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~~1 memo~~	~~Dobriansky to Clark re Article on US-Soviet Relations 1p~~ R 6/12/06 F00-006 #77	~~5/24/83~~	~~P1/~~B1

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 31, 1983

Jacque,

Judge Clark had requested a copy of the Hedrick Smith article. Attached is the article with Paula Dobriansky's analysis.

klm

Rick Smith scheduled for 6:00 Thursday.
JG

3584

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

May 24, 1983

WPC HAS SEEN

NOTED

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR WILLIAM P. CLARK

FROM: PAULA DOBRIANSKY

SUBJECT: Hedrick Smith Article on U.S.-Soviet Relations

I would like to bring to your attention the May 24 article by Hedrick Smith on U.S.-Soviet relations (Tab I). Although factually accurate (our relations are at a low ebb), the article by concentrating on such aspects as the alleged lack of dialogue, mutual hostility, sharp and acrimonious exchanges, does produce a skewed impression that this Administration is partially responsible for the deterioration in relations. Smith does mention the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the sabotage of U.S. peace efforts in the Middle East and Soviet destabilizing actions in Africa (example, Angola) but does not clearly link aggressive Soviet international behavior and bilateral U.S.-Soviet ties.

Attachment:

Tab I NYTimes article by Hedrick Smith, May 24, 1983

DECLASSIFIED / RELEASED

NLS F00-006 #77

BY [illegible], NARA, DATE 6/2/04

cc: John Lenczowski
Bob Sims

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Declassify on: OADR

NEW YORK TIMES, Tuesday, May 24, 1983

TIES BETWEEN U.S. AND SOVIET VIEWED AS AT A LOW POINT

Experts Cite Rise in Tension as 2 Nations Trade Charges on a Wide Range of Issues

By HEDRICK SMITH
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 23 — Soviet-American relations have reached one of the lowest points in a generation as the two nations trade recriminations over the Middle East, Central America, Afghanistan and missile deployments in Europe, according to many Government and academic specialists.

The specialists regard the three years since the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 as a time of protracted tension, sharp and acrimonious charges, diplomatic stalemate and mutual suspicion. Soviet visitors as well as American officials speak warily of the prospects for "doing business" with the other side.

Talks on Grain Sales to Resume

President Reagan suggested last week that a meeting with Yuri V. Andropov could take place next year, and White House aides say that by sharply stepping up military spending and by speaking out forcefully against Moscow, Mr. Reagan has demonstrated resolve, bolstered American military strength and set the stage for what one official called "a new season" of more productive bargaining with Moscow.

Senior Administration officials take comfort in the fact that the two sides have agreed to start long-term negotiations on grain sales. They also forecast more active probing in the Geneva negotiations on European nuclear weapons and strategic arms as a result of adjustments in American positions.

11 Commissions Suspended

Apart from arms talks, however, most cooperative activities have been shrinking. The volume of Soviet-United States trade has fallen from $4.5 billion in 1979 to $2.8 billion last year, to the point where the United States now supplies only 20 percent of Soviet grain imports, compared with 60 percent in earlier periods.

The activities of eight official groups set up under the Carter Administration to work on a treaty to bar satellite warfare, ban nuclear weapons in the Indian Ocean or develop a comprehensive underground test ban have lapsed. Eleven commissions set up a decade ago to work out exchanges in the fields of science and technology, seismic research,

Continued From Page A1

health research and developments in space have all been suspended.

The downward trend began under the Carter Administration, but it has quickened during the Reagan period, in which a determined but unsuccessful drive was carried on to block the Soviet natural gas pipeline to Western Europe and to tighten curbs on Western trade with Moscow.

"I don't know of a time when our relations have been worse at an official level," one experienced unofficial Presidential adviser commented. "The mutual suspicions are very high. There's very little real dialogue going on. To cut through that will not be easy because I don't think either side wants to be seen coming to the other hat in hand."

"The atmosphere is bad," said Helmut Sonnenfeldt, who was a ranking specialist on Soviet affairs in the Nixon Administration. "The Soviets are trying to heat up the Middle East and talk people into greater anxiety about the missile deployments in Europe. They're ominous in their tone. The arms negotiations are stalemated, though the nature of these negotiations is that they take five, six, seven years to succeed. The Russians are playing hard to get."

'A Period of Stalemate'

"There have been periods of accommodation in the past and periods of sharp confrontation, but this is essentially a period of stalemate," said Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was national security adviser to President Carter. "Both sides have openings which neither has exploited aggressively. They are like two weary boxers who have been slugging each other. They're hostile. They've backed off. They're not really talking to each other but they're not pressing each other on the ground."

Marshall Shulman, director of the Russian Research Center at Columbia University and former Soviet affairs specialist in the Carter Administration, compared the present climate to the cold war period and the time of the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962.

"Relations are on a low plateau — poor communications, tension, dismantling of cooperative activities, sharp rhetoric," Mr. Shulman said. "There aren't any signs for improvement in the near future.

"Indeed," he went on, "some factors could make relations worse — our nuclear force deployments in Europe and possible Soviet countermoves; second, the question of whether each side will deploy new strategic weapons systems; third, some third world event, say in Iran; fourth, the Middle East and particularily Syria. These add an element of unpredictability."

Kennan Takes Grim View

The grimmest assessment came from George F. Kennan, former American Ambassador to the Soviet Union, who said recently that Soviet-American relations were in a "dreadful and dangerous state" and changes were needed to halt "a march toward war."

Others, like Prof. Adam Ulam of Harvard University, temper pessimism with the reminder that for all the obvious strains, the two superpowers have avoided the sort of head-to-head showdowns they experienced over Berlin in the cold war in the late 1940's and during the Cuban missile crisis. But, Mr. Ulam added, "things are more dangerous now because the Russians are more powerful and we are weaker."

One saving grace, several analysts said, is that both President Reagan and the new Soviet leadership are preoccupied with domestic economic problems that tend to make them less activist and adventurous abroad.

Moreover, the approach of the 1984 elections has engendered hope that the current stalemates will ease as President Reagan seeks to rebut criticism of his posture toward Moscow and arms control.

"There might be some moderation," Professor Shulman said, "as the Administration gets closer to the 1984 election and concludes that there is political advantage in moving toward the center to take the peace issue from the Democrats."

Brent Scowcroft, the retired Air Force general who served as President Ford's national security adviser, said his recent informal contacts with ranking Soviet visitors indicated the Russians were interested in serious bargaining on arms control. The Russians, he told reporters at breakfast, are "open at the present time" for serious give-and-take but also are "defensive" and "apprehensive about this Administration."

"Official relations are really very bad and there are not a number of good contacts," the former general said. "One way to break out of that, considering the depth of suspicion if not antagonism, would be to initiate some private kind of talks without each side having to worry about caving in or making concessions — to attempt to clear away some of the underbrush. I wouldn't say that it can't be done through official channels, but it's more difficult."

During the Nixon years, Henry A. Kissinger, then national security adviser, engaged in what became known as exploratory "back channel" discussions with the Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly F. Dobrynin, that developed breakthroughs for the formal arms talks.

This year, Secretary of State George P. Shultz has held several meetings with Ambassador Dobrynin. Some officials see those meetings as a potential opening, but others report that Mr. Shultz has proceeded "very carefully" and that these contacts have so far been less ambitious and promising than Mr. Kissinger's earlier venture.

Changes are needed in Soviet-American relations to halt a "march toward war," said George F. Kennan, former American Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Marshall Shulman, director of the Russian Research Center at Columbia University, compared the present climate to the cold war period.

"The atmosphere is bad," said Helmut Sonnenfeldt, a ranking Soviet specialist during the Nixon Administration. "There are all kinds of nasty things going on."

Associated Press

"Shultz is a very capable guy but he's very careful," said one well-placed Reagan adviser. "He likes to master his agenda. I don't think he's comfortable with that kind of exploration."

Other officials contend, however, that even if this is the case now, Mr. Shultz will step up his role in Soviet-American relations in the coming months.

Administration officials assert that Moscow cannot simply expect Washington to resurrect past agreements if they are unwilling to accept much of the burden for the current stalemate. The Russians, these officials charge, aggressively pushed pro-Soviet takeovers in Angola, Ethiopia, Southern Yemen and Afghanistan in the late 1970's, cut back sharply on the flow of Jewish emigration, took a tough line against dissidents and promoted the crackdown in Poland.

"It would be easy to set up a summit and to move ahead if one essentially adopted the Soviet agenda of 'Let's have business as usual,'" said Richard Burt, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. "The Soviet position is that the U.S. needs to resurrect the series of agreements and relationships that emerged in the 70's, known collectively as détente.

"But we have concerns that need to be taken into account as well if a durable U.S.-Soviet relationship is going to emerge," Mr. Burt went on in a meeting with reporters. "We can't ignore the fact that there has been an increasing crackdown on different groups in the Soviet Union.

Some specialists contend the Administration is hampered because it lacks a top-level foreign policy-maker or strategist with the experience of Mr. Kissinger, Mr. Brzezinski or Mr. Scowcroft. Neither Mr. Shultz, Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger nor William P. Clark, the national security adviser, has a background in Soviet affairs or strategic policy-making.

For specialized advice, officials say, the President draws indirectly on Lawrence S. Eagleburger, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, a former Ambassador to Yugoslavia and close aide to Mr. Kissinger; Mr. Burt, a former specialist in national security affairs at the Institute for Strategic Studies; Fred C. Iklé, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, who is a past director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; Richard Perle, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, a longtime Congressional aide experienced in arms control and Soviet affairs; and Robert C. McFarlane, the deputy national security adviser, a career marine officer who served several years on the National Security Council staff in Republican administrations.

Roles for 2 Junior Specialists

With the departure from that staff of Richard Pipes, a Harvard historian, responsibility for Soviet and East European affairs fell several months ago to two well-regarded but quite junior specialists, John Lenczowski and Paula Dobriansky.

Within the Administration, Mr. Eagleburger and Mr. Burt have reputations as advocates of some flexibility in dealing with Moscow, whereas Mr. Iklé and Mr. Perle are known as proponents of toughness. Mr. McFarlane was the key figure lately in helping President Reagan work out the outline of shifts in his arms control positions with key members of Congress.

Outside specialists cite that sequence as symptomatic of the Administration's inadequate expertise in Soviet and strategic affairs. They note that the two new concepts now being incorporated into the President's strategic arms proposal originated outside the Administration.

The idea of raising previous limits on missile launchers to make way for a new single-warhead missile emerged from Democrats in Congress and was adopted by a bipartisan commission headed by Mr. Scowcroft. Another new idea, that of requiring each side to destroy two existing nuclear warheads for each new warhead on a new missile or submarine, came from Senators William S. Cohen, a Maine Republican, and Sam Nunn, a Georgia Democrat.

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Academy of Sciences

FOREWORD ix
INTRODUCTION 3
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVISED EDITION 23

Part One • The People

I. THE PRIVILEGED CLASS: *Dachas and Zils* 25
II. CONSUMERS: *The Art of Queuing* 53
III. CORRUPTION: *Living* Na Levo 81
IV. PRIVATE LIFE: *Russians as People* 102
V. WOMEN: *Liberated but Not Emancipated* 124
VI. CHILDREN: *Between Parent and Teacher* 147
VII. YOUTH: *Rock Without Roll* 171

Part Two • The System

VIII. RURAL LIFE: *Why They Won't Stay Down on the Farm* 199
IX. INDUSTRIAL LIFE: Skoro Budet—*It'll Be Here Soon* 215
X. LEADERS AND LED: *Nostalgia for a Strong Boss* 241
XI. THE PARTY: *Communist Rituals and Communist Jokes* 273
XII. PATRIOTISM: *World War II Was Only Yesterday* 303
XIII. SIBERIA: *High Rises on the Permafrost* 326
XIV. INFORMATION: *White Tass and Letters to the Editor* 344

10216 1 3 3 0 0 5 26 83 .
Ms. p. 4

10216z

Part Three • Issues

XV. CULTURE: *Cat and Mouse* 377

XVI. INTELLECTUAL LIFE: *The Archipelago of Private Culture* 397

XVII. RELIGION: *Solzhenitsyn and the Russianness of Russia* 417

XVIII. DISSENT: *The Modern Technology of Repression* 439

XIX. THE OUTSIDE WORLD: *Province of the Privileged and the Pariahs* 464

XX. CONVERGENCE: *Are They Becoming More Like Us?* 489

POSTSCRIPT 000

INDEX 511

5/26/83

10216 1 4 6 0 0 23 5 26 83
Ms. p. 5
10216z

INTRODUCTION to the REVISED EDITION

This book grew out of a period of détente which kindled American curiosity about Russian life far beyond anything I had imagined. To many, it filled an important need because it presented a human Russia, a down-to-earth story told in Russian voices, rather than a political abstraction, a foreigner's travelogue, or yet another exercise in Kremlinology. In the years since, détente gave way to increasing tensions and hostilities between Washington and Moscow, leaving us an uneasy and uncertain future.

Now, once again, American curiosity about Russia has been piqued by the change of command in the Kremlin. The Brezhnev era is over, and a new period is under way. Not only is Brezhnev gone, but so are other top leaders like Kosygin, Podgorny, Suslov, and Kirilenko, making way for new contenders at the top. Yet while the leadership has changed, most of Russian life has not. Yuri Andropov has to contend with the same human foibles, the same stubborn character, the same ingrained under-the-surface unruliness and devious ways of the Russians that Leonid Brezhnev found so difficult to discipline.

Since *The Russians* was written, I have not been back to the Soviet Union. But I have kept in touch with a steady flow of Russians coming to the West, both officials and emigrés, and scores of American specialists, journalists, and people with Russian relatives who have been into the heart of Russia and then shared their experiences with me. From their stories and observations as well as my own reading, I have updated my earlier impressions extensively. Here and there things are different. But in general, the unchanging Russian character, ingrained habits, the very conservatism of the Soviet system, and Brezhnev's long political lameness all reinforced the system and society that my generation of "détente" correspondents reported on nearly a decade ago.

5/26/83

10216 1 5 14 0 0 5 26. 83
Ms. p. 6
10216z

So, once again, *The Russians* is valid, timely, and relevant for those who want to understand this people whose destiny has become inextricably linked to our own.

Having worked hard to probe beneath the surface appearances of Soviet life for an authentic feel for Russian reality, I was not surprised that *Pravda*, the Communist Party's flagship newspaper, and other Soviet publications denounced my book and that some Soviet officials gave me the cold shoulder. Much of Soviet officialdom prefers not to have the ordinary truths told. But there were other reactions, less expected, and therein lies the fascination. For in my years as a Moscow correspondent it was the unexpected paradoxes of Soviet society that had beguiled me and led me through the "looking glass." Now, once again, it was the unexpected private reactions of Russian readers—officials and party propagandists as well as emigrés—that greatly intrigued me because they were often unanticipated.

Some years ago a ranking Soviet correspondent told me he had noticed a *Pravda* editor reading *The Russians* on an Aeroflot flight back to Moscow from a trip abroad. The *Pravda* man was reading greedily, obviously eager to finish before the plane landed and before he had to toss away the book, which would otherwise be seized as impermissible political contraband.

The correspondent, reflecting the official line at the time, ventured a safely disapproving comment to the *Pravda* editor. "Terrible book—all lies," he said.

"Yes," came back the reply. "Terrible book—no lies."

The Soviet correspondent, himself a Communist Party member, cocked an eyebrow as he related the incident. It amused me that this trusted Communist obviously relished the irony of sharing this bit of political heresy.

An American friend, an academic specialist in Soviet affairs, told me another tale of the insatiable curiosity of Soviet officials about an outsider's view of their society, even in defiance of the Party line. My friend was traveling to Moscow from Finland by train with two brand-new hardback copies of *The Russians*, in English, when two uniformed Soviet customs officials entered his compartment at Vyborg and began checking his belongings.

The senior officer, an older man, was content with a cursory look, preferring the pleasure of some small talk with my friend, who speaks fluent Russian. But the other officer, younger and more vigilant, kept poking for a trouble spot. Finding the books and opening one, he spied the very ordinary map of the Soviet Union on the frontispiece.

"These books should be seized," he said, gesturing at the map as if it were disclosing military secrets. The older officer brushed him off, pointing out that the books were in English. But the younger man, now

5/26/83

protecting the Motherland, was not to be denied.

Apologetically the senior officer informed the American that the books would have to be confiscated. When the American protested that the books were his personal property, the older man motioned him to come in the station to see the chief inspector, who wore a customs uniform bedecked with medals. "We can't let you keep those books," he declared.

"Why not?" asked the American. "It's a very good book. This is silly —they're my books."

Then, in a very Russian way, the chief inspector advised him, "Well, we have our rules. But take a receipt, and if you come back this way, you can pick them up when you leave our country."

With no alternative, the American acquiesced. But unable to resist a parting shot, he kidded them: "Well, have a good time reading it. You'll learn a lot."

But experienced as he was from previous travels to Russia, my professor friend was unprepared on his return to Vyborg a month later to discover that both copies of the book were well thumbed and dog-eared from frequent readings. Instead of having been safely stored in a customs vault, they had obviously been passed around by the very officials who had declared them unsafe for Russian eyes.

More recently a very well-placed Soviet official, probably with intelligence connections, called on me in Washington to talk about Soviet-American relations and at the end of our talk asked me for a copy of *The Russians,* personally autographed to him. Although I was happy to comply, this struck me at the time as rather risky. But on reflection, I assumed either that the climate had changed and the risks were not so great anymore, especially for someone with the right political connections, or that while most Russians face a close check going home, this man knew nobody would be looking into his luggage.

The reactions of Americans and other Westerners have been equally fascinating to me. Americans expect to hear that Soviets are gruff and defensive but are usually surprised to learn that they can also be incredibly open and tender. People who have formed a vision of a monolithic dictatorship commanding disciplined Communist phalanxes have written me expressing astonishment at my references to "the anarchy of the Russian soul" or the vast labyrinth of the Soviet black market. Others, worried that the Soviet military buildup spells a drive for global conquest, find it hard to absorb my suggestion that Russians suffer historically from a severe "Avis complex," convinced in their collective psyche that they are doomed to be No. 2.

"I always pictured Soviet workers as worker bees, real dedicated, stolid, and serious," Arch Gillies, a former New York City Council member, told me. "I was pleased to see they are just people, not ten feet

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Ms. p. 10
10216z

tall. They're like us, subject to the same ups and downs."

"Having first read your book as a teenager of about sixteen, I was delighted to find out that the young in Russia listen to rock music," Mike Moran, a budding young journalist, told me. "Remembering the 'Where have we gone wrong?' reaction of my own parents to my first Jimi Hendrix album, I could not even imagine the turbulence that such music must cause in Russian families. But what surprised me the most was the warmth of the Russian people and the fact that human curiosity had not been squashed by years of Communist rule. I think that people my age, who really don't even remember Khrushchev, view Russia as a land of faceless, complacent masses personified by the bland and nondescript Brezhnev. Your book made me realize that I had never thought of the Russians as people."

We Americans are pretty provincial. We find it hard to get out of our skins and understand another culture that is really different from ours. We look at the Russians, see their missiles, their cars, their TV's, and their world power ambitions, and assume they are like us, except they are Communists.

But real understanding takes a willingness to leap beyond our own life and the way our political and economic system operates, to reach out and try to comprehend how and why another people is truly different. Their roots are different. Their history is different. The ideas they had, long before the Bolshevik Revolution, are different. What they value is different. As a society we find it hard to believe that others have different *ideals* from our own, for example, preferring order over freedom. It takes great imagination and great self-confidence to ~~try to put ourselves in~~ try wearing their shoes.

Of course, like others, I found that American correspondents *in Moscow* are restricted in many ways, face more difficulties and more constraints than in any country I had ever covered. But I also found my years in Russia in the early 1970's the most engaging reporting experience I had known. Whatever the limits, we had a chance to ask, listen, and explore. So for all the obstacles and frustrations—and there were many—my experience was one of freshness and adventure.

As a reporter in Moscow I felt like an explorer, one of a small band searching out the continent. And this was not exotica. I sensed a resonance with readers because Russian reality is so important to Americans, to people all over the world. So, sharing each personal discovery, I felt like a Columbus explaining to my countrymen that the world is not flat. And that discovery seems as fresh today as it did then.

Hedrick Smith,
Washington, D.C.,
May 1983

POSTSCRIPT

Few events generate such universal fascination as the change of leadership in a superpower, especially when the drama unfolds secretly, the whole world knowing the new leader will suddenly emerge with the might to affect the destinies of all humankind. It is a strange and curious moment when time seems suspended. The old leader dies, and the world waits, uncertain who the next ruler will be and left to guess how he may try to transform Soviet society or bend the path of history.

It is a moment that tells volumes about supreme power in Soviet Russia—hidden, narrow, top-down. Typically, on November 10, 1982, ordinary people did not know what was happening. Moscow Television canceled a hockey game and replaced it with Tchaikovsky's mournful *Pathétique* symphony. Moscow Radio played somber music all day. The city was rife with rumors that someone important had died, Arvid Pelshe or Andrei Kirilenko, two aging members of the Politburo, or possibly Brezhnev himself. But not until 11 A.M. the next day was there an official announcement, more than 26 hours after Brezhnev had died. Hours later, in the elliptical way that the Kremlin has of identifying its new leader, it was revealed that Yuri V. Andropov would head the committee for Brezhnev's funeral.

Dour, businesslike, yet very much of a mystery, Andropov kindled public anticipation of dramatic change by the cocksure manner with which he assumed command. More like a practiced political leader than a shadowy secret police chief, he moved easily onto the world stage, showing muscle and talking moderation. It seemed an irony that after his 15 years in charge of the repressive apparatus of the KGB, other Soviet officials were presenting him as a "closet liberal" with a taste for modern art and a hankering for American jazz. Yet back in 1973, after his elevation to the Politburo, I had heard dissident scientists and establishment poets speak of Andropov as the most intelligent and sophisticated of the Soviet leaders, a man destined eventually for the top job. Were he truly liberal, however, would that have helped persuade the Politburo to choose him as its leader?

Initially Andropov made a rhetorical bow to collective leadership in

the Brezhnev manner but very quickly impressed foreign visitors like Vice President George Bush as someone accustomed to being No. 1. Moreover, at 68, Andropov acted like a man in a hurry to make his mark. He projected energy and a Spartan appetite for work. But he also showed an unexpected knack for playing symbolically to public opinion. Although hinting at economic reforms, he immediately launched a campaign against shirking and mismanagement that left Russians pondering whether he would be a ruthless neo-Stalinist bent on purges or an efficiency-minded reformer with Khrushchev's taste for bureaucratic shake-ups and experimentation. Whichever, they took him as the *krepki khozyain,* the strong boss they had been longing for.

In a very real sense, the long, slow drift of Brezhnev's final years and the paralyzing wait for his death set the political stage for Andropov's sharp vigor and drive for discipline.

A decade before, on November 7, 1972, I remember standing in Red Square, watching Brezhnev struggle to mount the stairs of the Lenin Mausoleum for the annual Revolutionary Day military parade. He had been out of the public eye for nearly a month, skipping important functions and lending credence to reports that he had been ill or recuperating from an operation. I watched him walk slowly up two short flights of steps, hefting his body forward ponderously. Through binoculars from 30 yards away, he seemed to have lost weight and color. But in time Brezhnev bounced back, outlasting many Western politicians who came to visit him. In 1973 he was ebullient when he journeyed to Washington and San Clemente for meetings with Richard Nixon. In my mind's eye, I can still see Chuck Connors, the western movie star, hoisting a cavorting Brezhnev off the ground in a raucous bear hug while protocol officials gasped nervously. Brezhnev loved it. That was his heyday. But by the late 1970's time had taken its toll.

I saw Brezhnev again in June 1979 in Vienna, where he met President Carter to sign the second strategic arms agreement. Coming off his Ilyushin-62 airliner, he hobbled with difficulty down the ramp and along the red welcoming carpet. I was astonished at his physical deterioration. He looked senile, his face allow and waxen. To catch a closer glimpse, I went that afternoon to a relatively small outdoor ceremony where Brezhnev was to lay a wreath at the tomb honoring the Soviet military dead in Austria during World War II.

Brezhnev was supposed to march past one group of Soviet officials and their families (with whom I was standing), execute a right turn, take half a dozen steps, and then symbolically touch a huge green wreath placed before the monument. He passed within 15 feet of me, moving mechanically like a penguin, feet shuffling in short, little steps from the knees down and arms hugging his sides, his hands flapping forward and back. His lieutenant, Konstantin Chernenko, was a step

behind him, followed by ranks of other Soviet dignitaries. Brezhnev missed his turning point, and before Chernenko could catch up, he plowed helplessly into another group of onlookers. He had to be rescued, pulled back, and then manually guided onto the right path. The rest of the ceremony went all right, but I walked away wondering how Brezhnev could wield power with such obvious ailments and whether ambitious lieutenants were already encroaching on his authority.

In the next three years high-level Western visitors came away from sessions with Brezhnev privately reporting that he seemed programmed in his remarks, unable to carry on an intelligent, free-ranging discussion. Aides hovered around to assist him. The Vienna summit had taxed their ability to prop him up. But Brezhnev, the hardy Russian Bear, hung on with stolid Slavic endurance. When he dropped from sight in the spring of 1982, some Western publications prematurely buried him politically. After more absences in the fall he appeared for the November 7 parade, braving two hours of cold atop the Lenin Mausoleum. Occasionally his jaw seemed to drop open. Once an aide removed his sunglasses. Stiffly he saluted passing formations, but he lasted through the ceremony. Mercifully the end came three days later.

In the wee hours of November 15 I watched his funeral on a live telecast. It was a very Russian occasion, a mixture of the formalities of state pomp and ceremony and intimate family moments. Marshals and generals carried 42 red satin cushions bearing his medals and honors. His casket was open, and his weeping widow, Viktoriya, and other relatives kissed him emotionally in their lamentations. The workmen at the gravesite had an embarrassing moment when one prop beneath the casket came out and the casket lurched awkwardly into the grave before it could be lowered smoothly with ropes. First, Brezhnev's widow and relatives and then Andropov and other Communist Party leaders began throwing dirt onto his now-covered coffin in the old Russian custom. In an instant the burial was over. Immediately bands swung into martial music for a military parade.

For only the fourth time in 65 years of Communist rule in Russia, the supreme leader had changed. In his 18 years, Brezhnev had spanned five American presidents. Yet unlike Stalin or Khrushchev, he aroused neither great fear nor affection, neither awe nor excitement among ordinary Russians. His was mediocre, stable, conservative, uninspiring leadership. His death prompted surprisingly little public display of emotion. It was a far cry from the outpouring of grief and panic among the unruly crowds that flooded Moscow's streets when Stalin died in 1953. Indeed, the television cameras showed almost no ordinary people on the streets during Brezhnev's funeral, almost as if Russians had waited so long for his end that they were indifferent when it came.

P 4

My point is not to dwell on the sad story of Brezhnev's fading health, but to suggest that his geriatric decline had serious political and economic consequences for Soviet society. His physical and political senility became a symbol and a source of the stagnation, drift, and disenchantment that afflicted the Soviet system in his final years. From 1979 onward the deterioration was especially marked. By clinging to political authority as his physical powers faded, Brezhnev paralyzed the rest of the leadership. Rather than solve problems, he let them accumulate, fostering economic inertia and ideological cynicism and feeding the rampant corruption of the underground economy.

Brezhnev himself became the butt of bitter sniping by ordinary Russians that epitomized their widespread disillusionment with the system. Toward the end Westerners were shocked at how openly Soviet officials as well as ordinary Russians vented their frustration. A young Moscow taxi driver poured out his scathing impatience one day to Anne Garrels, an ABC-TV correspondent, after Brezhnev had reappeared from what many had thought a fatal illness in the spring of 1982. "I can't believe it—he's not dead." The Muscovite grunted in exasperation. "We can't go through this anymore. Look at him. He can't talk. He can't walk. It's impossible to live this way. We need a tough leader to get people back to work and put food back in the shops."

What was forgotten is that between 1964 and 1982 Brezhnev drove the Soviet Union relentlessly to full superpower status and to accumulate a massive nuclear arsenal after the humiliation of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Not only did he spend hundreds of billions of rubles to develop new generations of highly accurate ICBM's, orbiting space stations, and a global navy, but he also projected Soviet power into the Horn of Africa, Angola, South Yemen, and Afghanistan. He maintained Russia's grip on Eastern Europe with military force in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the shrewdly orchestrated repression of Solidarity in Poland in 1981 and also by sustaining Eastern Europe's seductive dependency on Soviet oil, gas, and economic aid.

The Soviet economy, growing for much of the Brezhnev period at 4 to 5 percent a year, outperformed American growth rates and for a long period sustained the general rise in the Russian standard of living. In 1965, Brezhnev's first year, Soviet national output was about 46 percent of the American Gross National Product, and it rose, to 55 percent by the time he died. During the Brezhnev era the productivity of Soviet workers also rose from 30 to 41 percent of the American level.

In such yardsticks of industrial might as steel output and oil production, the Soviet economy forged past the United States in the past decade. Oil output leaped from 350 million metric tons in 1970 to 613 million in 1982. Soviet hard currency exports, aided by sharply rising world oil and gold prices, jumped from $2.8 billion in 1972 to about $22

billion in 1982. In Brezhnev's first dozen years he invested heavily in putting more meat and dairy products into the national diet so Russians would rely less on bread, potatoes, and cabbage. Car production tripled from 344,000 in 1970 to 1.3 million in 1980, although more than half went to export and government use. Television sets, refrigerators, and other appliances spread throughout the country. Returning visitors found people in big cities like Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev more stylishly clad in the early Eighties than a decade before.

"Despite economic shortages, people were better and more colorfully dressed than in the early Seventies," observed William Wagner, a Russian specialist from Williams College who had visited the Soviet Union in the early 1970's and returned in January 1982. "This time, differences of wealth were more openly displayed. In restaurants and theaters, you noticed the clothing, jewelry, and material possessions more. And the disparity between the man on the street and the people in the boxes at the opera was much more discernible than before."

Yet by the time Brezhnev died the economy had lost momentum and the yawning gulf between the Soviet and American economies remained. The farm sector was in disastrous shape. For four consecutive years, 1979 through 1982, the grain harvest fell 30 percent short of government targets. Food shortages were endemic. Other sectors went into recessions. Production of steel, autos, cement, and even oil reached a peak in 1978 but then fell back and struggled to slow recovery. As Andropov quickly pointed out, labor productivity and labor discipline had become critical problems. Even the expansion of the labor force, long an engine of economic growth, fell way off. Indeed, from 1979 on the economic growth rate averaged less than 2 percent a year by American estimates. In 1982 the Soviets officially pegged their growth at 2.6 percent, but if this included some unadmitted inflation, as Western economists assumed, the Soviet economy was barely crawling when Brezhnev died.

In short, Brezhnev's legacy was a congealed society, a muscle-bound giant with global strength but unable to feed its people on its own. Andropov inherited an economic system that with brute force and massed manpower could assault the Siberian wastes to construct a second Trans-Siberian Railroad or plop down new settlements in the freezing tundra to tap unbelievably rich oil and gas resources, but it was unable or unwilling to provide adequate urban housing. It was a nation boasting of socialist accomplishments but forced to buy industrial innovation from the West. Its foreign debt had risen from zero to more than $20 billion during Brezhnev's reign. Its economic failings bore all symptoms of a rigid command economy that stifles the initiative which is the mainspring of growth in freer societies. Ironically, while Soviet Russia mocked the capitalistic cycle of inflation and unemployment, it, too, got

P 6

caught in the backlash of the recession that bled the West in the early 1980's.

Appropriately, what Brezhnev had intended as his personal showcase of détente with the United States, the world's largest truck plant on the Kama River, fell short of his grand ambitions. The original blueprint called for an output of 150,000 trucks and 250,000 diesel engines in 1980, but by 1981 output was only 85,000 trucks. Cost overruns were enormous, and after the Pentagon had charged that Kama River trucks were being used in Afghanistan by the Soviet Army, the American suppliers still involved in the project fell away.

Moreover, the political mood was gloomy, and the sense of confrontation with the Reagan administration and the general deterioration of Soviet-American relations added to that gloominess. The leadership was turning inward. It had resumed jamming Western radio broadcasts in 1980, and two years later it eliminated direct distance dialing in its international telephone links. The dissident movement had been largely crushed, its main activities having been sent to Siberia or exiled to the West. Jewish emigration had been squeezed to a trickle. Cultural life seemed arid and leaden. Hopes for liberalization had faded, despite the safety valves of occasional daring plays or an astonishing exhibit of early 20th-century modern art. Many intellectuals were despondent over the trends. Some of the most talented and courageous had been pressured into leaving Russia, leaving behind a gray, mostly barren cultural landscape.

At the grass roots the tendencies that I had seen in the early Seventies had become trends a decade later. In spite of enormous capital investments in the farm sector—roughly $50 billion a year*—food shortages were so severe that Brezhnev conceded in November 1981 that food had become "economically and politically the central problem" of the Five-Year Plan. For many products, supplies in state stores were so erratic and shortages were so pervasive that virtually everyone shopped constantly *na levo,* on the black market. Although there were no official figures, all signs indicated that this second economy had grown massively in scope and volume during Brezhnev's last decade.

As before, the Soviet press blossomed with stories denouncing the prevalent corruption. Newspapers ran menacing little squibs about the occasional execution of government officials or big-time underground businessmen for serious economic crimes or about the firing of deputy ministers for theft, embezzlement, or mismanagement. But these disclosures were not a sufficient deterrent. Foreigners returning to Russia after long absences were struck by the brash and open operations of the black market.

*In this calculation and throughout this portion of the book, I have used the official rate of exchange; thus 1 ruble equals $1.40.

The sense of moral decay was reflected, too, in the lax and showy life-style of the Soviet elite. People pointed to Brezhnev's daughter, Galina Churbanova, who was linked to a scandal a few months before her father died. In January 1982 the authorities arrested her supposed lover, Boris Buryatiya, a minor singer in the Bolshoi Ballet, for the alleged theft of the czarist diamond collection of a lady lion tamer. Known in Moscow as Boris the Gypsy, Galina's escort drove a green Mercedes, wore an ankle-length mink coat, and bedecked himself in ten-gallon hats, thick gold finger rings, and a diamond-encrusted crucifix. His flashy dress and bohemian life-style were so well known that many of the Moscow elite believed he had been spared an earlier arrest only by his Brezhnev connection. "Nouveau riche" was the disdainful comment made to me by Vasily Aksyonov, a prominent writer of the early 1960's forced into exile. "They had no taste."

But it was the frequent disappearance of meat and other foods from the state stores—caused by the crisis on the farms—that bothered more humble Russians and confronted Andropov with a monumental problem.

Even in the early 1970's food supplies had been inadequate. But by the end of the decade they had become a chronic headache for the regime and for ordinary Russians. For example, in Novosibirsk, a West Siberian city of more than 1 million people, meat counters simply closed down for months at a time. In late 1980 an American traveler to Ulyanovsk, Lenin's birthplace, heard from an elderly man that the city's only meat—frankfurters—was reserved for sick children. By October 1981 Brezhnev admitted grave problems in "supplying the cities and industrial areas with such foodstuffs as milk and meat." To alleviate shortages and try to sustain livestock herds, the Kremlin was spending $6 to $8 billion a year on food imports—mostly feed grains and meat. Grain imports alone jumped from 14.3 million tons from 1966 to 1970 to 158 million tons from 1978 to 1982. But massive imports did not cure the problem. The situation had become so bleak that rationing had to be imposed in places like Irkutsk, Kazan, Tbilisi, Vologda, and Naberezhnye Chelny (renamed Brezhnev after his death).

Normally pride keeps Soviet officialdom from admitting to outsiders that rationing is necessary. That smacks of a wartime regime. But by late 1981 there was no hiding the situation when Serge Schmemann, a *New York Times* correspondent, talked with Leonid Pinko, the deputy Communist Party chief for the Irkutsk region. "Yes, we're on a coupon system because we don't produce enough meat and milk," Pinko candidly admitted. 'Local farms supply only sixty percent of the meat we need, and eighty percent of our milk, and we don't get enough from

P 8

outside."

Given the unbearable lines before rationing, some workers welcomed the idea. "I'm for it," said a technician. "Before, the *babushkas* would line up in the morning and clean the stores out. Some of them bought far more than they needed and resold the surplus on the black market. Now I can pick my time and still be sure of finding enough for my family."

Naturally the irrepressible Russian wit found black humor in the food shortages. I heard one Moscow riddle mocking the desperation of people in the hinterland. "Can a horse make the trip from Moscow to Saratov?" the riddle asked. "No," came the reply, "because the horse would be eaten en route in Kazan."

Humor aside, the food shortages eroded civic morale and exhausted people's energies. Although foreigners found that Russian hosts always managed to get ample food on the table, they also found people worrying about the next meal—not fearing starvation, as one Moscow mother told me, but knowing it would be a terrible ordeal to locate decent food and endure the lines to buy it. "Moscow is supposed to have the best supplies in the country," she said, "but meat has been hard to find, and so has cheese. And except in special stores [for the elite] you can't buy evaporated milk." Then, with cold sarcasm, she added, "If things were as good now as six years ago, people would think true Communism had arrived."

Even bread, the staple of the Russian diet, became a problem. Bread is a critical touchstone for Russian leaders, and they will go to great lengths to assure regular supplies. In the Bolshevik Revolution Lenin built appeal around the slogan "Peace, Bread, and Land." To politically astute Russians, the bread shortage in the winter of 1962–63 helped speed Khrushchev's downfall in 1964. So, even spotty bread problems in the winter of 1981–82 were perilous for Brezhnev. That November William Maynes, a former American diplomat in Moscow and subsequently editor of *Foreign Policy* magazine, made a trip to Russia and came back with tales of bread problems. He had heard widespread complaints about the miserable quality of bread, even at the normally well-provisioned elite hotel of the Academy of Sciences. But his biggest surprise came when, after he had asked several Russians what items were hardest to buy, a middle-level government official burst out in exasperation: "I'll tell you what's difficult to get in Moscow—bread!"

In other regions things got so grim that Soviet workers, perhaps indirectly influenced by the Polish Solidarity movement, occasionally staged wildcat strikes to protest food problems, economic shortages, and work norms. By my experience, this kind of protest was virtually unheard of in the early 1970's. But in 1980 and 1981 Western diplomats, correspondents, and economists like Marshall Goldman, a spcialist on

the Soviet economy from Wellesley College, compiled a list of wildcat strikes at the auto and tractor plants in Gorky, Togliatti, Tartu, Chelyabinsk, and Naberezhnye Chelny; among coal miners at Vorkuta and Donetsk, where an illegal union was briefly formed; in other plants at Vyborg, Riga, and Krivoy Rog; and at three different factories around the Ukrainian capital of Kiev. Ethnic clashes at Tallinn in Estonia and at Ordzhonikidze in the northern Caucasus region also apparently took on elements of economic protests, requiring authorities to call out troops to suppress them with force.

There are no detailed accounts because Soviet authorities deal with such problems quietly and suppress all information for fear the news would inflame other areas. Indeed, the Kremlin was so fearful of contagion that it instantly reimposed jamming of Western radio broadcasts in August 1980, when Polish workers in Gdansk went out on strike to protest higher food prices. Over the next year or two the leadership also set up flying brigades to ferry emergency food shipments into northern Russian cities where authorities feared trouble over the lack of staples. An American student told me of a Russian friend, an Army man who was assigned to one of these special transport brigades. The Russian told him that Army units would fly emergency supplies of meat, potatoes, and other foods to areas where the lack of staples was causing unrest and then also help keep order. They would jump from one area to another, the Russian told my friend. "They were reshuffling scarcity," the American observed.

Equally indicative of overall slippage were Brezhnev's revealing admissions to the 26th Communist Party Congress in 1981 about the vaunted Soviet system of free health care. Bluntly he criticized ministries for shortages of medical supplies and equipment, inadequate medical training, and poor distribution of medical personnel. "Many inadequacies remain," Brezhnev admitted. "The work of polyclinics, dispensaries, and outpatient clinics which handle eighty percent of all the sick must be substantially improved. Unfortunately in a number of places they lag behind the possibilities of medicine. There is a staff shortage, especially of middle- and junior-level personnel. Equipment is out of date. Modern medications are insufficient." Nonetheless, Brezhnev let the share of the state budget spent on medical care decline from 6.6 percent in the early 1960's to 4.9 percent in 1982.

In the latter year the Soviet Union boasted nearly 1 million doctors and 3.3 million hospital beds (compared to 357,000 doctors and 1.4 million beds in the United States), but the figures masked great disparities. Elite hospitals had well-trained doctors and high-quality care, but the Soviet press revealed that many rural areas were in bad shape. In 1975, for example, a rural region in Soviet Georgia had 25 hospitals and 127 outpatient clinics but not a single doctor. Two years later Boris

Petrovsky, the Minister of Health, told David Shipler of *The New York Times* that much Soviet X-ray equipment was obsolete, only a few dozen of the nation's 30,000 clinics had artificial kidney machines, only half the necessary anesthetic equipment was being manufactured, and even such a basic tool as the thermometer was in short supply. The press mentioned insufficient supplies of aspirin. Russian emigrés have told me of their constant efforts to smuggle antibiotics and more ordinary medicines to relatives back home. And I have heard American patients and physicians come back from treatment in Soviet hospitals stunned by unsanitary conditions, unsterilized needles, and other equipment, "wastebasket" toilets, and high infection rates after operations.

All these problems had palpable effects. Indeed, things got bad enough in the mid-Seventies for Soviet handbooks to start dropping statistics on unfavorable mortality trends. Murray Feshbach, an American economist and demographer, extrapolated from Soviet figures that after years of decline there had been a surprising nearly 50 percent rise in Soviet infant mortality between 1971 and 1978 and that the average male life expectancy in the Soviet Union had fallen from 66 to 62 years between 1965 and 1982 (compared to 70 in the United States). As barometers of the general quality of life, both trends were ill omens for Soviet society.

In other areas, like housing, the authorities kept producing enough of those vast impersonal apartment blocks for a majority of urban families to have their own apartments with the basic modern utilities. Even so, the Party's pledge in 1929 to provide each citizen with a minimum living space of nine square meters remains an elusive dream. *Pravda* acknowledged in February 1981 that 20 percent of Moscow's population still lives in communal apartments or dormitories, sharing kitchens, toilets, and bathrooms with other families, and in other cities the proportion is undoubtedly higher. In other ways Soviet consumers remain far from satisfied. With their increased exposure to *importny* goods, they turn up their noses at the shoddy quality of Soviet goods and leave them piling up in stores, hoarding their money instead. Not tomention black market purchases of gold and jewelry or inflation in cars and private cooperative apartments, one indication of consumer dissatisfaction is the leap in private savings deposits from 91 billion rubles ($127 billion) in 1975 to 165 billion rubles ($231 billion) in 1981.

In short, as Andropov took over, Soviet authorities were unable for first time since World War II to guarantee their workers a rising standard of living. The economy was not keeping pace with expectations of consumers taught by past promises and performance to anticipate a steady improvement in their lot. Indeed, in Brezhnev's final three years the Soviet living standard stood still or may have even slipped a bit in

some areas. I was told by one American student who visited relatives in Russia in 1979, 1980, and 1981 that in each successive year he found a noticeable tightening of conditions. Even among his upper-middle-class circle of provincial educators and Party members, he encountered severe grumbling. "Life is a grind," he was told. "You've got to beat out a living."

Privately some top Soviet officials like Georgia Arbatov, a Central Committee member with links to Andropov, acknowledged to American scholars that Moscow was having as much trouble as Washington in improving living standards. In late 1981 Arbaton remarked to one American, "We are both [both countries] moving into a period when it will be difficult for each of our governments to provide as necessities the things we now regard as luxuries." Arbatov, who is head of the influential Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada, hinted that the Soviet leadership would probably have to raise prices or taxes, foreshadowing some of Andropov's early moves. His comments offered a dramatic contrast with Nikita Khrushchev's boast in 1960 that the Soviet economy would "overtake and surpass the United States in twenty years."

In their cheerless predicament many Russians turned to grumbling enviously about Poland. It often came as bitter news that Poland at its worst was an enviable place from the perspective of Moscow shoppers. An American professor with close friends among the Moscow Party elite told me of a family discussion in the kitchen of his Party friends in the spring of 1981. One man had come back from Warsaw, where he had been negotiating for an industrial trade exposition, and the others were hungrily picking him over for scraps of information.

"It must be terrible there—no food," one of his relatives said.

"They've got fresh vegetables on every corner," the traveler recounted.

"But we read that they've got to have those little ration cards to buy meat," objected another member of the family.

"Yes, but with those cards they know that they can buy meat," he replied. "And they've got sixteen different kinds of *kolbasa* [sausage]."

That set the rest to grousing about having just four of five types of bologna and sausage in Moscow. They were also envious that Polish workers could see French movies at their workers' clubs, a titillating idea to the Soviet elite. Indeed, reports of a "good life" in Poland caused Moscow intellectuals, who cynically enjoy knocking their own society, to spawn a joke about Brezhnev's going to meet the then French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in Warsaw.

In the joke, Breznhnev boarded an overnight train, pulled his shades, and went to sleep. The next morning he awakened as the train pulled into Warsaw, but the general wealth of the city, its shops, and the stylish clothes of the Poles so surprised Brezhnev that he exclaimed,

P 12

"My God, I've overslept and the train has gone all the way to Paris." On another overnight train from Paris, the joke had Giscard awakening to sights of Poland, which he found so drab and depressing that he also exclaimed, "My God, I've overslept and the train has gone all the way to Moscow."

In the final Brezhnev years Soviet shortcomings were particularily irksome to "the chosen," white-collar professionals with good political connections—Party officials, technocrats, engineers, managers, foreign trade officials, and diplomats at mid-career in their late thirties and early forties. They were loyal, patriotic, and proud of Soviet superpower status but angered at living in a nation of bottlenecks. Around the kitchen table, my professor friend found them griping that Party leaders were allocating economic resources stupidly or that Soviet workers were not well enough trained in new technology or simply not forced to work hard enough.

"The leadership doesn't understand that you cannot introduce microcomputers into a laboratory unless you can make the Moscow power people provide constant power to run the computer," complained Valya, a middle-level diplomat. "The new Tretyakov Gallery is in a bog near Gorky Park. They can't move in the paintings because it has no air conditioning and the humidity is so great it will destroy all the art. My father is a member of the Party Central Committee, and yet I have to bribe some old *babushka* to get a ticket to the [Turkish] bath—twelve hours before I want to take one. But when I'm in Japan I can get a bath anytime I want. What's going on here?"

In a *New York Times Magazine* article in February 1983, John Burns, the Moscow Bureau Chief, conveyed the Russian malaise under Brezhnev from a dinner conversation with an English-language teacher from the Baltic republics. The linguist scoffed when the talk turned to repression. "You talk as if tyranny were the issue, but for most of us what happens in the Lubyanka [KGB headquarters] is really not the problem," he said. "No, what really upsets ordinary people is that nothing works anymore. The whole country is sliding into cynicism and corruption, and nothing is done to improve things. Most people have given up hoping for any solutions from the Kremlin."

That is a story I heard with many variations. A young American woman related the confession of Borya, her Russian brother-in-law, after one of those soul-to-soul talks into the middle of the Russian night. Borya, a Party man in his forties who taught Marxist history, admitted that he had lost faith and believed the best course for Russia would be evolution to a bourgeois democracy. The Russian-born wife of an American diplomat, accustomed to annual trips to her family in Russia, returned in 1982 with the report that not only the younger generation but the elders, who had always defended the system, were

now disenchanted. Business executives were sometimes taken aback by how disgruntled high officials in the foreign trade field had become.

"I don't want to hurt my contacts, so don't quote me by name," one man cautioned me in early 1981, "but morale is really crumbling. The people I talk to work hard. They are patriotic. They are dedicated. But lately some of them have said they no longer believe the Soviet system has the right answers. I don't bring it up. They volunteer it."

Resentment against the regime's spreading foreign involvements has also been on the rise. Facing their own economic hardships, Russians were angry at the costs of aiding third world or Eastern European allies. Vietnam's decision to join Comecon, the Soviet-led economic bloc, touched off one technocrat's frustration. "Why is it all the poorest countries want to join, and none of the rich ones?" he complained to an American visitor. "Why don't the Swiss want to join?" Criticism of Poland mounted after Russians, had realized they were bailing out Warsaw with food, consumer goods, and energy supplies as the West cut back loans and aid to protest the crackdown on Solidarity. "We pay for Polish laziness," a high official in the Ministry of Foreign Trade blurted out to an American businessman. "They don't work. They don't pull their weight. They want a free ride."

Surprisingly, however, given the use of 100,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan and an estimated 10,000 casualities over three years, that intervention did not stir serious protest. Because of the Soviet propaganda accompanying the December 1979 invasion, many Russians evidently feared some initial clash with America or other Western powers. Then there was grumbling about casualties when bodies of Soviet soldiers were shipped home, especially to Moslem areas of Soviet Central Asia. One American friend told me that his Russian relatives were worried by rumors that "barbarian Afghan tribesmen" were mutilating Soviet soldiers. Recent emigrants from Lithuania also said people were upset by reports of atrocities, especially when caskets arrived sealed and families pried them open to find mutilated remains or a stranger's body. But fears of a wider war subsided, and the authorities evidently curbed the practice of shipping all bodies home. Even the inevitable grumbling about the costs of "aiding" Kabul was evidently balanced off by Soviet national pride, just as it had been in Czechoslovakia in 1968. "We'll show them" was a common Russian comment.

For the leadership, one worrisome undercurrent was the rising antagonism toward the privileges of the Soviet elite. In the early 1970's I had found less class hostility than I would have expected from the Soviet proletariat. But by many accounts, the elite caste has become more ostentatious with its limousines, special stores, spas, and dachas in the intervening years and has provoked more discernible antagonism from ordinary Russians. Even the influential Party journal *Kommunist* car-

P 14

ried an article in early 1981 hinting at class grievances. Others have commented on this trend; among them is George Feifer, an American who has written seven books about Russia and who married a Russian. After 10 years' absence he visited the Soviet Union in 1980 and later wrote of workers, policemen, doormen, and taxi drivers seething at the arrogant greed of the Soviet "New Class." "The huge fraud called Socialism milks more and more from us to give more and more to *them,*" one driver told him. "We watch like robots while the greedy lords take our last nail for their new country houses." In a bar a retired hotel doorman vented his spleen against the *apparatchiki.* "Under Stalin, the top men carefully hid their privileges," he told Feifer. "Now that Communism's a joke, they're in it only for privileges and want to show them off. Their limousines drive them around Moscow in their special lanes and people mutter, 'There go the "servants of the people."' "

Occasionally Politburo members have obliquely acknowledged their fears of political instability if the political elite has become too self-confident about its own power and paid too little attention to the needs of ordinary consumers. During the maneuvering that preceded Brezhnev's death, Konstantin Chernenko, Brezhnev's handpicked candidate for successor, warned in a Communist Party journal in February 1982 that the "largest and most threatening danger" for the party was the risk of isolation from the population. Evidently with the Solidarity movement in Poland and possibly with Soviet worker unrest in mind, Chernenko marked himself as a proconsumer voice in the succession struggle. "Every day, with every decision the Party must confirm its right to rule society," he asserted in one unusually candid passage. "In the opposite case, as the harsh lessons of recent years incontrovertibly demonstrate, the political situation can assume the character of a crisis." Indeed, social tensions have spilled over in the wildcat strikes and in the anger and apathy of blue-collar workers. But so far the Soviet elite has been spared a real explosion.

Typically, jokes have been the main outlet for Russian political opinions, and in his final years Brezhnev became a lightning rod, with his doddering gait, his slurred speech, and his pretentious personality cult. He made ritualistic denunciations of Soviet failures, but in his last years the reflex of the Party apparatus was to cover over the worst. With their humorous vignettes, the people peeled back reality, mocking Brezhnev for incompetence, inertia, and self-delusion.

One joke, a devastating lampoon of Brezhnev's leaden immobility, had Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev traveling on a train that stalled somewhere in the steppes. Everyone turned first to Stalin, as the senior leader, to ask how to get the train moving. "Shoot the crew and get new engineers," Stalin commanded. A short while later the train stalled

again, and this time it fell to Khrushchev to recommend a solution. Khrushchev pardoned some of the experienced crew, who had somehow escaped Stalin's execution order, and put them back on the job. Of course, the train stalled a third time, and Brezhnev was put in charge. He thought a moment and then gave the orders: "Pull the shades and pretend we're moving."

In another joke Brezhnev was congratulating the Soviet cosmonauts after the Apollo-Soyuz flight. Since the Americans were winning the space race, he said the Politburo had decided to send a Soviet mission to the sun.

"But we'll be burned alive," the cosmonauts protested.

"Do you think we don't understand anything?" Brezhnev replied. "Don't worry, we've planned all the details. We've arranged for you to land at night."

Toward the end the vignettes turned to cruelly anticipating his demise. One had him about to deliver a eulogy for Mikhail Suslov, the Party ideologist who died in January 1982. Pulling a text from his coat pocket, Brezhnev began reading, "Comrades, the Party and people, united as one, wish to regret the death of the great leader Leonid Ilyich . . ." Then a pause, and Brezhnev added, "Oh, it's not my jacket. It must be Andropov's."

Considerably more risky than such anonymous humor was the open, though elliptical, attack on Brezhnev in the Leningrad literary magazine *Aurora* in December 1981. In an issue dedicated to Brezhnev's 75th birthday, there was a short story about a very old writer who "is living and does not plan to die," although everyone already thinks of him as virtually dead. The story appeared on page 75, reinforcing the popular impression that the "old writer" was Brezhnev.

It would be easy, and mistaken, for Westerners to overread the implications of such obvious cynicism. Ideological decay and general disenchantment posed serious obstacles for Andropov's efforts to instill zeal in his countrymen. But they did not signal that disillusioned Russians were looking to Western capitalism, with its unemployment, expensive education and medical care, boom-and-bust business cycles, and risky freedoms as an alternative. Western democracy is simply too foreign for Russians accustomed to authoritarian rule and a planned economy.

However angry or upset, the vast majority is so conditioned by its outlook and its way of life that it has difficulty imagining itself in a different system. The obvious difficulties I observed among recent Jewish emigrés in adapting to the uncertainties of job, home, health, and education under American capitalism are testimony to that. Tellingly, the emigré dissident writer Aleksandr Zinoviev, author of *The Yawning Heights,* Swiftian satire on Soviet society, has cautioned Westerners

that Russians, for all their carping, accept Soviet ideology unquestioningly the way a Western schoolchild accepts Euclidean geometry. For them, that is the way the world works. They may growl, but they are resigned to the status quo.

Moreover, the epidemic disillusionment of recent years is tied mainly to food shortages and economic failures. Real, tangible improvements in food supplies, living standards, and job satisfactions under Andropov could diminish public cynicism. "Their chief grievance is nothing more elevated, or less significant, than the system's failure to provide them with what they regard, with Russians' traditionally low expectations, as a tolerable standard of living" was Feifer's comment. "Authoritarian rule that supplied them with meat and a sense of pride would not seem onerous."* From my years in Russia, that has the ring of truth, much as it may puzzle or even frustrate Westerners who wonder why the combustible combination of hardship and cynicism does not inevitably ignite a new revolution.

Paradoxically, the intelligentsia may be more articulate in their disenchantment than the proletariat, but the regime may pay a higher price for apathy among demoralized blue-collar workers. Soviet sociologists worry in print about job drifting among the young, less skilled workers who find no job motivating and no self-respect in manual labor. Other specialists have reported on ennui slowing production on assembly lines or workers 'children feeling blocked off from opportunities for higher education and advancement to match the children of white-collar tecnocrats and intellectuals.

But more fundamentally the regime is confronted with monumental problems of absenteeism, alcoholism, slipshod work habits, slack discipline, squandering or stealing state resources, or simply loafing on the job. Construction workers are notorious for their indolence, stopping on the slightest pretext of a missing item. Employees in restaurants and other service establishments impose marathon waits on their customers. Foreign groups touring Soviet factories often notice Russian workmen who seem to be on permanent coffee breaks. Across the nation it has been routine practice in offices, institutes, factories, or government motor pools for workers to skip out during work hours to shop.

"If you want to show up around our place at 8 A.M. that is fine, but if you would rather come in half an hour or an hour later, or not at all, that is O.K., too," a Moscow truck driver confessed in a letter to *Pravda* during Andropov's first weeks in charge. "If anyone were to ask where you were, you can say anything you like: You were out with friends last

*George Feifer, "Russian Disorders," *Harper's Magazine* (February 1981). On worker attitudes and social problems, I have also gained insights from Gail Lapidus of the University of California, Berkeley, who has written on Soviet social trends in *After Brezhnev: The Sources of Soviet Conduct in the 1980s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).

night, you could not squeeze onto a bus, the subway was running late —anything will do. They will never check. Our mornings begin with chitchat about who spent the night where, what yesterday's take was, and the chores of the day—doing the rounds of the shops, buying that firewood for the mother-in-law, and how to spend the hours that each of us takes for 'lunch' after the first trip of the day. Meanwhile, the bosses are kicking off their day with a tea party, followed by long telephone conversation to relatives and friends. In the evening, with the trucks back in the garage, we open up a sort of makeshift restaurant with all the bottles and food we collected as 'tips' on our rounds to the shops, airports, and hotels. The bosses know all about these under-the-counter payoffs, but they turn a blind eye because they are busy using our repair shops to fix private cars for profits of their own."

In October 1981 Abel Agenbegyan, the reform-minded economist from Novosibirsk, asserted that "people's attitude toward their work" was a principal drag on the economy and a major cause of the alarming drop-off in the growth of Soviet labor productivity. In the first half of the 1970's, he wrote, productivity had risen 34 percent, but in the second five-year period it had risen only 17 percent, mostly between 1976 and 1978. Some blame could be laid to transportation bottlenecks, bad conditions in various mines, and slow introduction of new technology, he said, but mainly he pointed the finger at sloth and alcoholism in the work force.

"With deep-felt bitterness, I notice, for example, that drunks are encountered more and more frequently on the job," Agenbegyan wrote in the newspaper *Trud.* "Certain enterprises have even established special teams to police up, so to speak, heavy drinkers and keep them away from machine tools so there will be no accidents. They drink on the job. They drink after work. This is an extreme lack of respect for work."

Moscow Radio Braodcast an gloomy echo in April 1982 from Yevgeny Smolentsev, the Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Supreme Court. "It is with great regret that one is forced to admit that in recent years the consumption of spirits has not been going down, but up, that in a number of places the production of home-distilled liquor has become more widespread," he said. "It leads to lost working hours, a reduction in productivity, an increase in defective output, and a growth in injuries and accidents. Drunkenness also damages people's health and causes harm to the family. The demon drink is an unseen presence in the dock at the majority of court cases."

Soviet censors have suppressed most nationwide statistics on alcohol productio and consumption, presumably to avoid embarrassing comparisons with other countries. But Western researchers, like Vladimir Treml of Duke University, have pieced together a calamitous picture

from partial figures.* From 1970 to 1979 wine production rose nearly 50 percent, and hard spirits 33 percent, outstripping the 9 percent population increase. With a rise in drinking among women and minors and even more heavy drinking among men, Treml reports, the Soviet Union now boasts easily the highest per capita consumption of hard liquors in the world. Moreover, as I discovered in my travels, the Moslem populations of Central Asia and the Caucasian peoples of Georgia and Armenia generally prefer wine and leave most of the crippling vodka drinking to ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, and the Baltic peoples.

Liquor takes a staggering proportion of the normal family budget. With an average monthly wage of 172 rubles ($241), Treml reckoned that an average industrial worker's family in the mid-1970's spent about 410 rubles ($574) a year on alcohol, or roughly one-third of the family food budget. Even a 25 percent hike in vodka prices in 1981, pushing a liter of moderate-quality vodka up to 10 rubles ($14) and a smaller bottle of a coarser brand to 6 rubles 8 kopecks ($8.51), did not slow the steady rise in consumption, though signs blossomed in store windows warning Brezhnev of public discontent. A Leningrad store carried an ominous message: "If it goes to 25 rubles, we'll storm the Winter Palace again." And a similar theme was struck in a Moscow ditty:

> Vodka now costs six-oh-eight.
> We'll still drink it at that rate.
> Tell them if they make it ten,
> We'll still drink it even then.
> But let it cost a little more,
> And we'll bring Poland to their door.
> Let it rise to twenty-five,
> And we won't leave the boss alive.

Many times I have told of my encounter with two Soviet Air force pilots on a train and my fears that one would keel over dead on the spot when he downed in one long gulp a tumbler of scotch I had given him. But I was unaware how many Soviet citizens literally die from bouts of overdrinking, known technically as alcohol poisoning. On the basis of figures in a Soviet magazine, *Forensic Medicine,* Treml calculated that 51,000 people had died from alcohol poisoning in 1978 (compared to 400 in the United States). Most simply overconsumed state-produced

*I am indebted to personal conversations with Professor Treml and to his papers, including "Death from Alcohol Poisoning in the USSR," *Soviet Studies* (October 1982) and "Alcohol in the Soviet Underground Economy," in *Studies in the Second Economy of Communist Countries,* edited by Gregory Grossman of the University of California, Berkeley, and being published in 1983. Professor Grossman also generously shared his insights on the underground economy.

spirits. But 4,000 of them died from guzzling brake fluid, antifreeze, cleaning solvents, and other vodka substitutes or the famous *samogon,* homemade moonshine. Another 6,300 people died in 1978 from drinking vinegar, known among Russians as a hangover cure and evidently even as a fashionable suicide poison. Beyond that, no one knows how much of the rise in fatal coronaries was caused by heavy drinking, though Soviet and Western specialists have suggested it is a significant factor.

For a disciplinarian like Andropov, the cancerous growth of corruption that courses through every artery of Soviet life represents a severe obstruction. The second, largely underground economy is an even more crucial safety valve now than a decade ago and a critical lubricant for state enterprises in the lumbering, constipated official economy. But with the pervasive theft of state goods feeding both small and big-time black market operations, the second economy also competes with the official economy and indirectly challenges the economic writ of the leadership. It frustrates the allocation of resources and the system of economic incentives and rewards set up by the Kremlin and its economic planners.

Although no official Soviet figures reveal its scope, some Western economists have reckoned the second economy could account for as much as 20 percent of national output. Over recent years it has been nourished by what economists call the ruble overhang—the excess purchasing power paid in wages to Soviet workers above the value of consumer goods produced each year. Western economists like Gregory Grossman of the University of California, Berkeley, had already noted sharp acceleration in the growth of the Soviet money supply during the past decade, adding to unadmitted black market inflation. The annual increases in money supply jumped from 4.5 billion ($6.3 billion) rubles in the early 1970's to 29.8 billion rubles ($42 billion) in 1980. Then, in early 1983, a senior official of Gosplan, the State Planning Commission, told an American delegation that the annual ruble overhang was running about 100 billion rubles ($140 billion) a year. Since only about 10 percent was going into savings accounts, the rest provided a vast pool of funds for the second economy.

Yet even without figures, the trends were obvious: A far broader, more brazen black market has developed over the past decade. "In the Seventies, black market activities were covert," commented William Wagner, a Williams College professor who went back to Russia after a decade. "People asked you to change money or sell them blue jeans, but it took place down an alley or in someone's room. Now you walk out of St. Sophia's in Kiev, and the first thing you see is five people

approaching you to change money—in front of the Intourist guide. That kind of openness would have been inconceivable ten years ago. It could either be a greater tolerance by the authorities for such activities or things were sliding while Brezhnev's succession was being decided."

The principal elements of the second economy involve no crime: the legal farmers', pet, and hobby markets and the gray markets in used cars, housing exchanges, and private academic tutoring, gray because actual prices are often much higher than officially sanctioned levels. In 1980 *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta* reported that on just 1.5 percent of the arable farmland, private plots were producing 31 percent of Russia's meat output, 30 percent of the milk, 32 percent of the eggs, 64 percent of the potatoes, 34 percent of other vegetables, and 58 percent of fruits and berries. The newspaper gave no overall ruble figure for this enormous volume of trade, a good portion of which goes to feed farm families themselves. But one Soviet economist did reckon that families anxious to get their children into universities and institutes spent 1.5 billion rubles ($2.1 billion) on private tutoring. That is roughly one-fifth the state's total budget for general secondary schools.

Russians depend on the black market for everything: food, clothing, books, records, spare parts for their cars, household repairs, even exit visas. With black market inflation, the mark-ups from official prices have grown steeper. In state shops, for example, a Rubik's Cube cost 5.50 rubles, but since it is rarely in stock, it commanded nearly eight times that price—40 rubles *na levo*. Bribery, long a fact of daily life, has also become more pervasive. In the early 1970's I heard that some doctors expected "tips," but a decade later a Moscow woman told me it had become fairly common for a surgeon to expect an unofficial fee of 1,000 rubles ($1,400) for a big operation. The militia, too, has become notoriously corrupt. One well-known poet told an American friend he could not afford to leave a party too drunk because he did not have enough cash to pay off a policeman if he got stopped. Truckers tell of regular highway payoff points to the militia to avoid inspections. The Soviet press has reported cases in which railroad trains make prearranged stops near woods to allow thieves to loot large shipments without interference from train guards who were obviously on the take. Konstantin I. Zotov, the retired General in charge of the Office of Visas and Registration, was fired in 1981 for not cracking down on subordinates who were selling exit visas for up to 3,500 rubles, more than 15 times the official fee.

The heart of the second economy is a system of organized underground private enterprise, an entire looking-glass world that defies the official Soviet version of economic reality under Marxism. Probably the most comprehensive inside look has come from Konstantin Simis, for 17 years a defense lawyer in Moscow who handled cases for illicit

millionaire businessmen. While working on international law in the Soviet Ministry of Justice, Simis began secretly writing a book about the widespread corruption he had witnessed. The KGB found and confiscated his manuscript and forced him to emigrate in 1977 to the United States, where he has published *USSR—the Corrupt Society.* The type of operation he discloses is not new. It is the depth and volume of operation that are stunning—tens of thousands of modest underground factories, making knitwear, shoes, sunglasses, recordings of Western popular music, handbags, hosiery, or sporting goods and selling them at enormous mark-ups through underground networks. Many illicit operations work like moles within official state enterprises, living off stolen raw materials and spare parts. Simis identifies the centers of illegal private enterprise as Moscow, Leningrad, Riga, Vilnius, Odessa, Tbilisi, Baku, and Tashkent. In one city alone, Riga, he learned of 70 to 100 underground enterprises.

But for sheer size, Simis' more dramatic stories are built around Moscow entrepreneurs like Isaak Bach, whose father's company, Bach & Sons, had thrived on Kuznetsky Most Street, selling notions and ladies' underwear during Lenin's New Economic Policy in the early 1920's. When Soviet economic policy turned more stern, Bach was shipped off to a labor camp. He returned in the mid-1930's to revive the family business—this time illegally. By the late 1940's, Simis reports, Bach had a network of a dozen factories, making underwear, souvenirs, and notions and operating a network of stores in all republics of the Soviet Union. After his arrest, at 70, the prosecutor estimated his assets at about 87 million rubles. Although the Bach business has long been defunct, many others have replaced it, and Simis has estimated the annual profits from some 1,000 illicit factory networks as high as $5 billion a year.

More explosive, however, is his portrait of a system riddled from bottom to top with political corruption—official bribe taking, fixing court cases, buying and selling government posts, and official misuse of state funds and property. It makes Tammany Hall seems small-time. Simis reports, for example, that Frol Kozlov, who in 1963 was Khrushchev's most likely successor, was eased out of active service on the pretext of ill health but actually because the KGB had stumbled onto a hoard of precious gems and huge bnundles of money in the office safe of a close associate of his. Many, evidently bribes, were marked with Kozlov's name. It was known previously that Vasily Mzhavanadze was forced out as the Communist boss of the Georgian Republic (equivalent to an American state governor) in 1972 because of corruption, but Simis discloses that Mzhavanadze was selling ministerial posts for 100,000 to 300,000 rubles and that his wife and colleagues were trading in other official favors. Again, the Soviet press had skimpily reported the trial

of the Premier and the Supreme Court President in Uzbekistan in 1976 and 1977, but Simis reveals that they were found guilty of taking hundreds of thousands of rubles in bribes for appointments and fixing cases and then let off with fairly modest sentences. In what he terms "the land of kleptocracy" Simis asserts that "tributes" or payola, whether in the form of cash, furniture, cars, or large gifts of food to a state farm chairman from his underlings or from him to superiors, are built into the lives of Soviet officialdom.

"Massive and ubiquitous corruption at the district level of the party-state apparat has forged such close ties between it and the criminal world that there is every justification for saying that a system of organized crime has come into existence in the Soviet Union, a system that has permeated the political power centers of the districts as well as the administrative apparat, the legal system, and key economic positions," he contends. "Although not conceived as such by its creators, this Soviet variety of organized crime naturally is derived from and has become an organic part of the dictatorship of the apparat of the only political party in the country. . . . Organized crime in the Soviet Union bears the stamp of the political system. . . ."

But if the sluggish economy and corruption were areas where the regime was on the skids, Brezhnev fared better in achieving his ends in the cultural area, though at the enormous price of stifling the ferment that had given verve to Soviet intellectual life under Khrushchev. With a combination of strict, widening controls and occasional safety valves, the Brezhnev regime wrung political conformity from the intelligentsia without resorting to the draconian terror of Stalin or allowing Khrushchev's permissive effervescence to continue. Brezhnev's legacy was a drab, dull cultural scene and a dispirited, depleted cultural elite, largely drained of hope and vitality.

The picture was similar to what I had seen in the early 1970's, but worse. Later I heard of budding talent, but no new voices of real force and stature had risen to rival the establishment writers who had excited Moscow two decades ago at the height of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization. For the regime allowed no large platform for liberal newcomers to arouse a following, and the veterans were tiring in middle age. Andrei Voznesenky, the poet, occasionally showed bursts of creativity, but his counterpart, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, had retreated into sloganeering for the regime or dabbling in movies. Bella Akhamdulina, another top poet, had rare readings and more frequent drinking problems. Bulat Okudzhava, the novelist and unofficial balladier, had fallen more quiet, and Yuri Trifonov, a well-regarded writer, and Vladimir Vysotsky, a popular actor known for his satirical, politically risqúe

songs, both had died.

An even more grievous loss for Russian culture was the forced emigration and defection of many of the most powerful and talented writers, dancers, musicians, and artists of the post-Stalin era. Some had gained fame in Khrushchev's cultural flowering and drifted into dissent or publishing abroad and then finally into exile as the Brezhnev leadership tightened the cultural reins. The pattern of repression became familiar. First, censors blocked or butchered their writing, and they smuggled their more daring works to the West. If they persisted, they were ousted from the official Writers' Union and as outcasts could publish nothing in Russia. When they protested, they were finally warned they faced trial and Siberia or they could emigrate to the West.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, whose gritty realism on the Stalinist camps and thundering denunciations of Soviet censorship had electrified the intelligentsia, was forcibly ejected and became a hermit author behind his electrified fences in Cavendish, Vermont. Writers like Andrei Sinyavsky and Vladimir Maximov chose Paris over the labor camps. In final desperation, Lev Kopelev, the white-bearded literary godfather whose kitchen and sitting room had provided a warm but disorderly salon for liberal writers, was pushed out to Germany with his wife, Raisa Orlova. The list of the cultural diaspora went on and on. Mstislav Rostropovich, the world-famous cellist and conductor, went to Washington's National Symphony. Mikhail Baryshnikov, the Kirov Ballet's dazzling male dancer, and Aleksandr Godunov, a lead dancer at the Bolshoi, both defected and settled in New York, along with Ernst Neizvestny, the iconoclastic sculptor who first angered and then intrigued Khrushchev. Joseph Brodsky, a sensitive poet, came early to America, followed by two very popular writers, Vasily Aksyonov and Vladimir Voinovich. The regime was pleased to find it could export "troublemakers" and retreat into a more parochial and conservative climate.

Yet even against the odds, Soviet intellectuals kept at their cat-and-mouse game with the authorities, testing political taboos. Periodically the regime indulged them. In July 1981 Voznesensky teamed with composer Aleksei Rybnikov to produce a Russian rock opera. It was an amalgam of Russian Orthodox chants, the pulsing, deafening rock of Western rhythms, and a broken Russian-American romance that mirrored the collapse of détente. Chingiz Aitmatov, the Kirghizian writer who has delved into the Stalinist past, caused a stir with a novella, *The Day Lasts Longer Than the Age,* challenging the morality of international poltics. In January 1983 a long-awaited collection of Boris Pasternak's prose works was published, though it excluded *Doctor Zhivago,* the still-banned civil war novel that won Pasternak the Nobel Prize for literature and Khrushchev's condemnation.

P 24

A more stunning breakthrough to many of the 600,000 people who saw it was the exhibition of Russian and French modern art shown at Moscow's Manezh Museum in the summer of 1981. It was the first Soviet showing ever to chronicle the remarkable revolutionary canvases of modern Russian masters like Kandinsky, Chagall, Malevich, Rodchenko, Larionov, and Popova. Moscow intellectuals marveled at their first exposure to the collection of Suprematist, Constructivist, Cubist, and abstract modern art. For five decades it had been hoarded and suppressed by the guardians of Soviet culture, not to be exposed until the French government worked out a combined show with French artists like Picasso, Matisse, and Modigliani. Even then French officials protested there was some Soviet censorship of the exhibit and its catalogue.

Another powerful moment the year before was the Taganka Theater's adaption of Trifonov's anti-Stalinist novel *The House on the Embankment.* Previously the Taganka's ingenious director, Yuri Lyubimov, who is seasoned in the tactical wars against censorship, had excited Moscow audiences with his production of Mikhail Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita,* done in Brechtian style. When I met Lyubimov a decade ago, he then had Bulgakov's mystical anti-Stalinist satire in rehearsal but had to wait years for the censors' clearance. Those who also saw Trifonov's work said that in Lyubimov's hands, the play had more force than the novel, though the censors had deleted Stalin's name. A Moscow scientist told me that some people had been offended and walked out. But most intellectuals, shaken by the chilling theatrics of Stalinist interrogations and anonymous informers, were thrilled at Lyubimov's daring and puzzled that the play had been permitted. Word circulated that Lyubimov had written Brezhnev personally, arguing that Moscow needed an experimental theater as a safety valve. But if the director won that round, the scientist told me that Lyubimov had been blocked in attempting to stage a very critical play based on the life of Vysotsky, who had become a folk hero for his underground ballads on forbidden political themes.

A more dismal episode, indicative of the shrinking limits of official tolerance, was the crushing of the unofficial magazine *Metropol,* an effort by Vasily Aksyonov and others to achieve some autonomy and "to revive the spirit of the Sixties," as he later told me in his Washington apartment over vodka and Russian pirozhki. In the Kafkian setting of the Moscow Stomatological Institute—"a hall with 300 gleaming dental chairs"—Aksyonov and a young writer, Viktor Yerofeyev, conceived the idea of a new magazine of hitherto banned work by approved writers that would break beyond the monotony of official Soviet literature without posing too direct a challenge to the authorities. They enlisted Voznesensky, Fazil Iskander, Andrei Bitov, and other writers.

Over a year they collected manuscripts, typed up 12 copies of their magazine, and began negotiations with the Moscow Writers' Union First Secretary, Feliks Kuznetsov. But soon things went sour. Younger contributors were blocked from joining the all-powerful Writers' Union, and older writers found their contracts canceled and books held up.

"The authorities didn't touch us until our collection was together," Aksyonov recalled in his soft, husky voice. "Maybe it was entrapment, I don't know. In a closed Writers' Union meeting, I was accused of espionage. 'Let me congratulate you, Vasya, you are a C.I.A. man,' one said. All my books were removed from the shelves. All my publishing was blocked. They banned a movie based on my work, even though they had spent forty million rubles already. 'We don't compromise on ideology,' they told me. We were intimidated from time to time. Once, on a drive from Kazan to Moscow at night, I think there was an attempt to drive Maya [now, my wife] and me off the road. My phone was cut off. Eventually Kuznetsov suggested to me, 'If you ask for a Jewish emigration visa, it wouldn't be so nice because you are a Russian writer, but if you ask for a Russian passport, I am sure anyone would approve it.' I was so exhausted by this time I decided to go. But it took seven more months."

Many younger intellectuals found an outlet in chasing imported Western jeans and electronic gear, copying Western rock and imitating Western dress and life-style. Fancy stereo sets, current American rock music, and Western fashions are very popular among the Soviet elite. One senior American scholar told me of visiting in Moscow, the apartment of a top *Pravda* editor whose college-age children were in jeans listening to Western rock on the latest imported stero. In Leningrad a nightclub with the classic Russian name of Troika opened in 1982 and drew crowds of young political and cultural elite—party officials, government functionaries, actors, artists, and dancers—with a Western floor show based on Beatle music and other songs from the early Sixties. One American traveler suspected at first it was a satire on outdated Western ways, but a glance at the rapt faces showed it was "the real thing."

But an equally strong, if not stronger, pull comes from the very Slavic writings of the *derevenshchiki,* village prose writers who paint the past and rural Russia with special affection and decry the desecration of old traditions and the moral purity of the countryside by the intrusions of modern industrial society. Although writers like Valentin Rasputin, Vasily Belov, Fyodor Abramov, and Viktor Astafyev actually challenge the direction of official policy, they have worked with official blessing, perhaps because their writings are tinged with strong elements of Russian nationalism, evidently favored by many senior military and politi-

P 26

cal leaders.

An even more influential figure in the drive to revive Russian consciousness and preserve Russian historical monuments is Ilya Glazunov, perhaps now Moscow's most prominent painter. Glazunov, a trim, little man in his early fifties with wavy gray hair, is a portraitist of Brezhnev and other world leaders who has filled his apartment with ikons, religious relics, and historical memorabilia. Like other Great Russian chauvinists, he has privately blamed Jews like Trotsky for sullying the purity of Russian traditions and claimed that the chief architect of Moscow is part of a Jewish conspiracy to intrude on the Russian past.

As a favorite of top officials (his paintings hung, for example, in the dining room of the *Pravda* editor who had provided his children with the best Western stereo equipment), Glazunov was permitted a highly unusual one-man show in the Manezh Museum in 1978. He displayed many realistic canvases glorifying former czarist rulers, the Russian north, the Russian Orthodox center at Zagorsk, and church cupolas in the snow, all in realistic style. One work, "The Return of the Prodigal Son," showed a bare-chested Russian youth in Western jeans, ashamedly returning to his heritage as he is blessed by a robed figure who looked like Tchaikovsky, Dostoyevsky, and other giants of Russian culture. Clearly Glazunov's works touched a chord in many Russians, for praise ran strong in the visitors' book of the exhibit. "Thank you for holy Russia," said one person. "It's unbelievably difficult to be Russian in 1978." With the exodus of many liberal intellectuals, this theme of Glazunov is one that Brezhnev and others permitted to help fill the ideological vacuum of recent years. And it reflected an increasingly important strain in Soviet political life.

In the Brezhnev years the Kremlin—and Andropov personally as head of the KGB—was even more successful in dealing with political dissent. The Andropov policy of graduated repression effectively decimated the dissident movement that was born in the mid-Sixties. Shrewdly Andropov whittled away, jailing some dissidents, using psychiatric hospitals for others, and exporting many of the best known. His repression was administered in calibrated dosages, but it snuffed out the tiny organized opposition. Between 1975 and 1980 dissidents counted 440 of their number individually arrested and packed off to jails, mental wards, or labor camps.

Andrei Sakharov, the soft-spoken physicist who had become the towering central figure of the human rights movement, was effectively isolated by exile to Gorky. Solzhenitsyn was long gone. Democratic dissidents and Jewish activists like Yuri Orlov, Volodya Slepak, Viktor

Brailovsky, and Anatoly Shcharansky were arrested and sent to labor camps, where they smuggled out word of hunger strikes and harsh mistreatment. But others like Valentin Turchin, Zhores Medvedev, and Aleksandr Ginzburg were allowed to leave for the West.

As Turchin remarked, the forced emigrés were "tortured by terrible guilt" about friends back in the labor camps. "Orlov is like my brother," Turchin sadly mused to me at his Long Island apartment. "In Moscow we worked together for human rights. It's awful to be here, and know he is *there* and to hear of his suffering through letters from his wife. He is housed with a common criminal who has threatened to cut off his ear. He's getting older, and he is sick. His wife is afraid she will never see him alive again."

As détente with the West faded, especially after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Kremlin squeezed off the flow of Jewish emigration and decapitated the movement of Jewish activists. In an unprecedented gesture of liberalization, Soviet authorities had permitted more than 266,000 Jews to leave the Soviet Union since 1965 in the face of both internal and external pressures. But after the Afghan invasion the flow dropped off sharply from 51,320 in 1979 to 2,670 in 1982. Not only had Soviet authorities lost the incentive of détente as a reason to continue the outflow, but they had "lost their innocence about the West," according to my friend Alex Goldfarb, the young biologist who was a very effective Jewish spokesman in Moscow in the early 1970's and who managed later to emigrate to Israel.

"The authorities feel less inferiority toward the West than a decade ago," Alex told me. "You can see that in the way they handle dissidents and Americans. Ten years ago an article would appear in *The New York Times* or a statement in the *Congressional Record,* and it raised alarms. The people in charge were scared by Western reactions. But over time they saw signs of American weakness—the failure of the rescue mission for the hostages in Iran and the American economy—and they learned they could ignore much more in the West than they had thought."

The Shcharansky case was an important test of wills. His arrest in March 1977 caused a storm of protest in the West. Yet even though President Carter gave personal assurances to Soviet leaders that the 30-year-old Jewish computer expert had no links whatsoever to American intelligence, Shcharansky was sentenced in July 1978 to 13 years in prison and labor camps for treason, espionage, and "anti-Soviet agitation." He had gotten in trouble for wanting to emigrate to Israel, publicizing the Jewish movement to Western correspondents, and promoting human rights under the East-West accord signed at Helsinki in 1975. His trial was denounced by President Carter and Congress, and Washington threatened to curb various exchanges with Moscow in reprisal. But the Kremlin did not budge. Four years later Shcharansky

hovered near death from a prolonged hunger strike in prison over denial of a regular monthly letter and contact with his 74-year-old mother.

But the really crippling blow to organized dissent came on January 22, 1980. Police intercepted Andrei Sakharov's car, hauled him out, arrested him, stripped him of his triple title as Hero of Socialist Labor and all other Soviet awards, and flew him to Gorky, a city closed to foreigners. Until that moment other dissidents had imagined Sakharov untouchable because of his 20 years as a senior Soviet nuclear physicist, his international scientific reputation, and his world renown as a Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1975. A shy, scholarly man with sad blue eyes, he had become a beacon to Soviet human rights activists. His apartment was their unofficial headquarters and clearinghouse. His gentle but courageous presence and protests had been a protective umbrella. After his arrest Sakharov appealed for a formal trial, not "a gilded cage," but his appeals went unheeded. For all intents and purposes, he was incarcerated in his Gorky apartment—his door put under 24-hour police watch; his mail and phone contacts cut off except though his wife, Yelena Bonner; a radio-jamming tower installed on his building to prevent him from listening to foreign radio broadcasts; his apartment periodically raided; and he himself attacked in his car and his unpublished memoirs, diaries, and other personal papers taken by the KGB, he charged in October, 1982.

Just how demoralized Moscow dissidents had become was most poignantly illustrated by the decision of the best-known group of human rights activists to disband their Helsinki Watch Group in early September 1982. The group had been set up in 1976 to publicize Soviet violations of the human rights provisions of the Helsinki accords on East-West cooperation. In its final statement the group reported that 16 members of its Moscow branch were in labor camps or internal exile and all members of satellite groups in the Soviet republics of Armenia, Georgia, Lithuania, and the Ukraine had been jailed. Only three active members remained—Yelena Bonner and two people in their seventies, Sofiya Kalistratova and Naum Meiman. "In these circumstances," the final statement said, "the group cannot fulfill the duties it assumed."

Actually Andropov and the ethnic Russians who dominate the Communist Party apparatus face far more consequential problems in the potential polarization of the Soviet population along ethnic lines than in dealing with Moscow dissidents. Indeed, frictions between the dominant Great Russians and other nationalities are the most serious internal ideological and political threat faced by the regime. The late Mikhail Suslov, for many years the Party's leading ideologist, identified

nationality tensions as one of the primary obstacles to successful development of the Soviet state. More elliptically Brezhnev conceded that "the dynamics of the development of a large multinational state . . . gives rise to many problems requiring the party's tactful attention."

Some Western analysts, eyeing a country with 104 officially recognized nationalities, speaking 130 different languages, see a powerful centrifugal force in the ethnic impulses of the minorities that have been amalgamated to the central core of Russians. In one of his most Slavophile outbursts, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn advocated that Russia cast off the Baltic republics captured during World War II, the minority areas of the Caucasus, and formerly Islamic Central Asia and retreat into Russian purity. In a Western echo, Richard Pipes, the Harvard historian who served on President Reagan's national security staff, once forecast that "sooner or later the Soviet empire, the latest multinational empire, will fall apart roughly along the lines of today's republics."

If so, it is a very long-term prospect. Although I traveled to 11 of the 14 minority republics, I saw no evidence of a secessionist trend powerful enough to challenge Soviet authorities. But I personally encountered sharp anti-Russian sentiments among Georgians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Armenians, Estonians, Latvians, Moldavians, and the Moslem-oriented peoples of Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, or Kirghizia. Privately some expressed resentment at being forced to submerge their own national identity for the sake of loyalty to a wider Soviet entity. Sometimes the expression of those feelings was sharp; other times, subtle. But usually it conveyed resistance to the Russification of their own areas, frustration at the centralized political and economic decision making in Moscow, pique at what the minority peoples took to be the arrogance of ethnic Russians as the masters of the entire country.

In Tbilisi, the capital of Soviet Georgia, my wife, Ann, and I were at a small party with some writers and movie people, answering their questions about American life, including relations between whites and blacks, when I asked about human relations in the Soviet Union. I was stunned when one trim, dark-eyed, olive-skinned Georgian actor burst out: "We hate Russians. The Ukrainians hate Russians. The Lithuanians hate Russians. The Armenians hate Russians. We all hate Russians." His candid outburst stunned the other dozen guests into silence, but gradually most agreed and began to share anti-Russian vignettes and to talk about rivalries among Soviet nationalities.

On another trip to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, during the intermission of a play I went to the buffet and began pointing at unfamiliar local foods on sale and inquiring about them in Russian. The woman behind the counter, taking me for a Russian, sharply reprimanded me for my manners. "Here in Vilnius we don't do things that way," she scolded. But the second she discovered I was an American,

her hostility melted into warm hospitality. The next day an elderly scientist spoke bitterly to me in his small home about the influx of Russians who had followed the construction of new industries and were now destroying Lithuania's "identity."

Resistance on the language issue is often the best barometer of national consciousness in the minority areas. In Kiev, Yerevan, Riga, Kishinev, Tashkent, and Samarkand, local people complained that their school systems, theaters, or television programming were being Russified. They understood the sense of learning Russian as the modern language of science and public life, but they stoutly insisted that schools teach local languages to their children. Many took great pride in their local religions and customs (Catholicism in Lithuania, Orthodox Christianity in Georgia and Armenia, Islam in Central Asia) and in local efforts to honor traditional folk heroes or ethnic art and literature, rather than the politically sanctioned heroes of Bolshevism or the sterile propaganda art of Socialist Realism.

Some tensions are inherent in the Soviet federalist system with its 15 constituent republics and in the duality of the Kremlin's policies. In theory and in letter, the Soviet Constitution accepts regional autonomy and endorses cultural diversity. But in practice, Moscow imposes severe limits on national aspirations, especially when they veer toward open expression of separatist goals or strong anti-Russian feelings. To keep a firm hand in every republic, Moscow ensures that the top military commander, the head of the republic KGB, and the Second Secretary of the Communist Party apparatus are ethnic Russians. With this kind of firmness and some flexibility in cultural matters, the Kremlin has managed to contain the problem, but occasionally political undercurrents have exploded into demonstrations openly challenging "Soviet solidarity."

During the last decade thousands of Lithuanian Catholics have signed petitions protesting religious persecution by the authorities. In 1972 three youths immolated themselves in one such protest. Five years later, when the Vilnius soccer team won the national championships, the city's streets were filled with rampaging Lithuanians shouting nationalist and anti-Soviet slogans and tearing down Soviet banners. In Latvia one overt form of rebellion has been to desecrate Soviet monuments or rough up Russians at random. Youths wear T-shirts emblazoned in English with the slogan "Latvian power" and gather to sing the pre-Soviet national anthem. In Estonia, the capital of Tallinn and the cities of Tartu and Parnu all had demonstrations in the fall of 1980, on behalf of Estonian independence. Yet the Soviet hand, working through loyal local political leaders, is too powerful to allow any real separatist movement to emerge.

The most potent outburst of ethnic feeling in recent years occurred

in the southern city of Tbilisi in April 1978, when several thousand patriotic Georgians rallied at the Communist Party headquarters to denounce a new draft constitution which had dropped a clause proclaiming Georgian the official language of the republic. In a tactful and extraordinary concession to public opinion, Moscow backed down the next day, apparently on the advice of its own handpicked Georgian leadership. Georgian was reinstituted as the state language. (Promptly the Abkhazian minority within Georgia made protests for its own rights and won concessions for separate educational institutions to avoid cultural domination by the Georgians.) Apparently not wanting to take any chances in the neighboring southern republic of Armenia, the Soviet authorities quietly conceded the right of Armenians to their own state language without any public confrontations.

Nor has Russian been accepted as the primary language in the Baltic republics. Bare majorities in Lithuania and Latvia told the 1979 census takers that they knew Russian. In Estonia only 24 percent said they did. The Estonians have insisted on an 11-year system of primary and secondary education, compared to 10 years elsewhere, asserting that the extra year was justified by the need for more instruction in local languages.

Another worrisome trend to ethnic Russians has been the population explosion among the six main Turkic or Islamic nationalities concentrated in Soviet Central Asia. It has raised the fear in Moscow that ethnic Russians could become a minority in their own country by the year 2000. (The 1979 census showed Russians as 137 million, or 52.4 percent, of the Soviet Union's 262.4 million people.) With small families and crowded housing in Russian cities, the birthrate has been going down among ethnic Russians. But it has remained two and a half times as high among the Turkic peoples, who have large families in the Moslem tradition.

Western experts, projecting current trends, have calculated that the 45 million Soviet Moslems—very few of them practicing Moslems but many still following Moslem customs and rites—could grow to 25 percent of the total population and one-third of the nation's military recruits by 2000. Privately Russian demographers and party officials make no secret of their uneasiness at these trends. Racial prejudice toward the darker Central Asian peoples is fairly common. I have heard educated Russians call them "monkeys," "blockheads," or "black butts." Tales of barracks frictions between Russian and Central Asian troops, growing out of the Afghan intervention, have reached Western diplomats in Moscow. In a book published during the maneuvering over Brezhnev's succession in early 1982, Konstantin Chernenko, the main rival to Andropov, praised the flourishing of various national cultural but seemed to go much farther than most Soviet leaders in

condemning excessive ethnic Russian nationalism. Alluding to the privileged status of Great Russians, he said it was a particular need of the Party to struggle against "great power chauvinism," a thinly disguised euphemism for superardent Russian hegemony in the Soviet Union. After taking power, Andropov himself, in his December 1982 speech celebrating the 60th anniversary of the formation of the union, warned of the dangers of "negative" frictions among nationalities. More neutrally than Chernenko, he cautioned all sides that their cultural pride "should not degenerate into national arrogance or conceit, not gravitate towards exclusiveness and disrespect for other nations and nationalities."

This is more than a matter of emotions and cultural identity. These population trends have hard implications for Soviet economic development. Nationwide, with the Soviet population growing generally older and with family sizes shrinking as people move from farm to city, the nation's labor force is growing far more slowly than during the dynamic period of the 1950's, robbing Soviet economic planners of a traditional source of economic growth. In the 1970s they could count on a big boost each year from the 2.1 to 2.5 million new able-bodied workers joining the labor force. But Murray Feshbach, a skilled American demographer, has reckoned that in the 1980's the annual increment into the work force will be only about one-quarter what it has been in the past. This problem is compounded by the fact that Soviet planners need more workers in Siberia and around Moscow and other northern cities, while the real growth in the labor force is taking place among the Central Asians in the southern tier of the country. And so far Soviet planners have not found any way to get the Islamic peoples of the south to leave their traditional areas and move north in any great numbers.

With such obvious economic strains, one growing focus for nationality frictions is the battle over economic policy and the allocation of investment resources. Already Western analysts have detected three geographical interest groups lobbying in the press for investment funds, one pushing the older industrialized areas of Russia proper, where a skilled labor pool already exists; another advocating more rapid exploitation of the energy potential and other natural resources of Siberia; and a third pressing for investment in Central Asia, on the ground of equalizing the development levels in various regions. Ethnic Russians, who control all the key planning and political posts in Moscow, have contended that equalization was reached about a decade ago, but in the oblique debate that goes on in the Soviet press, Central Asian leaders have indicated they do not agree. There are other subtle pressures from some minority Communist leadership groups for more local representation in the political hierarchy and for more local political flexibility. Andropov himself acknolwedged the problem but rejected the idea of

"formal quotas" in allocating high posts.

Yet in an era swept by a global trend toward self-determination, the Kremlin has fairly effectively managed nationality frictions through a mixture of repression, measured tolerance for cultural diversity, and constant appeals to Soviet national pride and power. The press, television, and literature abound with paeans to Soviet military might, space exploits, and Olympic or other international sports victories, all intended to band Soviet nationalities together. And there are constant refrains to their common struggle against Nazism during World War II. The threat of really critical divisions is diminished, moreover, by the fact that Georgia, Lithuania, and Estonia, the non-Slavic republics where ethnic tensions are strongest, have small populations (from 1 to 3.5 million apiece) and the fact that the minority republics compete with each other for economic resources rather than gang up collectively against the Russians. In addition, Moscow has co-opted the Ukrainians, whose 42 million people bulk large, into collaboration as junior partners in Slavic domination of the Soviet political hierarchy. Nonetheless, nationality frictions will unquestionably test Andropov. Still, like many other aspects of Soviet life, they represent a considerable problem but not a full-fledged crisis.

Against this formidable national agenda, Yuri Andropov has thrown his power, his considerable energy, his intelligence, and an unexpected flair for symbolic politicking at the proletariat. Very quickly he established a dramatically different personal style from Brezhnev's listless, part-time leadership, as if hoping to shock the nation out of its lethargy with straight talk, a strong dose of discipline, some more food in the stores, and a Spartan insistence on hard work. "You cannot get things done by slogans alone," he said, deflating Brezhnev's grandiose rhetorical posturing.

From the day of his predecessor's funeral Andropov drove himself hard—as he would seek to drive the country. Erect, balding, head stooped forward, half-rimmed glasses showing narrow eyes over pouches of fatigue, Andropov followed up the Brezhnev funeral ceremony, parade, and reception with a series of lengthy meetings with foreign leaders. Visitors like Vice President George Bush and Secretary of State George Shultz found him serious-minded, well informed, pragmatic, and exuding self-confidence. When Bush, a former C.I.A. director, tried to kid with him about their mutual experience in intelligence, Andropov brushed aside the attempted informality with a nod and moved on to official business.

He projected other contrasts with Brezhnev. Where Brezhnev had been a gregarious, fairly tolerant consensus maker, who had risen to the

top through the provincial and central Party organization and then surrounded himself with a clique of protégés and lieutenants, Andropov was a brainy technocrat, a demanding taskmaster, reputedly the smartest, best-informed member of the Politburo but something of a political loner. Born in 1914 in the southern part of Russia between the Black and Caspian seas, he entered Komsomol and Party work early in life. His father had evidently been a white-collar worker in the czarist railroad bureaucracy. His father's mother was Jewish, a fact that some said was used against him in the struggle for the top job.

Andropov is the first Soviet leader to have achieved the pinnacle of power through the national security apparatus rather than the party's organizational machinery. It was in foreign affairs that he felt most comfortable making early decisions. His weak spot was lack of economic experience and regional responsibility. In the Politburo he seemed to have gathered allies by force of intellect; by representing a modern, efficient institution, the KGB, at a time of woeful inefficiency elsewhere and aligning himself with the equally efficiency-oriented military; and by biding his time while older leaders died off and then cannily outmaneuvering his rival, Konstantin Chernenko, in the final infighting.

By several accounts, Andropov's KGB undermined Chernenko as Brezhnev's protégé—and even Brezhnev himself—in the final months by having the KGB circulate stories that linked Brezhnev's family and some lieutenants with corruption. As Brezhnev's image was weakened, Chernenko's chances diminished. Moreover, those who read Soviet leadership speeches closely found Andropov in this period less of a moderate and reformer than Chernenko on issues like détente, promoting consumer economics, Communist Party democracy, and even economic decentralization—a fact that undoubtedly gave Andropov more appeal among the military hierarchy and Politburo conservatives. Indeed, Andropov's main political ally was Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov, who reportedly helped Andropov make a crucial shift in May 1982 to the Party Secretariat, giving him time to remind others of his party background despite 15 years as head of the KGB.

Yet in what may also have been a very cunning and deliberate campaign to humanize his image and reduce resistance to a leader drawn from the secret police, reawakening anxieties of Stalinist purges, Andropov's allies purveyed a legend of him as something of a "closet liberal." He was described as a genteel, polished man of the world who had collected modern abstract art and Western jazz, including Glenn Miller, Charlie Parker, Dave Brubeck, and Duke Ellington, favored scotch whisky and French cognac, enjoyed Gypsy music and cynical antiregime jokes, played tennis, cut a graceful figure on the dance floor, and was a voracious reader of Western novels and magazines. Such

stories were floated to Western reporters, picked up by Voice of America, BBC, and other Western radio stations, and played back into the Soviet Union.

Reality was more elusive and considerably less glamorous. By many accounts, Andropov does have an alert, inquiring mind and a well-developed respect for science and technology. Eastern Europeans, Finns, and others who have known him over the years have told Western diplomats he listens to new ideas, gathering information carefully, giving cautious evaluation to the consequences of various actions, but is obviously prepared to take tough, forceful action when he deems necessary. His ruthless but carefully calibrated repression of Soviet dissidents is characteristic. Even hating the controls, some felt spared because Andropov had let them get to the West. But others had their lives and spirits cruelly crippled by labor camps or psychiatric hospitals, and the movement as a whole was crushed, much as the Hungarian rebellion during Andropov's tenure in Budapest as Ambassador in 1956 had been.

Yet subsequently Andropov became known as a patron of economic liberalization in Hungary. Unorthodox Soviet artists recalled his attending their few authorized shows and buying "moderately daring" modern art. Igor Andropov, his son by a second marriage and now a middle-level diplomat fluent in English, said Andropov spoke moderate English and seemed to understand all that he read. But he discounted the image of his father as a connoisseur of abstract art who dabbled in lighthearted pastimes. "I do not think he loves abstract painting any more than other kinds of painting," the younger Andropov told a Reuters reporter in Madrid. "He does not have enough time to indulge in art. As far back as I remember, he was a hard worker."

In the early months, when Americans asked Soviet officials if there were any jokes about Andropov, the typical reply was that "One doesn't joke about Andropov." But years ago Steve Cohen, a political scientists at Princeton University, shared and Andropov joke he had heard. At one Communist Party Congress, while 2,000 delegates were dozing through the long speeches, Andropov was informed there was a C.I.A. agent in the hall. According to the joke, he personally arrested the agent within 10 minutes. His Politburo colleagues were amazed. "It was simple, comrades," he explained. "I remembered what Lenin taught us: 'The enemy never sleeps.' "

The image of a cold, calculating workaholic was reinforced by French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, who came away from Moscow in February 1983 describing Andropov as a "nonromantic" who worked like a computer. "He is a sober man, precise, shows no emotions, who sticks to the facts and to a mathematical reasoning," Cheysson told French reporters flying home with him. Andropov's presenta-

P 36

tion, he said, "was cool and objective, accompanied at times by a little personal touch in his gesture, in his smile, or in the way he set out an argument. But in all this, he was extraordinarily lacking in that human warmth which I found elsewhere, in Leningrad and even in my talks with [Foreign Minister] Gromyko." He had found Andropov a modernist, he said, "in the sense of a computer, in the sense of precision of word and gesture."

In a system riddled with venality, Andropov has a reputation for honesty. By most accounts, he lives fairly modestly for a man of his position. Initially he declined to move from his own apartment at 26 Kutuzovsky Prospekt in Moscow into Brezhnev's larger and more lavish accommodations on another floor, an act of self-restraint that won favor with ordinary Russians fed up with the self-indulgence of the elite. Word spread, too, that he scorned Brezhnev's normal cortege of siren-blowing limousines in favor of traveling inconspicuously with only one security car beside his own. People have noticed that he typically leaves for the Kremlin at 8:40 in the morning and arrives home between 6 and 7 P.M. Some Western analysts question whether he can keep up that pace. At 68, Andropov came into power with health problems. He had a heart attack in 1966 and is reported to have spent weeks at a time in hospitals in most years since then. His pallid complexion and slightly hesitant gait indicate less than robust health, though he is said to enjoy hiking on vacations in the mountains near Kislovodsk, not far from his birthplace. His habit has been to stay at the Krasniye Kamni Sanatorium for Soviet VIP's, though not in the main building but rather in a heavily guarded dacha nearby.

If anything, Andropov has seemed motivated by age and a sense of his own mortality to move swiftly to try to restore a sense of purpose and rouse the economy. He immediately declared war against "shoddy work, inactivity, and irresponsibility" and the shirkers who "sponge on society." In a drive for discipline and greater efficiency, he cracked the whip over workers' heads with Operation Trawl to dragoon goldbrickers back to their jobs and make them face fines and reprimands. Across the nation, police swooped down on stores, markets, coffeehouses, railroad stations, beer halls, and even the Turkish baths, a favorite hideaway of blue-collar shirkers and bureaucrats, and Moscow television confronted people skipping off the job early to loaf or shop. The campaign against absenteeism was what many old-timers had been urging in their impatience with Brezhnev's laxity. "Now they'll get a bit of the taste of how it was under Stalin," said an old man watching the police check the identity papers of two young men.

Adopting a tactic reminiscent of Nikita Khrushchev, Andropov him-

self made an unannounced visit to the Sergo Orzhonikidze machine-tool plant in Moscow in late January 1983. Bluntly he told workers that productivity was growing at rates "that can't satisfy us" and that the only way they would find more goods in the stores was to produce more. "Miracles, as they say, don't happen," he said, in obvious acknowledgment that the old ideological appeals for heroic Communist effort no longer work. His approach was hardheaded. "You yourselves understand that the state can only provide as many goods as are produced," he went on. "A rise in wages, if not backed up by the necessary quality of goods and if the services sphere is faltering, cannot provide a real improvement in prosperity."

Corruption, incompetence, and waste were three other obvious targets of Andropov. Tightening discipline, he said in an obvious bid for worker support, "applies to everyone, starting with ministers." And heads rolled. In short order, five ministers were fired, along with lesser officials—the Transportation Minister, Trade Minister, Minister for Rural Construction, Interior Minister, and one Deputy Premier. Brezhnev had launched his own campaigns against corruption, but Andropov's seemed to take on a keener edge. Not long after his takeover the weekly *Law Gazette* announced significant increases in the penalties for many crimes, including harsher penalties for economic crimes. "Andropov has the true ideologist's impatience" with corruption, Roy Medvedev, the dissident historian, told Western reporters. "He wants to show himself a strong, tough leader dealing strictly with all those who violate the law."

An anticorruption campaign is an ideal vehicle for a purge, and inevitably Andropov's campaign raised anxieties. But characteristically he has moved gradually to consolidate his power, removing only a few Brezhnevites from Party posts or other key jobs. Politically the most significant ouster was that of General Nikolai Shchelokov, an old Brezhnev crony at the Interior Ministry, who was replaced by one of Andropov's subordinates at the KGB, a ruthless Ukrainian security officer, Vitaly Fedorchuk. Given Shchelokov's reputation for running a lax, corrupt ministry, the shift signaled that Andropov wanted spine in his anticorruption drive. But whether by design or because of resistance within the Party hierarchy, Andropov's initial shake-ups were no more severe than those after Stalin had died in 1953 or Khrushchev had been overthrown in 1964.

In some ways Andropov was initially less daring than he seemed. He benefited by subliminal comparisons with Brezhnev much as Ronald Reagan initially benefited from comparisons with Jimmy Carter. But his campaigns against absenteeism, corruption, and inefficiency all were short-term palliatives to give a new sense of dynamism and momentum. They were relatively easy steps, popular with virtually all segments of

society. None of these moves really challenged the bureaucracy or risked a significant power struggle within the Party apparatus or government. With them, Andropov signaled no radical departure and launched no fundamental reform of the Soviet economic system that would go to the heart of its problems: the highly centralized Stalinist command planning with its bottlenecks and rigidities stifling innovation and blocking new managerial and technical efficiencies.

During the year before Brezhnev's death the broad policy consensus that had characterized his rule seemed to crumble. In the Party press there were ample hints of a behind-the-scenes debate over economic reform. The State Planning Council, Gosplan, and the State Committee for Science and Technology set up a group to study various options, including decentralization of economic management.

Early on Andropov kindled Western speculation that he was sympathetic to these ideas. Several times he seemed to be laying the groundwork for reform by urging that Soviet leaders "take into account the experience of fraternal countries." Many read that as a reference to Hungary, where economic growth had been spurred within a socialist framework by a more decentralized, flexible economic system as well as a broad legalized sector of private enterprise in retail trade and farming. But Andropov's references were vague, well short of advocating a market economy even in limited sectors like agriculture or trade. Although he quickly conceded many "ripe" economic problems, Andropov shied away from predetermined formulas by adding, "Of course, I do not have ready recipes for their solution." Initially, at least, that seemed a sign of caution. It was not immediately clear whether he lacked the stomach for taking on the well-entrenched economic bureaucracy, did not believe in significant decentralization, or simply preferred to consolidate his power and gather a solid Politburo consensus for action before launching real reforms. In an article in the theoretical journal *Kommunist* in February 1983, he criticized "excessive reliance on administrative methods, fussing and talk instead of work," but he also seemed to encourage more imaginative thinking by reform-minded economists. His stress on the need for "carefully prepared and realistic" measures suggested a man biding his time.

Essentially there have been two general approaches to economic reform in the Soviet Union. Nikita Khrushchev tried to decentralize the economic administration through regional centers known as *Sovnarkhozy.* In 1965 former Prime Minister Alelssei Kosygin tried industrial decentralization with more key decisions to be made at the enterprise level. But the powerful economic bureaucracy eventually sabotaged or dismantled both reforms. Beyond that, the political leadership also fears a dispersal of power that could add to the polarization between ethnic Russians and other nationalities. That concern, too, acts as a

brake on economic reform.

In Andropov's early months the advocates of the status quo were active. Soviet journalists and economists were telling foreign specialists that the Hungarian economy was too small to use as a model for the Continental-sized Soviet economy. "We don't need decentralization," they told several visitors, pointing to possible trends in the opposite direction. Indeed, one of Andropov's first steps was to appoint a new First Deputy Premier, Geidar Aliyev, and put him in charge of an even more centralized national railway network to try to break the nation's transportation bottlenecks. There were other early hints that post-Brezhnev "reforms" could combine some greater latitude for large economic enterprises along with tighter long-range planning by Moscow and consolidation of many ministries. The forum section, which had been broken down into a dozen major specialized agencies, was a prime target for organizational overhaul. Mergers were begun in the Georgian Republic early in 1983.

One controversial action taken quickly by Andropov to make the Soviet system more rational and efficient was the unannounced wave of price increases in January 1983. It covered construction materials, steel and other metals, paper and cotton products, electrical appliances, and such small consumer items as toilet paper, zippers, some wines, photographic film, and paint. Andropov's intention was clear: to make the pricing system more sensible and to sop up some of the excess purchasing power from the "ruble overhang." For in his factory tour he had warned of price increases, telling the workers that there was a "gulf between the quantity of goods in the stores and the money the population has." But significantly Andropov excluded food, on which the state spends 35 billion rubles ($49 billion) a year in subsidies. With a budget strained by competing civilian, military, and investment priorities, those were funds that must have tempted Andropov sorely. But the political reality has been that for two decades Soviet leaders have not dared raise the prices of such staples as bread and meat for fear of touching off serious unrest.

Moreover, without adopting either Stalin's widespread terror or the ability to deliver substantial improvement in the Soviet living standards, Andropov has been hampered in his efforts to motivate the work force to greater efficiency. For the 1983 New Year's holidays, he saw that food shops were flooded with far more than the usual holiday supplies of meat, citrus fruits, vegetables, and other foods—even such specialties as imported Finnish sausage. But as the months wore on, the sharp improvement could not be sustained at that level. Andropov made other gestures. In response to complaints from workers, the government issued a decree ordering food and other trade shops to keep longer hours, especially in stores near factories. The Politburo, for the

first time publishing some brief agenda notes on its meetings as a gesture to public opinion, even promised steps to expand the network of garages to serve the nation's 10 million private car owners better. But these were partial measures.

On the tough side, Andropov shied away from taking the drastic step of giving Soviet enterprises the right to fire shirkers, which would be a revolutionary political change for a system that has prided itself on guaranteeing employment. What did attract him, however, was tying wages more directly to the quality of work and allowing greater differences in pay to open up between the tops and bottoms of various salary scales. In the Brezhnev era the trend had been generally in the other direction. Wages floated upward annually, even when economic plans were not being fulfilled. On his factory tour Androrov had told the workers that this practice could not go on. Later, in his *Kommunist* article, he stressed Marx's dictum that in the current economic stage the guiding principle was "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work," not some promise to pay shirkers and shock workers equally. However sensible, even opening up large gaps in pay could backfire if a disgruntled majority feels out out of a better future and keeps sitting down on the job.

In any case, neither price increases nor a shift in wage policy in themselves would bring a basic restructuring of the Soviet economic system. They amount largely to tinkering within the inherited framework that dates back to Stalin. Indeed, for all the interest generated by Andropov's flurry of actions, he was initially proceeding along Brezhnev's path in his early months. He had Brezhnev's huge portraits taken down from Moscow office buildings and Brezhnev's memoirs given less prominent display in bookstores, but he largely stuck with Brezhnev's spending priorities on agriculture, energy development, and the military. In other fields he showed no change in handling culture, domestic dissent, or nationality problems. Even Andropov's foreign policy initiatives toward the West—his reassertion of détente and his revised arms control proposals—were adaptations of the Brezhnev line.

In short, Andropov's early strategy was to pursue Brezhnevism but to try to implement it better and thereby gradually winch up the nation's economic performance and general morale. Initially it produced a spurt. But it was far from clear whether this approach would lift the nation from its doldrums. Moreover, it was a strategy that left open the question of whether Andropov represented a new era of Soviet leadership or merely the transition to a new generation.

Unquestionably Andropov's tasks are Herculean. Yet from afar the temptation has always been great to overread the danger signals of the

Soviet economy, the corruption, and the ideological malaise as indications that Russia is afflicted with some fatal disease that has brought it to the brink of collapse. President Reagan, meeting with regional American newspaper editors in October 1981, contended that the Russians "cannot vastly increase their military productivity because they've already got their people on a diet of sawdust." A few months before, then Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Jr., contended that the Soviet Union "shows clear signs of historic decline," and a few months later, Thomas C. Reed, a national security aide, described the Communist superpower as "an economic basket case."

Rather inconsistently Reagan was voicing alarms at the military threat posed by this crumbling giant. Yet after asserting that in his estimation Moscow had achieved "a measure of superiority" over the United States in the nuclear arms race, he went before the British Parliament in the summer of 1982 to urge a propaganda campaign for freedom that would compound the Soviets' "astounding" economic failures and "leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history." In private talks with other Western leaders in Versailles, he suggested that the decline and fall of the Soviet empire were within grasp if the Western powers and Japan would join his embargo against the Soviet natural gas pipeline to Western Europe. "If we push the Soviets, they will collapse," he told the other Western leaders privately at Versailles. "When will we get another opportunity like this in our lifetimes?"

The allies, their economies dependent on trade with Moscow and on Soviet gas supplies, would not go along, especially while the United States continued to sell grain to the Russians. Ultimately President Reagan had to back down. He lifted the sanctions just a day after Andropov had taken command of the Kremlin. By then it was clear that the cutoff of American equipment from the General Electric Company in Schenectedy, New York, had pinched the Soviet economy somewhat, forcing Moscow to divert turbines and other equipment from domestic pipelines under construction to the international pipeline to Western Europe. The Soviet construction schedule had been slowed, but without Western European cooperation the impact of the American squeeze had been marginal. Rather than show signs of collapse, the Soviet system had demonstrated considerable resiliency.

Moreover, Moscow is quite capable of making America pay a price for economic sanctions. After Carter's grain embargo, the Soviet leadership shifted its grain purchases to other suppliers like Canada, Australia, and Argentina. When Reagan lifted the grain embargo but pressed for Western credit curbs, the Kremlin stuck with the new arrangements. In late 1982, President Reagan offered Moscow the chance to buy up to 23 million metric tons of American grain, but the Russians took only 6 million, the minimum required under the long-

term Soviet American grain agreement. In short, after the grain embargo, the American share shrank from more than 60 percent of the Soviet market to just over 20 percent.

One reason the Reagan administration had been tempted toward waging economic cold war was the evidence that Moscow was feeling a credit squeeze in 1982 and having great difficulties paying off its own foreign debts plus underwriting Poland's needs. World centers like Zurich and Hong Kong were filled with news of Russians hastily selling off gold and diamonds. With world oil prices falling, Moscow was not earning so much for its petroleum exports. It was asking commercial contractors in Japan and West Germany for new lines of credit to Moscow or delayed repayment schedules. Soviet hard currency deposits fell in Western banks in late 1981 and early 1982 but gradually recovered. Always Moscow had more than enough gold reserves and foreign assets to pay off its foreign debts. The Kremlin lowered its domestic investment targets and, according to the C.I.A., may have even cut back on its annual 3 to 4 percent growth in military spending as the economy slowed down. In short, the Russians were able to weather the difficulties. Curbing the flow of Western trade was disruptive but not crippling.

In part, this was because Preident Reagan's tactics played into the hands of the Soviet leaders, who are skillful at rallying their populace to bear unusual hardships by making them appear the work of hostile Western powers. Communist ideology promotes a siege mentality that fits in naturally with traditional Russian patriotism and xenophobia. As a result, many Western specialists consider it axiomatic that internal Soviet stresses tend to benefit the West more when they arise naturally —for example, economic stagnation slowing the growth of military spending—rather than when Western political leaders try openly to exploit Soviet vulnerabilities.

"The Russians have this ability to endure and suffer, particularily when it's made to look as though all their problems come from outside," commented Marshall Goldman, a well-known specialist on the Soviet economy at Wellesley College. "They held up in the Stalinist period in the 1930's, when there was starvation and in World War II, when there was more starvation. Our export controls under Truman did not hurt them very much. They've stood up to other pressures since. They are masters at tightening their belts."

"There's a big difference between the difficulties the Soviets have and bringing the Soviet economy to its knees," observed a State Department policy maker. "Economies that big just don't collapse. The Soviet economy just shambles on. They're used to bottlenecks. They don't run their economy well in normal times. Now they'll just run it less well." The enormous size of the Soviet economy and its rich supply of natural resources make it hard for a foreign trade or credit squeeze to achieve

the kind of leverage that imposes major changes on the Soviet political leadership. "The record compiled by the Soviet economy in recent years has indeed been poor," asserted Henry Rowen, head of the C.I.A.'s National Intelligence Council. "[But] we do not consider an economic 'collapse' . . . even a remote possibility."

The lesson is that the Soviet economic system has considerable resiliency and durability in spite of internal strains and outside pressures, just as Russian national character and customs have demonstrated considerable resiliency in the face of the determined Bolshevik drive to transform the old realities into the New Soviet Man and the New Communist Society.

Russians are hard to budge—hard for the regime to motivate and purify, hard for outside powers to provoke with economic pressures. They are a patient, passive, stable people. They treasure continuity and order and will grumblingly tolerate a large catalogue of hardships without seeking explosive outlets. The pervasive corruption, alcoholism, and slipshod work habits are evidences of the strains in their society. But Russians have grown as accustomed to their problems as we have to ours. Undoubtedly Americans would be startled, and offended, if some Soviet leader had declared in 1982 that the American system was on the verge of collapse and destined for the "ash heap of history" because of prolonged recession, 10.4 percent unemployment, near $200 billion federal deficits, and opinion polls showing a very unhappy population.

In honest moments, Russians, like Americans, know their system abounds with paradoxes. A military buildup goes along with agricultural failures, though the Andropov leadership evidently recognizes this cannot continue forever. Corruption stands officially condemned yet remains essential to the public's well-being and the functioning of the economy. People goof off on the job but don't get fired. Even when factory output declines, officials cook the figures to make it look as though economic targets have been met. Stores are stocked with goods that people don't want to buy. The good items are in chronic short supply, yet somehow, under the table, Russians manage to obtain much of what they want. They grumble constantly in private about how bad their life is and parrot the official line in public. In one area of life after another, appearances do not match reality.

The Russians I knew either wept over this sad state of affairs or laughed at the paradoxes in their way of life that so baffle foreigners. As I was writing this postscript, an old Moscow friend, Nina Voronel, reminded me of that trait by reciting a little ditty about the six main paradoxes of Russian life. It went like this:

P 44

There is no unemployment, but no one works.
No one works, but all plans are fulfilled.
All plans are fulfilled, but the food shops are empty.
The food shops are empty, but all refrigerators are full.
All refrigerators are full, but everyone is dissatisfied.
Everyone is dissatisfied, but everyone votes yes.