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An Appeal to the People

Glasnost – Aims and Means

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The New Slogans

When Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary, the Soviet Communist party took a long stride into the world of mass communication and public relations. What Western politicians have known for a long time now at long last dawned upon the Soviet leadership: To get a message across not only *what* is said is important, but also *how* it is said. When Ronald Reagan ran for presidency in the United States, his superior ability to communicate with the media gave him the upper hand over his rivals, but even «the great communicator» has been eclipsed by Gorbachev. Both superpower leaders have sworn that they will fight for peace and disarmament, but public opinion in Western Europe has more faith in the Eastern than in the Western assurances.¹⁾

What is the secret behind Gorbachev's success with the public? There is, of course, no simple answer to this question, and I will emphasise only one aspect here: the ability to formulate good slogans. The significance of slogans in politics has always been acknowledged by Soviet leaders. Lenin was a true master of the art and outwitted his political rivals in 1917 with catchy, simple demands for «bread, peace and all power to the soviets». In later years, however, the art was practised less elegantly. Which exciting slogans do we associate with the Brezhnev era, if any?

Gorbachev has decided to launch his programme for renewal of Soviet society under four watchwords: «Restructuring» (perestroika), «acceleration» (uskorenie), «new political thinking» (novoe politicheskoe myshlenie) and «glasnost». These words now fill the columns of *Pravda* and, apparently, the mind of the average Soviet citizen. As long as Gorbachev can follow them up with practical moves such as releasing political prisoners and putting forth startling disarmament proposals, the slogans will not ossify and turn into ritualistic incantations. So far there are reasons to believe that they indeed portend important changes in Soviet society.

Acceleration

But what kind of changes? What is the message these slogans are supposed to convey? Between them there exists a certain division of labour. *Perestroika* is the overarching collective term for the whole process and is best studied through an analysis of the separate components.

Acceleration is the slogan directed towards the sphere of production. It aims at higher productivity, better quality control, better implementation of high technology, etc. Taken in its literal sense this slogan is the least revolutionary of those Gorbachev has to offer. Soviet leaders long before Gorbachev (as well as political leaders in most other countries) have always called for greater efficiency. The decisive question is what Gorbachev will use as *propellant* to achieve acceleration: exhortations, coercion, material stimuli, market mechanisms or perhaps something quite different.

New Political Thinking

The «new political thinking» aims at pulling *international politics* out of the backwater. This expression now to a large extent overshadows the more traditional concept of «peaceful coexistence» which is associated with Nikita Khrushchev as *his* most important contribution to political vocabulary. (It had been used occasionally by Lenin and Stalin, but not as forcefully and systematically as by Khrushchev). New political thinking has not supplanted coexistence, but rather expands and specifies it. It focuses to a larger degree on so-called «global problems» (an expression that came into vogue among progressive Soviet social scientists during Brezhnev's last years)²⁾: the impending breakdown of the eco-system, the everyawning gap between industrialised and underdeveloped countries, the population bomb, and last but not least the even more menacing nuclear bomb. A common feature among these disparate problems, as the Soviets see it, is the fact they can be solved only through a gigantic common effort among countries with different political systems. Whereas peaceful coexistence as it stood could be interpreted as a passive «live and let live», the new political thinking emphasises the *interdependence* of the contemporary world.³⁾

In this perspective the danger of a nuclear catastrophe is one of seven-

ral global problems, but it is still viewed as the most urgent one. Also in this area Soviet foreign affairs specialists are trying out new approaches. Besides parity, which up to now has been the paramount goal of Soviet military build-up, the concept of «reasonable sufficiency» is being used with increasing frequency. It is too early to say whether it is related to the Western concept of «minimal deterrence».

It is generally assumed that Gorbachev's disarmament initiatives must be explained against the background of internal Soviet politics: firstly, triumphs on the international scene may convince his compatriots that he really is the dynamic leader he is portrayed as. Secondly, a reversal of the arms race can, in the long run, release resources which are sorely needed in civilian production. In this perspective the new political thinking is a means to further economic acceleration. In this article I shall argue that a similar aim-means relation exists between *uskorenie* and the final slogan - *glasnost*.

Glasnost

The operational field of *glasnost* may be said to be «culture», taken in a broad sense to include what today is understood as «political culture». ⁴⁾ The word is usually translated as (greater) openness, but other translations have also been suggested, for instance «publicity». The fact that the word «*glasnost*» has passed untranslated into most European languages indicates that it is hard to find satisfactory equivalents.

«*Glasnost*» is a fairly rare word not only in Soviet political vocabulary, but in Russian spoken language in general. It is, however, no neologism, and has been found in the speeches of both Lenin and Brezhnev. ⁵⁾ The standard Russian dictionary by S.I. Ozhegov explains it as a substantivation of the adjective «*glasny*» which means «accessible to public information and discussion». The word is etymologically connected with «voice» and people are clearly encouraged to speak and write more candidly. ⁶⁾ Boris Pasternak's novel «*Dr. Zhivago*» is now «printable» whereas rumours in the West that the books of Aleksander Solzhenitsyn will be printed next are most likely premature.

But more fundamental than the «whats» and «whos» of *glasnost* are the «whys» and «wherefores». Which aims is Gorbachev hoping to achieve by the introduction of a new openness in public affairs? What

kind of political dividends can he collect, if any? Clearly it will secure him the support of large parts of the cultural, and some of the technical, intelligentsia, but just as clearly it will engender considerable opposition and dissatisfaction among those who will now have their murky affairs exposed under the greater openness. These are primarily people in public office who wield substantial power. There is no reason to believe that the emphasis on glasnost will automatically make Gorbachev a popular leader in all sections of Soviet society.

Several students of Soviet affairs have pointed to the social dynamics and technical development in the recent decades to explain why glasnost is now being introduced. One of the first and most important cultural campaigns launched by the Bolsheviks after the 1917 Revolution was the effort to liquidate illiteracy. Since then the emphasis on education has run through all subsequent modernisation drives. As soon as primary school had been made compulsory, the Soviets tried to make secondary education, and later higher education, available to as many as possible. Whether the leaders like it or not, this educational explosion has forcefully stimulated the intellectual curiosity of large portions of the population. It is exceptionally difficult to convey high quality knowledge to the pupils without sharpening their discernment and quest for truth. Glasnost thus becomes a popular demand.

At the same time the currents of information in modern societies have swelled up tremendously. In the postindustrial era, production of steel and cast iron is no longer the most important indicator of economic growth. The ability to store, circulate and make use of large amounts of information is of vital importance. Data bases are introduced as a panacea in all fields, in the East as well as in the West. Computers have for a long time been the dream of the technocrats in the Soviet Central Planning Agency, the Gosplan. They have hoped that new technology will at last make it possible to work out a foolproof Five Year Plan. But in order to boost the Soviet economy the information must be allowed to flow freely in society and be tapped by all who need it, not only by the planners in Moscow. This presupposes and fosters glasnost.

Convergence?

The significance of these processes should not be underestimated. This perspective shows that glasnost is not an arbitrary whim of a new leader

in the Kremlin, but the end result of long development. One should, however, not jump to the conclusion that the Soviet society of its own accord is bound to acquire the same traits as our own. This is what is generally known as the convergence theory, a theory which has had its adherents in the West since the 1960s, for instance in the person of the prominent economist John Kenneth Galbraith. This theory has always been emphatically rejected by Soviet scholars and political leaders, and it is not difficult to see why. It postulates among other things that the power monopoly of the Communist party will gradually be eroded and eventually dissolved. In that case Gorbachev would be sawing off the branch he is sitting on. The Soviets have indeed not changed their attitude towards the convergence theory since he came to power. Galbraith is singled out for attack in an article in the ardently pro-glasnost periodical *Moscow News* by the economist Eduard Arab-Ogly. Arab-Ogly initially admits that convergence «exists objectively» but by way of some tortuous arguments he arrives at the conclusion that this is not so after all. He claims that historically there is no drawing together of the two systems, but rather a socio-political *divergence*. «In short, we move farther and farther away from that speculative crossroads at which, we are told, we are fatally doomed to meet and embrace each other». ⁷⁾

Glasnost as Populism

Glasnost Under the Tsar

This rather gloomy view is to my mind an exaggeration. I do believe, though, that glasnost is quite conceivable also within a political system markedly different from ours. It may actually be launched as a means not to emancipate society from the grip of a ubiquitous state, but instead to strengthen the power of the state over the citizens. To support this assertion I will produce a piece of evidence from tsarist Russia. It can be shown that even before the revolution the term «glasnost» was part of the political language. To be sure, far from all political discussers at that time had it in their program. The ideologists of the court spoke little, if at all, of the need for glasnost; they insisted instead on the absolute, God-given prerogatives of the tsar and understood the relationship between him and the people in categories of command and obedience. The radical intelligentsia on their side felt equally little need to include glasnost among their political aims. They strove not to reform, but to crush the existing order. Between these two extremes, however, *the Slavophiles* developed an ideal of a moderate tsardom, perhaps one could call it the ideal of «a tsardom with a human face». They based that ideal on the assumption that the evolution of Russian society had to grow out of the country's own traditions and not be a slavish emulation of Western models. For that reason they rejected parliamentarism and the notion that all political views ought to be given real influence in proportion to their support in the population. According to them this would inevitably lead to the cultivation of petty group interests at the expense of the common good. Strife, quarrels and intrigues would flourish. The tsar, however, stood above the factions and could see and take cognizance of the whole of society with a birds-eye view, as it were. Up to this point the ideology of the Slavophiles coincided with the views proclaimed from the court, but in addition the Slavophiles asserted that the tsar could in no way act arbitrarily since he was responsible to God, the Church and last, but not least, *the people*. While both Western absolutism and Eastern despotism in their view was founded on violence and conquest, the Russian autocracy had,

according to their reading of history, been introduced by invitation. In the 9th century the Russians had implored the Scandinavian viking chieftain Rurik to come and rule over them. They needed someone who was willing to defend them by sword so that they themselves could concentrate on peaceful pursuits. When the Rurik dynasty died out, the people in 1613 *elected* a new ruler at an Assembly of the Land - *Zemskii sobor*. In later history such assemblies were summoned at irregular intervals and as time went by also acquired new forms, as when Catherine the Great convened the Great Legislative Commission in 1767.

The Slavophiles readily admitted that the *Zemskii sobor* was not a representative organ, and did not possess any actual political power, but this was in their opinion no drawback. The idea behind the *sobor* was not to press the people's will upon the autocrat, but to serve as a channel for wishes and opinions up to the top, to the «little father». The relationship between him and the populace was not and should not be confirmed in any form of legal contract; this would immediately result in formalism, hair-splitting and a power struggle. Instead it was built on tacit confidence and «organic» unity. The informal contacts secured congruity of thinking at the bottom and the top of society. They gave the system an element of *glasnost*.

The social theory of the Slavophiles has justly been called utopian. It depicts an ideal state rather than the actual political relations in prerevolutionary Russia. One is also tempted to say that the very notion of a «democratic autocracy» is self-contradictory. Still this dream lived on until the eve of the revolution.

The glasnost-ideal of A.A. Kireyev

A concise recapitulation of the *glasnost*-ideal of the Slavophiles is given in the pamphlet *Short exposition of the Slavophile teaching*. This brochure was written in 1896 by A.A. Kireyev. Kireyev was by no standard an original thinker; on the contrary he must be ranked among the epigones. But perhaps for that very reason he presents the Slavophile ideas in an admirably clear and direct way, without overly many reservations. If he can claim any originality, it is in his treatment of the *glasnost* idea.

(...) The authority must by necessity be seeing, it must see everything that takes place around it and is conducted in its name. That is to say that we recognise unconditionally the necessity of glasnost. Those who want to denigrate glasnost (the adherents of a «bureaucratic» state, a «Polizei-staat») say, firstly, that glasnost can shake the confidence of the people in the wisdom of the government, secondly, that glasnost can promote the proliferation of «harmful ideas». Let us look into the matter!

When I talk about the usefulness and necessity of glasnost, I do not of course propose that it should be exempt from legal control; (and a very high degree of glasnost can coexist with very strong state control). Abuses of glasnost ought to be persecuted strictly, but the question then arises: What should actually be considered an abuse? What should be persecuted? If someone informs the Highest Authority that there and there a real evil exists, this would of course be very inconvenient for a bad administration, but would in no way shake the «prestige» of the authority, for as soon as the authority has convinced itself that the given piece of information is true, it will of course immediately correct it. This will strengthen rather than undermine the authority. And nobody can seriously believe that the Highest Authority does not want to correct the evil! Such notions can be found only in satirical republican articles! To confirm my thoughts I will quote some words from an anonymous publicist. It is impossible not to agree with him when he says: «The people must get to know the truth about the government, and the government - the truth about the people.» (...) But at the present the government is informed about the people almost exclusively by its own agents, and in this situation it is necessary to bear in mind the universal human trait: Whenever someone in a subordinate position is asked to deliver a report to his superiors about his own actions in a matter entrusted to him, he is always inclined to say that «all is well»! This we have seen time and again. (...)

Literature must have the right to give serious, objective criticism. From an apologist, who only has the right to praise, one cannot expect any benefit, not even in the instances when he tells the truth, but not the whole truth.⁸⁾

It is astonishing to find such an accurate description of glasnost written more than ninety years ago. When I use such old material to throw light on the contemporary situation, I must be prepared to be met by methodological objections: Russian society has undergone con-

siderable changes since last century, and the political discourse today takes place in a radically altered context. This is not to be denied. Still I will maintain that it is fruitful to examine continuity and change in the political language, and in this case the degree of continuity is very high. As glasnost until quite recently has been fairly seldom used as a propagandistic word in the Soviet Union, I will also suggest that it has probably not undergone dilution or semantic change to the same degree as more frequent slogans. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that Gorbachev puts approximately the same meaning into this word as Kireyev did.

To confirm this hypothesis it is necessary to look into both the role which the idea of glasnost plays in Gorbachev's speeches, and the practical use the notion of glasnost is put to in the Soviet Union today. Firstly, the speeches.

Gorbachev's Ideal of Glasnost

The concept of glasnost was given considerable attention in Gorbachev's «Political report» to the 27th Party congress in February 1986. This report is necessarily somewhat more rhetorical than Kireyev's exposition, but repeats many of the arguments of 1896.

Broadening of glasnost is for us a matter of principle. This is a political question. Without glasnost there is and cannot be any democratism, or any political creativity of the masses, and they cannot participate in the administration. (...) Sometimes when the matter of glasnost is broached, someone will ask us to speak more cautiously about our shortcomings and negligence, about all the difficulties which are inevitable in any living work process. Such people can only be given one answer, the one Lenin gave: Communists need always and under all circumstances to know the truth. (Prolonged applause) (...) Those who are used to work with their sleeves down and to deal in eye-washing will indeed feel uncomfortable when exposed to the light of glasnost, when everything that is done in the state and in the society is controlled by the people and exposed to the people. (Applause) Therefore we must turn glasnost into a foolproof system. It is needed centrally, and even more locally, where people live and work.⁹⁾

In his speech in Khabarovsk on July 31 the same year Gorbachev elaborated upon his view:

There exists nothing as powerful as public opinion, when it is activated. And it can be activated only under the conditions of criticism, self-criticism and broad glasnost. We need glasnost to ensure that the tasks set forth at the (Party) congress will be carried out, to include the people in a real way into all aspects of the administration of the state, such as Lenin dreamt about. (...)

Generally speaking, it is not advisable to approach glasnost with a yardstick and campaign traditions. Glasnost is not a once and for all measure, but the norm for contemporary Soviet life. It is an incessant, unbroken process, in the course of which some tasks are solved while others, usually more complicated, turn up. (Applause)¹⁰⁾

Bureaucracy

These quotations point clearly to the main target of the glasnost-strategy: it is the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is just as overgrown and wilful today as before the revolution and the struggle against «bureaucratism» is a recurrent theme in Gorbachev's speeches. This malaise is, to be sure, found in large measure also outside the Soviet Union, but apparently other psychological and systemic mechanisms function in the Norwegian bureaucracy. Judging from the headlines in the newspapers one is tempted to say that Norwegian officials compete among themselves to see who can paint the situation in his field of responsibility in the *bleakest* colours. This is evidently done in order to receive larger allocations in the next fiscal year under the assumption that more money can solve all problems. In the Soviet Union there is the opposite tendency -to paint the situation as much as possible in *rosy* colours. The Russians have a special word for this - *pripiska*, padding. In every office where a report passes through on its way upwards in the system the figures are «corrected» somewhat to achieve an appearance of plan fulfilment and hopefully overfulfilment.¹¹ This is, incidentally, the main reason why the dream of a supercomputer for elaborate, ingenious Five Year Plans will never come true. Even if it became possible to construct a machine that can operate with as many variables as are required in a national economy the output would be far from accu-

rate as the figures put into it will always contain considerable errors. This is what is generally known as «garbage in - garbage out». Gorbachev has drawn the consequences of this dictum by trimming down the Central Planning Agency which is no longer responsible for the detailed planning of Soviet economy.

Gorbachev's dilemma can be summarised in this way: To «speed up» the Soviet Union he must know what the actual situation is in the different parts of the country, but nowhere can he completely trust the local officials in the party and the civil administration unless he knows them personally. Therefore he must appeal to «the man in the street» and bypass the bureaucracy in the hope that this will secure him more reliable reports.

This model has markedly populist traits. The term «populism» is used here to describe the deliberate attempt of a state leader to build on unorganised masses as a vital part of his power base. No historical parallel with Latin America or the prerevolutionary Russian *narodnichestvo* is implied. Gorbachev will, moreover, in all likelihood never become a pure bred populist as there are no signs so far that he will relinquish the Communist Party as his most important power base. What he seems to be doing is mobilising «the people» as a check on his own comrades in the party.¹²⁾ The Slavophiles dreamt about direct, organic links between the «little father» and his subjects, and Gorbachev in a similar way wants to open up informal, vertical channels of communication between the leaders and the led in the Soviet Union. Through these channels will flow not only information from the bottom to the top, but considerably increased amounts of information will also flow downwards, from the central leadership to the common readers and TV watchers. As Kireyev expressed it, it is not enough to let the government know the truth about the people; the people must also get to know (more of) the truth about the government. This second aspect is to a large degree a precondition of the first. If the common man gets the feeling that he is being asked to supply the leaders with information without getting any feedback, he will soon lose interest in the project. Glasnost then is a two-way street.¹³⁾ What distinguishes it from the supplying of information in the West is, in my interpretation, that under glasnost there is a deliberate attempt to limit the information flow to the vertical dimension, without increasing the amount of information circulating generally and freely at different levels of society more than absolutely necessary.

The Means

To reach this goal, the Soviet leaders can employ a wide range of tools for information gathering and dissemination. The following pages of this study will be devoted to an analysis of some of the more important of them - the electoral system, legal acts, demonstrations, the fostering of public opinion, independent political organisations, opinion polls, mass media, and different kinds of control organs. In all these areas there have indeed taken place remarkable changes and sometimes startling vacillations in Soviet policy over the last couple of years.

The list is presented in no particular order and does not presume to be in any way exhaustive. With each «tool» under discussion the following questions will be implied: How great a potential does it have for Gorbachev; to what extent has it actually been employed so far; and to what degree is it possible to put it into use without undermining the socialist state order. Occasionally reference will be made to the Western use of the same «tools». This is not done to compare the Soviet practice with any kind of ideal standard, but simply to highlight the typicality of the Soviet system.

The Legal Code

To make sure that the voice of the common man is not silenced when he tries to reach the leaders of the country, legal guarantees can be issued. A number of such guarantees are given in the Brezhnev constitution of 1977. Article 48 states that the citizens of the USSR have «the right to take part in the management and administration of state and public affairs and in the discussion and adoption of laws and measures of All-Union and local significance». According to article 49 «every citizen of the USSR has the right to submit proposals to state bodies and public organisations for improving their activity, and to criticise shortcomings in their work». ¹⁴⁾ These extensive rights have, however, been exploited only to a very small degree. In large sections of the popula-

tion political apathy is rampant. Most people simply do not believe that criticism and constructive proposals will be followed up in any way other than possibly by persecution of the hapless proposer.

In January 1987 Gorbachev voiced the view that «time has come to begin elaborating legal acts guaranteeing openness (glasnost). These should ensure maximum openness in the activities of the state and public organizations and give the working people a real opportunity to express their opinions on any question of social life.»¹⁵⁾ This call was followed up six months later when the Supreme Soviet on June 30 1987 passed a new bill «On the discussion of vital question in the life of the state by the whole people» which is intended to create better conditions for criticism and public proposals. According to the preamble of the new law it aims at «further deepening of the socialist democracy and development of the self-rule of the people». The new law will give «every citizen real possibilities to realise his constitutional rights to take part in the management of the state and society».

The law asserts that all draft bills «of vital importance» are to be made public no later than ten days after the draft is ready. This provision pertains not only to all-Soviet laws, but also to new laws in the Union republics. The discussion of the drafts are to take place in an atmosphere of «wide glasnost». The mass media shall report regularly on all aspects of the discussion and of the amendments proposed. If any officials attempt to stifle the debate, they are liable to legal prosecution.

An important provision in the new law is article 13 which stipulates that citizens may send their proposals and comments directly to the legislative assembly. By circumventing the bureaucracy the proposers can feel confident that their letters are not «misplaced» anywhere en route. This article clearly shows the populist character of the new law. The whole idea behind it is to engage the common man on an individual basis in the lawmaking process, by-passing the bureaucrats. The «all-people hearing» of new laws in the Soviet Union is thus markedly different from what we understand by a hearing in Norway and most other Western societies. In Norway different *institutions* and lobby organisations are asked to voice their opinion, not private citizens.

When the law of all-people discussion was presented to the Supreme Soviet, the chairman of its Presidium, Andrei Gromyko, delivered a speech in which he explained the intentions behind it. He claimed that such discussions are uniquely characteristic of Soviet-style democracy as the ruling classes in capitalist countries cannot take the risk of letting

the people express their opinion freely on matters of vital importance for the state. In the USSR such discussions have already been practised for a long time, he went on. In the 1970s and early 1980s a new housing law, a family law and a school reform were presented to the public for discussion. Most important, however, was the new Constitution of 1977. More than 140 million people took part in the hearing of it, and over 400.000 amendments were proposed.¹⁶⁾

If the public discussion system under Brezhnev was as viable and effective as Gromyko claimed, it is difficult to understand why it was necessary to safeguard it with a new special law. Gromyko admitted, however, that the impressive figures he had presented did not tell the whole truth. On a number of occasions the discussion of new laws had been conducted «formalistically» and the different proposals had not been given due consideration. In the Union republics no public discussions on new laws had taken place whatsoever. There the draft bills had only circulated among different departments, and «been moved from one desk to another». According to Gromyko the new law contains «solid guarantees» that this will never happen again, as it (in contrast to the Constitution) contains specific provisions on *how* the amendments are to be gathered and processed. It remains to be seen, however, how this will work in practice. The decisive question is whether the average Soviet citizen feels that it makes any difference whether he speaks his mind or keeps silent. It goes without saying that if a proposal is one among 400.000 the chances that it will actually be written into the final text are meagre, no matter how good it is. In a population of over 275 million there are therefore definite limits to the possibilities of including the citizens in the law-making process on an individual basis. There have, moreover, been remarkably few comments on the new law in the Soviet and Western press, which indicates that neither the Soviets themselves nor Western observers find the new guarantees especially convincing.

Electoral System

One of the most obvious means of channelling inputs from the common man into the state machinery is through the electoral system. In Western societies elections give the voters a choice between different par-

ties, and it is commonly felt that only with a multiple party system can elections be a genuine means of expressing opinion. Judged against this criterion, elections in Soviet style societies have been dismissed as nothing but propaganda shows, intended to give the regimes a semblance of legality. But this is not necessarily so. Even in a one-party system elections can, under certain conditions, give the populace a chance to express confidence or lack of confidence in their political leaders. The most important of these conditions are multiple candidacy and secret balloting. Also it ought to be possible to abstain from voting and thus signal distrust in all candidates. Such a system allows the voters to give their support not to one political *programme* rather than another, but to a particular *person* who the voter feels is better equipped to carry out the programme common to all the candidates.

Multiple candidacy has been practised earlier in Soviet history. Under Lenin there had to be two candidates for each seat and the one who received fewer votes became «assistant» to the one who was elected. Also under Brezhnev the law provided for the possibility of having several candidates running against each other. It stipulated that all candidates registered in a given constituency ought to be put up for election, and there were no restrictions as to how many candidates could be registered. In reality, however, all the candidates but one were eliminated during the nomination process, and the elections became a mere formality. This system still prevails in Soviet elections. The journalist Valery Kadzhaya in the weekly *Moscow News* claims that this practice is a result of «artificial restrictions placed on democracy in the recent past». ¹⁷⁾

Under glasnost the Soviet electoral system is to some degree being remoulded. In the elections for local Soviets on June 21 1987 multiple candidacy was practised in some constituencies, and orders went out that all voters should stand in a cubicle while putting the ballot in the envelope. Previously secret balloting had been optional and in many places people who tried to «hide away» while putting the ballot in the envelope were looked at askance, as if they were trying to cheat.

In June the «pre-election campaign» too became livelier. As the voters now had a choice between several candidates, these were forced to market themselves more actively than before. These new signs inspired confidence in several Soviet dissidents who in earlier years had boycotted the elections. The Jewish activist Iosif Begun made his way to the ballot box for the first time in 15 years, having elicited support

from both candidates in his constituency for the right to teach Hebrew to Jewish children.

It is, however, too early to assess the consequences of the new electoral system for the political culture in the Soviet Union. In June the multiple candidacy was practised only in a limited number of constituencies, and, as Soviet officials point out, as an experiment. This must mean that if the new practice does not give the desired results, it will be abandoned. The multiple candidate system does, furthermore, not automatically assure a plurality of options for the voters. If all the candidates put up have close ties to the current leadership in the community and in all likelihood will continue their political line, this is only a new and somewhat more subtle form of co-option. To be sure, in theory the new system gives everyone a chance to be nominated by a motion from the floor, but candidates lacking the necessary contacts and patrons will often run into difficulties. The regulations stipulate that nomination, in contrast to the actual election, is to be conducted by raising hands, and many feel that it is not advisable to turn down candidates who will subsequently be able to let their influential friends vent their wrath on you. At an institute in Tblisi in Gruzia six out of eight candidates nominated were wives of local «big shots». The remaining two had no-one to pull the strings for them; on the other hand they enjoyed the full confidence of their fellow workers. Still, nobody dared to vote down the wives of the bosses. During the show of hands everybody present voted unanimously for *all the candidates*, even though only two had to be named. When the procedure was repeated, the result was identical. Then someone suggested secret balloting, and the two candidates without patrons were elected with a clear margin. In this case one had to deviate from the legal procedure to break the deadlock.¹⁸⁾

Gorbachev's election experiment may in no way be characterised as revolutionary. In most of the constituencies where multiple candidacy was tried out, there were four candidates for three seats in the local Soviet. Thus the voters could reject only a quarter of the candidates and those who lost the election automatically became standbys. That is to say that as soon as a seat (any seat) in the local council became vacant, he would fill it without a new election. As there are few standbys for each local Soviet, it is quite likely that all of them can take their seats fairly soon.

Some figures give a picture of the modest scope of Gorbachev's election experiment. In Gruzia 48,914 candidates were elected in the

June elections, and only nine were rejected by the electorate. One may legitimately ask whether an experiment of such minuscule proportions represents any real break with the past at all. Valery Kadzhaya in *Moscow News* admits that nine rejections is a «negligible» figure, but adds that to understand the depth of the democratisation in the new election procedure one should also take into consideration the preceding nomination process. During this process 55,452 candidates were discussed and rejected, and this should be understood as «a first stage in the elections proper», we are told.¹⁹⁾ But considering the possibilities of manipulations at the pre-election meetings, which Kadzhaya himself describes, it is surprising that they can give him much solace.

An important sign of continuity with the traditional Soviet election system, is the remarkably high turnout at the June elections. The poorest results were yielded in Latvia, where 97,58% showed up to vote. In the majority of the Union republics participation exceeded 99.8%. Azerbajdzhan could with its 99.99% compete with any Albanian election.²⁰⁾

These results can be interpreted as follows: Participation in elections in the Soviet Union is still understood more in terms of civic *duty* than of civic *right*. This impression is confirmed by the presentation of the elections in the Soviet mass media. On the eve of the elections *Pravda* ran an editorial under the heading «Everybody - to the elections». The paper claimed that «in fulfilling their civic duty, the Soviet people realize their great socio-economical, political and personal rights».²¹⁾ This view shows that the elections in the Soviet Union even under glasnost have legitimation of the regime as their primary function. Only in so far as this function is not impaired are they to be opened up as channels of public sentiments.

Demonstrations

In Western societies a fairly common way of expressing opinion is to stage a demonstration. This is especially popular among groups that distrust the electoral system and feel that their views are not properly represented in the organs of government. In the Soviet Union «demonstrations» are arranged regularly on certain holidays, e.g. 1 May, the International Women's Day, Revolution Day 7 November, etc. These

marches would, however, in Western parlance be called processions rather than demonstrations. They are held on the initiative of the authorities, and many people feel that they might get into trouble or at least forfeit an expected promotion at their place of work if they are not present. Consequently, neither the turnout nor the slogans on these occasions can convey to the leaders any information about the attitudes and sentiments of those who participate, other than a determination to keep in step and give a show of loyalty to the system.

Since the mid 1960s, however, Soviet dissidents have arranged their own demonstrations to express their views. The first rally apparently took place on December 5 1965 in Pushkin Square in Moscow. On such occasions the KGB have not waited to see how many people the dissidents could muster, or which demands they would put forth. Instead they have cleared the area as quickly as possible. Unauthorised demonstrations have been considered a disturbance of public order, not an appropriate way to express public opinion.

Under glasnost there have been some signs that this attitude is changing. In July 1987 several hundred Crimean Tatars staged a sit-down in Red Square in support of their right to return to their homeland in Crimea. They feel that their deportation to Central Asia in May 1944 for alleged collective collaboration with the Nazi invaders was an unlawful act which should be rectified. Their demands have been supported in public by popular Soviet personalities like the poets Bulat Okudzhava and Yevgeny Yevtushenko.²²⁾

To the surprise of Western correspondents in Moscow the Tatars were not removed by the militia, but were allowed to continue their demonstration uninterrupted for several consecutive days, and eventually a Tatar delegation was received by the Soviet head of state, Andrei Gromyko, on July 27. He agreed that the deportation had been unfounded and reminded the delegation that their nationality had been officially rehabilitated in 1967 and acquitted of all charges. The restoration of the Autonomous Tatar republic, however, was impractical as the area is now populated by other people. Gromyko nevertheless announced the establishment of a commission headed by himself that would look into the matter more closely.²³⁾ The Tatars have not yet achieved their goal, but have at least succeeded in attracting world public opinion and the attention of the Soviet leaders to their cause to an unprecedented degree.

A similarly lenient attitude towards an unofficial demonstration was

shown on May 6 1987 when members of the «Pamyat» movement congregated in Manezhnaya Square not far from the Kremlin. This rather boisterous group is fighting for the conservation of nature and cultural monuments, and at the same time it issues high-pitched warnings against the international Zionist conspiracy, freemasonry, and decadent Western influence in Soviet society, e.g. rock music and blue jeans.²⁴⁾ The Pamyat demonstrators demanded to be received by either Gorbachev personally or by the Party boss in Moscow city, Boris Yeltsin. The latter actually showed up and listened to their complaints for two hours. In this case the demonstration led to an open exchange of views between a top party leader and a strong grass root movement.

In early September *Moscow News* announced that the Soviet Executive Committee in the city of Moscow had adopted a decision «On holding demonstrations, meetings and street processions». This decision states that the city authorities have the right to ban any congregation in overcrowded places, near historical monuments and in places where additional crowds might hamper traffic, e.g. Red Square. It also stipulates that all demonstrations must be applied for in advance, and the maximum time for considering an application is seven days.

From a legal point of view these regulations appear to restrict the wide liberties laid down in the Soviet Constitution. Article 50 in the Constitution flatly declares that the citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of «assembly, meetings, street processions and demonstrations».²⁵⁾ When presented with this objection to the new regulations, the public prosecutor in Moscow, Lev Baranov, gave the following explanation:

It is clear that the fact of adopting the decision represents an assertion of the principles of perestroika and is yet another sign of the process of widening the democracy. In earlier time, no such regulations were needed because all meetings and demonstrations were so strictly regulated.²⁶⁾

Here Baranov is apparently hinting at some regulations that have never been promulgated and that were so strict that they nullified the provisions of the Constitution. In so far as these have now been repealed and replaced by the new decision, this clearly represents an act of genuine glasnost. Possibly the Soviet leaders now feel that they themselves can extract some benefit from the staging of unofficial demonstrations as

these can serve as a barometer of popular discontent and frustration. Baranov explains: «We cannot talk about broad democracy and glasnost without letting people speak their minds about the ways in which our country can develop for the benefit of the state and society». He adds, however, that «we must distinguish between expressions of constructive opinions aimed at improving our society and spiteful or hateful criticism of the Soviet social order». He does not say how he would react if and when he decides that a demonstration is staged by «hateful critics» of the Soviet order. Evidence from other Soviet cities shows that under glasnost it is sometimes hard to draw the dividing line between such criticism and «constructive opinion».

Some of the best attended unofficial demonstrations since Gorbachev came to power have taken place in the Baltic states. Already on July 14 1987 Latvian nationalists rallied in Riga to demand the re-establishment of the independent Latvian state. The real showdown, however, occurred on August 23, the anniversary of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact which put the Baltic states in a Russian «sphere of influence». The dissident «Helsinki '86» group had in advance called on all Latvians to lay down red and white flowers - the Latvian national colours - with a black ribbon at the foot of the Monument of Liberty, which is located in the middle of the main thoroughfare of the city, Lenin Street. On the 21st, the group was summoned to the city deputy prosecutor and informed of the existence of some «Provisionary regulations for demonstrations» which stipulate that organisers of a demonstration must notify the authorities ten days in advance, giving information about the aim of the demonstration and the number of participants. This the group had indeed done even though they were unaware of the regulations.

On the 23rd a large number of flowers were placed at the monument. The militia did not at first turn the demonstrators back, but tried by different methods to reduce the number of onlookers. The parallel street was closed down and the traffic redirected to Lenin street. Demonstrators were at random told to produce their documents and their names were taken down. As these measures did not halt the demonstration, empty buses were parked in the afternoon on all sides of the monument. Suddenly the militia announced through a megaphone that the demonstration had to stop at 7 PM and people were then forcibly driven away from the area. As some demonstrators resisted and started to chant «liberty», traffic batons and watering machines

were used against them. In the evening events took an unexpected turn when a political commentator on the Latvian television deplored the conduct of the militia, who according to him had behaved in an «uncultured» way.²⁷⁾ Some days later *Pravda* ran a commentary on the demonstrations, proudly asserting that in the era of glasnost such incidents were not hushed up. The tone of the article was, however, rather harsh. The demonstration was said to be a provocation instigated by foreign secret services, and the members of «Helsinki '86» were denounced as traitors and former criminals.²⁸⁾

The conduct of the militia on August 23 indicates that the Latvian authorities in the spirit of glasnost indeed tried to rebuff the demonstrators with indirect, peaceful means. Only when that failed did they have recourse to traditional police methods. The behaviour of the TV commentator shows that there have been divergent opinions in the Latvian leadership as to which approach should be adopted towards the demonstrators.

The demonstration was in terms of support a great success. By different estimates, somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000 people participated in Riga, and similar manifestations took place in other Baltic cities. This turnout corroborated the results of the June elections, in which Latvia had a markedly higher number of non-voters than any other Soviet republic. This goes to say that the Soviet election system, even in its present form, can be taken to a certain extent as a gauge of social and political unrest.

But the detection of popular discontent is only the first step for the Soviet authorities, the next and more important one is to combat it. Gorbachev has to some extent managed to neutralise the liberal-democratic dissident movement, at least for the time being, by standing forth as the champion of social reform and cultural freedom, the age-old demands of the Soviet liberals. The nationalist movement in the Union republics can, however, not be mollified in the same way. Their demands include a full separation of their home countries from the Soviet Union, which would in the end lead to a complete dismantling of the Soviet multi-national state, which is clearly unacceptable in Moscow. As the nationalists cannot be met halfway, they will have to be resisted. Before the next encounter with the Baltic dissidents, the KGB contra-insurgency experts were given free reins. On October 18, the unofficial Latvian national day, Riga was almost hermetically sealed off from the outside world and the leaders of the «Helsinki '86» group

were shadowed step by step for weeks in advance.²⁹⁾ The Soviet authorities also staged a counter-demonstration, with some ten thousand participants who protested against alleged American interference in internal Soviet affairs.³⁰⁾ In Moscow Refusenik Jews who took to the streets in November and early December in support of their demand to emigrate to Israel were severely harassed by the police. The laxity of the summer of 1987 seems to have been abandoned as an unsuccessful experiment.

Public opinion

In his speech in Khabarovsk Gorbachev linked the widening of glasnost to the strengthening of «public opinion». This concept has the last couple of years been evoked with increasing frequency. It seems to denote individuals and loose groups in society who engage themselves socially or politically outside the forums of the Communist party. Today it is claimed by Soviet spokesmen that Soviet public opinion has become an strong force which has to be reckoned with. As proof of its new power the shelving of the river diversion scheme is usually mentioned. This gigantic technocrat project was intended to improve the water supply situation in Central Asia by diverting parts of some vast Siberian rivers to the south. The project had unforeseeable ecological implications and would, if it had been carried out, also had meant the destruction of important cultural monuments.

The pressure from conservationists undoubtedly played an important, possibly decisive, role in the abandonment of this project, in which several local and central party leaders had invested considerable prestige. In this respect the outcome of this matter indicated an important change in Soviet political culture. At the same time it seems paradoxically to be easier to influence large projects than small ones. Big decisions are made in Moscow, where Gorbachev and his reformers are at the helm, whereas minor decisions are taken locally by more conservatively-minded party bosses, and local matter are not written about in the national newspapers to the same degree.

One of the leading activists in the campaign against the river diversion, the renowned author Valentin Rasputin, wrote an article in *Pravda* in May 1987 in which he drew up the balance sheet for the

Soviet conservation struggle. He struck a very pessimistic chord. He claimed that there are still countless places where «the historical interests of the state clash with the shortsighted interests of the departments and where decisions are made in favour of the protégés and the all-powerful devastators. (...) In our society the public opinion is allowed to speak up, but so far decides very little.»³¹⁾

Political organisations

Rasputin is apparently not satisfied with the role as pusher on the political sideline, and wants public opinion to have a formalised say in the decision making process. To make this come about, it must be possible to let the opinion crystallise in independent political and social organisations. Such organisations play an important role in resource allocation and decision making in several countries. Modern Western society has not without reason been labelled «the organisation society». The existence of such organisations probably more than anything else vouchsafes the survival of a civil society as an independent entity separate from the state.

Also in the Soviet Union one can find a high number of organisations engaged in different kinds of political and social work, but these have a different function and status from their Western counterparts. They have been established not only with the blessing of the party but also on its initiative, and usually with a number of prominent party leaders in central positions. They may therefore hardly be called independent or detached from the state structure. True, there are also other organisations created «from below» by individual citizens, but they have invariably been criminalised and forced into an underground existence. As a consequence they have had marginal support and have not been able to play a major role as channels of public opinion.

If Gorbachev wants to let the glasnost process include the creation of independent political organisations, he cannot, as a matter of course, create them. He can, however, refrain from taking actions *against* them if and when they are created «from below». The Italian Communist daily *L'Unita* elicited Gorbachev's opinion on such organisations (among other things) in an interview in May 1987. The General Secretary said he resented the way the question was posed as in his view it

portrayed the current democratisation process in the Soviet Union as starting from zero. The contrary was the case, he claimed. Perestroika is not a «break with our political system, but a fuller and more efficient utilisation of its potentials».³²⁾ By dodging the question, Gorbachev gave the impression that independent political organisations are not assigned a role in the glasnost process.

Still, during the last couple of years a large number of different new groups, clubs and organisations have nevertheless sprung up on their own accord, groups that can be characterised neither as dissident in the traditional sense, nor as standing under the party's auspices. The «Pamyat» movement has already been mentioned. Even though this group has been severely attacked in the Soviet press on several occasions, its members have been able to hold meetings in the open and to express their views freely.

Most of the new groups are, however, of a different brand. They are commonly referred to as «socialist clubs» and have names like «The Community», «Epicentre», «The Che Guevara club», «The Club for Social Initiative» and «Perestroika». Some of them, like the Leningrad-based «Spasenie» («Salvation») are concerned mostly with conservation issues, whereas others lobby for the erection of a monument to the memory of the victims of Stalin's terror. One is primarily occupied with giving financial aid to disabled people and others who are not able to sustain a living on their small pensions. None of these clubs is what in Western parlance would be called an «interest organisation», that is, an organisation primarily concerned with promoting the (material) interests of its own members. Most of the clubs have city youth as the bulk of their membership. Leningrad seems to be a centre for this new phenomenon. Here more than 300 new clubs have been created during the last couple of years.³³⁾

On December 20-23 1987 a first meeting between representatives of 47 different socialist clubs was arranged in Moscow. The initiative was taken by the clubs themselves, but the arrangements were made in coordination with party authorities in Moscow who provided the premises. The meeting is reported to have been «a stormy affair».³⁴⁾ The political programmes of the different groups deviated wildly, and only representatives of 16 of them joined the new «Federation of Socialist Clubs» and signed its manifesto.

This document contains a number of demands and suggestions of an ideological, political, economical, and cultural character.³⁵⁾ It

acknowledges the constitutional role of the CPSU as the leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, but at the same time points out that the party contains healthy and unhealthy elements. The groups will support the former to combat the latter. At the same time the manifesto advocates «the withering away of the state» through the growing influence of independent social groups and the elimination of administrative and bureaucratic structures. This clearly runs counter to official Soviet ideology which envisages the further *strengthening* of the socialist state. On the other hand, however, this demand is perfectly in line with the views propounded by Lenin in his major theoretical work *State and Revolution* in which «withering away of the state» was the key concept. The groups thus present themselves as more Leninist than the party.

What the manifesto means by «the growing influence of independent groups» was spelled out in no uncertain terms. Such groups should gain legal status, and be allowed to make legislative proposals. The electoral system should be reformed to give non-party public organisations the right to propose candidates, who should have free access to the mass media. If these demands were accepted by the Soviet leadership, a major distinction between Western and Soviet-type democracy would disappear, and one of the main theses of this article would collapse. There are, however, so far no signs that this will be the outcome. On the contrary there are indications that the new organisations, even in their present modest form, are viewed with considerable suspicion. The meeting held on August 20-23 has been given remarkably little coverage in the Soviet press: only the two most outspoken glasnost publications, *Moscow News* and *Ogonyok*, have run articles about it, and neither gave anything like a full report or reproduced the manifesto. The political programme of the federation was passed over in silence. Vera Tolz sees this as a sign that the authorities «want to channel the activities of informal groups away from politics and confine them to cultural, ecological, and social issues.»³⁶⁾

In a society with no traditions of independent organisations, unofficial associations lead a precarious existence on the razor's edge, poised between two pitfalls - reversal to underground dissidence or co-option into the established political system. In either case their ability to serve as a mouthpiece for public opinion will be greatly impaired. The journalist in *Moscow News* jokingly alluded to the latter of these possibilities, intimating that the intention behind the Moscow party commit-

tee's sponsoring of the information meeting had been to give the leaders of the new organisations «a portfolio». In that event, he predicted, they might easily lose their following.³⁷⁾ A representative of the Moscow party committee, Yu. Ljubtsev, emphatically denied that the party had any such intentions, but Vera Tolz is not convinced. She suspects that the authorities «wish to discourage the unofficial groups from acting independently and to bring their activities under official control».

The mass media

There are reasons to believe that Gorbachev prefers *informal* links with public opinion to institutionalised links. Some of the most important informal channels at his disposal are the mass media and the postal service. The Soviet citizens can address themselves directly to the leaders by post or write their complaints to the papers. Zhores Medvedev claims that «it is these letters, rather than elections to the Supreme Soviet, which reflect public opinion».³⁸⁾ The pivotal role of the media in the glasnost process is also emphasised in official Soviet literature. In the 1987 edition of the standard handbook *Short Political Dictionary*, «glasnost» is explained as

the optimal form of mass control over the work of the organs of power, especially local organs, in the struggle against bureaucratism. The widest channel of glasnost is the mass media, oral propaganda and visual notification (stands etc.).³⁹⁾

This channel seems to be very effective. The Soviets write letters as never before to editors and journalists. Every paper in the capital receives thousands of letters every day, the mail department of *Pravda* is said to be bigger than the news department. The letters that are printed represent only the tip of the iceberg, and do not of course have to represent a cross section of the mail received. They may well be selected by the editors to support a campaign in progress. In any case, they make interesting reading. Some are protestations of support for glasnost and perestroika, but many more contain complaints about local mismanagement. Obviously a flood of frustration and grudges has accumulated over the years, waiting for a chance to break into the open. It is true that there has always been room for criticism of local affairs in the

Soviet press, as long as the system as such was not called in question. What takes place now, however, has dramatically larger dimensions and ramifications. The papers appear to compete among themselves as to who can disclose the most shocking story of incompetence, negligence, waste, public offices sold to the highest bidder, private underground factories, protectionism, cover-up actions, etc. Some of the criticism hits out not only against individuals and institutions, but also against (certain aspects of) the economic and political system.

But the success of glasnost also creates new dilemmas. The handling of all these letters and complaints must by necessity engender a large bureaucracy. At the present it is often apparently a matter of chance which letters are picked out by an energetic journalist for investigation, and such investigation is a *sine qua non* if this glasnost-mechanism is to work as intended. Gorbachev and his aides can never take the complaints at face value. They must make sure that they do not take the form of private vendettas in which individuals are trying to hurt their personal enemies. This was one of the most sinister dynamics of the Stalin purges. A general relapse to the sins of that era is, it is true, impending only if it is encouraged from the top. So far this has not been the case. Gorbachev has several times spoken of the need to fight against the enemies of perestroika with «firmness» and «intransigence», but he always adds that the struggle must be carried out in an atmosphere of «glasnost and openness». ⁴⁰⁾ One of the most striking features of the glasnost policy in the media is the opportunities given to persons criticised to fight back. Factory managers and others who have been pilloried in the papers for alleged negligence have been allowed to present their own version of the matter to the readers.

Many letters to the editors contain reports on active opposition to perestroika. A metal worker and party member from the city of Ufa writes in *Pravda* that he has attacked protectionism, nepotism and breaches of socialist legality at his place of work, and has paid dearly for it: as a result he has been relieved of his post as party organiser in his division, and now he fears that he will be sacked from his job as well. He draws very pessimistic conclusions from his experiences: «Without the support of the party organs the chances of glasnost and criticism are zero.» ⁴¹⁾ This sounds like a catch 22: If glasnost is to succeed on the local level, it must be supported by the very people who will suffer from it.

In the same edition of *Pravda* another reader takes to task those who

are «overinsuring» themselves against possible counterattacks from the enemies of perestroika. He claims that an active communist always «runs a certain risk». So «if you are seriously concerned about the interests of the state, you need no insurance. Then nothing can stop you in the struggle for order and against negligence and all kinds of violations...»⁴²⁾

The role of the mass media in the glasnost process can hardly be exaggerated. In the same way that energetic reporters in the *Washington Post* got the ball rolling in the Watergate scandal, their Soviet colleagues to an ever-increasing degree play the role of the vigilant conscience of society. Their abilities to check and «overrule» local decisions give them a tremendous power. On June 5 1987 the *Red Star* ran a story on Senior Lieutenant Kachanov in the anti-aircraft forces who had been taken to a Comrades' Court charged with negligence in the organisation of political education in his unit. At first sight it was a clear-cut case of glasnost exposure of a slovenly officer. As it turned out, however, he was an exemplary and honest soldier who had discovered several cases of theft in his unit. When he filed a report on this, measures were taken to have him removed. Such revelations could stain the reputation of the regiment.⁴³⁾ Kachanov, however, got the upper hand by writing to the *Red Star*. An appeal to the editor of the local paper would probably not have helped. Such people are still to a large degree under the control of reactionary petty party bosses, a problem which Gorbachev has touched upon on several occasions.⁴⁴⁾ When the *Red Star* journalist started to look into the matter, the process against Kachanov was stopped; the villain became the hero.

There is no particular reason to doubt the version in the *Red Star*, but Gorbachev can never be quite sure: possibly Kachanov is after all the crook his superiors claim him to be, but has influential friends higher up in the *apparat* and in the media who managed to save him from well-deserved disgrace. In this perspective glasnost may easily turn into a scramble to reach the columns of the papers.

Today in Moscow one can see long queues of people wanting to secure for themselves the latest issue of *Pravda* or *Izvestia*. The political and social scandals now exposed in the columns supply a longed-for relief from the edifying tales of the successful building of socialism which prevailed in the Brezhnev era. The fact that the different papers follow somewhat different editorial guidelines whets the appetite even more. The liberal glasnost weekly the *Moscow News* characterises this

new phenomenon as «socialist pluralism». This should not, however, be understood as an opening for a diversified press in the Western sense of the word. There are no signs that the party will abandon its control of the press, which was defined by Lenin as a crucial instrument of Soviet power. The *Moscow News* is very explicit on this point. Its journalist Dmitry Kazutin writes that

wrong are those who see this as a rejection of the principle of the Party's guidance of the press. The principle remains, what changes - in terms of quality - is the methods. Ruling by decree (administration by mere domination) which prevailed for many years, has given way to a more democratic style. It can't be otherwise if we want real glasnost in society's life.⁴⁵⁾

The dual function of the press as an instrument of glasnost and an instrument of party power is a genuinely Leninist conception. As has been shown by Viktor Yasmann, when Lenin talked about glasnost it was primarily in the context of press ethics in a tightly controlled press.⁴⁶⁾

In 1987 attempts were made to challenge the Party monopoly of the press by founding independent publications «from below». The attitude of Soviet authorities towards a journal with the appropriate name *Glasnost* in the summer was in many ways a test case. The editor of the paper, former political prisoner Sergei Grigoryants, did not want to produce an underground publication, but announced the founding of the journal openly at a press conference on July 3 and applied to the Central Committee of the Party for permission.⁴⁷⁾ He received no answer, but went ahead with his plans as if his project were quite legal. Grigoryants has explicitly stated that he wants his undertaking to be understood as an act of glasnost «from below» (in contrast to Gorbachev's «glasnost from above»,⁴⁸⁾ and as a deliberate attempt to probe the limits of glasnost. In his case they seem to be fluctuating but fairly narrow. Both Grigoryants and his collaborators have on several occasions been arrested and held for questioning overnight, and have sometimes been beaten. The charge against them has been illegal use of state-owned printing equipment - a xerox copy machine, (all such machines, are state-owned in the Soviet Union). TASS wrote on the occasion that the editors of *Glasnost*, «while proclaiming adherence to the principles (of glasnost) themselves grossly violate order and discipline

and commit immoral and illegal acts». ⁴⁹⁾ The paper is, however, as a rule «printed» on ordinary typewriters with carbon paper, and there is little that distinguishes the production or distribution of this paper from earlier samizdat publications. Grigoryants has as yet not managed to break out of the underground existence in any substantial way.

Opinion polls

Apart from the mass media there exists another important informal way of gathering information about sentiments and attitudes in the population - opinion polls. Such polls are conducted regularly in many countries, but until recently little use has been made of them in the Soviet Union. This is somewhat surprising as polls are a kind of contact with the public which in theory could give the Communist party great advantages. The initiators of the polls frame the questions themselves and can control the process from start to finish. They decide themselves whether they will publicise their findings in the media or communicate them only to a limited number of departments and institutions. In principle such polls can therefore be an exclusively «vertical» channel of information with hardly any «horizontal» leakage.

In heavily ideologised societies polls may, however, prove rather ineffective. As long as there is only one «correct» answer to every political question, it takes considerable courage to express deviating opinions. What the pollsters obtain may well be a reflection of textbook formulae rather than the frank opinions of those interviewed.

At least two conditions must be met to make the polls work as intended: those interviewed must be made to believe that their answers really are of importance to the pollsters, and secondly that they will not get into trouble if they answer frankly. These conditions may be more or less fulfilled under glasnost. In this way glasnost and polls could live a symbiotic life: glasnost is a prerequisite for effective polls, and polls are at the same time an instrument for deepening and furthering glasnost.

Genuine polls can, however, cut both ways and turn out to be counterproductive in the glasnost process. The success of perestroika hinges to a large degree on the faith people have in it. If the polls show that a large percentage of the population believes that the present thaw will be reversed into a new night-frost, fewer people will commit them-

selves openly to it. Thus polls containing such negative findings can easily become self-fulfilling prophecies. Such unpleasant side effects can to some extent be avoided if the results are not made public, but on the other hand the public will soon lose interest in the polls if they do not receive any feedback from their answers.

Polls can play into the hands of the opponents of perestroika in the party in another way. They can claim that the reforms, as mirrored in the polls, foster discontent and discord in the population and may threaten to tear society asunder. According to the ideological watch-dogs in the party the ideal should be a «monolithic unity of the people and the party», but if the society is of one piece there cannot be any significant deviations of opinion. Simply by conducting polls the reformers therefore put the monolith theory into question. Some reform sociologists like academician Tatyana Zaslavskaya explicitly dispense with this theory and instead propound the empirically better founded but ideologically impure notion of «interest groups». She maintains that «our society consists of many groups with various views, having different (sometimes even opposite) interests and aims which they try to pursue». ⁵⁰⁾ Zaslavskaya is careful not to call these interest clashes «antagonistic»; such a statement would certainly make her a heretic, as antagonistic contradictions according to Marxism-Leninism can occur in capitalist societies only. Her ideas are nevertheless revolutionary indeed. One of the most interesting points is that she links peoples' interests to their *views*, and thus lets them decide for themselves, subjectively, what their interests are. The traditional Marxist approach has been to try to identify the «objective» interests of the people, which they themselves are not often aware of. In the new subjectivity approach, opinion polls clearly become an indispensable tool.

Several Soviet newspapers have in fact printed results of interesting opinion polls, and some of the findings of the pollsters ought to send waves of consternation down the spines of the reformers in the Kremlin. According to the Moscow daily *Sovetskaya Rossiya* only 16% of researchers in scientific institutions believed that «perestroika is successful», whereas 31,4% said that «perestroika is moving, but slowly». As many as 32.2% claimed that the effects of perestroika were not noticeable at all. The answers collected among engineers and technical workers were even more disheartening. The corresponding figures here were 5.2%, 46.9% and 47.9%. ⁵¹⁾ It seems that the further down people are placed on the social and educational ladder, the less they experience

current changes in society. The polls reported in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* were conducted by the Institute for Sociological Research under the Academy of Sciences, an institution that by Soviet standards has considerable experience in public opinion surveys. It pioneered in this field under Brezhnev, when V.E. Shlapentokh among others made some interesting public opinion studies.⁵²⁾

Another survey referred to in the *Moscow News* reveals how workers in the Ural region react to a new wage system which makes their income more dependent on the amount of work actually accomplished. 51% of the people asked believed that the amount of individual work under the new system would «drastically grow», whereas only 18% thought their work would become more interesting. Valery Chichkanov, the director of the Institute of Economics in the Ural which made the survey, would not, however, characterise the results as discouraging. «Would a unanimous answer be better?» he asked. «That only takes place when no actual changes are meant and people are aware of it.»⁵³⁾ Diversified answers are thus, not without reason, taken as an indicator that reforms initiated at the top really make some difference on the shop floor.

Perhaps the most alarming figures found by the pollsters show that approximately one-quarter of the working population is of the opinion that a broad discussion of shortcomings and bottlenecks does more harm than good. Vilen Ivanov, director of the Institute for Sociological Research, comments: «They are not just those whose interests have been infringed. I think there are certain people who, having lost nothing during the reorganization process, are sincerely convinced that negative information must be restricted, and access to it given only to select officials.»⁵⁴⁾ This cuts right into the nerve of the glasnost process and shows that a significant proportion of the Soviet population simply feels no need for it at all.

Still, it is my prediction that opinion polls will continue to play an important and probably growing role in the perestroika process. In the polls the Party can meet the members of society individually and set the rules for communication with them. Shocking results will continue to be disclosed in the press, but in a controlled and selective manner.

Control

Kireyev maintained, as we saw, that glasnost can very well coexist with a high degree of control; control and glasnost complement rather than

contradict each other. Gorbachev is in agreement with him. «Control is necessary», he says, «only not the kind of control we have today». ⁵⁵⁾ There exists in the Soviet Union comprehensive systems of control of the party and state organs by wide networks of professional and amateur controllers. They have minutely controlled the routines of the bureaucrats and workers at all levels, but according to Gorbachev have wasted their time. Only to a very small degree have they been able to prevent or even disclose the kind of mismanagement and corruption which the papers now write about. In many cases the control apparatus has covered over the misdeeds of the local party bosses.

The problem of effective control have troubled the Soviet leaders since the establishment of the socialist state. The first control commission for the civil administration was established as early as in 1917 and has been reorganised innumerable times. In 1920 the so-called «Rabkrin» or «Worker and peasant inspection» was formed. Its tasks were to discover negligence in the administration, simplify the state apparatus and counteract bureaucratism. ⁵⁶⁾ Its first leader was Joseph Stalin, and it soon became the notoriously most bureaucratic and ineffective organ of Soviet power. At the same time there existed a parallel «Central commission» for party control whose tasks to a considerable degree overlapped the work of Rabkrin. In 1923 Lenin fused them into one organisation under the maxim «better fewer, but better». In 1934 they were, however, split again under Stalin into a «Committee for party control» (KPK) and a «Committee for people's control» (KNK). Since then these two organs have been merged and divided alternately by each new General Secretary. Khrushchev created a united «Committee for party and state control», whereas Brezhnev reverted to the Stalinist double organ system. Neither system has so far been able to fulfil its main task: to ensure discipline and effectivity in the bureaucracy and other places of work.

In January plenum (1987) of the Central Committee Gorbachev spoke of the need for «control from above» and «control from below» which should complement each other.

(...) with all the importance of control «from above» it is of fundamental importance in the conditions of the democratization of society to raise to the level and effectiveness of control «from below» so that each executive and each official constantly feel their responsibility to and dependence on the electorate. (...) The main thing in this respect is to create and

strengthen all instruments and forms of real control by the working people.⁵⁷⁾

These signals were followed up half a year later in the June plenum. Here Gorbachev proposed the establishment of, on the basis of the People's Control Committee (KPK), a «unified, integral control system that would possess broad powers throughout the country's territory, relying on maximum glasnost in its work».⁵⁸⁾ In the same speech he stated that under glasnost the tasks of the State prosecutor's office would be «immeasurably» enhanced.

It is not quite clear what Gorbachev means by «a unified and integral control system». If it signals the reintegration of party and state control, it undoubtedly means a return to more Leninist and Khrushchevite forms of control, but this in itself will hardly relieve the situation. It is further quite clear that while Gorbachev wants to give the controllers broader powers, he does not want to increase their number which already runs into hundreds of thousands.⁵⁹⁾ He would prefer a reorganisation along the lines of the Leninist slogan «better fewer, but better». The expert on Soviet control systems, Jan Adams, claims that «the redesigning of the USSR People's Control Committee is most likely to entail, if not the demise of the public inspector, then a definite curtailment of his role, in current ideology and in fact».⁽⁶⁰⁾ While it is hard to see how this conclusion squares with Gorbachev's call for broadening the power of the controllers, it is clear that he has no patience with control for control's own sake.

Gorbachev's appointee as new chairman for the KPK, Sergei Manyakin, elaborated on the proposed reorganisation of his Committee in an article in *Pravda* in September 1987. He stated that

To create an integral control system on the basis of KNK signifies a stepping up of the process of giving this organisation wider rights in the struggle against violations of state discipline and legality, a counter-attack against all kinds of abuses. In this matter it is necessary to strengthen the ties with the State prosecutor's office, arbitration and other law-enforcing organs.⁶¹⁾

Again the State prosecutors are called upon for closer involvement in the control process. An article in the *Moscow News* reveals how this might be done in practice. The paper tells that the public prosecutor in

the city of Moscow appealed to the citizens through the newspaper *Moskovskaya Pravda*: «Inform us on violations of rules in the food trade, the hiding of products, speculations and other trade abuses.»⁶²⁾ In nearly every shop-window in the city there is posted a telephone number which the customers can call if they have any complaints against the service. Few people avail themselves of this opportunity as they realise that it will get them nowhere. The appeal from the prosecutor, however, was an immediate success. A special «hot line» telephone number was set up, and even on the first day several hundred calls from wronged citizens were received. Most of them reported on petty theft and minor cheating with weights and measures, but others contained more serious charges.

This story provides an almost perfect example of collaboration of «the top» and «the bottom» of society which seems to have become the hallmark of Gorbachev-style democracy. Crooked bureaucrats and petty officials are to be caught in a pincer movement, in which the one limb is represented by concerned citizens and the other by the law-enforcing body. The control has moved upstairs and downstairs at the same time. In the story in the *Moscow News* the KPK is significantly not called into action at all.

The system is, however, fraught with danger of misuse. The head of the mail and reception department of the Moscow prosecutor's office admits to the *Moscow News* journalist that half of the callers refuse to identify themselves, but his office apparently acts on such anonymous informing as well. He explains: «You see, the majority of calls are confirmed anyway.» Considering the excesses such denouncements led to under Stalin, Gorbachev ought to exert extreme caution in implementing this tool.⁶³⁾

The idea of hotlines seems to be the latest fashion in the glasnost process and is followed up in various parts of the country. In the Vladimir Region telephone numbers by which any inhabitant of the region can directly contact leaders of any rank were published in the local press. The callers tell about shortages in the social sphere (the organisation of trade and the distribution of housing), report on conflicts or give suggestions for increased productivity and less waste at their place of work. The journalist Yuri Aidinov in *Moscow News* explains:

Of course, previously people could be received by an official. Usually people resorted to this in extreme circumstances, because reception

*rooms don't bring joy to anyone. (...) Glasnost hotlines are proof of the situation changing.*⁶⁴⁾

In this case people are asked to call the same offices which they previously could reach by applying in person. The reason why the hotline is so much more popular, must be twofold: Firstly, by picking up the telephone receiver, the complainants and supplicants won't have to stay in line, secondly, in many cases they can retain a larger degree of detachment and anonymity.

The Yeltsin Affair

Boris Yeltsin was until October 1987 known as one of Gorbachev's closest comrades-in-arms in the struggle for perestroika. He was brought in by December 1985 from the relatively obscure post of party secretary in Sverdlovsk to run the huge party machinery in the capital. Here he soon earned a reputation as a relentless foe of red tape and bureaucratism. He fired without hesitation subordinates who did not come up to standard, and even closed down whole research institutions and enterprises that did not produce valuable work. In two years according to one source he had removed 40% of the apparatchiks in the city's party committee, 23 out of 33 party secretaries in the raions (city districts) and 44% of the labour union bosses in the area.⁶⁵ Quite a remarkable record. Other sources tell that he used to travel to his office on the metro instead of using the curtained black limousine at his disposal.

In the beginning of November 1987 he was fired from his job and instead given an insignificant new occupation as head of a construction office. Even though many details of this demotion are still in the dark, enough has been disclosed to throw light on the mechanisms and limits of glasnost.

Let us look first at the formal side, the way the affair was handled by the party. The conflict between Yeltsin and his colleagues in the party leadership came to the fore when Yeltsin in an impassioned speech at the October plenary session of the Central Committee gave a devastating assessment of the achievements of the Gorbachev administration so far. According to him the perestroika had given the people «practically nothing». Yeltsin had apparently read the results of the opinion polls closely and had drawn sombre, if not to say defeatist, conclusions. He also accused highly placed party officials of deliberately obstructing the restructuring. It seems he did not give any names, but it did not take much imagination to surmise that he was hitting out against, among others, Yegor Ligachev, the party ideologue, and the head of the KGB, Viktor Chebrikov, neither of whom is trying to speed up the glasnost process.

Western correspondents in Moscow heard about this sensational speech when Central Committee secretary Anatolii Lukyanov gave a press conference shortly afterwards. On the same day the official press agency TASS in its Russian language edition «categorically» advised the Soviet mass media not to print anything on the matter.⁶⁶⁾ The Soviet public was informed only on November 13 when *Pravda* devoted no less than two and a half full pages to the Yeltsin affair. The paper gave the readers a most detailed account of the charges brought against him at a plenary session of the Moscow city party committee, at which Yeltsin was formally removed. While this broad coverage could be taken a sign of greater openness in public affairs, the time lag is significant. It shows that the party would give such a sensitive matter publicity only after it had been finally settled. This goes a long way to confirm the suspicions of many foreign observers that glasnost does not embrace intramural affairs in the Kremlin. On the other hand inadvertent leakages like Lukyanov's are possible under the new openness.

According to unverified but plausible reports on the affair in the Western press, some Central Committee members had defended Yeltsin at the plenary session, among them Gennadii Kolbin, Georgii Arbatov and Alexander Yakovlev, who are all known to be staunch reformers.⁶⁷⁾ *Pravda* wrote, however, that the decision to remove him had been «unanimous». The ranks had apparently been «serried» to use a typical Soviet phrase. The right to diversified opinion, said to be a vital ingredient in glasnost, did not apply. Neither was the public allowed to express support for Yeltsin. The «Federation of Socialist Clubs» asked for permission to stage a demonstration on November 16 to protest against the removal of this party leader who earlier in the autumn had provided premises for their meeting. The permission was not granted and no demonstration took place.⁶⁸⁾

What then were the charges against Yeltsin? It was in the end no doubt his outspokenness that toppled this zealous reformer. Had he been able to keep silent he would have retained his position. His impolitic speech was emphasised also in the *Pravda* account as a major factor in the indictment against him. It was labelled by Gorbachev himself as «politically immature, extremely self-contradictory and demagogical».⁶⁹⁾ At the same time *Pravda* made it quite clear that this speech was only the last nail in Yeltsin's political coffin. The main thrust of the charges brought against him, was, surprisingly, mismanagement of the city of Moscow. The reputed liberal was accused of running his

party committee with administrative fiat instead of democratic decisions, not giving his subordinates a fair hearing, and often not even letting them into his office. As Gorbachev phrased it, Yeltsin «was trying to achieve necessary changes on impulse, with pressure, bellowing, and with naked decrees. And these, as you know, are devices from the old arsenal.»

Yeltsin's subordinates, who had cowed under his allegedly arbitrary, draconian rule, now stood forth, one bolder than the other, accusing their former boss of the vilest crimes against the party and, incidentally, against themselves personally: he had tried to shift the responsibility for his own serious shortcomings to others, and even worse, he had recruited low level party officials to spy on the middle level ones. Yeltsin was reported to have said to the area inspectors: «Tell me if these sons of bitches (e.g. raion secretaries) are up to anything.»

One middle level *apparatchik* related: «We fought against this. Some of our comrades we were able to save, by moving them to other departments, but others were lost.» Such statements describe the same fierce battle between reformers and antireformers in the Soviet party administration which we have grown accustomed to read about in the Soviet press over the last couple of years, but now suddenly reported from the trench of the bureaucrats-traditionalists. Yeltsin's denouncers are of course in no way unbiased witnesses, and it is tempting to dismiss their testimonies as so many outpourings of bile. Their statements do, however, to a surprisingly high degree concur with what we have otherwise found out about the mechanisms of glasnost. The new openness does indeed contain reporting from below as an essential element, and it is also hard to see how an earnest reformer can manage to purge his domain of good-for-nothing officials by democratic procedures alone. If removals are to be decided by majority votes, idlers must be expected to try to protect one another.

According to my interpretation then, Yeltsin fell victim not primarily to an ambush of antireformers or even to his own personal shortcomings (which were no doubt real enough), but to the complexities inherent in glasnost itself. It is quite possible to believe both that Yeltsin was indeed a genuine reformer through and through, and that he had resorted to rather ruthless methods. As the career of Peter the Great shows there is no necessary contradiction between reforming zeal and authoritarianism. Often the latter is a prerequisite of the former. Peter succeeded because he wielded absolute power, whereas Yeltsin pushed ahead impetuously without a secure power base.

A Tentative Conclusion

Glasnost is still a developing process which takes new turns practically every month. Gorbachev himself has also repeatedly said that he does not possess any ready blueprint for the restructuring and is adjusting his approaches and methods as he goes along. It is therefore premature to make any definite characterisation of glasnost or any assessment of its potential to remould the Soviet state and society. The following comments are therefore by necessity quite tentative.

There seem to be good reasons for taking Gorbachev's statements seriously about broadening the Soviet democracy, especially as they are formulated as indignant protests against the type of «democratism» which prevailed under his predecessors. These statements should not, however, make us ignore his equally strong insistence on greater discipline, better control and party leadership in society. In the Kremlin these two lines of thought are not seen as opposites; on the contrary they are emphasised side by side in the same speeches. In this study, by referring to a parallel call for glasnost in earlier Russian history, I have tried to show that both tendencies can be explained by the same model. By employing this model, which is taken from the Slavophile theory of the state, I have no intention of showing that Gorbachev is «in reality» a Slavophile in disguise. Many of the ideas so dear to the Slavophiles, such as nationalism and their plea for a common faith and worship by the whole population, do not appeal to Gorbachev at all. Other observers have with good reason claimed that these traits are much more salient in the speeches of his most important rival in the Politbureau, Yegor Ligachev.⁷⁰⁾ And, as we have seen, some aspects of the perestroika may be fruitfully elucidated by drawing a parallel to a very different chapter of Russian history, the reforms of Peter the Great, which many of the Slavophiles loathed.

Lenin's principle of «democratic centralism» may be understood as an attempt to make a powerful party leadership give heed to signals from below. It has, however been shown to be extremely difficult to find the correct balance between the two elements in this concept.

Throughout Soviet history the emphasis has fallen heavily on the last part of the phrase. Compared with this principle, (which Gorbachev, to be sure, still pays obeisance to) glasnost may be taken to be something new: it does not aim only at a mobilisation of the common *party* members, but of the entire population. This is to be done, however, without relinquishing the power monopoly of the party.

Glasnost does not seem to be an end in itself for the Soviet leaders. Not culture but the dismal state of the Soviet economy is their worst headache. If one should arrange the perestroika slogans hierarchically, glasnost would range lower than *uskorenie*, acceleration, and be understood as a means to achieve this more important goal. Glasnost is in the last resort a means the Kremlin leaders employ to curtail their own bureaucracy. This is done by exposing it to a crossfire of pressure - from concerned citizens below and more enlightened and knowledgeable leaders above.

Many signals indicate that the correct frame of reference for glasnost is not the society, but the *state*. Both at elections and at other times the citizens are told to express their views as a duty towards the state. Even the activist Rasputin argues the case of conservation of the environment as consistent with the interests of the state. As the reader in *Pravda* said: If you are seriously interested in the affairs of the state, then you must support glasnost.

The Norwegian ideal of *offentlighet* (openness) in the administration may be said to express the wish to make the state more transparent. This can hardly be said to be the primary goal of glasnost. It is true that Andropov introduced the issuing of short communiqués after Politbureau meetings, but these do not in any way give the public any coherent picture of what is going on behind the Kremlin walls. Kremlinology will in all likelihood continue to be a maze of conjectures even under Gorbachev.

Not the transparent state but the *seeing* state seems to be the primary goal of glasnost, as Kireyev pointedly expressed it. Or put differently: The ideal is the transparent society, as seen from the Kremlin. The high Kremlin walls not only impede vision from without, but also from within. This is the problem glasnost is supposed to remedy.

Still, even if glasnost may be shown to be a logically consistent strategy, we have not as yet answered the question as to whether it is a feasible strategy. The Yeltsin affair showed that Gorbachev is balancing on a tightrope between those who want to push the reforms to the

utmost limit, and those who want to halt the process or give it a new direction. At the moment the latter forces appear in ascendancy. They consist not necessarily of antireformers, but rather of people who want to carry out the reforms by other means than those Gorbachev advocates. Glasnost-populism is not among their favourites.

In the January 1987 plenum Gorbachev talked about the need for «an organic combination of democracy and discipline, of independence and responsibility, of the rights and duties of officials and of every citizen». ⁷¹⁾ This sentence sums up neatly the essence of glasnost as Gorbachev understands it, but at the same time it may be taken as a starting point for assaults against his perception of glasnost. The sentence is repeated almost verbatim by Viktor Chebrikov in a speech given on September 10 in honour of the founder of the Soviet secret police, Felix Dzerzhinsky on the 110th anniversary of his birth. ⁷²⁾ Such odd jubilees are not usually celebrated in the Soviet Union with the exception of Vladimir Lenin, and it seems that Chebrikov was actively looking for an occasion on which to formulate his version of perestroika. In elaborating on the need to combine democracy and discipline, he stated that

It is necessary to understand clearly that perestroika in our state and society will be realized under the leadership of the Communist party within the framework of socialism and in the interests of socialism. This revolutionary process will be trustworthily defended against all subversive machinations.

Such subversion is in Chebrikov's view a real danger. His speech gave the impression that the Soviet Union is still besieged by voracious capitalists awaiting their chance to devour it in a similar way as in the situation described by Stalin in the 1930s. According to Chebrikov the Western secret services see glasnost as a golden opportunity for themselves, and are actively fishing in troubled waters. One of their main objectives is to «undermine the international unity and brotherly friendship of the nations of our country». Chebrikov finds evidence of this in the «actions of a group of extremists from the Crimean Tatars, and the recent provocative rambles of nationalists in the capitals of the Baltic Soviet republics». The Western secret services are also attempting to «disrupt the monolithic unity of the party and the people, and inculcate political and ideological pluralism.» The sober sociological analyses of

Tatyana Zaslavskaya are here replaced by a dogmatism clearly reminiscent of Brezhnev days. Chebrikov is moreover at variance not only with Zaslavskaya's views, but he has got indirectly engaged in polemics with Gorbachev himself. Two weeks later the General Secretary in a conversation with representatives of the French public was asked whether glasnost could spell pluralism. Gorbachev answered affirmatively, adding only that this in the Soviet context always means socialist pluralism.⁷³⁾ The statements of the General Secretary and the KGB head were evidence of a rift rather than a monolithic unity in the Party leadership.

Other parts of Chebrikov's speech show, however, that he shares many of the concerns of the reformers and is in no way satisfied with the state of Soviet society. He speaks out sharply against «corruption, embezzlement, *pripiska*, production of low-quality goods, assaults on the life, health, honour and dignity of the citizens», and is seriously worried about «drunkenness, drug-addiction and parasitism». Chebrikov then, seems to favour perestroika, but of a somewhat different brand than the one Gorbachev envisages. To put it briefly, Chebrikov would like to see perestroika minus glasnost, or with a minimum of glasnost.

For Gorbachev glasnost is primarily a means of achieving a certain goal - invigoration of the Soviet economic life. For a large, and possibly growing, percentage of the Soviet population glasnost has, however, acquired a value of its own, to be pursued in its own right. These people have as their mouthpiece periodicals like *Ogonyok* and *Novy mir*, and the popularity of these journals shows that glasnost has a considerable backing in the population. They had a first taste of cultural freedom under Khrushchev's erratic rule, but Brezhnev was able to put the lid on again. Possibly the same thing could be happening again, but the defenders of glasnost are gambling that the educational and technological development of the Soviet Union has made the process irreversible. A Ligachev or a Chebrikov at the helm of the Soviet state could perhaps end up having the same experience as the sorcerer's apprentice: It is easier to start the cauldron boiling than to turn it off again.

Notes

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1. According to one survey 10% of Norwegian people think Reagan deserves more confidence than Gorbachev in his work for peace and disarmament, whereas 30% have more confidence in the Soviet General Secretary. *Dagbladet*, November 9, 1987. As many as 60% were, however, undecided, which shows that «the battle of the minds» is by no means over.
2. See e.g. «Marksizm-leninizm i global'nye problemy sovremennosti», *Voprosy filosofii* 1983, pp 143–150, and other articles in the same journal (1985/2 and 1987/3).
3. See e.g. Deputy Foreign Minister V. Petrovskii in *Pravda*, June 6, 1987.
4. This concept is now frequently invoked by both Gorbachev and his aides. See e.g. Gorbachev's address on the 70th anniversary of the October revolution. *Pravda*, November 3, 1987, p4 and Fyodor Burlatskii: «To learn democracy» in *Pravda* July 18, 1987.. Burlatskii claims that «before our eyes a new Soviet political culture is to a considerable degree beginning to take form».
5. See Viktor Yasman: «Drafting a Press Law: Glasnost' as an Alternative to the Free Flow of Information.» *Radio Liberty Research* 14/87 and Alexander Rahr: «Boris El'tsin: Moscow's Champion of Glasnost'». *Radio Liberty Research* 2/87.
6. There are however, certain restrictions on this encouragement. Several areas are exempt from glasnost exposure. These include «information which contains secrets of the state, the military, science and technology, production, medical care, etc.» *Kratkii politicheskii slovar'* (Short political dictionary), Moscow 1987, p 89. Almost all of the activities of the KGB and the Soviet Army can probably be covered by this proviso.
7. *Moscow News* 1987/37, p 5. For a general discussion of this topic, see: Leon Guore et al.: *Convergence of Communism and Capitalism. The Soviet View*, Miami 1973.
8. A.A. Kireyev: *Kratkoe izlozhenie slavianofil'skago uchenia*, Moscow 1896, pp 62–65.
9. *XXVII S'ezd kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soyza, 25 fevralya – 6 marta 1986. Stenograficheskii otchet*, tom 1 p 83. Italics in the original.

10. *Perestroika neotlozhna, ona kasaetsya vseh i vo vsem. Sbornik materialov o poezdke M.S. Gorbacheva na Dal'nii vostok 25–31 iulya 1986 goda*, p 53.
11. According to one estimate, padding accounts for more than 3% of the reported volume of production in the USSR. See Aaron Trehub: «The USSR State Committee for Statistics: New Name, Old Problems», *Radio Liberty Research*, 340/87.
12. Thane Gustafson and Dawn Mann have labelled Gorbachev's strategy «true party populism». They maintain that «other general secretaries, notably Krushchev, have played with populist approaches in the past, attempting to mobilize the masses against the resistance to the party leader's policy at middle levels, but Gorbachev's strategy is true «party populism», something that has not been tried by any Soviet politician since Lenin.» *Problems of Communism*, July–August 1987, p 20. Gorbachev's mobilisation of the grass roots of the party is no doubt an important ingredient in his recipe, but this observation does not exclude an equally important or maybe even more important appeal to the grass roots of society at large.
13. An important part of the new increase in information from the top is the release of statistics that under Brezhnev were considered state secrets. These include data on infant mortality, invalid children, and life expectancy; sales of alcoholic beverages, grain production, pension sizes, characteristics of the country's ecological «sore» points, etc. See «Learning to count does us good» in: *Moscow News* 1988/2 and Aaron Trehub, op. cit. Reliable and available information on these sensitive topics is now viewed as essential to boost the economy.
14. *Constitution (fundamental law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Novosti press, Moscow 1978, pp 45–46.
15. Mikhail Gorbachev: *Reorganization and the Party's Personnel Policy*, Moscow 1987, p 36.
16. *Pravda*, July 1, 1987.
17. *Moscow News*, 1987/30, p 9.
18. See the preceding note.
19. loc. cit.
20. *Pravda*, June 27, 1987.
21. *Pravda*, June 21, 1987, p 1.
22. Ann Sheehy: «Crimean Tatars Demonstrate for Restoration of Autonomous Republic in Crimea», *Radio Liberty Research* 305/87.
23. *Pravda*, July 24 & 28 1987.

24. Julia Wishnevsky: «The Emergence of «Pamyat'» and «Otechestvo», *Radio Liberty Research*, 342/87.
25. *Constitution (fundamental law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Moscow 1987, p 46.
26. *Moscow News*, 1987/37, p 15.
27. *Russkaya mysl'*, August 28, 1987.
28. *Pravda*, September 1, 1987.
29. *Aftenposten*, November 19, 1987.
30. *Sovjet-nytt*, November 27, 1987.
31. *Pravda*, May 5, 1987.
32. *Pravda*, May 20, 1987.
33. *Sovjet-nytt*, November 20, 1987.
34. *Moscow News*, 1987/37.
35. See *Soviet Analyst*, 1987/18, p 2.
36. Vera Tolz: «Informal Groups Hold First Officially Sanctioned Conference», *Radio Liberty Research*, 380/87.
37. *Moscow News*, 1987/37, p 12.
38. Zhores Medvedev: *Gorbachev*, Oxford 1986, p 209.
39. *Kratkii politicheskii slovar'*, Moscow 1987, p 80.
40. Gorbachev's report to the plenary session of the Central Committee, June 25 1987, *Pravda*, June 26, 1987.
41. V. Glukhov: «Zhdu nakazanie» (I await vengeance) in: *Pravda*, June 6, 1987.
42. See the preceding note.
43. *Krasnaya zvezda*, June 5, 1987.
44. Speech in Khabarovsk, June 31, 1987; Report to the plenary meeting of the Central Committee, January 27–28, 1987.
45. Dmitry Kazutin: «Socialist pluralism» in: *Moscow News* 1987/30.
46. Viktor Yasman: «Drafting a Press Law: Glasnost' as an Alternative to the Free Flow of Information», *Radio Liberty Research*, 14/87, p 3.
47. *Morgenbladet*, August 30, 1987.
48. See the preceding note.
49. *Vårt Land*, October 3, 1987.
50. *Moscow News*, 1987/25, p 7.
51. *Sovjet-nytt*, November 27, 1987.
52. See V.E. Shlapentokh: «Moscow's War Propaganda and Soviet Public Opinion» in: *Problems of Communism*, 1984/Sept–Oct.
53. «The reform mirrored in the opinion poll» in: *Moscow News*, 1987/39, p 8.
54. *Moscow News*, 1987/25, p 7.

55. *Pravda*, June 25, 1987, p 3.
56. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia*, 2. ed, v. 35, p 432.
57. Mikhail Gorbachev: *Reorganization and the Party's Personnel Policy*, Moscow 1987, p 35.
58. *Pravda*, June 26, 1987.
59. See S. Manyakin, chairman of the KNK in *Pravda*, September 24, 1987.
60. Jan Adams: «A New Profile for the USSR People's Control Committee?» *Radio Liberty Research*, 444/87.
61. S. Manyakin, op. cit.
62. Viktor Turshatov: «Civic Interest» in: *Moscow News*, 1987/38, p 14.
63. Certain evidence suggests that the tradition of anonymous complaints is so ingrained in Soviet society that it is very difficult to uproot. A medical professor writes in *Pravda* that 98% of all letters to the Supreme Attestation Commission, which confirms all dissertations written by post graduate students, are anonymous. Their complaints against the candidates are nevertheless checked, but rarely sustained. «In other words», the professor laments, «a stream of slander is directed against honest, high-principled and conscientious people. We have filed a petition to call a halt to the activity of the anonyms, but nobody listens to us. The checks continue. The whole system of defence of theses is in my view irreparably impaired. There is no time to work. How and by whom are these underground slanderers to be stopped?» *Pravda*, January 6, 1987. One month after the publication of this letter, however, TASS announced that the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet had adopted a resolution prohibiting officials from action on anonymous complaints. See Aaron Trehub: «Human Rights in the Soviet Union: Recent Developments», *Radio Liberty Research* 67/88, p 4. If this resolution is rigorously enforced, it may indeed change Soviet political culture in a significant way.
64. *Moscow News* 1988/2, p 1.
65. *Russkaya mysl'*, November 20, 1987, p 1.
66. *Aftenposten*, November 2, 1987.
67. *Aftenposten*, November 13, 1987.
68. *Russkaya mysl'*, November 20, 1987, p 1.
69. *Pravda*, November 13, 1987.
70. Nils Morten Udgaard, in: *Aftenposten*, September 27, 1987.
71. Mikhail Gorbachev: *Reorganization and the Party's Personnel Policy*, Moscow 1987, p 39.

72. *Pravda*, September 11, 1987, p 3.

73. *Pravda*, September 30, 1987, p 1.