the nuclear dilemma. As Brezhnev now pronounced the idea of nuclear victory to be "dangerous madness" and the Party renewed a no-first-use pledge, military and other issues of the global agenda came to the fore.[38] Now many of the concerns raised by Sakharov in 1968, Burlatsky in 1970, and Frolov in 1973—dissident or semi-dissident ideas at that time—entered the mainstream of Soviet thought.

In 1981, Frolov and International Department deputy Zagladin published *Contemporary Global Problems,* which raised issues from

"limits to growth" and depletion of resources to the early, "humanistic" Marx's concerns about mankind and alienation.[39] Also in 1981, and under the same title, Inozemtsev edited an IMEMO volume that surveyed the entire range of pressing global issues in a new light. Backwardness, overpopulation, the environment, hunger, energy, natural resources, and nuclear confrontation were viewed as "universal-human" (*obshchechelovecheskie*) problems whose solution required greater East-West cooperation.[40]

Here, as well as in Shakhnazarov's 1981 book *The Coming World Order* and Burlatsky's 1982 article "The Philosophy of Peace," the nuclear danger was the primary concern.[41] For Shakhnazarov and Zagladin—at least formally—the superiority of the socialist approach to global issues was manifest.[42] Yet their reference to the humanistic concerns of the early Marx marked a qualitative shift in the context of discussion, and their stature as "prominent ideologists" gave the field of globalistics a legitimacy that it had previously lacked.[43] The new middle ground—criticizing Soviet liberals for "an uncritical attitude toward Western works" but also faulting Soviet conservatives for being "insufficiently aware of the nature and depth" of global problems—was an important step toward new thinking in the open literature.[44]

Less prominent ideologists were now correspondingly freer to push the limits even further and risk an "uncritical attitude toward Western works." For example, IEMSS staffer Alexander Tsipko's *Some Philosophical Aspects of the Theory of Socialism* cast Soviet socioeconomic problems in a radically new light.[45] Breaking with the more materialist analysis of his erstwhile coauthor Butenko, Tsipko emphasized "moral and spiritual" problems, "the autonomy of the individual," and "free choice" in socioeconomic development. Tsipko, too, stressed the universal-human nature of these concerns; he cited the Club of Rome, which Shakhnazarov had criticized as "Malthusian," in analyzing the "limits to growth" that constrained both capitalist *and* socialist economies.[46] But common limits existed in the "spiritual-psychological" realm as well; echoing the early *Vekhi* authors (see chapter 1), Tsipko warned against forced leaps in societal development.

> In society, as in nature, there are many interconnected social-psychological systems upon whose balance everything depends. To this day these systems are incompletely understood. Therefore,

> destruction of even one of the links of such systems, such as rejection of some tradition or form of social organization, can have unforeseen consequences for the entire system. "In matters of culture," as Lenin noted, "haste and grand designs" are more harmful than anything.[47]

While Tsipko cited Lenin in praise of the NEP, Burlatsky quoted Engels in support of new thinking on nuclear issues; there would come a time, Engels had noted, when technology would make waging war "unthinkable."[48] Burlatsky stressed global interdependence and repeated the formulation of his 1970 program, that peace was an "absolute value."[49] Moreover, Burlatsky downplayed capitalism's supposed militarism and emphasized the "dialectics" of the arms race, an action-reaction spiral that had acquired a momentum of its own quite apart from the goals and intentions of either side.

An attempt to halt this spiral, to forge professional ties and mutual understanding, lay behind another important development of Brezhnev's final years. Building on longstanding Pugwash contacts as well as the U.S. and Soviet academies of science exchanges of the 1970s, international gatherings on issues of global concern now grew in prominence. Even as some scientific ties were curtailed in the bitter post-Afghanistan climate, others soon expanded—particularly those in the field of nuclear arms control.[50] Beyond the official Committee on International Security and Arms Control (CISAC), led on the Soviet side by Inozemtsev, these included new nonofficial links with such U.S. groups as the National Resources Defense Council and the Federation of American Scientists. Velikhov now brought Roald Sagdeyev and other Soviet physicists into informal U.S.-Soviet discussions of anti-satellite weapons, a test ban, and other issues; as Sagdeyev recalled, "we were becoming more and more active in non-governmental forms of arms control."[51] Their nongovernmental nature was critical as such fora allowed Soviet specialists greater freedom to explore issues without the official constraints of formal Pugwash presentations.

In 1981, American physician Bernard Lown and the Kremlin's head doctor Yevgeny Chazov founded International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.[52] Also that year, Arbatov joined the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security (the

Palme Commission). In these and other such venues, nonscientists, too, "became familiar with various American points of view on . . . foreign, military and economic policy, and they became valuable sources of our education."[53] In 1982, when Velikhov became director of the Soviet CISAC delegation, the number and range of Soviet participants grew still further. As Sagdeyev described, "I met all the great guys—Panovsky, Garwin, Wiesner and Townes—and the discussions were extremely enlightening."[54] ISKAN deputy director Andrei Kokoshin noted the impact of new Westrern ideas (and older, long-supressed Soviet ones) on notions of "nonoffensive defense"[55] And ISKAN director Arbatov recalled how the Palme Commission influenced his thinking:

> For several years I was in constant contact . . . with people who were unusually perceptive and original thinkers. I had to argue with them and find points of common ground. . . . In the midst of once-again tense international relations, new ideas and thoughts were born from collective experience in open, honest, and sometimes heated debate . . . [such as] the idea of "common security" [and] a new approach to nuclear arms.[56]

New Thinking Under Fire

But without support from the Soviet leadership, the emboldened new thinking of 1980–82 remained in a precarious state, a new foreign-policy agenda at odds with an essentially unchanged official line. As East-West relations continued to deteriorate, liberals' positions grew increasingly tenuous; their calls for conciliation sounded increasingly dissonant in an environment of heightened confrontation and militancy. Only a sharp turn at the top could rescue the new thinking from this highly vulnerable position.

But the decrepit Brezhnev was incapable of any bold moves, either toward reform *or* reaction.[57] His incapacity, and the decline or death of others in the core Politburo group that had steered the 1970s course of limited détente abroad and muddle-through at home, began shifting power in the senior leadership toward foreign-policy hawks.[58] The influence of Defense Minister Ustinov and the military grew, partly at the expense of Foreign Minister Gromyko, who was viewed by some as the main executor of a failed détente.[59] Also increasing with the growing immobility at the

top—on secondary if not primary policy matters—was the weight of hard-line "second echelon" Politburo members, such as the Moscow Party boss Viktor Grishin and the International Department head Boris Ponomarev, together with senior Central Committee old thinkers such as Propaganda and Ideology chief Mikhail Zimyanin, Science and Education tsar Sergei Trapeznikov, and *Kommunist* editor Richard Kosolapov.[60] In 1982, as Brezhnev neared death, these reactionaries launched a concerted attack on the new thinkers.

For example, Arbatov fell afoul of Ponomarev for his Palme Commission activity; he also provoked Suslov's ire for sponsoring publication of the commission's report in Moscow.[61] The military harshly criticized Chazov for publicizing his views on the nuclear danger—"demoralizing the Soviet people at a time of great danger."[62] Burlatsky and others who championed nonideological approaches to the arms race were also attacked, and, in late 1982, the old Stalinist Trapeznikov promulgated new, "utterly dogmatic" directives for Academy of Sciences' institutes—a "club" to beat recalcitrant liberals.[63]

More than just scattered attacks, these efforts soon coalesced into a major counteroffensive that took aim at the three most "Westernized" institutes: IMEMO, ISKAN and IEMSS. The first blow, in early 1982, fell upon IMEMO. When an investigation of criminal activity over a relatively trivial matter—the disposal of old furniture—failed to produce serious *kompromat* (compromising material), the big guns were rolled out. In April, the KGB arrested two young staffers for dissident activity and there ensued a drawn-out attempt to purge IMEMO at the highest level and destroy its influence.[64]

The arrested, Andrei Fadin and Pavel Kudyukin, belonged to a group that had circulated leaflets denouncing the official line on events in Poland and praising Solidarity, the independent trade union. They also put out a samizdat journal that drew in others, such as left-wing dissident Boris Kagarlitsky.[65] Such incidents had occurred before and "ordinarily . . . did not have any serious consequences for the institute or its directors." But this time the affair offered a pretext for investigation by a special Party commission, chaired by Grishin and Zimyanin.[66] They found that IMEMO, in part due to "zionist elements," was in a state of "ideological col-

lapse" and had "disoriented the leadership of the country as to the processes underway in the world." That the institute was recognized abroad as a reformist, pro-détente bastion at a time of worsening U.S.-Soviet relations fueled the further charge that IMEMO was being "praised by our enemies."[67]

The victims of this witchhunt, along with some senior IMEMO officials, included director Inozemtsev, whose death in 1982 was hastened by the ordeal.[68] Another casualty was IMEMO's strong public reformism on international affairs; for nearly a year, such views disappeared from the institute's journal.[69] Arbatov and Bovin eventually raised the case with Brezhnev in one of the now-rare moments "when you could have a serious talk with him." Brezhnev, apparently unaware of the matter but sympathetic to his long-time adviser Inozemtsev, promptly phoned Grishin and told him to call the witchhunt off.[70]

Bogomolov also came under fire at this time. Just as the collapse of détente provided ammunition to attack IMEMO and ISKAN, problems in Eastern Europe fueled attacks on IEMSS. For example, the institute's frank criticism of the Polish (and, by extension, Soviet) leadership brought down the wrath of reactionaries in the Central Committee apparatus. Bogomolov was reprimanded by Konstantin Rusakov, chief of the Department for Liaison with Communist and Workers' Parties. Punishments meted out to analysts in the Polish section at IEMSS ranged from suspension of travel privileges to loss of their jobs.[71] Though their warnings had proven absolutely correct, their diagnosis of Polish problems, and harsh criticism of the Polish Communist Party, hit too close to home for Soviet conservatives to tolerate. Conservatives also struck at ISKAN, viewing it as a collective of dubious loyalties because of Arbatov's sheltering of outspoken liberals fired from other positions in academia and journalism. Their suspicions were further fueled by incidents such as that involving two ISKAN analysts who were dismissed on orders from the Central Committee for their too-accurate speculation on Soviet arms-negotiations positions in an interview with *Newsweek*.[72]

As superpower ties worsened during 1982, ISKAN suffered as the main institutional bastion of détente,[73] and soon after Brezhnev's death in November, Arbatov began to feel even more heat. The proximate cause was a memo he had written in December

to Andropov, the new general secretary. Continuing a longstanding practice of informally advising his former Central Committee boss, Arbatov now found his recommendations for liberal cultural-scientific policies rejected and was told henceforth to keep his views to himself.[74] Bovin, another former subordinate of Andropov's, was similarly reprimanded.[75] Arbatov, recalling that already in January 1982 he had been sharply criticized by Suslov, believes that Andropov was seeking to shore up his support among Politburo reactionaries: "They were pressing him from all sides, especially from the right, and he was not always able or willing, to resist this pressure."[76]

In early 1983, Arbatov was summoned to the KGB headquarters to explain his alleged criticism of the Soviet leadership to a group of visiting Americans.[77] In May, he and Bovin received a stinging public reprimand at a plenum of the Central Committee (of which both had been members since 1981):

> Everything was going routinely when suddenly, in the section of the plenum report on counterpropaganda and the need "to denounce those who, consciously or unconsciously, act as a mouthpiece for foreign interests [*poet s chuzhogo golosa*] by spreading all kinds of gossip and rumors," Andropov interrupted the speaker. . . . And in the dead silence of the shocked auditorium, he sharply said the following: "Yes, by the way. I know that there are people sitting in this hall who, in conversation with foreigners, give out information that is unnecessary or even harmful to us. I am not going to name names just now, these comrades themselves know whom I have in mind. And let them remember, this is their final warning."[78]

General Secretary Yuri Andropov: Reformism Revived

Arbatov is surely correct in attributing this episode, at least in part, to Andropov's perceived need to distance himself publicly from the most visible reformers as he consolidated power in a tense international and domestic environment.[79] But it was power that Andropov sought precisely in order to begin long-overdue reforms. As such, his clash with Arbatov highlights a central dilemma of Andropov's reign: initiating change in an ossified, militarized Party-

state system, and doing so against a growing tide of reaction and a backdrop of collapsing East-West relations.

Beyond conservative resistance, Andropov's efforts were hamstrung by other factors: his own limited horizons; foreign-policy crises beyond his control; and, above all, his brevity of tenure. Andropov was general secretary for only 15 months—from November 1982 through February 1984—and his active period was even briefer, some nine months, before he entered the Kremlin hospital from which he would not emerge alive. Yet during these nine months, Andropov undertook more than Brezhnev had over the preceding nine years. He sponsored several economic innovations—"experiments" in enterprise autonomy and decentralized management—and also took small steps toward defusing confrontation with the United States and ending the Afghan war.[80] Although in hindsight these can be seen as inadequate half-measures, they were reasonably bold in the climate and context of 1983. Moreover, they were linked to what would be Andropov's most lasting contribution: shaking the country out of its torpor, openly airing problems, and beginning the political-personnel changes that would later facilitate the inception of perestroika.

In general, Andropov's term was a time of renewed hopes and revived activity for Soviet reformers. Though his direction of the KGB and suppression of dissidence had hardly endeared him to liberals, those who knew him from his even earlier sponsorship of innovative thinking were cautiously optimistic. At a minimum, the era of stagnation seemed to have ended as Andropov took charge with great vigor; he denounced idleness, drunkenness, and corruption, began retiring old Brezhnev-era cadres, and announced his intention to get the country moving again. "We must soberly realize where we find ourselves," he warned.[81] In June 1983, summoning the first Central Committee ideology plenum since 1961, he stated:

> We cannot be satisfied with our pace in shifting the economy onto the rails of intensive development. . . . It is obvious that in searching for ways to solve new tasks, we were not energetic enough, that we often resorted to half measures and could not overcome the accumulated inertia quickly enough. We must now make up for our neglect.[82]

To address the backlog of problems, Andropov sought to tap the country's scientific expertise, stating in his plenum address that "we have not adequately studied the society in which we live and work, and have not fully revealed the laws which govern it, particularly the economic ones."[83] His priority was domestic (primarily economic) affairs, and specialists were now invited to submit their analyses and proposals. Scores responded to the call, including leading reformers ignored under Brezhnev.[84]

Some, such as the oft-persecuted Moscow economist Stanislav Shatalin, were asked to offer their ideas directly to Andropov.[85] Others, such as the Novosibirsk reformers, focused mainly on further refining their critiques; it was at this time, for example, that Tatyana Zaslavskaya's analysis of the socioeconomic divisions underlying stagnation—the famous "Novosibirsk memorandum"—was quietly drafted.[86] Among others who injected their views into the open debate was Academy of Social Sciences director Vadim Medvedev; his *Administration of Socialist Production* argued for decentralizing, marketizing reforms as boldly as anything seen in the mainstream literature for a decade.[87] Medvedev soon replaced Trapeznikov, the long-serving Brezhnev crony and open neo-Stalinist, as head of the Central Committee department overseeing Academy of Sciences institutes.

Early in 1983, Andropov gained Politburo approval to convene a plenum on scientific-technological (i.e., economic) issues; in preparation, work began to assemble and analyze the proposals now pouring into the Central Committee.[88] And in connection with this initiative, Andropov began what were arguably the most important changes of his brief tenure, promoting several younger officials and putting them in charge of plenum preparations. Mikhail Gorbachev, whose leadership responsibilities grew rapidly, was appointed to manage the project. He was assisted by Nikolai Ryzhkov, a senior Gosplan deputy and long-time industrial manager, who was also named to head the newly created Central Committee Economics Department.[89]

Other members of Andropov's young team, distinguished by their energy and distance from corruption, were Viktor Chebrikov, Vitaly Vorotnikov, and Yegor Ligachev. The latter, Party boss of the Tomsk region, was brought to Moscow to head the Party Organizations Department of the Central Committee and charged

with replacing many provincial Brezhnev-era holdovers.[90] Another important appointment was Lev Tolkunev, a protégé of Andropov's from his 1960s Central Committee consultant group, as editor of *Izvestiia*. In general, editors were encouraged to confront problems more openly and honestly, and this produced a modest critical margin in the press and much greater critical freedom in specialist writings.[91] Together, these personnel and political changes were Andropov's main levers in the effort to overcome inertia and fierce conservative resistance in the Party-state apparatus.

In foreign policy, Andropov faced tasks no less daunting. He had inherited bad superpower relations and a U.S. counterpart disinclined to compromise. On the "Euromissile" issue, the two sides had already set themselves on a collision course; SS-20 deployments were far advanced, and NATO's counterdeployments were set to begin in late 1983. Andropov was also confronted by such complications as Reagan's "Star Wars" in March, the Korean airliner tragedy in September, and the U.S. invasion of Grenada in October.[92]

Still, Andropov undertook several initiatives in an attempt to arrest the slide; he announced a halt in testing of the Soviet antisatellite system, for example, and proposed a moratorium on further deployment of SS-20s if NATO would cancel its plans for new ballistic and cruise missiles. Andropov also undertook the first serious Soviet effort to prepare for withdrawal from Afghanistan.[93] But these modest steps were unsuccessful, and with the KAL airliner tragedy and the failure of efforts to block NATO rearmament, relations virtually collapsed. The invective on both sides reached a pitch not seen since the early cold war.[94]

Although clearly a victim of circumstances, Andropov was hardly blameless. Certainly his inherited Afghanistan dilemma was at least partly of his own making. He also ignored advice to take a conciliatory public line on KAL 007, and allowed himself to be persuaded that an ultimatum on Euromissiles would be successful owing to anti-war sentiment in Western Europe.[95] When it failed, there seemed no choice but to follow through (at least temporarily) on his threat to abandon the Geneva arms talks. With better luck and more time, Andropov's foreign policy might have evolved differently. But circumstances dictated otherwise, and in any case—if he is judged by his own beliefs and inclinations—Andropov was

hardly a new thinker.[96] Only bolder steps would have made a real difference, and these could come only from a different leader.

But while his gestures to the West were quite limited, his suggestions to Soviet foreign-policy analysts were far more consequential. Already in November 1982, just days before taking office, Andropov echoed the new thinkers' critique of Soviet support for radical regimes in the third world by arguing that "It is one thing to proclaim socialism . . . and quite another to build it."[97] Further, suggesting a need to demilitarize foreign policy and put domestic affairs first, he noted that "we exercise our main influence on the world revolutionary process through economic policy."[98] Finally, in summoning specialists to search for new solutions, Andropov encouraged study not only of other socialist countries, but of "world" experience in general.[99]

This was all the encouragement that the new thinkers needed. After lying low to weather conservative attacks at the bitter end of Brezhnev's reign, the "year of Andropov" saw another vigorous push for foreign-policy change.[100] It began with a qualitative reappraisal of the main adversary. For example, a 1983 ISKAN study of the U.S. economy bluntly contradicted the official line:

> The basic mass of business interests are not and cannot be drawn into the arms race. . . . The basic interests of the overwhelming majority of US firms depend on mass production for civilian markets, with the normal functioning of which militarization of the economy increasingly interferes.[101]

Shmelev extended this analysis to the international level, arguing that modern capitalism bred not cutthroat and violent competition, but cooperation and stability.[102] Many works now cast Western political-economic life in an increasingly positive light, essentially bringing to broader attention the views developed in the restricted or specialized literature of the 1970s. Notably, in early 1984, the deputy head of the International Department, Zagladin, contradicted the views of Ponomarev, his chief, by criticizing as "premature" the arguments of "some Marxist scholars that the general crisis of capitalism has entered a new stage."[103]

With an open reassessment of the capitalist West, there also came a variety of new (or revived) ideas for easing the confrontation. Burlatsky, for example, offered a proposal for international

cooperation in a revision of his 1970 "Planirovanie" address.[104] Building on his earlier study of the international arms trade, Foreign Ministry staffer Andrei Kozyrev published a plan to limit weapons sales; here, in an open Soviet source, he revealed for the first time data on Soviet participation in this trade that showed that, as of the 1970s, the USSR had become the world's largest weapons exporter.[105] IEMSS analyst Yevgeny Ambartsumov raised the link between domestic- and foreign-policy reforms; joining his colleague Butenko's critique of socialism's systemic "crisis," Ambartsumov drew an explicit parallel to 1921 and called for another NEP.[106] Though stressing domestic problems, the fact that NEP had also seen a turn from confrontation to peaceful coexistence abroad was the clear subtext of Ambartsumov's argument, particularly in the context of the renewed cold war of 1983–84.

Perhaps the most important publication of this period was Shakhnazarov's article "The Logic of Political Thinking in the Nuclear Era."[107] Moved by new insight into the "upside-down logic" of Soviet military policy acquired via special access to Warsaw Pact data—and though debate with senior military officials—Shakhnazarov now revised his earlier arguments in several critical ways.[108] First, the nuclear dilemma now necessitated a "transformed worldview," a shift to a "new way of thinking" (*k novomu obrazu myshleniia*). Its central tenet was that each side "is forced to consider the security of the other as its own." Attempts to gain security unilaterally could only provoke a corresponding buildup that lessened security for all; "only collective security is possible in the nuclear era."[109] A second tenet of Shakhnazarov's new thinking was de-ideologizing international relations. The old belief that "however passionate the ideological dispute and whatever the methods employed in it, they don't threaten the human race," was now found deeply flawed.[110]

Further discarding his earlier ridicule of Western futurology as a "fiasco" and his scorn for Western globalistics as "Malthusian," Shakhnazarov now stressed poverty, the environment, and other problems that, if not solved, threatened consequences "no less dangerous than those of thermonuclear war." These problems, moreover, could be addressed only through "the collective efforts" of all nations.[111] Shakhnazarov also sought to reconcile class with universal priorities, arguing that "Marxism-Leninism . . . has never

opposed class interests to universal-human ones." Given the dangers of confrontation, the latter must now take precedence or else risk "extremely negative consequences."[112]

While exploring such theoretical innovations, attention also turned to the two most pressing concrete foreign-policy issues: the existing military debacle in Afghanistan, and a possible future military debacle in outer space. Regarding the former, 1983–84 saw the Afghan war seriously addressed for the first time since 1980. As noted above, Andropov began work toward ending the conflict. Simultaneously, and almost surely with his tolerance or even approval, criticism of the war was now manifested in a number of ways.[113]

Ambartsumov, in a historical analogy even subtler than his NEP argument, warned of "danger . . . when messianism becomes the official ideology of a superpower." Ostensibly criticizing the U.S. invasion of Grenada, Ambartsumov noted that such a superpower "really believes that it makes the world happy, that it brings progress and culture. . . . Lev Tolstoy exposed the inhumanity of this 'civilizing mission' in chapter 18 of *Hadzhi Murat* which was banned by tsarist censorship."[114] Educated readers knew that Tolstoy's work had in fact been banned for heroically depicting the resistance of Muslim *basmachi* to tsarist imperialism.

At this time, Afghan veteran Col. Leonid Shershnev sent the Politburo his analysis of the war: "The inhuman actions of Soviet soldiers against civilians are systematic and widespread, manifested in plunder . . . destruction of homes . . . desecration of mosques . . . and lack of respect for customs and traditions. As a result, we have been drawn in to a war with the people and it is hopeless."[115] Shershnev, like some other critics, was handled gently for his dissidence. Less fortunate was Lt. Col. Vladimir Kovalevsky, a teacher at the Frunze Military Academy, who "went so far in his lectures as to compare the presence of our troops in Afghanistan with the activities of the USA in Vietnam."[116] Kovalevsky's case "raised considerable alarm" in the army's Main Political Administration because, as the Party moved to expel him, some 10 percent of the student body—nearly all of Kovalevsky's pupils—signed petitions to the academy administration in support of their teacher.[117] It was no coincidence that, soon after Andropov's death, Kovalevsky was indeed fired and kicked out of the Party.[118]

For all its intractability, the Afghan dilemma was a straightforward one. From dissident officers to soldiers' mothers, all understood well that the war was a disaster and must be ended. Much more complex was the issue of strategic weaponry, particularly in space, and here the ideas and initiatives of specialists would prove much more critical.

With the announcement of the U.S. "Star Wars" initiative in March 1983, a familiar Soviet response soon followed. Beyond the rhetorical reply—outrage over Washington's flouting of the ABM Treaty and dire warnings of the program's dangers—the policy response was reflexive: If the Americans build it, so shall we.[119] Further, all other arms talks would be held hostage to the space issue, which became the subject of an enormous Soviet propaganda campaign. As part of the latter, a group of prominent scientists would, it was felt, be useful in the battle for world public opinion. And so the Committee of Soviet Scientists in Defense of Peace and Against the Nuclear Threat was formed two months later.

Unfortunately for partisans of orthodoxy, these prominent scientists were the same ones who, for more than a decade, had been broadening their outlook in various international exchanges. Many were also closely involved in the numerous informal U.S.-Soviet arms control discussions of the late 1970s and early 1980s.[120] The result was that, while initially echoing the official condemnation of U.S. policy, the Soviet Scientists' committee quickly began charting another course.

Almost immediately after the committee's founding, in May 1983, its senior members Velikhov and Kokoshin sent Andropov a report arguing SDI's impracticality and opposing "the hysterical Gromyko policy" of loud propaganda and the threat of a tit-for-tat military reply.[121] Here, at the very outset of its work, the committee had already produced what would be perhaps its most important contribution to the strategic debates of the mid 1980s: the idea of an "asymmetric response," ignoring the cry for absolute parity in favor of a realistic assessment of what SDI could actually do and, if necessary, adoption of simple, low-cost countermeasures to preserve the Soviet deterrent.[122]

Led by Velikhov and Sagdeyev, the scientists' committee also took the initiative to advise Andropov on such matters as anti-satellite weapons and nuclear testing.[123] Meanwhile, other, less-promi-

nent committee members publicized heretofore little-addressed issues such as the detailed climactic and other effects a nuclear exchange would cause.[124] Said one, "We took the issues seriously and came to our own conclusions, such as on the effects of nuclear winter or the possibility of accidental nuclear war. . . . We didn't take instructions from the government, it was the other way around."[125] In the words of another, "what started as another marionette organization, to carry out the leadership's directives, soon began operating as an independent group of specialists. . . . It is in a scientist's nature to question, and we knew the West well by this time."[126]

New Leadership for New Thinking

The emboldened foreign-policy discussions of 1983 were aided by the greater critical freedoms permitted under Andropov and encouraged by the expectation of change that enveloped Soviet intellectuals and much of society at large. Still, the new thinking remained somewhat apart. While exploring modest reforms, Andropov himself was no new thinker. A hard official line mainly prevailed and foreign relations continued to deteriorate during his tenure as Andropov's priority remained domestic change. Similarly, his main long-term contribution to reform—the inception of a study project and creation of a team of young reformers to manage it—was also primarily domestic and economic in focus. But for one member of that team, Mikhail Gorbachev, domestic and foreign-policy reformism grew increasingly linked.

Gorbachev was clearly the leader of Andropov's young protégés. By 1983 he was already a full member of the Politburo, held much greater responsibilities than Andropov's other promotees, and it soon became apparent that he was being groomed for eventual succession. But Gorbachev stood out from the other members of Andropov's team in another important respect; alone among them, he built strong ties to the boldest foreign-policy reformers. Some became unofficial advisers, while others influenced his thinking through writings that he avidly consumed. Gorbachev grew personally close to a number of leading new thinkers during the post-Brezhnev interregnum, forging political and intellectual bonds that would be of critical importance after 1985.

Gorbachev also stood out among the leadership—including the other young reformers—by virtue of his education and early experience. As seen earlier, he and his wife Raisa witnessed first-hand the transforming events of the early thaw era at Moscow State University (MGU), a crucible of debate and original thought that in those years graduated many future leading reformers in all fields—history, economics, philosophy, and science.[127] Gorbachev's subsequent career showed an intolerance of complacency, waste, and stagnation, an open, searching mind, and a reformist bent that contrasted sharply with the overwhelming majority of Party careerists.[128]

These traits were manifested in his record as a dynamic, innovative Party official in his native Stavropol region.[129] They were also seen, and to a certain extent shaped, by Gorbachev's interest in East European reform experience, including the Prague Spring.[130] In an important sense, the latter began long before 1968, in his acquaintance with one of the movement's future leaders, Zdenek Mlynar, at MGU in the early-to-mid 1950s. They drew close—"He is Raisa's and my friend, one of our closest friends during our whole life"—and in 1967 Mlynar paid the couple a highly unusual visit in Stavropol.[131] For two days, they discussed the problems and prospects of reform in their respective countries. And so the crushing of the Prague Spring a year later was deeply disillusioning, though, as Gorbachev admits, he partly shared in the perception of a threat to the socialist camp and participated in the rituals of support for the invasion.[132] The full force of 1968, as "a major impulse to my critical thinking," came only a year later, when Gorbachev, as a member of a Party delegation, visited Czechoslovakia and found a country still seething in the invasion's aftermath. Nearly everywhere the group went, the people—from shopfloor workers up to Communist Party leaders—criticized or snubbed the Soviet visitors.

> People just turned away from us . . . for me it was a shock. Suddenly I understood that, for global strategic and ideological reasons, we had crushed something that had [in fact] ripened within society itself. From that time on, I thought more and more . . . and came to the distressing conclusion that something was really wrong with us.[133]

By the 1970s, such reflections were also fueled by travel in the West that followed his promotion to first secretary of the Party bureau at Stavropol. By many accounts, Gorbachev's visits over the next decade to Italy, France (twice), Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands—some on Party business, others mainly as a tourist—had an enormous impact on his intellectual evolution.[134] Chernyaev, who accompanied Gorbachev on a 1972 trip to Belgium and Holland, recalled that he "stood out from all the other local party bosses by virtue of his unusual passion for change, to correct, to improve."[135] Gorbachev himself described the familiar shock, of a first-time visitor to the West, at the standard of living. But also impressive was "the functioning of a civil society." Having met people ranging from German students and French farmers to Italian workers, the "openness and relaxed, free, and critical discussion" he encountered "shook my faith in the superiority of socialist democracy."[136] Soon, with Gorbachev's promotion to the Central Committee, came other opportunities to gain a "different perspective on socialism. We could order so-called 'white' books off a special list from Progress publishers. That's how I read G. Boffa's three-volume *History of the USSR*, the works of Togliatti, the collection *Dubcek's Drama*, the books of Gramsci, Garaudy, and the articles of Brandt and Mitterand."[137]

In Stavropol, Gorbachev also developed a close relationship with the leader of the neighboring Georgian Republic, Eduard Shevardnadze, probably the most reformist republican leader of the 1970s. The two frequently met, cooperating on practical matters and comparing reform ideas and experience. They also lamented their country's decline and agreed, "Everything's rotten. It's all got to change."[138] In 1978, Gorbachev took the bold step of sending a report to the Central Committee arguing for far-reaching changes in agriculture.[139]

A year later, with Andropov's support, Gorbachev was Central Committee secretary for agriculture and a candidate Politburo member. Back in Moscow again after more than 20 years, he wasted no time in seeking out the country's best minds for new ideas. Beginning a practice unheard of for a high official of the Party, Gorbachev summoned leading reform economists—including Aganbegyan, Zaslavskaya, and Tikhonov—for a series of private seminars.[140] Significantly, these began nearly five years before such

"semi-dissident" scholars were formally tapped under Andropov. Tikhonov later described Gorbachev's special interest in, and considerable knowledge of, the NEP experience as a model for future reforms.[141] Zaslavskaya recalled a 1982 meeting with Gorbachev in which they discussed "a *perestroika* of the economic system."[142]

Toward the end of Brezhnev's reign, Gorbachev also began forging ties with leading foreign-policy new thinkers. Velikhov described their association as beginning in earnest in 1981, over the subject of computers and Gorbachev's interest in streamlining agricultural planning. But soon their discussions turned to foreign policy and ideas for breaking the nuclear stalemate.[143] A similar breadth of interests is recalled by Chernyaev, who at that time was an assistant to International Department head Boris Ponomarev. Chernyaev described his boss's anger at "this upstart, who's supposed to be working on agriculture, sticking his nose where it doesn't belong."[144]

Chernyaev emphasizes three aspects of Gorbachev's early outlook on international affairs. One was an interest in (and openness with) foreigners "that none of his colleagues permitted themselves."[145] Another was his interest in social democracy and admiration for the social democratic-leaning European Communist Parties.[146] And a third was his disgust at the rigid, Comintern-style domination (*kominternovshchina*) that prevailed in intrabloc relations. Revealingly, Zagladin recalled Gorbachev's complaint on this issue:

> We have to deal with [the socialist countries] as equals. And we've got to wonder why the strong, influential parties all turn away from us, to various "deviations," while the small, insignificant ones remain orthodox and faithful. And by what criteria is a party considered "good"? Our main concern is that they support [the Soviet line]. To talk about equality here is simply absurd.[147]

By the early 1980s, Gorbachev had established ties with many liberal foreign-policy thinkers in the Moscow establishment. For example, according to Yevgeny Primakov, Inozemtsev and Gorbachev developed "implicit trust" and saw "eye to eye."[148] Frolov recalled Gorbachev telling him that "he'd been reading works on global problems for 15 years."[149] And Shakhnazarov described how Gorbachev "really surprised me once. Back when he

was still agriculture secretary we met in the corridor, and he said that he'd read my book *The Coming World Order* and that he really liked it."[150]

On practical policy issues, Velikhov's and Arbatov's influence on Gorbachev was apparently strongest—the former on arms control, and the latter on broader East-West relations. Beginning in 1983, with his appointment to head the Supreme Soviet's international-affairs committee, Gorbachev's foreign activity expanded greatly and he drew increasingly on Arbatov and Velikhov for advice. Both played important preparatory roles in his May 1983 visit to Canada.[151] As Sagdeyev writes, "My friends Arbatov and Velikhov were already considered members of Gorbachev's team."[152]

Gorbachev's Canadian trip was also decisive in bringing another member to this team—Alexander Yakovlev. During the visit, Gorbachev spent considerable time with Yakovlev, then in his tenth year of ambassadorial exile for having run afoul of resurgent Russian-national chauvinism. The two now renewed their earlier acquaintance and found that they were "kindred spirits."[153] "Tossing out the official program and forgetting about Canadian agriculture, they spent hours talking about Russia."[154] These talks "had a decisive impact" on Gorbachev, helping him "to understand in much greater depth the processes occurring in the Western world [as well as] questions of democratization, freedom, and glasnost. As Gorbachev later told me . . . Yakovlev expounded his vision of development in the Soviet Union and the world as a whole, suggesting ways of improving our society."[155] In Yakovlev's own summary, "We spoke completely frankly about everything . . . the main idea was that society must change, it must be built on different principles—all that was there. It's clear that these thoughts didn't just appear spontaneously, accidentally, in March of 1985."[156]

For Yakovlev, having observed détente's demise and much else from his vantage point in the West, these thoughts were already quite radical. Earlier known as a reformist apparatchik for efforts that also played a part in his banishment, the subsequent evolution of his worldview is revealed in an essay that he had completed in 1983 just prior to Gorbachev's visit.[157] In it, Yakovlev lambastes stagnation and militarization while emphasizing all the concerns of a broad, new-thinking agenda. These included: criticism of dogmatic social thought and of belief in the infallibility of one's own

model; admiration for the market, as a practical *and* ethical socioeconomic institution, and scorn for an outdated view of primitive capitalism; concern over global problems and praise for Western futurology; lamentation over the revolutionary destruction of avant-garde expression and Russia's lost place in world culture; and, finally, an appeal for recovery of "fundamental values" and establishment of a "worldwide humanism."[158]

Immediately after Gorbachev's return from Canada, Yakovlev's long exile ended and he was named director of IMEMO. The institute, cowed by the attacks of 1982 and rudderless since the death that year of Inozemtsev, quickly revived under Yakovlev's direction. Recalled one staffer, "He'd lived in the West for 10 years, it was incredible experience, and his guidance helped us overcome the remaining dogmas."[159] Yakovlev "assigned his researchers the work of John K. Galbraith on post-industrial societies, that of Wassily Leontiev on growth, and that of Daniel Bell on the end of ideology."[160] Soon IMEMO was producing studies that proposed creation of Soviet-Western joint ventures and warned that, without radical economic reform, the country would sink to the status of the third world in 15 years.[161]

Yakovlev himself credits IMEMO's staff in the institute's revival, recalling that now he "was listening to smart people."[162] One of those, military-affairs analyst Sergei Blagovolin, had just completed a doctoral thesis on NATO, essentially arguing the economic and political folly of a Soviet policy that sought to match the combined might of all the country's potential adversaries.[163] "Yakovlev read it, called me in, and asked: 'If you take out the anti-imperialist jargon, do you realize what you've written? That we're at a dead end!' " A report based on this research, and many other similar memos, became part of "a steady flow of information to Gorbachev."[164] Yakovlev's own characterization is that "we were collecting heresies."[165]

For the most part, these ideas remained separate from the official plenum preparations that proceeded simultaneously. The latter, as noted, had an overwhelmingly domestic focus, and foreign-policy "heresies" were mostly a matter of private discussion and analysis among Gorbachev, Yakovlev, Arbatov, Velikhov, and a few others.[166] This group, described by Sagdeyev as "Gorbachev's team," was distinct from the "Andropov team" assembling reform propos-

als through the Central Committee apparatus. Still, at Gorbachev's direction, some of the former were brought into the latter. As noted by Vadim Medvedev, in addition to domestic analyses, "other comrades contributed their international experience."[167]

By early 1984, the plenum project had distilled numerous studies and proposals down to 110 separate documents. These, Gorbachev recalled, were "the conclusions of academicians, writers, prominent specialists, and public figures . . . the materials were prepared for a special Central Committee plenum on issues of scientific-technological progress, and your humble servant was assigned to give the main report. But that plenum was never held."[168]

The Neo-Stalinists Bid for Power

That plenum was not held because its reformist goals were opposed by powerful conservatives. Already under fire because of Andropov's campaigns against stagnation and corruption, and threatened by the retirement of status-quo cadres, the old guard knew exactly where his "experiments" were heading—to the erosion of their main power base in the economy as decentralizing, anti-bureaucratic innovations were adopted. Initially sent reeling by Andropov's vigorous start, they quickly regrouped, and by late 1983, with Andropov's health failing, they struck back. Beginning with renewed attacks on the most reformist individuals and institutes, the hard-liners' counteroffensive grew so broad as to reveal deep domestic and foreign-policy divisions at the highest levels. By 1984, with Andropov's death and the accession of Chernenko, they struck even harder.

While Chernenko's words pledged continuity with Andropov's initiatives, his deeds represented mostly a return to the muddle-through, conservative course of his long-time patron Brezhnev.[169] But Chernenko's political and physical weakness soon created another vacuum at the top that enabled officials far more reactionary than he to seize the initiative. Like the reformers, they, too, understood the long-run bankruptcy of a Brezhnevite, do-nothing course. But instead of liberalizing domestic and foreign-policy changes, they sought a return to older, "proven methods" of tight control at home and confrontation abroad.[170]

Chernenko's own antipathy toward serious reforms had been

revealed back at the Central Committee plenum of June 1983. From the same rostrum where Andropov lamented the "inertia" and "half-measures" of the past, and called on the country's specialists to tackle old problems with new approaches, Chernenko took a different tack. He assailed the Novosibirsk Institute, for example, and also criticized TsEMI, "of which we expected much . . . but from whom we have yet to see any major concrete research."[171] Although these and other reformist institutes had revived under Andropov, under Chernenko they again came under siege. For example, the security investigation that ensued after Zaslavskaya's "Novosibirsk memorandum" leaked to the West in 1983 was now followed by renewed ideological pressure on her and her boss Aganbegyan.

The reactionaries also struck against IEMSS. Butenko and Ambartsumov, the theorists of socialism's contradictions and crises, were subjected to fierce attacks orchestrated by Richard Kosolapov, editor of *Kommunist*. Butenko was forced to recant in early 1984; Ambartsumov was demolished in an article in *Kommunist* later that year.[172] Another IEMSS analyst, the *Vekhi*-admiring Tsipko, also came to grief. His globally oriented, pro-NEP book *Some Philosophical Aspects of the Theory of Socialism* had been published, under Andropov, only after two years of struggling with the censors. Now, under Chernenko, a full-blown scandal ensued; all remaining copies of the book were recalled and Tsipko's editor at the Nauka publishing house was fired.[173] Tsipko was savaged in various academic fora as Kosolapov prepared the coup de grâce for a forthcoming issue of *Kommunist*.[174] Only the intervention of Gorbachev, who had read and admired the book, saved Tsipko from annihilation.[175]

Foreign-policy specialists were also beleaguered. Reformist analysts in the Central Committee were dismayed by a new directive that—limiting apparat positions to those who had chaired local Party committees—now favored conservative hacks over qualified area experts.[176] IMEMO director Yakovlev clashed repeatedly with Grishin, the Moscow Party boss, and Zimyanin, the ideology secretary, who had been Inozemtsev's main tormenters.[177] Arbatov, too, felt renewed heat. In addition to the usual criticism, hard-liners now had the pretext of a security breach (like the Novosibirsk report, only this case was far more serious) with which to beat Arbatov's institute. Their pretext was the affair of ISKAN staffer Vladimir

Potashov, who was arrested by the KGB for providing the CIA with classified information concerning Moscow's positions on key issues in U.S.-Soviet relations.[178]

These relations were in fact fast approaching a nadir as Andropov succumbed to his final illness in late 1983 and early 1984. The repercussions of KAL 007 continued to grow, followed by the failure of Moscow's Euromissile gambit, the deployment of new NATO missiles, and the Soviet walkout from the Geneva arms talks. Now, more than just attacking the new thinkers, resurgent hard-liners brought top-level foreign-policy disputes into the open. For example, after Gromyko defended détente's gains with reference to Lenin's flexibility toward the West, the chief of the general staff, Nikolai Ogarkov, answered with a broadside pointing out that Lenin's disarmament policies of the 1920s had ultimately failed.[179] An even louder anti-détente voice was that of Politburo member Grigory Romanov, who pronounced détente dead and warned darkly of NATO preparations for a first strike against the USSR.[180]

In the summer of 1984, as the date of the long-scheduled visit of East German leader Erich Honecker to the FRG approached, another policy dispute was on public display. Supporters of détente such as Bovin and Zagladin wrote (tellingly, in the *Izvestiia* of Andropov protégé Lev Tolkunev) in support of Honecker's visit; they argued for efforts to normalize East-West relations, including expanded trade, and downplayed the significance of the Christian Democrats' triumph in recent West German elections. Others (writing mainly in the conservative Victor Afanasyev's *Pravda*) took a harder line, depicting the FRG as a revanchist pawn of the United States and warning of economic leverage that Bonn could use to "ideologically disarm" the East.[181] The debate ended in a victory for the hard-liners as Honecker's visit was abruptly canceled.

At its peak, Soviet propaganda reached a pitch unseen since early in the cold war. Scenes of World War II filled television and movie screens, Reagan was compared to Hitler, and NATO's attack plans were "exposed." A large increase in the defense budget was publicly announced and civil-defense preparations were heightened.[182] Privately, responding to directives for closer attention to Western nuclear activities, KGB residents abroad deluged Moscow with intelligence that reportedly convinced many in the leadership

that war was imminent.[183] Writing in early 1984, Kosolapov depicted the West as a doomed, fevered maniac:

> Swallowed up in the abyss of its general crisis, capitalism becomes especially dangerous. In ancient times, slave-holders and feudal lords ordered that their wives, servants and slaves be buried with them when they died. In our times, capitalism, in leaving the historical scene, is ready to take with it all life on earth.[184]

Nobody with memories of the earlier cold war could miss the Stalinist echo—the infamous thesis that as socialism grows stronger, its enemies become more devious and desperate—in Kosolapov's diatribe.[185] But such gross inflation of the Western threat raised an even earlier parallel with the Stalinist past—with 1927–28, when war-scare propaganda helped hard-line forces to triumph in a domestic power struggle. In 1983–84, the threat was not Anglo-American invasion but a NATO nuclear strike.[186] As Gorbachev later described it, "things were near a boiling point, it worried us. Wherever you went, you encountered the same questions. When will the war come? Will there be war or not?"[187]

The extent to which the Soviet leadership may have succumbed to a largely self-generated war scare remains unclear. No doubt, as in the late 1920s, a heightened foreign threat served hard-line interests in a struggle that was primarily domestic; the main goal of its exponents was to squelch reforms and gain power at home. Still, these reactionaries had a long-term foreign agenda that was anything but conciliatory. Confrontation abroad served not only the immediate purpose of gaining power, but also that of tightening control and strengthening the hard-liners' positions in the militarized Party-state system.

All the same, the extreme cold-war imagery evoked by the hard-liners cannot be fully understood solely in terms of a domestic power struggle while ignoring their beliefs, values, and core identity. The perceived Stalinist legacy of order and discipline certainly had broad appeal in a time of physical and spiritual decay; but suggestions of skewed domestic priorities, immense new sacrifice, and even war were arguably counterproductive, not only in society at large but among the broad middle ranks of Party and managerial elites.[188] That a group of older, Stalin-trained reactionaries in the top leadership reflexively invoked earlier images—from anti-foreign, anti-

Semitic echoes of the postwar campaign against "cosmopolitanism" to Kosolapov's view of capitalism lashing out from "the abyss of its general crisis"—is certainly revealing.[189]

So, too, were the directives that Trapeznikov had recently issued to Soviet research institutes. These praised "the economic debate of 1951, and Stalin's contribution to it" as a model of analysis for the current period.[190] One side in that earlier debate—which concerned foreign affairs more than economics—argued that World War II had eased capitalism's aggressiveness and ended its hostile encirclement of the USSR, thus permitting a relaxation of the country's fortress-like isolation. But these views were demolished by Stalin whose "contribution to the debate," his 1952 *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, was a primer for relentless cold war.[191] That there were deep ideological and emotional ties to the Stalinist worldview at work in 1983–84, and not just near-term political considerations, is also revealed in a series of steps that, more ominously than at any time since the mid 1960s, pointed again toward the tyrant's rehabilitation. These included awarding a state prize to an openly Stalinist novel,[192] Stalin's reappearance in television and films,[193] and a decision to readmit Stalin's faithful lieutenant Vyacheslav Molotov to the Communist Party. At the Politburo meeting that discussed this step (and the further one of readmitting Malenkov and Kaganovich), the old guard—Chernenko, Ustinov, Gromyko, and Tikhonov—engaged in an orgy of Khrushchev-bashing and nostalgia for Stalin.[194]

At the same time that Stalin's aged henchman was being rehabilitated, Yakovlev recalls, a legal case was in the works against "28 specialists at various Moscow institutes."[195] Thus, by late 1984, reformers and new thinkers were threatened not only with another "theoretical" defeat, but by a broader academic purge that would silence their unwanted voices once and for all. And the reactionaries sought not only victory on the academic front; they were also preparing specific steps for a hard-line turn in policy. For example, the announced 14 percent hike in military spending was dwarfed by an increase of 45 percent that was now incorporated in preparations for the next five-year plan (for the period 1986–90).[196] The implications such a sharp turn held for both domestic and foreign policy are obvious.

But the permanence of such a turn would remain in doubt so long as transition and turnover continued at the top. Thus it was important to cement hard-line policies by decisions of a Party congress. Here the reactionaries "were in a race with death." As Arbatov recalls, "their bets were on the 27th CPSU Congress, which was [scheduled] for early 1986. But by late 1984 . . . it grew clear that Chernenko probably would not last [so they pushed through] a decision . . . to advance the congress' date."[197]

But the most important decision for the country's future was the choice of a new general secretary, one healthy enough to see major changes through and chart a long-run course. And here, despite the "inevitability" of reforms that many detect in hindsight, much of the preceding suggests that a liberalizing course was anything but inevitable. In late 1984, with Andropov gone, Chernenko dying, and Gromyko weakened, hard-liners such as Ustinov, Grishin, Tikhonov, and the ascendant Romanov appeared to have the upper hand. As Yakovlev recalled, "With the exception of Gorbachev, all the members of the party-state leadership at that time leaned toward nondemocratic methods, a return to the system of camps, prisons and prohibitions. They wanted to crush anyone whose political or philosophical views went beyond the boundaries of Marxism."[198]

Yakovlev's reference to "camps, prisons and prohibitions" is probably exaggerated, for there is little evidence that a literal return to Stalinist methods was planned. But the reactionaries clearly sought hard-line policies at home and an even more confrontational turn abroad, a course that can certainly be characterized as neo-Stalinist. Had this course been chosen, moreover, the resultant sharpening of foreign and domestic crises might indeed have eventually led to a truly "Stalinist" outcome.

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The years 1980–84 were, in many respects, a time of culminations. The policies of offensive détente abroad and muddle-through at home, after decades of tinkering and delay, seemed nearly spent. At least to those whose concerns extended beyond the immediate future, it increasingly appeared that the country was fast approaching a crossroads. The choice, for many, seemed increasingly stark: either back to older, proven methods; or forward to new, untried ones.

To the great fortune of the entire world, and against powerful opposition, the latter course was chosen. Gorbachev's succession, and the subsequent development of his policies, will be examined in the chapter that follows. In reviewing the events of 1980–84, most important was that, despite a surge of reaction, the reformist cause advanced and a reformer moved into position to take power. Moreover, of all Andropov's reformist protégés, Gorbachev was certainly the one with the most far-reaching goals for changing the Soviet system and society. Under his dynamic leadership, the post-Brezhnev era would finally begin.

As much as for his bold domestic agenda, Gorbachev also stood out as the only one of the reformers in the leadership who was close to the new thinking. All desired an end to the arms race, but only Gorbachev possessed the interest, experience, and intellectual ties to new-thinking ideas and individuals that would prove absolutely essential in winding down nearly 70 years of Soviet-Western hostility, isolation, and cold war in less than five.