■

Russia and the Idea of the West

Russia and the Idea of the West

GORBACHEV, INTELLECTUALS, AND THE END OF THE COLD WAR

Robert D. English

Columbia University Press NEW YORK

Columbia University Press
Publishers Since 1893
New York Chichester, West Sussex

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
English, Robert (Robert D.)
Russia and the idea of the West : Gorbachev, intellectuals, and the end of the Cold War
Robert English.
p.cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-231-11058-8 (cl) — ISBN 0-231-11059-6 (pa)
1. Soviet Union—Politics and government—1953–1985—Philosophy. 2. Soviet Union—Politics and government—1985–1991—Philosophy. 3. Intellectuals—Soviet Union—Political activity. 4. Soviet Union—relations—United States. 5. United States—Relations—Soviet Union. 6. Soviet Union—Relations—Europe, Western. 7. Europe, Western—Relations—Soviet Union. I. Title.

DK274.E54 2000
303.48'24701821—dc21 00-024327

Casebound editions of Columbia University Press books
are printed on permanent and durable acid-free paper.

Printed in the United States of America
Designed by Audrey Smith

c 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
p 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For Magda, Dave, Zhenya, and Bob

Contents

Preface: An Intellectual History

This book was conceived in the heady early days of perestroika with the intention of exploring a seemingly simple question: What was the source of the so-called "new thinking" that, already in 1987–88, was radically transforming both the theory and practice of Soviet international relations? With an undergraduate education focused on Russian and especially East European history, followed by a master's degree in international affairs and six years' subsequent work in defense and arms–control analysis, I began the formal study of political science with an eclectic and admittedly unsystematic perspective on Soviet politics. And it was a perspective that two years of training in preparation for thesis research did little to "systematize." For Princeton, in its wisdom, allowed me to divide my coursework among the Departments of Politics, History, and the Woodrow Wilson School. Encouraged simultaneously to explore the nature of the international and domestic systems, to appreciate both the influence of culture and the innovation of leadership, and to understand the complex sources of previous reform epochs in Russian and Soviet politics, I was ultimately on my own in searching for the nexus of power and ideology in perestroika.

This "benign neglect" was something I initially regretted as my Moscow fieldwork began in earnest in mid-1989. I envied my exchange colleagues their fine-tuned theories and specific research assignments, which contrasted sharply with my admittedly vague focus on "within-system reformers" and my research mission–then little better defined than to talk to as many people as possible, and read as much as I could, about foreign affairs. But this regret soon turned to appreciation because, with so much in flux (from policy itself to the people and ideas behind it, and the opportunities to

explore both) a looser "orienting framework" allowed me continually to learn, adapt, and innovate.

These conditions, with the added circumstance of my wife's work as a correspondent for *Time*, then *Newsweek* and the *Wall Street Journal*, were invaluable, in both enriching and prolonging my stay in Moscow (through late-1991). This gave me the time to work in the archives of the USSR Foreign Ministry and the closed, *spetskhran* collections of several foreign-policy institutes. It enabled me to travel widely, in both provincial Russia and such regional centers of early reformist thought as Tallinn and Tbilisi (and to view the collapse of empire from the periphery as well as the metropole). Most of all, it allowed me the opportunity to conduct nearly 400 interviews with more than 100 different individuals. They ranged from Brezhnev-era Politburo members Petr Shelest and Gennady Voronov to such perestroika-era notables as Mikhail Gorbachev, Eduard Shevardnadze, Alexander Yakovlev, Yegor Ligachev, and Sergei Akhromeyev. But even more important were meetings with dozens of lesser-known apparatchiks and academics–foreign-affairs analysts, economists, historians, philosophers, scientists, artists, writers, and diplomats. These interviews–and the unpublished studies and memoranda to which they led, together with numerous classified reports, published articles, and memoirs–would constitute the core of my research.

Time and again, long afternoons or evenings spent reliving little-known events of the 1950s or reconstructing closed-door debates of the 1960s and 1970s uncovered the myriad episodes and experiences that contributed to the emergence of new thinking. Scientists recalled their earliest concerns about the environment; economists described their first exposure to Yugoslav "self-management" or their first reading of Paul Samuelson; historians recounted their thaw-era research in Poland and Italy; philosophers and sociologists led me to samizdat lectures and the works of obscure scholars in institutes far beyond Moscow. Some policy analysts, diplomats, and even military officers eventually opened their personal archives to me. Others opened the door to an ever-widening circle of interlocutors, and thus to an ever-growing appreciation of the social as well as intellectual dimensions of the new thinkers as a diverse but unified community of "Westernizing" reformers.

Little of this would have emerged had I begun with a narrowly

structured model and rigid research plan. Even less would it have been possible had I followed the advice of one senior Sovietologist who, in a predeparture briefing, urged me to conduct my interviews via a standardized questionnaire. What little that would have gained me in quantifiability would have cost much in qualitative terms. Only a free-flowing and wide-ranging approach, going deeply into the particular experiences of each individual while building on the insights gleaned from others, could have yielded so much. For not until months into the process–only when I had acquired a large evidentiary base and thus begun to see the contours of a little-known intellectual history–did I even know which questions to ask.

Throughout, there was a growing sense of urgency as a shifting political climate affected the accessibility or volubility of some interlocutors, while mortality began to take its toll on others. Many were the "Children of the 20th Party Congress," that landmark event in post-Stalin liberalization, who by the late 1980s were well into their sixties. Others survive, and I was able to supplement my original research–and better place it in political-historical context–with extended return visits to the "new" Russia during the parliamentary elections of December 1993 and the presidential contest of June/July 1996. Readers of the chapters that follow will judge for themselves the extent to which I have found that proper context.

For this preface, there remains only to acknowledge the many institutions and individuals who made this project possible. The International Research and Exchanges Board supported my first, critical academic year in Moscow; the USSR Academy of Sciences extended my research privileges for two more; and the Princeton Society of Fellows and Center of International Studies supported the writing of a dissertation. Allegheny College funded subsequent research in Moscow that was vital in revising this book in manuscript.

Among numerous Russian-Soviet advisers and friends, special thanks are owed Georgy Arbatov, Alexander Bessmertnykh, Nikolai Bukharin, Anatoly Chernyaev, Gennady Gerasimov, Viktor Girshfeld, Vladimir Kovalevsky, Tatyana Kutkovets, Igor Malashenko, Merab Mamardashvili, Daniil Melamid, Constantine Pleshakov, Yuri Senokosov, Vladimir Tikhonov, Alexander Tsipko, Yuri Zamoshkin, and Rostislav Zolotaryev. I am also most grateful for the personal and intellectual comradeship of Julie Newton, Michael Kraus, and Allison

Stanger, and for the warmth and wisdom of three generations of the Pestretsova family–Anka, Tanya, and Tyotya Anna.

Academic advisers who, from diverse perspectives, each lent their time and sage advice are Richard Wortman, Fred Greenstein, and Dick Ullman. Others commented on various parts of the manuscript at various stages of its completion: Nancy Bermeo, Nikolai Biryukov, Craige Champion, Robert Herman, Howard Tamashiro, Vladislav Zubok, and three anonymous reviewers of Columbia University Press. Two whose guidance was exceptionally important, in both the inception and completion of the project, are Jim McAdams and Bill Wohlforth. But my greatest scholarly debt is to two senior mentors, Bob Tucker and Steve Cohen, who prepared me superbly for the study of Russia: sharing their deep knowledge and unsurpassed insights into Soviet politics, they lent me the best possible "intellectual armor" but sent me off to contend alone–free to survey the flanks and pursue various quixotic charges until, through the "fog" of upheaval and change, I also saw the continuities at which they had been pointing all along.

But in fact I did not contend alone, and my deepest debt is to my wife, Liza. Together we interviewed presidents and prostitutes, spoke at conferences and surveyed kolkhozy, crossed the Armenian-Azerbaijani frontier and braved the no-man's-land of Tskhinvali–always discussing, often arguing, sometimes even agreeing. From the barricades of Riga and Dubosary to the parliaments of Tallinn and Yerevan, from the cafes of Tbilisi to the corridors of Staraya Ploshchad, this has been, in every sense, a journey we made together.

Robert D. English
September 1999

Russia and the Idea of the West