

Notes

***Glasnost'*: Roots and Practice**

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MIKHAIL GORBACHEV'S policy of *glasnost'* has generated debate in the Western media and among scholars concerning the scope and significance of this "open" information policy. Regardless of their own political predispositions, most Western analysts and scholars have discussed *glasnost'* on the basis of the limited evidence found in official Soviet press reports. This article will look at Gorbachev's *glasnost'* in a broader context by tracing the origins of *glasnost'* to 19th-century Russia and then reviewing the use of open criticism in the early post-revolutionary period of the Soviet Union. The article will also examine Gorbachev's *glasnost'* policy and its application by Soviet civilian and military media in order to assess the current scope and limits of openness in Soviet society.

Origins of *Glasnost'*

The concept of *glasnost'* became known in Russia during the last decade of Tsar Nicholas I's reign (1825-55), when debates were held on the projected emancipation

of the serfs and what came to be known as the Great Reforms.¹ Introduced by "enlightened bureaucrats" within the central government, *glasnost'* at the time meant an exchange of opinions within the bureaucracy about the country's much needed social and economic transformation (*preobrazovaniye*).²

Nineteenth-century champions of *glasnost'* viewed debates within the government as an effective tool for correcting failures of bureaucratic institutions and thwarting corrupt practices among officials.³ The debates were strictly confined to domestic issues: the abolition of serfdom, the judicial process, the administration of the Naval Ministry.⁴ Proponents among government officials of public openness emphasized that more extensive statistical reporting in the press would aid the central government in its decision-making.

This *glasnost'* policy was as much constrained by bureaucratic institutions and conservative officials as it was by the autocratic form of the government. The "enlightened bureaucrats" did not seek to engage broader segments of the educated public in political debates—

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¹I am indebted to Dr. Jacob Kipp of the Soviet Army Studies Office, US Army Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for drawing my attention to the origins of *glasnost'* in imperial Russia.

²The discussion is based on a study by W. Bruce Lincoln, *In the Vanguard of Reform*, DeKalb, IL, North Illinois University Press, 1983, pp. 102-204.

³This approach can be found, for instance, in the views of a liberal Russian censor Alexander Nikitenko. See *Diary of a Russian Censor: Aleksandr Nikitenko*, ed. and trans. by Helen Jacobson, Amherst, MA, University of Massachusetts Press, 1975.

⁴Interestingly, one such discussion was conducted in the Naval Ministry under the patronage of Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich. In this case, however, the Duke hoped that an artificially induced debate (*iskusstvennaya glasnost'*) among naval officers concerning a projected new naval regulation would promote seeming conflict of opinion and create the impression that the new legislation to be passed reflected public opinion rather than decisions approved by the central government. For a detailed discussion see Jacob W. Kipp and Maya A. Kipp, "The Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich: The Making of a Tsarist Reformer, 1837-1853," in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, No. 34, 1986, pp. 3-18.

unless their proposals encountered opposition from other influential bureaucratic groups.

During the reign of Alexander II (1855-81), however, several liberal-minded officials attempted to extend *glasnost'* to a genuinely open political debate in order to co-opt groups of radical intelligentsia and to check the growth of the revolutionary movement in Russia. Despite their efforts, the notion of *glasnost'* which came to prevail remained a limited one because it stressed that public opinion had invariably to express public support for the state and its policies. Arguing that public criticism was contrary to the Russian principle of autocracy, Alexander II reimposed stricter censorship in order to curtail criticisms of the state policies in the press.⁵

Soviet Tradition of *Glasnost'*

A concept of *glasnost'* also existed during the early Soviet period. The term is first mentioned in Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's works on the economic and political organization of the socialist state during 1918-19. In these works, Lenin advocated the open and public criticism of economic inefficiency and of the cumbersome state bureaucracy:

*Everything that takes place at a socialist enterprise should be made public (predavat' glasnosti). The shortcomings in the economic activity of each and every commune should be disclosed to the public. We need public criticism which will expose the evils of our economy, strike a responsive chord with the public and help us cure social problems.*⁶

Like the "enlightened bureaucrats" of the 19th century, Lenin conceived of *glasnost'* as leadership-initiated and leadership-regulated criticism designed, in his view, to reverse undesirable socio-economic trends, accelerate economic development, and boost labor productivity. In the political realm, he saw the function of *glasnost'* as a means to castigate bureaucratic malpractice and stimulate public participation in political life, that is to say, to strengthen the regime's legitimacy.⁷ In Lenin's view, "the state is strong when the masses know everything, render their opinion on every issue, and consciously respond to every policy."⁸

⁵For censorship practices of the period, see Charles Rudd, *Fighting Words: Imperial Censorship and the Russian Press, 1804-1906*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1982.

⁶Vladimir Lenin, *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy* (Complete Collected Works), Moscow, Politizdat, 1969, Vol. 36, pp. 147-50.

⁷*Ibid.*, Vol. 45, pp. 389-406.

It should be noted that Lenin's view of *glasnost'* differed fundamentally from the Western concept of the free flow of information. *Glasnost'* was intended to promote the best interests of the regime which set the parameters within which divergent opinions could be voiced. Open public debates in the press were largely restricted to sanctioned policy issues. Predictably, Lenin believed that the media should not inform the general public about sensitive foreign policy issues such as foreign credits and Western technology transfers to Russia.⁹ Extending the dialectical process to media policy, he called for a "balanced" news coverage, that is, for positive accounts of the USSR's successes to outnumber critical assessments of its shortcomings and failures.¹⁰

It was symptomatic of Lenin's views on *glasnost'* that the Bolsheviks had reestablished pre-publication censorship, declared printing to be a state monopoly, and closed down newspapers owned by non-Bolshevik political parties. The October 1917 Decree on the Press and related legislative acts banned dissemination of criticism of the new regime.¹¹ Furthermore, to silence the regime's critics, Lenin had instituted Military Revolutionary Tribunals operating under the state security organs. To Lenin's thinking, such repressive measures against free political thought were not inconsistent with the policy of *glasnost'* which allowed for a relatively free debate among the various factions of the party on controversial policy issues.

In arguments similar in structure and style to those of Lenin (one may also add, of Gorbachev), Stalin, too, expressed support for the principle of *glasnost'*:

*In order to move forward and improve relations between the people and the leaders we should keep the valve of self-criticism open. We should give the Soviet people an opportunity to criticize their leaders for their mistakes so that the leaders do not put on airs and the masses do not distance themselves from their leaders.*¹²

Stalin wrote these words after the Shakhty affair (1928), which marked the beginning of the leader's campaign

⁹*Ibid.*, Vol. 35, p. 21. Interestingly, Gorbachev has on numerous occasions quoted such statements from Lenin's works, undoubtedly in order to provide an authoritative stamp of approval to the *glasnost'* policy and to thwart attacks by its opponents. See, e.g., Gorbachev's speeches at the 27th Party Congress and January 1987 Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee in *Pravda* (Moscow), Feb. 26, 1986, and Jan. 28, 1987.

¹⁰Lenin, op. cit., Vol. 45, p. 195.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Dekrety Sovetskoy Vlasti* (Decrees of the Soviet Authorities), Moscow, Politizdat, 1957, pp. 24-25.

¹³Yosif Stalin, *Sochineniya* (Works), Moscow, Politizdat, 1952, pp. 31-32.

against so-called class enemies of the state.¹³ By that time, Stalin had defeated his opposition and had in effect silenced open debate in the Soviet Union, even while he reiterated Lenin's views on the importance of *glasnost'* for social progress. His endorsement of public criticism enabled him to stage and manipulate media campaigns against his opponents. Moreover, an occasional airing of unauthorized political views in the press or the publication of unorthodox literary writings often was the cue for one of Stalin's orchestrated public campaigns against dissenting voices, and a prelude to a subsequent massive purge of these people.¹⁴ It is worth noting that in his writings on the media Stalin expressed disapproval of Western-style investigative reporting, and that he specifically opposed any press criticism of mid-level enterprise managers and party apparatchiks—who constituted the core of Stalin's support during the years of his struggle for absolute power.

Clearly, like the leadership of imperial Russia, the leaders of the early Soviet state viewed *glasnost'* as a tool of policy. *Glasnost'* served not only as a vehicle for reforming the bureaucracy, but as a pretext for eliminating political opponents and consolidating power.

Gorbachev's Concept of *Glasnost'*

The concept of *glasnost'* changed in the post-Stalin period, but more in terms of emphasis than essence. During the Khrushchev era, the media was directed to criticize Stalinism and its political supporters. The publication of unorthodox literary writings and discussion of sensitive political issues brought allies for Nikita Khrushchev, especially from among the intelligentsia, against the Stalinist rank and file in the party bureaucracy. However, this relatively liberal information policy did not allow the printing of explicit criticism of the Soviet political system or of Khrushchev's policies (labeled "hare-brained" schemes after his ouster in 1964). Nor did this policy preclude an anti-Western propaganda campaign which proceeded in high gear and became especially intense during the political crises in Hungary (1956), West Berlin (1961), and Cuba (1962).

In the early 1970's, when Gorbachev was rapidly advancing to the higher rungs of the party bureaucracy, Leonid Brezhnev explained his approach to public criticism in the following terms: "Communists should not be apprehensive of serious and business-like criticism and self-criticism on the grounds that it might be used by our enemies."¹⁵ By that time, Brezhnev had curtailed public criticism of Stalinism and had restricted artistic freedoms, although he also had expanded policy debates among experts and elites on selected issues.

By the mid-1970's, however, a new argument for *glas-*

nost' was presented by Professor Zasurskiy, the dean of the Moscow University School of Journalism and an influential representative of the Soviet mass media. Zasurskiy argued that *glasnost'* was imperative for the country's technological development, especially in the areas of electronic media and computer and information sciences. He furthermore maintained that a freer exchange of information would help overcome the trends towards inertia and stagnation in Soviet society: "*Glasnost'* is an effective method of intensifying ideological and political processes."¹⁶

Mikhail Gorbachev seems to have been impressed with this rational, technocratic approach to *glasnost'*. He has encouraged criticism of management and personnel at industrial enterprises for failure to meet production norms and to develop new technologies. He has argued that, by stimulating competition between enterprises and creating the incentives for employees to change their attitudes towards work, *glasnost'* improves sluggish labor productivity. The General Secretary has also called for holding discussions at party, Komsomol, trade union, and enterprise meetings in order to stimulate mass participation in decision-making on local issues.¹⁷ Citizen participation in low-level policy-making, Gorbachev evidently believes, will restore the public's eroded trust in the communist leadership and its ideology. As the Soviet leader pointed out during the January 1987 CPSU Central Committee Plenum:

*It is necessary that accountability go hand in hand with a lively and principled discussion, criticism and self-criticism, business-like suggestions Then we will satisfy Lenin's requirement that the work of elected officials and organizations be open to everyone Then there would be no reasons for complaints and appeals to high-level authorities.*¹⁸

¹³In March 1928 the Soviet state prosecutor announced that a group of noncommunist engineers in the Shakhty region of the Donets Basin were to be tried for allegedly deliberate sabotage of the mining industry and for conspiracy with foreign powers. This trial became the first in a series of show trials and signaled a new tough policy on dealing with class enemies. Stalin's campaign against the kulaks followed shortly thereafter. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932*, Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 112; and Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, New York, Random House, 1960, p. 363.

¹⁴E.g., the publication of literary pieces labeled seditious in the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* in the mid-1940's occasioned a purge of Andrey Zhdanov's Leningrad party organization.

¹⁵Leonid Brezhnev, *Leninskim Kursom* (On A Leninist Course), Moscow, Politizdat, 1972, p. 45.

¹⁶Y. Zasurskiy, Ed., *Zhurnalistika v Politicheskoy Strukture Obshchestva* (Journalism in the Political Structure of Society), Moscow, Politizdat, 1974, pp. 81-82.

¹⁷Mikhail Gorbachev, "On Perestroika and the Party's Cadre Policy," *Pravda*, Jan. 28, 1987.

¹⁸Ibid.

Gorbachev needs *glasnost'* to accelerate the country's technological development, which lags behind the technologically advanced West. In Gorbachev's political parlance, *glasnost'* should trigger *perestroyka* (restructuring), a synonym for Lenin's "socialist construction" (*stroitel'stvo*), or 19th-century "transformation" (*preobrazovaniye*). Viktor Afanas'yev, the editor-in-chief of *Pravda*, emphasized this role of *glasnost'* in a speech to a Press Day meeting on May 5, 1987:

*It is the duty of all Soviet journalists to translate the policy of restructuring into reality. For us journalists there is no nobler mission, nothing we treasure more, than to impart Leninist principles to the masses and to be in the front ranks of the fighters for communism.*¹⁹

Although Gorbachev's policy has not changed the fundamental principle of party control over the mass media, it has partially unveiled the cloak of secrecy that shrouded political and social events in the Soviet Union. The General Secretary has encouraged public criticism of the party apparatus, the state bureaucracy, and individual officials up through the republic level. In practice, this means that major institutional actors, i.e., the party, the Komsomol, the ministries, the military, the KGB, and the judiciary, which were immune to criticism during the Brezhnev period, now regularly come under fire in the Soviet press.

Not unlike Stalin in the late 1920's or Khrushchev in the late 1950's, Gorbachev has been using these press campaigns to remove his opponents from positions of power.²⁰ Today, articles criticizing the lack of *glasnost'* in a particular area usually hint at the need for personnel changes in an oblast or republic. Of course, corruption in the higher echelons of power has been no secret to the Soviet public in recent decades, yet its portrayal in the media challenges the credibility of the ruling elite in a traditionally authoritarian society.

Other manifestations of *glasnost'* include more complete reportage on accidents and disasters, as well as a more realistic coverage of the country's social problems. Yet, Soviet handling of the accident at the Chernobyl' nuclear plant has demonstrated the limits of *glasnost'* in reporting disasters: while some information on the accident has been released in response to pressure from the West, domestic audiences have been consis-

tently denied specific information related to their health and the safety of their environment.²¹

On the other hand, the Soviet press has reported nationality conflicts, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, the poor quality of medical care, problems of poverty and vagrancy, draft-dodging demonstrations and strikes and other controversial issues—that is, problems associated with social justice that as a rule had been previously mentioned in the Soviet press only with reference to Western capitalist societies. Moreover, Soviet authorities have also started to release more quantitative data on negative social trends, including alcoholism, drug abuse, infant mortality, infectious diseases, and male life expectancy. Conceivably, even a partial release of selective statistical data serves to provide lower-level planning agencies with the information necessary for decision-making. As one Soviet military writer has observed, "we need information not for the sake of information, but as a basis for decision-making."²²

Since the June 1987 CPSU Central Committee Plenum the Soviet press has been gradually expanding its coverage of politically sensitive issues. It has alluded to anti-Semitism and has discussed such topics as the misuse of psychiatry to suppress non-political criticism and the existence of restrictions on foreign travel to and from Eastern Europe. The media has also published conflicting and often revisionist interpretations of Russia's revolutionary and early post-revolutionary experience.²³ The revolutionary leaders of the "Lenin Guard," who were previously referred to as notorious "enemies of the people," have now been restored to good standing and special tribute has been paid to Nikolay Bukharin whose theory of "market socialism" is consistent with some aspects of Gorbachev's economic reform.²⁴

Soviet writers have also scrutinized Stalin's policy of collectivization, condemned the purges, and criticized Stalin's legacy in contemporary Soviet political life.

²¹For a well-documented discussion of Soviet media behavior during the Chernobyl' accident, see Ellen Jones and Benjamin Woodbury, "Chernobyl' and Glasnost'," *Problems of Communism* (Washington, DC), November-December 1986, pp. 28-39.

²²N. Kiziun, "Operational Quality and Reliability of Party Information," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil* (Moscow), No. 23, 1986, p. 13. Interestingly, a demand for more extensive reporting of statistical data in the media is consistent with earlier notions of *glasnost'* advocated by Russian reformers in the 1850's and resurrected by Lenin in 1918-19.

²³See for instance, "Two Letters," *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (Moscow) June 17, 1987, and E. Maksimova, I. Martkovich, "Defenseless," *Izvestiya*, July 11, 1987. For contrasting views on Stalin and Soviet history see, for instance, O. Martynenko, "Preserving Butter in Lanterns," *Moskovskiy Novosti*, Oct. 4, 1987; V. Tkachenko, "We Have Only One Homeland," *Pravda*, Aug. 21, 1987; and an interview with Colonel General D. Volkogonov on Moscow television, Oct. 23, 1987 in *FBIS-SOV*, Oct. 23, 1987, p. 40.

²⁴For an interesting article on Bukharin by one of Gorbachev's well-known supporters see F. Burlatskiy, "A Political Testament," *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, July 22, 1987.

¹⁹"Powerful Instrument of *Perestroyka*," *ibid.*, May 6, 1987.

²⁰E.g., news of the illegal arrest in Ukraine of Soviet journalist Viktor Borisovich Berkhin in reprisal for his criticism was followed by a letter of apology written by the Ukrainian Communist Party's First Secretary Volodymyr Shcherbytskyi in the party newspaper. It can be argued that the publicity accorded the case by the media served to compromise Shcherbytskyi about whom rumors that Gorbachev wants to remove him have long circulated. See *Pravda*, Feb. 15, 1987.

Their discussions have supported the idea of a legitimate intraparty opposition existing in a one-party socialist state and espousing an alternative strategy of social development, i.e., a less centralized economy and more relaxed political and social controls. The Gorbachev leadership, however, appears to have assumed the role of a mediator in such discussions, balancing the conflicting views and interests of major elites and social groups. This middle-of-the-road line was strikingly evident in Gorbachev's speech commemorating the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution.²⁵ Although the General Secretary criticized the mass terror during the purges and recognized Bukharin's role in the USSR's economic development, he praised Stalin's contribution to Soviet World War II victories and approved of his policy of forced collectivization. Such a policy line is likely to have disappointed groups on both sides of the political spectrum: for some the General Secretary is going too far, while for others he is not going far enough in transforming the Soviet Union into a more open society.

However, in some respects, *glasnost*' has met the demands of intellectual elites for the right to learn the truth about their own society from official sources of information instead of dissident literature (*samizdat*) and foreign radio broadcasts. Furthermore, literary elites have been granted considerable freedom in discussing politically sensitive issues in their works. This more liberal cultural policy was designed to co-opt the more creative elements of the intelligentsia—who enjoy high prestige and moral authority in Soviet society—to support the new leader and to promote his reforms. Apparently, it was also intended to check the growth of the dissident movement and prevent the further emigration of the country's intelligentsia to the West. In this respect Gorbachev seems to have also learned from the Russian historical experience of co-opting the intellectual elite to serve the regime's political, economic, and military priorities.

Available evidence indicates that *glasnost*' has been intended, first and foremost, for domestic consumption. Yet, it can be argued that it has the potential to yield foreign policy gains as well. The new image of openness serves to restore Soviet international prestige, which was eroded in the post-détente years as a result of a continuing military buildup and the invasion of Afghanistan. By winning favor with Western public opinion, the new leadership hopes to gain access to Western technology and to smooth the arms control negotiating process. The insistence and intensity with which Soviet representatives have been trying to convince Western

politicians that *glasnost*' portends a meaningful reform of the Soviet Union suggests that this policy is being used for a variety of public relations purposes. Prominent Soviet cultural figures who enjoy the reputation of "closet liberals" in the West have published articles in the Western press crediting Gorbachev's policy for the renaissance of culture and art in the Soviet Union.²⁶ In a departure from past practices, Soviet officials in the press section of the Foreign Ministry in Moscow have willingly set up interviews with Soviet officials for Western correspondents, while at the same time continuing to deny them the right to travel freely to most Soviet cities.²⁷ Finally, Soviet journalists, especially those representing more "liberal" newspapers and journals associated with *glasnost*' (e.g., Yegor Yakovlev, chief editor of *Moskovskiy Novosti*) have held press conferences abroad in which they discussed, and the press reported, the changes which have occurred in the Soviet political scene as a result of *glasnost*'.²⁸

The Limits on *Glasnost*'

A major constraint on Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*' is the party's control over the Soviet media. It severely reduces the media's ability to apply an open information policy and reduces *glasnost*' to a party tool designed to reflect and implement the party leadership's political goals. As Gorbachev himself stated before a domestic audience:

*The main task of the press is to help the nation understand and assimilate the ideas of restructuring, to mobilize the masses to struggle for successful implementation of party plans We need . . . glasnost', criticism and self-criticism in order to implement major changes in all spheres of social life . . . but criticism should reflect the interests of the party.*²⁹

In keeping with Gorbachev's directives, the reports written from the journalists' congress held in Moscow in March 1987 explicitly confirmed the need for local-level party committees to intercede in the daily operation of the press: "the party committees should direct the press to focus on the main avenues of restructuring."³⁰

²⁶See, e.g., Andrey Voznesenskiy's article in *The New York Times*, Mar. 16, 1987; and Yevgeniy Yevtushenko's article in *Time* (New York), Feb. 9, 1987, pp. 32-33.

²⁷David Satter, "The Foreign Correspondent in Moscow," *Encounter* (London), May 1987, pp. 58-63.

²⁸See for example, "Their Interest in Our *Glasnost*," *Izvestiya* (Moscow), May 15, 1987.

²⁹"Conviction—A Bulwark of Perestroika," *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Moscow), Feb. 14, 1987.

³⁰"District Newspapers," *Pravda*, Mar. 28, 1987.

²⁵*Pravda*, Nov. 2, 1987.

Gorbachev has clearly defined the limits of permissible criticism. During a meeting with mass media representatives in February and July 1987, Gorbachev reaffirmed that a major revision of the Soviet Union's historical experience and revolutionary ideology will not be permitted.³¹ Warning against excessive criticism of the local level party committees and against personal attacks on party officials, he called on the media to portray the country's current problems in a generally positive light:

*Glasnost' and democracy do not mean that everything is permitted. Glasnost' is called upon to strengthen socialism and the spirit of our people, to strengthen morality . . . Glasnost' also means criticism of shortcomings but it does not mean the undermining of socialism and our socialist values.*³²

A perusal of the Soviet press shows that no explicit criticism of the General Secretary, his policies, or his political allies has appeared in print. No overtly dissenting views and opinions of Gorbachev's opponents have been made public. Yet, according to a recent Yugoslav visitor to Moscow, at least one brochure critical of Gorbachev's policy exists and is now being circulated through *samizdat*.³³ Even the political debate that had apparently taken place during the January CPSU Central Committee Plenum has not been reported fully in the Soviet press.³⁴ The text of Academician Andrey Sakharov's arms control proposals made in February 1987 at the much-publicized Moscow Conference for a Nuclear-Free World and Survival of Mankind also has yet to be released.³⁵ Finally, the Soviet press continues to deny its citizens specific information pertaining to USSR foreign policy initiatives, military doctrine, and military and technological capabilities. The completeness of reporting in this area has not improved: the figures related to the defense budget, allocations for defense programs, volume of international trade, technology transfers or arms sales to the Third World have not been divulged.

Although the Soviet press now occasionally publishes the opinions of Soviet émigrés living abroad, it does so mostly in cases where the views are critical of the

West or supportive of Gorbachev's political initiatives. Recently, however, a Soviet newspaper, *Moskovskiy Novosti*, published a letter by 10 leading émigré dissidents voicing skepticism about Gorbachev's reforms and proposing major revisions in Soviet ideology and international behavior. The letter had previously received much attention in the Western press, which may explain why the Soviet media felt compelled to print it. Instead of inviting a free discussion of the points raised in the letter, the editor of that newspaper condemned the émigré demands as "counterrevolutionary," and warned the authors of the letter that their criticisms will bar them from returning to the Soviet Union.³⁶

While censoring anti-Semitism, the press has failed to mention existing policies and practices of discrimination against Jews in areas of education, employment, and professional and political career advancements. Similarly, discussions of psychiatric abuse have not included reference to past and probably current cases of psychiatric victimization of political dissidents.

The effect of *glasnost'* on the media's treatment of the West in general and the United States in particular has been marginal. The *glasnost'* policy has gone hand in hand with an anti-Western propaganda campaign which subsides on a regular basis prior to or during superpower summit meetings, only to be revived a few weeks later. This pattern of media behavior on foreign policy issues is consistent with Gorbachev's specification at the 27th Party Congress in February 1986 that the media continue its psychological war against the United States.³⁷ The guidelines issued to Soviet journalists on the coverage of foreign policy issues for domestic audiences leave little doubt that the traditional propaganda vis-à-vis the West remains in place. To quote the chairman of the Journalists' Union:

*The press, radio, and television are called upon to disclose the reactionary nature of modern capitalism. It remains our duty to criticize convincingly bourgeois ideology, disclose reactionary imperialist policies and enemy lies about socialism. We should remember that our ideological adversaries today act against socialism more insidiously, with more sophistication, and in a more aggressive, coordinated manner. That is why our ideological weaponry should be accurate, stinging and capable of repelling any attack.*³⁸

Consistent with this policy statement has been a plethora of Soviet articles accusing the United States of

³¹See texts of Gorbachev's speeches during meetings with mass media representatives in *Izvestiya*, Feb. 15, 1987; and *Pravda*, July 15, 1987. See also the text of his speech in Leningrad in *Pravda*, Oct. 14, 1987.

³²Mikhail Gorbachev, "Strengthening Perestroika Through Real Deeds," *Pravda*, July 15, 1987.

³³Radio Free Europe, *Yugoslav Situation Report* (Munich), No. 3, May 8, 1987.

³⁴The list of speakers at the Plenum was published in *Pravda*, Jan. 28, 1987.

³⁵Andrey Sakharov's speech was published in *Time*, Mar. 16, 1987, pp. 40-43.

³⁶*Moskovskiy Novosti*, Mar. 29, 1987.

³⁷*Pravda*, Feb. 26, 1986.

³⁸"On the Surge of Perestroika," *Pravda*, Mar. 15, 1987.

human rights violations, of an unprecedented military buildup, and of an expansionist foreign policy.³⁹ *Glasnost'* notwithstanding, Soviet authorities have warned the public that unauthorized circulation and viewing of Western video films containing violence, pornography, or anti-Soviet propaganda will continue to be punished as criminal offenses.⁴⁰ On the other hand, a drift away from traditional Soviet presentations of a polarized Western society can be observed in some media accounts which depict not only the workers pitted against capitalists but also a prosperous middle-class resistant to the idea of social revolution.⁴¹

Gorbachev's interest in using Western liberal public opinion to support his foreign policy initiatives has led the Soviet media to pay increasing attention to Western middle-of-the-road parties and movements. Yet, although the Soviet media now sometimes reports views of Western politicians and commentators which significantly diverge from the official Soviet position—a clear departure from previous practices—in most cases these discussions are followed by counter-arguments presented by a Soviet writer.⁴² Therefore, by the admission of Alexandr Bovin, a well-known *Izvestiya* reporter, Soviet journalists writing on foreign policy issues have not been the beneficiaries of Gorbachev's *glasnost'* policy. Unlike their colleagues writing on domestic politics, Soviet foreign news reporters are required to follow closely the party line.⁴³

In the area of domestic policies serious discussions are largely limited to the central press and Moscow-based public organizations.⁴⁴ The central press is re-

plete with articles illustrating the limited effectiveness and even lack of *glasnost'* in provincial towns and rural locations.⁴⁵ For instance, a group of workers from Pskov oblast complained to *Pravda* that discussions held at their party meetings were not being reflected in the final written reports. *Pravda* also criticized newspapers in the Saratov oblast for not having informed their readers that the five-year plan was not fulfilled.⁴⁶

Resistance to the *glasnost'* policy indicates that Gorbachev has not as yet succeeded in exercising full control over the provincial party organizations. In many instances, this resistance comes from provincial party leaders whom he himself has brought to power. Gorbachev has mentioned, and the press has documented, numerous cases of reprisal whereby party members criticizing management during party meetings were removed from their jobs or forced to leave the area.⁴⁷ For example, the secretary of the party organization in a power station located in the city of Ufa was removed from his party post for criticizing the corruption of the enterprise management.⁴⁸ Such examples of reprisal do not encourage the local leadership and the population at large to exercise public criticism.

Opposition to *glasnost'* also exists among high-level bureaucrats for whom public criticism of their actions is a threat to their status, career advancement, and privileges. Remarkably, the new press centers created at the ministerial level and specifically designed to promote *glasnost'* also represent obstacles to Gorbachev's policy. According to Soviet reports, the press centers not only block the release of unfavorable information but also commission laudatory articles about themselves in the central press.⁴⁹ Clearly, by providing some freedom to criticize opponents, *glasnost'* has exacerbated institutional conflict in Soviet society.

Soviet political culture itself, with its deeply ingrained intolerance for differences of opinion, constitutes another constraint on *glasnost'*. In the absence of appropriate legislation, policy statements, or even specific guidelines on freedom of information, Soviet citizens are confused about the limits of permitted criticism and are understandably reluctant to support Gorbachev's policy. Mindful of Stalin's purges and the more recent dissident trials, the Soviet public recognizes the uncertainties associated with *glasnost'*. Continuing reprisal for public criticism in the provinces reinforces a deep-seated suspicion that participation in public discussions may later, if not immediately, have serious and unforeseen repercussions for people's careers and future lives.

The fragmentary evidence available in the official Soviet press supports the argument that many Soviet citizens are skeptical about the success of Gorbachev's policy. Some citizens have labeled it "banned."⁵⁰ Other

³⁹For recent examples see *Pravda*, Mar. 3 and 16, and Apr. 3 and 4, 1987.

⁴⁰*Zhurnalists* (Moscow), No. 12, December 1986, pp. 58-59; and *Pravda*, Mar. 1, 1987.

⁴¹For a good discussion of changes in Soviet media coverage of international issues, see Ellen Mickiewicz, *Making Media Work: Soviet Society and Communication*, forthcoming M. E. Sharpe.

⁴²For the reporting of Western views of the Strategic Defense Initiative see, e.g., "From Different Points of View," *Pravda*, Feb. 28, 1987.

⁴³"On the Surge of *Perestroyka*."

⁴⁴The trend towards a freer political discussion in the central press, on the one hand, yet a more repressive information policy in the provinces, on the other, represents a significant departure from recent experience. During the Brezhnev period, for example, more unorthodox views and writings were as a rule published in the provinces, and left untouched by the central press.

⁴⁵See, e.g., "After Certification," *Pravda*, Jan. 18, 1986; "The Danger of the Old Railroad," *ibid.*, Sept. 1, 1986; and "When the Discussion is Serious," *ibid.*, Oct. 26, 1986.

⁴⁶"Is It Easy for a Newspaper to Be Probing?" *Pravda*, Mar. 13, 1987; and "From a Skeptic's Point of View," *ibid.*, Mar. 18, 1987.

⁴⁷*ibid.*, Mar. 18, 1987.

⁴⁸"*Glasnost'* Without Reservations," *ibid.*, June 6, 1987.

⁴⁹"Conveyors of Proof," *ibid.*, Feb. 27, 1987; and "Orienting the Press Toward Delicate Issues," *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, Mar. 11, 1987.

⁵⁰*Pravda*, Nov. 24, 1986; and Mar. 18 and 29, 1987.

citizens have expressed doubt that their letters to newspaper editors would be published. At least one editor of political science literature has noted that the *glasnost'* policy has not changed the content and quality of works currently submitted for publication.⁵¹ Recently, Peter Chernetskiy, a collective farm chairman who has suffered reprisal for criticizing the organization of fishing industries in the Far East, readily identified popular sentiment about Gorbachev's policy in the following terms:

*One should not criticize. You pay a high price for this afterwards . . . Democratization, glasnost', are, for the time being, words, but reality is different.*⁵²

An elderly reader of *Izvestiya*, flatly refuting Marxist belief in the locomotive of history, has summed up popular doubts about the ability of the communist system to change in this way:

*It's fashionable now to talk, write and do television broadcasts about restructuring. In general, it's almost all the same things about which you used to write: let's go, let's go, speed it up, speed it up. In my lifetime M. S. Gorbachev is, I think, the seventh leader. Typically, correspondents make a business-like adjustment to every one of them. Under Stalin it was five-year plans, domestic and foreign enemies, but prices fell. Under Khrushchev it was corn, peas, chemistry, and price increases. Under Brezhnev it was the virgin lands, Malaya Zemlya, Orders of Victory, marshal stars, pace-setting and decisive years, price increases, etc., etc. Tomorrow we will be singing to any kind of music . . .*⁵³

Soviet youth has apparently expressed even less enthusiasm for *glasnost'* than most other segments of the population, and its apathy represents another immediate obstacle to *glasnost'*. The partial data available from surveys of youth taken in fifty industrial enterprises in the city of Donetsk shows that the majority of young people there are not familiar with Gorbachev's new policies and have only a vague idea about their role in "restructuring."⁵⁴ These responses reflect the process of estrangement of Soviet youth which took root in Soviet society in the 1970's. As Western research on Soviet youth has demonstrated, in rejecting official collectivist values, young Soviets have retreated from involvement in public life and turned to the family, hobbies, and participation in unofficial associations for personal satisfac-

tion.⁵⁵ These long-term trends in the behavior of youth account for their reluctant support of Gorbachev's *glasnost'* policy, which ultimately emphasizes mobilization of society for the "public good." Apathy and distrust of social ideals, including *glasnost'*, seem to set the young generation of the 1980's apart from their fathers, whose political values—shaped during the Khrushchev "thaw" period—were based on a belief in the possibility of reforming the Soviet political system. This probably explains why the vocal supporters of Gorbachev's reform have been middle-aged intellectuals (Tatyana Zaslavskaya, Abel' Aganbegyan, Yevgeniy Yevtushenko) rather than their younger counterparts.

In conclusion, one can argue that a demand for unrestricted freedom of public opinion or political discussion has never been strongly promoted in Soviet society. Many proposals made by Soviet dissidents on information policy envisage some restrictions on the free flow of information either on moral or political grounds. Surveys of Soviet émigrés consistently demonstrate that former Soviet citizens perceive freedoms enjoyed by Western media as excessive, if not pernicious. In their view, full reporting of social disturbances, of conflicts within the government or of criticism of the top political leadership jeopardize the stability of a strong state.⁵⁶

Still, we can discern some signs of pressure by Soviet citizens to widen the limits of artificially controlled *glasnost'*. A well-known poet and a popular theater director both have insisted that society needs genuine public openness and a right to criticize every government organization and its management.⁵⁷ A group of Russian nationalists from the unofficial association *Pamyat'* (Memory) have held a demonstration in Moscow demanding official recognition of their organization and government protection of Russian historical monuments.⁵⁸ In Latvia and Moldavia, nationalist youth groups held demonstrations to protest the Soviet treatment of the local population during the Soviet occupation of the Western provinces in the prewar period.⁵⁹ An official authorization to hold discussions on selected politically sensitive issues has challenged some young

⁵¹"Movers," *ibid.*, Mar. 10, 1987.

⁵²"Being Chastized for Criticism," *Izvestiya*, Apr. 8, 1987.

⁵³"You and We," *ibid.*, Mar. 14, 1987.

⁵⁴"Speak with the Youth," *Pravda*, Apr. 27, 1987.

⁵⁵See a detailed discussion in Vladimir Shlapentokh, "Soviet Youth under Gorbachev: Pioneer in the Privatization of Society," paper presented at the Airlie House Workshop, "Soviet Society under Gorbachev," Oct. 14-16, 1986.

⁵⁶Stephen White, "Continuity and Change in Soviet Political Culture: An Emigré Study," *Comparative Political Studies* (Beverly Hills, CA), No. 11, 1978, pp. 381-95.

⁵⁷*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, Apr. 8, 1987; and *Sovremennaya Dramaturgiya* (Moscow), No. 3, March 1986, pp. 223-25.

⁵⁸"Where Memory Leads," *Izvestiya*, June 3, 1987.

⁵⁹"More Democracy Means More Socialism," *Sovetskaya Latvija* (Riga), June 18, 1987; and "From Slogans and Words to Real Deeds," *Sovetskaya Moldaviya* (Kishinev), May 31, 1987 trans. in *Current Digest of Soviet Press* (Columbus, OH), Vol. 39, No. 27, Aug. 5, 1987.

people to expand the limits of permitted debate and to demand wider participation in decision-making. There have been several examples of this. During political discussions in Donetsk, young men and women posed probing questions even though they were promptly labeled "dissidents" by local ideological workers. (Perhaps that is why half of the oblast's professional ideology officials have reportedly refused to work with young audiences.⁶⁰) In a discussion in Leningrad, a young man suggested adopting a Western-style competitive system for top leadership positions and advocated full rights for citizens to criticize the central authorities and their policies.⁶¹ When city authorities in the same town, disregarding a public outcry, decided to raze a historic building, hundreds of young people held a demonstration in the vain hope of reversing the decision.⁶²

These instances of conflict seem to indicate that *glasnost*' provokes some people to ask disturbing questions about the underlying causes of the corruption and failure of socialist society. Since the process of intellectual introspection and social analysis cannot be easily controlled, *glasnost*' might, in the long term, radicalize groups of well-educated and socially active young people. This raises the possibility that some members of the younger generation may find themselves at odds with those who support a restricted *glasnost*' policy.

It appears that, despite the leadership's efforts to confine public debates within sanctioned limits, *glasnost*' cannot be kept under full control. The Soviet press today portrays Soviet society as riven with institutional rivalries, and group and personal conflict. In the absence of a consensus on *glasnost*' among either the major bureaucracies or the population at large, this policy may yet prove destabilizing for Soviet society and thus result in political and ideological losses rather than the expected gains for the Gorbachev leadership. However, to Gorbachev's way of thinking, the long-term benefits of *glasnost*'—a modernized economy, a revitalized society, and restored international prestige—outweigh the risks of internal instability and social turmoil.

Glasnost' in the Armed Forces

An interesting case study of how state institutions tailor the *glasnost*' policy to suit their own interests is provided by the Soviet military. An examination of the military press indicates that its reporting on social and political issues has not been changed markedly since Brezhnev's time and that its coverage of Gorbachev's

domestic reforms and foreign policy initiatives has been at best selective. For example, the military press has not printed the text of the economic reform which allows for limited private initiative in the service sector, and the General Secretary's speech at the January 1987 CPSU Central Committee Plenum has been published only in an abridged, sanitized version. Moreover, the military censor omitted those passages from the proceedings of the Congress of Journalists that strongly criticized bureaucratic resistance to the *glasnost*' policy. Unlike the civilian history journals which now regularly discuss the loss of life during the Stalin purges and its detrimental effect on Soviet military performance in the initial phase of the war, the Military History Journal has consistently failed to mention the cause of death of prominent military commanders in the 1930's.⁶³

At the time of the summit meetings between Gorbachev and President Reagan in October 1986, the Soviet military press chose to emphasize the US military build-up, and the dangers of the Strategic Defense Initiative. The high point of its anti-American campaign was marked by the publication of an article vividly describing the plunder and sadistic atrocities allegedly inflicted by the American expeditionary force on the Soviet civilian population during the Allied intervention of 1918.⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that, consistent with enforcing a negative view of the West, Soviet political officers have been instructed to recommend that military officers instill their men with hatred of the enemy. For example, hatred of the Germans is to be stimulated by recounting vividly Nazi atrocities committed during World War II.⁶⁵

Glasnost' has, however, had some effect on the military press. Discussions critical of bureaucratic mismanagement and corruption in the military establishment have been published, as has censure of shortcomings in training and discipline in individual military units. Interestingly, during the *glasnost*' campaign of the past two years, senior military officers and the Ministry of Defense as an institution have been subjected to serious public criticism for inefficiency and misappropriation of funds in both the civilian and military press.⁶⁶ The military press has selectively disclosed information on so-

⁶⁰"Speak with the Youth."

⁶¹*Moskovskiy Novosti*, Feb. 1, 1987.

⁶²*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, Mar. 25, 1987.

⁶³See *Voyennyy Vestnik* (Moscow), No. 2, February 1987, p. 15, for the biography of a civil war commander Gaya Gay; and *Voyenno-istoricheskii Zhurnal* (Moscow), No. 2, February 1987, pp. 49-50, for the biographies of commanders Yosif Nemerzeli, Fedor Raskol'nikov, and Yosif Rozenblyum. For a call in the civilian press to tell the truth about Stalin and the purges see, e.g., *Sovetskaya Kul'tura* (Moscow), Mar. 21, 1987, trans. in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* (Columbus, OH), Apr. 22, 1987, pp. 1-3.

⁶⁴"Intervention," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Feb. 14, 1987.

⁶⁵V. K. Luzhenko, "Ways of Improving Party Political Work in the Attack," *Voyenno-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, No. 3, March 1987, pp. 62-68.

⁶⁶"Think and Work in the New Manner," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Mar. 22, 1986; and "Stains on One's Honor," *Pravda*, Mar. 21, 1987.

cial problems in the Armed forces: alcoholism (but not drug abuse), nationality conflicts, draft-dodging (with references to service in Afghanistan), selection of unqualified candidates for officer and noncommissioned officer (NCO) schools, and flagrant violations of army discipline both in the ranks and among officers.

The coverage of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, which has been gradually expanding since 1984-85 independent of *glasnost'*, seems to reflect the general "preemptive" approach of Gorbachev's media policy. The more candid and truthful reports about the war as well as discussions of the problems of Afghanistan veterans, which have become more frequent during the *glasnost'* campaign, are designed, on the one hand, to prevent Soviet audiences from turning to alternative Western sources of information, and, on the other hand, to check rumors based on first-hand accounts of veterans returning from the battle zones. In other words, the coverage of Afghanistan under *glasnost'* has taken into account the potential for independent verification which has increased in proportion to the growing number of returning soldiers.

As the death toll in Afghanistan has mounted, the Soviet press has become more explicit in dealing with the problem of casualties as well as more skillful in exploiting it for inculcating patriotic, nationalistic, and martial values. By giving a general human treatment to the heroic deeds of Soviet soldiers with an emphasis on friendship, courage, and virility, the media has eulogized a new post-war generation of popular heroes—an approach that plays an important educational and ideological role.⁶⁷ Recent accounts of mujahedin raids across the border into Soviet territory released in connection with *glasnost'* have emphasized both the significance and the defensive nature of the war to the ordinary citizen.⁶⁸

An interesting aspect of Afghanistan reporting has been the acknowledgment—beginning in 1985—of the reluctance among some conscripts to risk their lives in combat, as well as the disclosure of methods used by parents to keep their children from being drafted.⁶⁹ A bolder departure from the old propaganda line can, perhaps, be seen in a frank admission by a returning serviceman that the mujahedin, who constitute a considerable part of the country's population, had not been recipients of foreign military aid prior to the Soviet military intervention.⁷⁰

⁶⁷For recent treatments of Afghanistan heroes see "The Time of Testing," *ibid.*, Apr. 4, 1987; and *Izvestiya*, Apr. 16, 1987.

⁶⁸*Pravda*, Apr. 19, 1987, reported in *Soviet Analyst* (Richmond, England), May 20, 1987.

⁶⁹"A Manly Deed," *Pravda*, May 18, 1987.

While the cryptic language of these reports indicates considerable differences of opinion about the war effort, the constraints of the *glasnost'* policy have not allowed for a straightforward discussion of Soviet policy in Afghanistan in the media. The lack of an open policy debate in the Soviet Union about the costs and benefits of a low-intensity conflict is in sharp contrast to the galvanizing of public opinion that took place in the United States during the Vietnam era and in Israel during the war in Lebanon.

Another aspect of *glasnost'* in the military press has been the new candor in assessing Soviet military performance during World War II. Though criticism of selected aspects of Soviet operations (e.g., the organization of logistics and medical service, the initial period of war) appeared in the military press during the late 1970's-early 1980's,⁷¹ the recent discussions scrutinize Soviet military failures during all phases of the war. A noted military historian writing in a civilian journal has severely criticized Stalin for military incompetence in planning many World War II battles, including the Battle of Stalingrad, and called for the publication of historical documents and scholarly works dealing with the controversy over General Andrey Vlasov's encircled army and the treatment of Soviet prisoners of war.⁷² The *Military Historical Journal* has provided a critical and detailed treatment of the use of the operational maneuver of anti-aircraft artillery and an in-depth analysis of Soviet failures during offensive operations in Ukraine in 1944.⁷³

Since the Soviets view military history as a model for refining their military doctrine and operations for a future war, their military science is likely to benefit from *glasnost'*. In the view of Soviet military historians, the research and teaching of controversial issues in Soviet military academies will have a favorable impact on the training of future commanders and defense planners.⁷⁴

Soviet political officers have also redefined the scope of *glasnost'* to meet the requirements of the armed forces, while avoiding risks to combat readiness or sol-

⁷⁰Radio Moscow broadcast cited in *Soviet Analyst*, May 20, 1987, and in "More Selective *Glasnost'* About Afghanistan," *Radio Liberty Research* (Munich), RL 167/87, Apr. 28, 1987.

⁷¹For examples of criticism of the organization and performance of military medical service see *Voyenno-meditsinskiy Zhurnal* (Moscow), No. 5, May 1980, pp. 69-73, and No. 5, May 1984, pp. 61-64.

⁷²*Argumenty i Fakty* (Moscow), Mar. 14-20, 1987, trans. in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Apr. 22, 1987, pp. 5-7.

⁷³V. Subbotin, "Carrying Out an Operational Maneuver of Anti-aircraft Artillery in the Course of Frontal Attack Operations," *Voyenno-istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 4, April 1987, pp. 30-36; and S. Mikhalev, "From the Experience in Attack Operations in the Right-Bank Ukraine at the Outset of 1944," *ibid.*, No. 3, March 1987, pp. 19-27.

⁷⁴See, e.g., *Voyenno-istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 1, January 1987, pp. 3-12.

diers' morale. Thus, for example, *glasnost'* is used to promote discussions in military units on topics ranging from awards and admonitions to shortcomings in training and exercises. By castigating corruption, alcoholism and related social maladies, greater openness will also assist in correcting some of the army's present discipline and morale problems. Furthermore, commanders are now requested to solicit recommendations from junior personnel on issues related to education and training.⁷⁵ According to the Chief of the Political Directorate of the Air Force, Colonel General of Aviation Leonid Batekhin, public openness should be used to discuss possible improvements in training standards, namely, to introduce tighter combat readiness standards.⁷⁶ This new emphasis on training (*obucheniye*) over indoctrination (*vospitaniye*) clearly indicates Soviet military commanders are using *glasnost'* in order to improve both training methodologies and the quality of Soviet manpower, especially its junior command.

Another aspect of *glasnost'* in the military has been encouragement by officers of grass-roots initiative in suggesting improvements in military hardware and training procedures—changes designed to make the military system more cost-effective. For instance, within the framework of *glasnost'*, Soviet logistics experts are encouraged to improve efficiency in the areas of resource allocation and cargo transportation, and more extensive use of computer technology.⁷⁷ Admiral Aleksey Sorokin, First Deputy Chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy, recognizes the role of public debate in facilitating the decision-making process, namely, in making the military bureaucracy more responsive to inputs from below.⁷⁸ In addition, he has emphasized the need to keep the soldier informed about command decision-making—a prerequisite for developing low-level initiative in peace and wartime.

The extent of *glasnost'* enjoyed today by a professional soldier in the Soviet Army depends on rank and party membership. The Chief of the Political Directorate of the Ural Military District has warned military personnel that criticism of commanders and their decisions would not be tolerated, but party members among soldiers and junior officers can use authorized party channels to criticize their superiors.⁷⁹

The new policy has nevertheless produced tensions

in units where low-ranking military personnel have petitioned senior military authorities to investigate misconduct by their commanders. Military personnel initiating such investigations reportedly suffer from reprisals. For instance, a navy captain stationed at the Leningrad Naval Base was reprimanded for informing senior military authorities about the unauthorized employment of enlisted men in an illegal souvenir workshop on post as well as in menial jobs in the commander's home.⁸⁰ For fear of reprisal the majority of enlisted men and NCO's are said to be reluctant to engage in critical discussions. As the First Deputy Minister of Defense, Army General Pyotr Lushev admitted, "since criticism is not respected in all military units, criticism from below is expressed in the form of timid suggestions, with caution."⁸¹

Judging by indications in the Soviet media, the military establishment nevertheless finds Gorbachev's policy disquieting. Deletions in party documents, the restrictive use of the term *glasnost'*, and the lack of substantive social criticism in the military press point to mounting dissatisfaction with Gorbachev's policies among senior officers. Inasmuch as the Soviet military leadership perceives its role as an educator of civilian youth and a guardian of ideological and martial values in civilian society, it views Gorbachev's more open information and cultural policies as detrimental to its institutional interests.

The Soviet military fears that even a limited *glasnost'* policy might in the long term soften stringent Soviet ideological assumptions about the continuing conflict between the socialist and capitalist systems. Lieutenant General Dmitriy Volkogonov, Deputy Chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy and a prominent military expert on psychological warfare, has recently warned military personnel that the regime's traditional view of the West's military threat remains valid. General Volkogonov has also reaffirmed continued Soviet support for revolution in the Third World—a possible allusion to the military's steadfast commitment to maintaining a strategic and military foothold in Afghanistan:

*There is no and will be no parity with our class enemy as far as the human factor is concerned. As always before, the Marxists do not condemn war in general. This would amount to . . . pacifism. Our support will always be with those nations who conduct a just struggle for social and national liberation, against imperialist domination and aggressions.*⁸²

⁷⁵M. Popkov, "Party Democracy and Party Discipline," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil* (Moscow), No. 16, 1986, pp. 18-26.

⁷⁶L. Batekhin, "A Time for New Approaches," *ibid.*, No. 21, 1986, pp. 17-24.

⁷⁷Tyl i Snabzheniye (Moscow), No. 11, 1986, pp. 17-21.

⁷⁸A. Sorokin, "The Individual at the Center of Party Work," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, No. 22, 1986, pp. 9-18.

⁷⁹O. Zinchenko, "Criticism and Self-Criticism," *ibid.*, No. 18, 1986, pp. 52-59.

⁸⁰"A Shortage of Glasnost'," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, Mar. 17, 1987.

⁸¹P. Lushev, "The Great Responsibility of Cadres," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil*, No. 5, 1987, p. 17.

⁸²D. Volkogonov, "The Human Factor," *ibid.*, No. 2, 1987, pp. 14-15.

Along the same lines, a military representative at the journalists' congress accused the civilian press of ignoring the military threat from the United States:

*Imperialism is preparing for war. None would deny that. Unfortunately, these issues are often not covered by our civilian newspapers.*⁸³

Such alarmist statements portray genuine concern by the Soviet military about the ramifications of Gorbachev's *glasnost'* policy for the fighting spirit of the army.

As can be seen from this analysis, the military has re-defined Gorbachev's concept to suit its interests by channeling discussions and criticism in ways which might potentially enhance combat readiness and overall military effectiveness. At the same time the new policy has increased apprehensions about the potentially negative effects of public criticism on the army's political and ideological reliability, morale, as well as the status of the military profession in Soviet society.

⁸³"On the Surge of *Perestroika*."

Conclusion

Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost'* has not brought about a break with the Russian-Soviet political tradition of state control over public criticism and political debate. Indeed, the old Soviet view of public criticism as a skillfully manipulated political tool still prevails. In the area of foreign policy, *glasnost'* has not heralded a marked Soviet departure from an essentially anti-Western, and particularly anti-American, stance. In light of this, *glasnost'* cannot be seen as a consistent, long-term commitment to a free exchange of information nor as a guarantee of Soviet compliance with the Helsinki Accords in areas of human rights and information (the so-called "third basket"). It should also be kept in mind that the *glasnost'* policy does not so far enjoy a consensus in Soviet institutions, and can therefore be reversed.

It should be stressed, however, that *glasnost'* does benefit the West. It provides more extensive and reliable information about Soviet society. Furthermore, constraints notwithstanding, *glasnost'* allows more freedom of expression and promotes critical thinking in that society. On these counts, *glasnost'* is a step forward.

Perestroyka and Soviet Agriculture

Roy D. Laird

GRAIN PRODUCTION in the Soviet Union in 1986 and 1987 was higher than it had been in recent years. How much of the increase can be attributed to Gorbachev's agricultural program, discussed here, and how much of it to better weather conditions, is far from clear. Understandably, Gorbachev is inclined to credit the improvement to his policies. Thus, in his major speech on *perestroyka* (restructuring) to the June 1987 Central Committee plenum, he spoke of a "revitalization of life in the countryside."¹ Nevertheless, lagging food output and low levels of farm labor productivity remain the major Soviet domestic problem area. In a speech delivered in Murmansk on October 1, 1987, Gorbachev gave one measure of the gross inefficiency of Soviet agriculture—a problem that, he observed, "concerns all society and every family":

*The price the state pays the . . . farms for what they produce . . . for livestock output, is one and one-half to two times higher than the price at which it sells the stock to the population. . . . subsidies last year amounted to 57 billion rubles.*²

Gorbachev's calls for *glasnost* (openness) have apparently prompted the resumed publication of key statistics on Soviet agriculture that had not been provided

in recent years. For example, in 1986, the official statistical yearbook resumed publishing statistics on annual grain output.³ These data (see Table 1) reveal a bleak trend in the production of key agricultural commodities over the span of the three most recent five-year planning periods (1971–75, 1976–80, and 1981–85). Specifically, when the record of the 1981–85 period is compared with that of 1971–75, we find that grain production was down in per capita terms (10 percent) and even in absolute terms; the grain import balance had soared dramatically; production of potatoes had declined sharply, although output of other vegetables had increased;⁴ and production of meat per capita had only increased by a modest 6 percent—and that due largely to the massive increase in grain imports, without which Soviet meat production per capita would doubtless have declined.

Even with the improvements noted in 1986 and 1987, results are still far from reaching the oft-stated production targets for grain (one metric ton per capita) and meat (some 80 kilograms per capita)—levels that are comparable to those currently achieved in the West. The availability of food, especially of livestock products, remains far below consumer demand, and there are reports that meat shortages still abound. Moreover, not all of the commodities tallied in Table 1 are actually consumed by the Soviet population. For example, some of the produce is wasted (20–30 percent according to Gorbachev);⁵ some is processed for other purposes (e.g., the manufacture of alcohol); and much of it is used for animal feed.

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¹Pravda (Moscow), June 26, 1987.

²Ibid. Oct. 2, 1987.

³Narodnoye khozyaystvo SSSR v 1985 g. (The National Economy of the USSR in 1985), Moscow, Finansy i statistika, 1986, pp. 180–81.

⁴In their search for a better diet, many Soviet citizens may be cutting back on their consumption of starch.

⁵Pravda, June 26, 1987.