

**PUBLIC OPINION IN SOVIET POLITICAL SYSTEM
SINCE 1977 CONSTITUTION**

Thesis submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirement
for the award of the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

CHITRA CHAUDHARY

1420

1-53807-5300
80

**CENTRE FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067
INDIA
1993**

ProQuest Number: 3726528

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 3726528

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067

CENTRE FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

August 5, 1993.

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the Ph.D thesis entitled "PUBLIC OPINION IN SOVIET POLITICAL SYSTEM SINCE 1977 CONSTITUTION" submitted by Ms. CHITRA CHAUDHARY of the Centre for Soviet & East European Studies is her original work carried out under my guidance and supervision and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or of any other University.

I recommend that this thesis may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

(PROFESSOR DEVENDRA KAUSHIK)

Supervisor and
Chairman.

TO MY PARENTS

CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
PREFACE	i - iv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1 - 25
Chapter 2: Extended Role of Public Opinion During 1977-82 Period	26 - 60
Chapter 3: Public Opinion During the Interregnum	61 - 118
Chapter 4: Gorbachev's Policy of Glasnost and Democratization and Qualitative Changes in Formation and Consultation of Public Opinion	119 - 150
Chapter 5: Public Opinion and State and Party Organisations During Gorbachev's Political Reforms	151 - 221
Chapter 6: Public Opinion and the Soviet Press and Public Organisations under Glasnost	222 - 283
Chapter 7 : Conclusion	284 - 307
BIBLIOGRAPHY	i - xxviii

PREFACE

The significance of a serious study of the role of public opinion in the Soviet political system for a proper understanding of the nature and functioning of the Soviet polity cannot be gainsaid. To what extent people's opinion was taken into consideration in working out the public policies, to what extent could people speak out and what impact did public opinion have upon the decision makers - these are some of the issues which call for serious examination.

The first chapter which is introductory in nature deals with the concern for public opinion in the Soviet system which to Lenin constituted an important means of ensuring continued mass support for the revolution. It was sidetracked during the period of Stalin, though lip services continued to be paid to the principle of free expression of public opinion in the key party and state documents. The old accent on public opinion re-emerged in the early 1960s in the wake of de-Stalinization. The introduction of the new concept of the "state of the whole people" by Khrushchev and its juridical confirmation in the 1977 Constitution under Brezhnev proved a shot in the arm for development of the concept of public opinion and recognition of its significant role in the Soviet political system.

The second chapter discusses the enhanced role of public opinion from the 1977 Constitution onwards. The third chapter focuses on the public opinion's role during the interregnum period following the death of Brezhnev. Efforts were made by Andropov and Chernenko in their short period to step up the role of public opinion by introducing the Law on work collectives in 1983 and by emphasising work with letters respectively.

During the Gorbachev period, perestroika, renewal, democratization and glasnost became the key planks of the regime. The fourth chapter highlights the various measures taken in this period to expand the role of the public opinion through a free press, electoral reforms and renewal of inner-party democracy.

The fifth chapter examines the reformed state and party institutions and their role. Democratization of Soviets and party organisations and the shift of power from the CPSU to the newly elected Supreme Soviet and the Soviets at different levels became the main thrust of Gorbachev's Perestroika.

The last chapter discusses the role played by the press and public organisations under Gorbachev's policy of glasnost. The Soviet press was made free by introducing the Law on the Press in 1989. It published material which

was not possible to publish even five years before. The role of public organisations was increased by introducing the Law on Public Enterprises in 1987 and the Law on Cooperatives in 1988.

The study also attempts an evaluation of the functioning of the various institutions of public opinion like recall and referendum, work with letters, as also of the various instruments to ascertain public opinion like public opinion polls and surveys, etc.

The work is based on primary and secondary source materials. The primary sources include works of Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko and Gorbachev and Party Congresses reports and documents, various constitutions of the USSR and the laws relating to public opinion. The secondary sources used in the work include books by Soviet and Western authors and important Soviet and Western periodicals and newspapers.

I am indebted to my supervisor Professor Devendra Kaushik for his invaluable guidance. I am also thankful to the Librarian and staff of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Library for their help and cooperation in consulting the material used for this work. I remain grateful to my friends, Shailja Bhargava, Shiva Kumar G.N. and sister

Seema Rani Choudhary for helping me in various ways and cheering me up in course of my work on the thesis. I would like to express my boundless appreciation to Mr. G. N. Manjunath for getting me material from Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses' Library and Teen Murti Library. I am also thankful to Mr. Jagdish Chander Vidyarthi for painstakingly typing my thesis.


(CHITRA CHAUDHARY)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The significance of a serious study of the role of public opinion in the Soviet political system for a proper understanding of the nature and functioning of the Soviet polity cannot be gainsaid. Today public opinion has become an object of widespread interest. This is indicated particularly by the great interest taken by Universities and other academic research institutions in promoting studies in public opinion. Numerous research organizations at different levels have sprung up in recent decades for the purpose of monitoring and analysing the different aspects of public opinion. Being an object of study by the economists, educationists, journalists, political scientists, historians, psychologists, and sociologists, it has grown into an important field of knowledge vitally affecting the lives of the people.

The term "public opinion" evokes certain questions in the mind of a researcher, viz, what is it, how is it formed? etc. We may call "public" as a large collection of individuals (either assembled at one point or scattered over a wider area) who do not know each other personally but who react to an issue with the expectation that certain categories of other individuals will display similar attitude on the same issue. "Opinion" may be defined as an expression of

attitude in words. In short, collection of individual opinions on a problem is referred to as "public opinion".

The nature of public opinion as a social and political process is still almost an unexplored field of research. There are differences among scholars about its definition. Thus Lord Bryce writes:

"The term public opinion is commonly used to denote the aggregate of the views men hold regarding matters that affect or interest the community". 1

But Charles Colly, on the other hand, asserts,

"Public opinion is no mere aggregate of separate individual judgements, but an organization, a cooperative product of communication and reciprocal influence". 2

In spite of differences over definition, students of public opinion generally agree that it is a collection of individual opinions on an issue of public interest. It is a state of mass consciousness. In simple words, public opinion is an attitude of society towards various social issues.

1. Lord Bryce, Modern Democracies (London, 1923), vol. 1, p. 173.

2. Clarence Schettler, Public Opinion in American Society (New York, 1960), p. 4.

In politics the term "public opinion" is used in connection with matters which are of public interest and concern such as, for example, what people think about the political system, the regime, the constitutional framework, the way public issues are decided. It is a powerful, bold and unmeasurable force, which is not dependent on any particular type of constitution. It changes the nations' way of living. Every type of system is ruled by public opinion, be it monarchy or democracy. It checks the government and keeps it on its toes.

In a developed society the usual channels and forms for the expression of public opinion include elections for governmental bodies, mass participation in legislative and executive functions, the press and other means of mass communication, meetings and demonstrations. Public opinion is also expressed or measured through referendum, mass discussions of problems selective polls and letters in the press.

The other side of the coin is the efforts of governments to influence public opinion. Censorship, propaganda, publicity these are tools which governments use for this purpose.

Meaning of Public Opinion in Soviet Political System:

The question of "real" attitudes of the Soviet people towards the social system and towards policies adopted by leadership interests not only specialists but all those who are interested in knowing about developments in the then USSR in general. In many ways one of the crucial questions for understanding the dynamics of change in the former Soviet Union was the role of public opinion in the Soviet political system. To what extent people's opinion was taken into consideration in working out the public policies, to what extent could people speak out and what impact did public opinion have upon the decision makers - these were some of the issues which called for serious examination.

The emergence of a visible public opinion in the 1960s - expressed, measured, and reported - and of public opinion research in the former Soviet Union surprised some western observers and quite a few of them analysed it seriously. The need to study the role of public opinion in the Soviet political system was obvious. Due to increasing role of the individual in socialist society, the need for the study of public opinion was also becoming important. It became firmly established in the political dictionary of the communist world. The experience of building socialism and communism confirmed that public opinion was an important

factor in political, ideological and legal decision-making, and exercised strong influence on the functioning of all elements of the political system of the then Soviet Union. It was an important motive force in the development of Soviet society and played a greater role than in the past in solving the problems facing the Soviet society.

The meaning of public opinion in the Soviet political system was different from that in the western system. In Soviet thinking public opinion was a sum total of ideas and views on various social problems reflecting the economic, social and other realities accepted by various groups and sections of the population. Soviet society was free from class contradictions, where people were free from exploitation. All power was supposed to belong to the entire working population of the country. Hence, it was thought, people have common interests in regard to all vital aspects of life. There was a near perfect congruence between leadership policy and mass opinion. The mass media which is the barometer of discovering and expressing informing and shaping public opinion, represented the entire people. Soviet political scientist R.A. Safarov who stated that "there are no "antagonistic contradictions" between the people and the government organs, at the same time urged that opinion surveys be conducted in order to "discover in time contradictions (within each social group and among them,

between the public will and law) and take measures for their resolution by democratic methods inherent in socialist government".³

Socialist public opinion was considered to be non-antagonistic. Hence basic methods of opinion research in Soviet society were letters, press, parliamentary decisions, sample survey, public discussions and public documents.

To study public opinion in the Soviet political system, one has to go into the history of public opinion in the Soviet Union. Old Russia was under the autocratic rule of the Tsars, as the emperors were called, who held absolute power. There was no parliament and no general elections. There were ministers in charge of various government departments, who held office at the pleasure of the Tsar. People were not consulted in anything by autocracy, except when forced by circumstances. The people were unaware of citizens' rights and liberties. There was rigid control over the press and literature. The common man knew nothing about the freedom of press, of opinion, or of assembly. They were beyond his mental horizon.

3. Walter D. Cannon, Zvi y. Gitelman and others, Public Opinion in European Socialist Systems (New York: London, 1977), p. 15.

In this way democratic traditions were completely absent, although from time to time some steps were taken like - emancipation of serfs and agrarian reforms, but even after that the exploitation of peasants continued. Recognition of the institutions of self-government - Zemstvo assemblies, was also a step towards democratization. But their elections were indirect and hampered by the Tsarist regime. In this way people were mercilessly suppressed under the Tsarist regime.

To get rid of oppressive Tsarist rule there were revolutionary uprisings in Tsarist Russia which were crushed by the government. But at the same time the vast majority of the people were more or less satisfied with the Tsarist rule. Only a minority (a small elite from among the intelligentsia) had an awareness of this frustrating state of affairs, who had through education acquired consciousness of the need to reshape society. It was the task of the intelligentsia to create this consciousness among the masses as well. But all revolutionary movements or organizations of intelligentsia like - Decemberist movement, populist movement, Zemlya i Volya (Land and Liberty) etc. failed in Russia because they could not establish a firm contact with the broad sections of the population. They did not enjoy mass support and could not impart revolutionary consciousness to the masses. There was a great need of mass

support to revolutionary movement of the intelligentsia.

In the beginning of the twentieth century Lenin's emergence as a leader of the masses brought a radical change in the intelligentsia's relations with the masses. He could draw a practical lesson from the plot of assassinating the Tsar in 1887, in which his brother was executed. A revolutionary struggle could not be successful on the basis of individual acts of terrorism. It should draw the participation of the majority of the people. Therefore, he showed a great concern for the masses. Revolutionary struggle must be based on the combined and disciplined efforts of an elite which should direct the masses.

Lenin was the first Marxist who stressed the Marxist saying that the proletarian class consciousness is the agent of revolution. This had been neglected more and more by the Russian Marxists in the late nineteenth century. Lenin always stuck to his argument adding to it the saying of the founding fathers (Marx and Engels) of communism that "the emancipation of proletariat can never be anything else than the work of the proletariat itself".⁴ He wrote that "we are all convinced that the emancipation of the workers can only be brought by the workers themselves; a socialist

4. Alfred G. Meyer, Leninism (New York, 1972), p. 25.

revolution is out of the question unless the masses become class conscious, organized, trained, and educated by open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie".⁵

But Lenin found in the working class only trade union consciousness which could serve merely for less important narrow sectional interests and could not take care of the interests of the class as a whole. He saw the spontaneity of the working class action which led to the development of economism, not to a genuine revolutionary feeling. So there was need to awaken the revolutionary feeling and essential political class consciousness of the masses which Lenin realised "could only be brought to them from without".⁶ From without, he meant from a revolutionary party which was to be led by the real political leaders of the entire people and must be a secret, concentrated, restricted and highly organised group, whose members whether drawn from workers or intelligentsia, had to be professional revolutionaries, men who were carefully trained, schooled and experienced and capable of converting the initially spontaneous and distinguished worker's movement into a conscious and organised force, fighting for socialism. Lenin knew that

5. V.I. Lenin, Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution (Calcutta, 1942), pp. 89-90.

6. Alex Inkeles, Public Opinion in Soviet Russia (Massachusetts, 1967), p. 13.

the masses would not instinctively go in for the revolution and insisted that the impetus for revolution must come from this party of professional revolutionaries. He compared the party with the general staff of the army without which it was impossible to win the battle.⁷

But at the same time, Lenin believed that leaders alone could not make history. A successful revolution comes about only when vast, so far passive sections of the society awaken and take an active part in political life. "A basis of mass support was indispensable, and to think of acting without it was mere political "adventurism".⁸ Lenin warned that to throw this vanguard (party) alone into the battle "would not merely be a folly, but a crime. It was necessary prior to accepting a decisive challenge for power, to be certain that the broad masses had taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it".⁹

Lenin believed that consciousness turns into power only with the help of the masses of the population. He wrote that "theory becomes material force only when it

7. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

8. Ibid., p. 14.

9. V.I. Lenin, Selected Works, vol. 10, p. 136.

takes hold of the masses".¹⁰ "Power, he said, "must be based...unconditionally on the majority of the population".¹¹ He believed that "living, creative socialism is the product of the masses themselves".¹²

Lenin had a very healthy respect for the public opinion when he faced the problems of ensuring the success of revolutionary or other public action. Right from the moment of its birth he tried to make the party a mass party in full sense of the term, enjoying the sympathy and support of the masses, whose policies and practice expressed their vital interests. He said - "Live in the midst know the moods, know everything. Understand the masses. Find the approach. Win its absolute trust. This concise formulation, which is almost in the form of a summary, contains the principles of the tactics and strategy of the party's work among the masses, and the programme for deepening the close organic bond with the people".¹³ He insisted that party should have a "a good ear" for the voice of the masses. For showing such big concern for public opinion he was even accused of having become

10. Meyer, n. 4, p. 38.

11. Ibid., pp. 38-39.

12. Reprints from the Soviet Press, vol. 34, 15 May 1982, p. 7.

13. K. Chernenko, "The CPSU's Leninist Tradition Working for and with the People", World Marxist Review, vol. 22, No. 5, May 1979, p. 3.

an opportunist who wanted the party, to get stuck up in the morass of public opinion.

Throughout the revolution he paid a great attention to mass support and mass mood. He wanted to acquire a firm hold on political power through mass support. He gave credit for the victory of the October Revolution to the will and action of the millions of Soviet people. He argued that the revolution had been accomplished to establish the power of the entire people. He viewed the victory of the October Revolution as giving rights and freedom to the people and opening up vast new opportunities for them to participate actively in political life which did not exist before. He said: "For the first time in history of the civilized society, the masses of the population will rise to taking an independent part, not only in voting and elections, but also in the everyday administration of the state".¹⁴

After the victory of October Revolution, power seized by the party on behalf of the people was viewed by him not for power's sake, but for the sake of leading the whole people to socialism as their teacher and guide. When he was chosen as head of the government elected by the entire

14. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 25, pp. 487-8.

people, on the first day itself, he said: "We want a government to be always under the supervision of the public opinion of its country".¹⁵ His government always expressed the cherished aspirations and fundamental interests of the working people. It was shown by his "Decree on Peace" and "Decree on Land". It was for the first time that the will of the masses was asserted. He encouraged collectivism in the party and self-criticism within the party. In 1918 Lenin also emphasised the Right to Recall - a form of direct democracy - through which people not only have the right to elect their representatives but right to recall them back if they do not justify their trust.¹⁶ Therefore, Right to Recall was included in the Constitution of the RSFSR adopted on 10 July 1918.

Electors' mandate - a sort of programme which expressed the will and opinion of the electorate and by which people's Deputies were bound and freedom of the press through which people could express their views, were other forms of direct democracy in Lenin's government. Critical letters and complaints sent by citizens to state and party bodies, which is one of the best form to link the press with the masses, were also encouraged under Lenin's government. The central office of the Council of People's Commissars (CPC) received about 10,000 letters

15. R. Safarov, "Public Opinion under Developed Socialism", Socialism: Theory and Practice, vol. 2, February 1978, p.83.

16. V.I. Lenin, n. 14, vol. 26, p. 336.

of this kind a year, many of which are reported to have been taken into account in the elaboration of government decrees and instructions, and many citizens were also received directly at the Council of People's Commissars (CPC's) reception office.¹⁷

In all these ways Lenin tried to take public opinion into account as much as possible and to make the system more democratic. He did not want the masses to conclude that they had supported no real revolution but a mere change from one authoritarian state to another. Wherever destiny took him, wherever he found himself and in whatever he did, he was always in touch with the common people.

With the death of Lenin the struggle for succession started between Trotsky and Stalin. Being the top organizer of the Red Army Trotsky was considered Lenin's natural successor. On the other hand, being the General Secretary of the Party, Stalin was also rapidly building up his power through his control of the Party's Central Secretariat. Most of the Bolshevik leaders unaware of the enormous potential of the office of General Secretary of the Party, combined with Stalin against Trotsky. In this way Stalin came to power.

17. Stephen White, "Political Communication in the USSR: Letters to Party, State and Press", Political Studies, vol. 31, No. 1, March 1983, p. 44.

Whereas Lenin tried to make the party a mass party in full sense of the term, Stalin ousted his opponents - who had started opposing him due to his ruthlessness and crudeness and cruel policies of industrialization and collectivization - not only in the party but in the government as well. In this inner-party struggle (concerned with policy as much as power) Stalin was able to defeat and oust all his chief rivals from their leading positions by the end of 1929 and emerge as the undisputed leader of the party.

Stalin's cult imposed itself over the wishes of the masses. All democratic institutions of the Soviet system were totally paralysed during Stalin's period. The party which was regarded as a true forum for expressing public opinion was fully controlled by Stalin. As the General Secretary of the Party, he held absolute power for himself, and free discussions and collective decision-making were replaced by his personality cult. The basic principle of 'inner-party democracy' which stipulates the right to discuss freely questions of policy and to criticise any leader, regardless of his position vanished from the party. The party ceased to be a creative association which shaped policy and got transformed into an instrument in the hands of the dictator, a privileged chorus of sycophants who sang his praises and enforced his will.

The party was transformed into a highly bureaucratic machine. Party had become a disciplined military phalanx. Opposition was a mutiny. The function of the Commander was to issue order and all party members were bound to obey him. In Stalin's period party membership also decreased by more than 1.6 million between 1930 and 1938. Stalin's drastic purges in the mid-1930s weeded out more than half the members of the party.¹⁸ No new members were admitted between January 1933 and November 1936.¹⁹ Party congresses which were supposed to meet at least once every three years became less frequent in the Stalin period.

Soviets which were considered to be the only mass organizations expressing the will of the masses and through which people could participate directly in the political life, were retained merely for show purposes under Stalin's rule. They were converted from bodies of popular power at all levels into appendages of party organisations. Discussion in the Soviets on any question or draft was not regarded as a necessary step in Stalin's days. It is proved from the fact that budgets were submitted for its approval after they had already been in effect for half a year. In the war time also the Supreme Soviet had no

18. Karel Hulicka & Irenl M. Hulicka, Soviet Institutions: The Individual and Society (Boston, 1967), p. 78.

19. L.G. Churchward, Soviet Socialism: Social and Political Essays (London: New York, 1987), p. 128.

part in decision-making. The system of electing members of various Soviets was also changed. It was replaced by a multiballot, direct election to the Soviets on several levels. As a result, the personal contact between the voters and the candidates was lost.

Freedom of press, freedom of speech, assembly, demonstration, were guaranteed in Article 125 of the new Constitution of 1936.²⁰ But they were merely written on paper. Press and other means of mass communication were fully controlled by the government. In 1931 Glavit (Censorship agency) was formed to restrict the circulation of objectionable works. Letters to government, party and press through which people could express their views and criticise the government, also began to receive less attention during the Stalin period.²¹

In such an atmosphere consultation of public opinion on any decision was a far cry. Stalin never felt the need of public opinion on any matter. Although the draft of the 1936 Constitution was put for nationwide discussion, it was just to show the world that the Soviet Union was a true democracy and it enjoyed the full support of the

20. M. Fainsod, How Russia is Ruled, Rev. ed. (Bombay, 1969), p. 377.

21. Stephen White, "Political Communications in the USSR: Letters to Party, State and Press", Political Studies, vol. 31, No. 1, March 1983, p. 44.

Soviet people.²² In reality people were so much suppressed that if any decision was put for public discussion, they did not have the courage to criticise Stalin's decisions. They had to support his policies due to fear of punishment. Therefore, public opinion on government's decision if any, was of no importance in the Stalin period. It was just a formality to consolidate the regime.

Thus in Stalin's period there was total eclipse of public opinion. It was a dictatorial rule and condemned as a deviation from the norms, where all power rested in the hands of Stalin who alone had the right to decide all questions. This rule was based on high coercion and law information. In conclusion, the picture of Stalin's regime was one of individual rule where public opinion was ignored and its expression stage-managed to conform with the leader's own whims and fancies with a view to legitimising it.

After the death of Stalin, N.S.Khrushchev took over the leadership as First Secretary of the Party in mid-1953. The new leadership found Stalin's dictatorial method of governance unsuitable. After the grim regime of Stalin the country most urgently needed the sense of renewal, the hope of a healthier relationship between the governors and

22. M. Fainsod, n. 20, p. 371.

the governed. To rectify the unhealthy situation created by Stalin's dictatorship, the new leadership proceeded to abolish the heritage of the late dictator. A process of de-Stalinisation and a full-scale campaign against the 'cult of personality' was launched by Khrushchev. In the Twentieth Party Congress the de-Stalinisation campaign reached its height when Stalin was openly criticised by leading communists for his autocratic rule.

In the wake of the Twentieth Party Congress, "greater popular involvement in public affairs, expanded rights, collective leadership, and expanded socialist input"²³ the official organ's close ties with the masses were put as the basic principles of Soviet system of government. It was declared that "phenomena of this kind would never again arise in the Party and country".²⁴ Every attack on the Stalinist cult, every attempt to reduce its role in the creation of Soviet society carried with it a demand for society's democratisation and restoration of Leninist norms in Soviet society. The party returned back to Lenin's principle of party, where people could express their opinions, could criticise the

23. George W. Breslawer, Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Soviet Politics (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), p. 59.

24. History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1960), pp. 670-71.

Party leadership. All democratic institutions which were totally paralysed in the Stalin period had been revived under Khrushchev. All policies were adopted after considerable discussions in the Soviets as the Pension Law in 1956, Industrial Reorganization in 1957, Educational Reform in 1958-59 etc.²⁵ The people's Right to recall deputies, introduced by Lenin as a direct form of democracy, also came into practice.

In 1961, at the 22nd Party Congress, in place of the dictatorship of proletariat the Soviet Union was declared a "state of the whole people"²⁶ expressing the will and interests of workers, peasants and intellectuals, the working people of all nations and nationalities in the country. Khrushchev said: "Stalin's rule was a dictatorship based on force and repression, but now we have a state of the whole people in which all citizens share in power".²⁷ The public organizations embracing the entire population of the country like Trade Unions, the Komsomol and other mass organizations of the working people were given the right to take part in solving political, economic, social and cultural question and initiate legislation, in other words, to submit proposals involving decision-making.

25. L.G. Churchward, Contemporary Soviet Government, Second Edition (London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 113.

26. Darrell P. Hammer, USSR: The Politics of Oligarchy (Hinsdale: Illinois, 1974), p. 129.

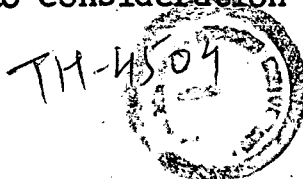
27. Ibid.

People's control committees which were suspended in the Stalin period, were also reintroduced.

Public opinion polls - an institution of direct democracy, were also introduced for the first time in the 1960s which gave an official recognition to public opinion. The mechanism of opinion polls and inquiries really opened up fresh possibilities for further drawing the working people into administering the affairs of the society. The press and other mass media, mouthpiece for public opinion, were more and more liberalised.

Thus, one finds great changes in the post-Stalin Soviet society. From the Twentieth Congress onwards, there was an increasing stress on democracy. The entire life of society was based on the principle of broad democracy - socialist democracy including freedom - freedom of speech; of the press and of the assembly. It was visualised by the new leadership that it was impossible to fulfil the goal of developed socialism without a broad mass participation in the administration and expression of their opinions and without taking into account the criticism voiced by citizens on a wide variety of questions ranging from minor issues to matters of state importance. There was free flow of public expression and it was taken into consideration on every step.

Thesis
V, 57T N82 ← N77
N3



THESIS
303.380947
C3933 Pu



The socialist democracy re-established in the Khrushchev period was not only consolidated during Brezhnev's period who succeeded Khrushchev as the First Secretary of the Party (later designating himself as General Secretary), but important steps were taken to enhance its role in Soviet society. Brezhnev said: "For us democracy is boon, it is an essential condition for all our activities".²⁸ He also said in the 25th Congress of CPSU in 1976: "Today, we know not only from theory but from years of practice that real democracy is impossible without socialism, and that socialism is impossible without the constant development of democracy".²⁹ In his report he said "the study of public opinion deserves greater attention".³⁰

Polls were conducted frequently on various problems of society. In this way, the democratic system and the tradition of studying public opinion were taken over from the Khrushchev period. The 1977 Constitution may be regarded as the best example of the increased insistence on study of public opinion in connection with the nationwide discussion of its draft.

-
28. L.I. Brezhnev, Questions of Development of the Political System of Soviet Society (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), p. 61.
29. Documents and Resolutions. XXVth Congress of the CPSU (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Pub. House, 1976), p. 103.
30. R.A. Safarov, "Problems of Public Opinion Research", Soviet Law and Government, vol. 16, No. 3, p. 59.

Public opinion was not only consulted on the draft of the New Constitution but it was given official recognition by the New Fundamental Law. Article 5 and 9 of the New Constitution were great steps towards extending socialist democracy. Article 9 declares that the principal line of development of the political system of Soviet society was "the extension of socialist democracy, that is, ever broader participation of citizens in managing the affairs of society and the state, continuous improvement of the machinery of state, heightening of the activity of public organisations, strengthening of the system of people's control, consolidation of the legal foundations of the functioning of the state and of public life, greater openness and publicity, and constant responsiveness to public opinion".³¹ In Article 9 broader democracy and public opinion as a principal direction of the Soviet political system were given official recognition.

The draft of the constitution emphasised that the power belonging to Soviet people is to be exercised not only through representative organs - the Soviets - but also directly, through immediate expression of the popular

31. T.M. Dzhafarli, "The Study of Public Opinion, A Necessary Condition for Adoption of Correct Discussions", Soviet Law and Government, vol. 17, No. 3, Winter 1978-79, p. 10.

will. A new Article, Article 5 gave place to such a form of direct democracy. Nationwide discussion and popular vote, were added in the 1977 Constitution by it. Article 5 says: "Major matters of the state shall be submitted to nationwide discussion and put to a popular vote (referendum)".³²

For the first time it was provided that bills and other important matters in political affairs would be submitted for nationwide discussion by the entire people or put before them for voting (referendum), thus increasing the role of public opinion. Obviously the submission of all major legislative questions for public discussion implemented the policy-making role of public opinion. In this way, representative democracy was transformed into direct democracy.

The essence of the new Constitution of 1977 was its care for the people. By adding some new Articles enlarging the people's participatory rights, ensuring a more meaningful scope for mass involvement in political life, the 1977 Constitution marked a new stage in the development of socialist democracy and scope of public

32. Boris Topornin, The New Constitution of the USSR (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), p. 238.

opinion. As Brezhnev said in his report at the May Plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee: "Generally speaking the main aim of the innovations in the Draft is to broaden and deepen socialist democracy".³³ The 1977 Constitution by not only involving the people in a discussion of its draft but also adding some new provisions extending people's role in Soviet life, proved that socialist society was a society of the working people for the working people.

33. V. Dolgin, "A Society of Truly People's Power", International Affairs, August 1977, p. 5.

CHAPTER 2

EXTENDED ROLE OF PUBLIC OPINION
DURING 1977-82 PERIOD

EXTENDED ROLE OF PUBLIC OPINION DURING
1977-82 PERIOD

Any assessment of the politics of the Brezhnev era must begin with an understanding of the eighteen year tenure in office of the man who was elevated to power in October 1964. Unlike his volatile predecessor Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Ilich Brezhnev brought relative stability and cautious leadership to the Kremlin. But like Khrushchev, he sought to make his mark on Soviet history and to forge a series of policy initiatives that not only dealt with the major economic and social problems facing the nation but a large extension of democracy and public opinion in running their country.

Democracy is generally thought of as being a form of state organization based on the principles of popular rule, freedom and equality. A distinctive feature of Soviet democracy, and of socialist democracy in general, is the involvement of millions of working people in managing both production and the affairs of state. Socialist democracy grants the working people real opportunities for active participation in managing the affairs of the state and society and in solving economic, political and social problems. The Soviet Union's historical progress was the result of indissoluble connection between socialist democracy and humanism which provided reliable guarantees of the major political rights and freedoms of the Soviet citizen.

After Brezhnev's coming to power socialist democracy continued to expand and make itself felt in the different spheres of social life. He not only put stress on democracy but also took some important steps to enhance the role of democracy and public opinion in Soviet society. The 1977 Constitution may be regarded as an example of increased insistence on the study of public opinion in connection with the nationwide discussion of its draft. Some new Articles were added to it enhancing the role of public opinion in the Soviet political system.

The discussion of New Constitution took place over a period of nearly four months and 140,000,000 citizens, 80 percent of the adult population participated in the discussion. There was an unending flow of letters from the Soviet people, party members or not, and all of them, as masters of the country, thoroughly examined the draft constitution, making proposals for improving the text and expressing other considerations bearing on various aspects of life in socialist society which were carefully studied and scrutinized by the constitutional commission.

Public opinion's role was also extended by adding several new Articles aimed at the further development of socialist democracy. A new Article 9 was a great step towards broader democracy and public opinion as a principal direction of the Soviet political system. A new Article 5 gave place to a form of direct democracy. Nationwide discussion and popular vote,

were added in the 1977 constitution by this article. Article 49 gave Soviet citizens a new constitutional right, the right to criticize implied freedom of the citizens to express their opinions and convictions. This right to criticize was made more meaningful by forbidding any persecution for criticism and by making obligatory for all Soviet government, party and public bodies and organizations to heed to the working people's letters complaints and suggestions within the prescribed time.

A new Article 57 was included in the 1977 Constitution providing the Soviet citizens the right to legal protection, i.e., protection by the courts against any encroachment upon life and health, property, personal freedom, honour and dignity. Another new Article 58 was also added in the 1977 Constitution which likewise extended the role of public opinion. By adding this new article Soviet citizens were provided the right to lodge complaints in a court of law against the unlawful actions of officials, state bodies and public bodies and also to indemnification for damages incurred by such unlawful actions.

Besides introducing some new articles, extending the role of public opinion, several articles were amended to enhance the role of democracy and public opinion. In this way, the 1977 gave Constitutional recognition to public opinion.

The new Constitution's principal trend was the extension of socialist democracy, namely ever broader participation of

citizens in managing the affairs of society and the state, continuous improvement of the machinery of state, heightening of the activity of public organizations, strengthening of the system of people's control, consolidation of the legal foundations of the functioning of the state and society, greater openness and publicity and constant responsiveness to public opinion.

Not only the 1977 constitution, several other steps were taken by Brezhnev to ensure larger participation of people in the Soviet political system. Soviet citizens were encouraged to express their views on various aspects of the development of Soviet society and the state. They made critical remarks on the different aspects of the activities of government bodies and public organizations and suggested measures to improve their functioning and eliminate shortcomings.

Beginning with the late seventies the Soviet leadership realized the shortcomings of economic policies. Brezhnev critically spoke of the existing methods of planning and management and at the 26th party Congress, he adopted a fresh approach to the principle of democratic centralism, emphasising the "Closest possible link between the centre and the localities, between the party's leading organs and its rank and file".¹

The CPSU played a key role in the development of socialist statehood and socialist democracy. The drawing of the

1. Documents and Resolutions - XXVI th Congress of the CPSU (Sovietland Booklets, 1981), p. 81.

working masses into managing social and political affairs was the road followed by the Communist Party in developing the Soviet political system and the democratic principles of state and social life. At a meeting with the Baumansky District electorate on 2 March 1979 Brezhnev said "The party is going to the pools with a broad programme of improving the forms and methods of their multiple activities. The essence of this programme is that everyone, I repeat, every Soviet person, should feel himself or herself involved in the affairs of state and be certain that his or her views and remarks will be heeded and taken into account in major or minor decision-making".²

In his report to the 26th Party Congress, Brezhnev spoke about democracy. He said : " A very important matter is to keep all Soviet citizens informed of party affairs. Publicity (glasnost) in the work of party organizations is an effective means of strengthening the party's ties with the masses".³

Brezhnev personally showed constant concern for the further development of internal party democracy. Consistent extension of internal party democracy and a more exigent attitude to every party member were highly relevant. Brezhnev was not an impulsive man, he never aspired to be a superior, god - like figure in the manner of Stalin. The collective leadership which was one of the most important principles in inner party democracy

2. L.I. Brezhnev, Socialism, Democracy and Human Rights (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980) p. 236.

3. no.1, p.82.

and which stipulated the right to discuss freely questions of party policy and to criticise any leader, regardless of his position was given a great importance in the Brezhnev period. All party matters were settled democratically on a strictly collective basis.

The principle of criticism and self - criticism - the most important criterion for party democratism developed extensively. Delivering his report at the 26th Party Congress, Brezhnev said: " The instructions of the 25th Congress of the CPSU stimulated the extension of criticism and self - criticism in the party. Everything should be done to continue fostering this positive trend, to assert in all party organizations a spirit of self- criticism and irrecon - cilability to shortcomings.

Any attempt at persecution for criticism must be resolutely cut short. Our stand on this question is clearly recorded in the party rules. It is also reflected in the Constitution of the USSR. There must be no condoning of those who muzzle criticism - such is the demand of both the party and the state law".⁴

Under Brezhnev the CPSU Politburo evolved as a body composed of the chiefs of the major institutions and interest groups of the country, where policies were first debated and discussed before arriving at a decision. Between 1971 and 1976 eleven Central Committee Plenums were held, at which the most

4. Documents and Resolutions - XXVI th Congress of CPSU.
(Mascow: Novosti Press Agency, 1981) pp. 96-97.

important problems facing the party and the country were discussed. Commenting on the work of these plenums at the 26th Party Congress Brezhnev remarked, "... They were convened regularly and the discussions were conducted in a business - like manner and in a spirit of self - criticism".⁵

A large number of sessions of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee were held, at which matters relating to industry, agriculture, capital construction and improvement of management at all levels of the political and economic apparatus were discussed. At the 26th Party Congress Brezhnev said: " The Political Bureau may be described as the militant headquarters of our many - million strong party. It accumulates the collective wisdom of the party and gives shape to party policy expressing the interests of the whole of Soviet society, of all communist and non - party people.... Quite naturally, various opinions were stated and many comments and recommendations were made in the course of the preparations for meetings and during the discussions. However, all decisions were adopted in a spirit of complete unanimity. This unity underlies the strength of collective leadership."⁶

All major problems were discussed in the highest and lowest party organs not by one man alone, or by a narrow group, but at democratic party forums, such as party Congresses,

5. Ibid., p.89.

6. Ibid., p. 90.

Conferences and general meetings. All Communists were entitled to discuss political questions freely. At the 26th Party Congress Brezhnev reported:

" When the preparations for the 26th Congress were started, the Central Committee called upon all Communists to hold election meetings, to discuss the Central Committee draft for the Congress creatively and self - critically The meetings of primary and shop party organizations and of party groups were attended by 96 percent of the membership. Nearly 10,000,000 people took the floor".⁷ He further said : " As at the plenary meeting of any Party Committee, at a party meeting all urgent matters must be discussed in depth and seriously".⁸

"Inner - party briefing is an inalienable element of the party's democratic life. The CPSU Central Committee kept local party organs, the Communists broadly and promptly briefed on questions of home and foreign policy and on organizational and ideological work. At the same time, the CPSU Central Committee and all Party Committees began to make more use of information from primary party organizations. This helps to take public opinion into account and form a clearer idea of the state of affairs in the localities".⁹ Brezhnev reported to the 26th Congress.

There was a nationwide discussion on the five year plans. The guidelines for the Economic and Social Development

7. Ibid., p.95.

8. Ibid.,

9. Ibid., p. 96.

of the USSR for 1981-85 and for the period ending in 1990 adopted at the 26th Party Congress urged to consider the proposals about the eleventh five year plan made at the 26th Congress of the CPSU, at the Congresses of the Communist Parties of the Union Republic, territorial and regional party Conferences, meetings of activists and plenary meetings of party committees in districts, cities and areas, in work collectives and in the press, as well as in letters of workers, collective farmers, specialists and scientists. ¹⁰

Party's programmatic documents of the Guidelines for the USSR's Economic and Social Development from 1981 to 1985 and for the period until 1990, was widely discussed in all regions, territories and union republics of the country and by all work collectives.¹¹ 121 million people took part in the discussion and 1.2 million proposals were submitted. Valuable suggestions, additions and amendments enriching this important document were made in the course of the nationwide discussion. It demonstrated the vitality of socialist democracy and unity between the party and the people. All the proposals were examined and taken into account in elaborating the five year plan for 1981-85.

In his address to the 26th Congress Brezhnev said:
" Comrades, the objectives fixed for the Eleventh Five year plan and the eighties are set forth in detail in the CPSU

10. Ibid., p. 148.

11. Viktor Grishin, " Party policy and Mass Creativity", Problems of Peace & Socialism, vol.10, no. 5, May 1982, p.7.

Central Committee's draft Guidelines for the Economic and Social Development of the USSR for 1981-85 and the period up to 1990. Upwards of 121 million people took part in discussing it. The draft received the wholehearted approval and support of the working class, the collective farmers, and the intelligentsia.

A large number of useful proposals, additions, and clarifications were put forward, and these will undoubtedly enrich the contents of the document." ¹²

Besides the Law on the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the Law on the Procurators' office of the USSR were approved in the course of nationwide discussion. ¹³

Thus the work of the party organisations was completely open. The Soviet people were not only widely informed of the work of the party through the media and meetings, but they themselves actively participated in the formulation and implementation of party policies. Brezhnev again and again emphasised the need to strengthen the Party's ties with the people. At the 26th Party Congress he said: " Party is steadily deepening its ties with the masses of the people, takes their needs and concerns to heart In unity with the people lies the party's strength". ¹⁴ He further added: " The Comrades appointed to party executive should know what is in the minds of

12. no. 4, p.48.

13. Boris Babil, "Democratism of Social Management in Developed Socialist Society", in Democracy and Politics ed., by Social Sciences Today (Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1982) p. 64.

14. no. 4, p. 155.

the workers, peasants, and intellectuals of our country and what their life, needs and interests are, not from documents but from personal experience".¹⁵

Party membership also grew during the Brezhnev period. At the time of the 26th Congress CPSU had 17,480,000 members. In the years from February 1976 to February 1981, over 1 1/2 million best representatives of the working class - that is, 59 percent of all new members - joined the CPSU.¹⁶

The Soviets of People's Deputies - political basis of the state and social structure of the USSR which were formed throughout the country as a result of the revolutionary initiative of the masses became the all-embracing organizations of the people, the embodiment of their unity. They were transformed into a genuine school of the social activity of millions. Brezhnev attached great importance to improving the work of Soviets of People's Deputies. His name is linked with the framing and enactment of laws specifying the content of the work of the Soviets and extending the rights of Deputies and enhancing their role at all levels of state and public life. He constantly drew their attention to the need for regular reports to the electorate, publicity, increased popular participation in the administration of public affairs, criticism of shortcomings and measures to stamp out bureaucracy.

15. Ibid., p. 93.

16. L.I. Brezhnev : Pages from his life. (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982). p. 83.

In his report at a meeting with the Baumansky District electorate on 2 March 1979 Brezhnev said:

"Our Soviets and Soviet democracy have a vast latent vitality. It should be used ever more fully to disclose existing reserves, to criticise shortcomings, to compare views and formulate sound decisions. Soviet democracy can and must serve.... more fully guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of Soviet people and further developing socialist democracy".¹⁷

At a session of the USSR supreme Soviet on 18 April 1979 he said:

"The new constitution has created the most favourable conditions for the supreme Soviet of the USSR to exercise actively its broad powers."¹⁸

Soviets were raised to a new level of flourishing socialist democracy. The democratic principles of the formation and activities of the Soviets were further developed. Direct elections of the Soviets of People's Deputies by people and their role in solving the essential questions of society's socio-economic and cultural life increased. They were made more accountable to the masses.

In February - March 1980, elections to the Supreme Soviets and local Soviets were held in all Union Republics of the USSR. In 1982 there were 50, 600 Soviets of People's Deputies functioning

17. L.I. Brezhnev, no. 2, p. 238.

18. Ibid., p. 239.

in the USSR with over 2.2 million deputies elected by direct and secret ballot.¹⁹ All citizens participated equally in the elections. It presented a means for drawing broad sections of the people into political activity and to voice their opinion.

Local Soviets - mass organs of state power closest to the population ensured more effective participation of the masses in the actual work of the government. In 1980 there were 50, 117 local Soviets, which included 6 territorial, 116 regional, 8 Soviets of autonomous regions, 10 area, 2, 970 district, 1,978 urban city Soviets, 515 urban district, 41,049 rural and 3,542 settlement Soviets of People's Deputies.²⁰

With the adoption of the new constitution of the USSR the role of the Soviets of People's Deputies became more important. People's representatives through Soviets enjoyed a wide range of democratic rights and freedoms, in particular, the right to participate in the organization and exercise of state power, and in the management of all the affairs of society. Deputies of whom more than half were workers and collective farmers adopted laws, discussed and approved state plans for economic and social development and the national budget of the USSR.

The rights of the local Soviets of People's Deputies were broadened through a law adopted in the USSR's national Republics on the basic rights and duties of the city, district and village Soviets and a law on strengthening the material and financial base

19. Boris Babii, no. 13, p.65.

20. M.A. Krutogolov, Talks on Soviet Democracy (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980). pp. 72-73.

of the Soviets ' executive Committees. The new law specified the rights and duties of the Soviets in handling all tasks of economic, social and cultural construction.²¹ The local Soviets with over 30 million active members, were empowered not only to solve all local questions, they also supervised the work of all organizations on their territory. The most important matters relating to village, district, town, region or territory were decided at sessions of the local Soviets.

To ensure better management of all affairs of the society standing commissions were formed under the Soviets. In 1977 alone, there were more than 328,000 commissions with a total membership of 1,800,000 deputies and more than 2,500,000 activists.²² These commissions studied the state of affairs in a particular area and adopted recommendations which allowed the Soviets to make appropriate decisions. Taking into account public opinion, the Soviets of People's Deputies determined the direction of their work.²³

The vigorous activities of the people's voluntary organisations were a graphic example of ever deeper democratism of Soviet society. Through the institution of voluntary organizations called aktiv of people at local level participation of millions of people was ensured. In 1980, there were over 2,240,000 such organizations in the country, involving over 31,000,000 people.²⁴

21. Sali Rajabov, " Rights of the Soviet National Republics in the Political System of Socialist Federation", no. 13, p. 130.

22. M.A. Krutogolov, no. 20, p. 76.

23. Boris Babil, no. 19.

24. M.A.Krutogolov, no. 20. p. 82.

Soviet people not only elected their deputies and participated indirectly through them, but they themselves directly participated in state affairs. Nationwide discussion of the most important laws before their adoption by the Supreme Soviet which ensures a wider public involvement had become an established part of legal practice in the USSR. People could participate and discuss the matters in the sessions of the Soviets openly. All important draft laws such as fundamentals of legislation on marriage and the family (1968) were published and widely discussed.

"After the national press carried reports that the legislative Commission began working on the draft fundamentals of legislation on marriage and family, preliminary discussion on important details was frequently held at meetings and gatherings. These included such matters as marriage age, the conditions and form of the marriage ceremony, parental rights, alimony and divorce.

Such a discussion, for example, took place at a meeting of the collective of the Riga textile combine Zaslauka manufactura, which was attended by more than 400 women. The majority of those present supported the suggestions drawn up by the Commission which were directed towards strengthening marriage and the family. But at the same time opinion was expressed on the necessity to further simplify divorce procedure in those cases where the family had to all intents and purposes ceased to exist and its restoration was impossible.

It should be pointed out that the suggestions made at this and a number of other meetings on changes in divorce procedure were implemented by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in the ordinance adopted on 10 December 1965, 'on some changes in Divorce Procedure in the Courts', which was passed before the adoption of the Fundamentals of Legislation on Marriage and the Family. The norms of this ordinance were later included in the legislation. In conformity with the wishes of the working people the two-stage divorce procedure in the courts was abandoned and an advance announcement of divorce in the press was also dropped.

The standing Commissions of the Chambers also consulted the people on other questions relating to the law on Marriage and the family. Thus, workers at the Makhachkala Garment Factory in Daghestan at a meeting attended by 250 persons discussed the question of alimony collection procedure.²⁵ Thousands and thousands of suggestions which were made in the course of discussion were considered when adopting the law.

Another Law on Public Health (1969) was also discussed by people on a large scale. "As a result of the discussed on the draft Fundamentals of Public Health legislation, published in Izvestia, and Meditzinskaya Gazeta, the Supreme Soviet Commissions received more than 3,000 suggestions. These suggestions resulted in the following additions: Article 32 was supplemented with provisions ensuring specialised medical aid and periodic medical

25. M.A. Krutogolov, no. 20 pp. 140-41.

check ups for workers with the aim of preventing disease by early diagnosis. Article 32 and 52 were added to ensure privileges for invalids of the Great Patriotic War. Many other suggestions were also incorporated".²⁶

Fundamentals of Labour Legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics, was passed by the Supreme Soviet on 15 July 1970. Labour legislation was drawn up on the initiative and with the participation of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. The right of legislative initiative was legally assigned to the trade unions of the USSR and Union Republics.

The Fundamentals of Land Legislation in the USSR and the Union Republics (1968), Water Resources (1970) Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments (1976) were also adopted following a wide discussion by the public.

Nationwide discussion of the draft five-year plan was nothing new in the state and public life in the USSR. In Brezhnev period, it was only the continuation of firmly established practice which dictated that all important questions, including the drafts of fundamental laws (and the national economic plan in the USSR is also a law), should be discussed not only by the party and state organs, but also by the public. The draft "Guidelines for the economic and social development of the USSR for 1981-85 and for the period ending in 1990" which was presented by the Central

26. Ibid., p. 142.

Committee of the CPSU to the 26th Party Congress was prepared by thousands of experienced specialists and planners working in local and central bodies, carefully discussed at various levels and having been approved it was put for nationwide discussion, which took place in many party, trade- Union and komsomol organizations, at meetings and in the press. For over two months workers, collective farmers, scientists, engineers, pensioners, housewives - Communists and non-Communists had been studying, analysing and comparing with their own experience the basic guidelines for the development of the country over the next five years. The draft plan was also given full coverage in the press. The participation of millions of Soviet people in the free and open discussion of key issues concerning their life such as the country's future socio-economic development or its domestic and foreign policy became an integral part of the Soviet way of life, and of socialist democracy in action.

In this way citizens of the USSR in Brezhnev period continued to take part on central and local level in the work of legislation not only via their deputies in parliament but by direct participation in discussion on draft laws.

In their work Soviets of People's Deputies at both central and local level were guided by their electors' mandates - an expression of the most diverse requirements of the population, reflecting the specific interests of individual groups of working people and of society as a whole and which ensured participation of practically all citizens in running state affairs, inasmuch

as everyone has the right to submit his or her proposals to these mandates to a deputy or a Soviet at an election meeting.

The deputy's mandate and his concern to fulfil it was considered as a part of the genuine Leninist tradition of democracy. Deputies to the Soviets were obliged to report about the fulfilment of their mandates to the electorate. " These mandates are an expression of the most diverse requirements of the population, reflecting the concrete interests of individual groups of working people and of society as a whole. That is why fulfilment of these mandates is an important part of the work of the Soviets and of their deputies" - Brezhnev stated in his report to the extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on October 4, 1977." 27

" The new Constitution of the USSR, the Constitutions of the union Republics, as well as the laws on the local Soviets set a new procedure for the summing up of these mandates and the endorsement of measures for their realisation. The executive Committees of the local Soviets and their deputies worked to fulfil their electors mandates and exercised control over their implementation by enterprises, offices and organizations." 28

A deputy was duty bound to heed the voice of his constituents. " The proposal being put forward by the deputies on the

27. no. 16, p. 91.

28. Sali Rajabov, no. 21.

basis of mandates from their electors" Brezhnev said, "reflect the requirements and needs of our people as a whole".²⁹

During election campaigns in each Republic, at meetings with candidates for deputy, electors gave thousands of mandates. "For instance, the Soviets of the 1977-79 convocation implemented more than 776,000 such mandates".³⁰ "In 1980, after the elections to the local Soviets, the executive committees considered 796,000 suggestions and requests concerning production and socio-cultural relations, filed by electors. By 1981, more than 350,000 mandates had been fulfilled".³¹

From 1978 to 1982 more than 1,8000,000 mandates of the electors concerning various aspects of economic and cultural development, public education and health protection, trade and food catering, the municipal services and the service industry had been translated into reality with the deputies' direct participation.

Thus, electors' mandate is one of the real expression of social democracy. Being one of the forms for the expression of the will of the people, they exercised a real influence on the work of the Soviets and their organs and served as an important means for drawing the people into government.

People's Right to Recall, introduced by Lenin as a direct form of democracy through which people could express their opinion

29. no. 27.

30. Sali Rajabov, no. 21.

31. Ibid.

was practiced as much as possible. From raising the question of recall to establishing the results of the voting, discussion and decision of questions took place with the direct participation of the electorate, work collectives and public organizations. The Right to Recall was not mere paper enactment, although it was not applied frequently. A total of 8,000 Deputies to the local Soviets were recalled during the 1959-1981 period. More than 100 Deputies to the Supreme Soviets of the Union and Autonomous Republics and 12 Deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR were also recalled during the same period. ³²

Organs of people's control provided yet another channel through which people could participate in affairs of state. Set up by the corresponding Soviets of working People's Deputies, the members of district, town, regional and territorial Control Committees were selected from among the workers, collective farmers, office employees, specialists, journalists and workers of science and culture. Empowered to check the implementation of party and government directives, to supervise the execution of state plans, to check the work of enterprises, ministries and departments and to order them to look into complaints etc., the people's Control Committees enjoyed a great amount of power in Brezhnev period.

In 1980 there were 9.6 million people's controllers in the USSR, of which 4.5 million were workers and 1.6 million collective

32. Devendra Kaushik, Soviet Political System: Perceptions and Perspectives (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983) P. 64.

farmers. In his speech at a session of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 18 April 1979 Brezhnev said: " We need the smooth and efficient functioning of the entire apparatus of management, real responsibility on the part of each person for the task entrusted to him, a persistent struggle against violations of state discipline and against all forms of extravagance, bad management and abuses. The primary role must be played in this by the 9 million members of the People's Control movement and the People's Control Committee of the USSR which leads it". ³³

In his speech at 26th Congress Brezhnev noted:

"All - embracing people's control of the work of administrative bodies and officials is an essential component of Soviet democracy. Not a single violation, not a single case of abuse, wastage, or indiscipline should be overlooked by the people's central inspectors. The CPSU Control Committee orients them on more energetic and resolute action". ³⁴

One of the principle channels of the Soviet people's participation in social management - public organizations encompassing almost the entire adult population of the USSR, were encouraged to play a broader part in the life of the country. The Soviet Union's largest organizations of working people trade unions, with 125 million members, the Young Communist League -

33. L.I. Brezhnev, no. 2, p. 240.

34. no. 4, p. 84.

the komsomal - with about 40 million members, as well as various professional and cultural associations, were given the right to take part in solving political, economic, social and cultural questions and to submit proposals involving decision - making.

Regarding the role of public organizations in his speech at the 26th Congress Brezhnev said:

" The Constitution of the USSR has greatly enhanced the role of public organizations in the development of our democracy. The largest of these are the trade Unions. Now that they have enrolled the millions of collective farmers, the trade unions embrace practically all the working people. They have exceedingly broad tasks and rights. They protect the interests of working people, take part in resolving economic, social, and cultural problems, and do much to faster socialist emulation, invention, and innovation ..."³⁵

Trade Unions directly participated in the formulation of laws and regulations not only on industrial but also on agricultural production, on public education, on safeguarding the working people's rights and on working out plans for socio-economic development and drafts of production plans. At the 26th Congress Brezhnev reported:

"In the present conditions, great economic and social significance attaches to the further involvement of factory and office workers, collective farmers and professionals in running production and to

35. no. 4, p. 85.

enhancing the role of trade unions as the top mass organization in settling all questions of production, work, everyday life and leisure of the working people." ³⁶ He further said:

" Trade Unions and work collectives should tighten their control of decision - making concerning all questions of the work and life of people and take a larger part in planning and managing production, selecting and placing personnel, and effectively utilising the funds at the disposal of enterprises and organizations." ³⁷

The Soviet working people solved major economic and social problems directly at their work collectives. " For example 5.5 million members of permanent production conference at state - run enterprises and 3.2 million members of collective farm boards were particularly active in managing industry and agriculture". ³⁸ "A number of studies conducted in the USSR showed that from 30-40 to 60-70 percent of work collectives' members are actively and daily involved in management". ³⁹ Brezhnev stressed that "it is also very important for every enterprise, every collective to create the right kind of atmosphere, the right kind of public opinion, so that everyone is fully aware of who is working and how he is working and everyone gets his due". ⁴⁰

36. Ibid., pp. 145-46.

37. Ibid., p. 86.

38. Boris Babii, no. 13, p. 66.

39. William Smirnov, " Active and Passive Participants in the Political Process", no. 13, p. 52.

40. Soviet Democracy in the period of developed socialism, (Moscow : Progress Publishers, 1979) pp. 237-38.

Highlighting trade unions as a direct form of people's participation at the 26th Party Congress Brezhnev said:

"The party regards the trade unions as a pillar of support among the masses, as a powerful means of promoting democracy and drawing people into the building of communism. One of Lenin's precepts was: " contact with the masses, i.e., with the overwhelming majority of the workers (and eventually of all the working people), is the most important and most fundamental condition for the success of all trade union activity". He insisted that trade Unionists should be in the thick of the workers' life, know it inside out, be able unerringly to assess the mood, the level of political awareness, and the actual needs of the masses without the slightest false idealisation, and have the ability to win the complete confidence of the masses by a comradely attitude to them and solicitous satisfaction of their needs. I hope every trade unionist will always and in everything check his actions with this behest of Lenin's".⁴¹

Komsomol also actively participated in running the affairs of society and in the work of the state organs. More and more possibilities were extended for the participation of youth in state construction. "It may be said without exaggeration", Brezhnev emphasised, "that no major matter is decided without the participation of the youth, whether it concerns the affairs of the Soviet Union, a region, a district, or the personnel of an enterprise".⁴²

41. no. 4, p.86.

42. no. 16, p.97.

"In the 1979 elections 207 members of the Komsomol were elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. This figure represents 13.8 per cent of the total membership. In the local Soviets, 413,000, or 18.7 per cent of the membership, were elected from the Komsomol"⁴³ In 1980, there were 48,000 young members of the executive Committees of the local Soviets.⁴⁴ Meetings between young deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR at the Komsomol Central Committee and such meetings at the Komsomol Central Committees of the Union Republics, and in the territorial, regional, town and district Committees became very regular.⁴⁵ Standing Youth Commissions attached to the Soviets of People's Deputies which are concerned primarily with problems that directly affect the younger generation and its interests, also increased in number. While speaking at on 26th Congress Brezhnev said: "There are more than 40 million young men and women in the Leninist Young Communist League.It is taking a large share in the administration of the state, of all public life. This is the course that should be maintained".⁴⁶

Freedom of speech, assembly, demonstration through which people can express their opinion and get the chance to criticise the government, were the rights enjoyed by Soviet people in

43. M.A. Krutogolov, no. 20, p. 236.

44. Ibid. p. 235.

45. Ibid. p. 236.

46. no. 4, pp. 86-87.

Brezhnev period. People were encouraged to express their views and criticism. The new constitutional right of 1977 Constitution, the right to criticise implied more freedom of the citizens to express their opinions. This right to criticise was made more meaningful by forbidding any persecution for criticism and by making obligatory for all Soviet government, party and public bodies and organizations to heed to the working people's complaints and suggestions within the prescribed time. In his speech on presenting the city of Baku with the order of Lenin on 22 September 1978 Brezhnev said:

"The suppression of criticism, comrades, violates the norms of communist morality and the Fundamental Law of the USSR. This is an evil which should not be left unpunished. We highly value the people's initiative and no one will be allowed to undermine this source of our strength".⁴⁷

In his report at the 26th Party Congress Brezhnev said:
"The essence of Soviet democracy, of democracy in action lies in concern for the Common work, for the development of production, in comparing notes, in frank and principled criticism and self-criticism, and in promoting the socio - political activity of every citizen."⁴⁸

The role of press and mass media continued to grow as an important instrument of democracy, inasmuch as the Fundamental Law of 1977 made it incumbent to constantly heed the

47. L.I. Brezhnev, no. 2, p. 235.

48. no. 4, p.84.

voice of the public. There was a firm tradition of discussing in the press and on radio and Television the most important state and party resolutions, draft laws, and problems related to the socio-economic and cultural development of society. Soviet newspapers were free to publish critical remarks or letters sent by Soviet people on the shortcomings of officials. Every Soviet newspaper had a daily column which went under such Readings as "Letters From our Readers", " Replies" etc. While addressing 26th Congress Brezhnev said: " The newspapers and journals, which have a circulation of 380 million copies, are a dependable channel of day-to-day information. The screens of 75 million T.V. sets light up daily in our country. And this means that tens of millions of families can get the necessary explanations of the Party's policy and new information, and enrich themselves intellectually and culturally".⁴⁹ He further pointed out: "Naturally, all of us want our media always to be a true voice of party and public opinion. Every article in a newspaper or journal and every T.V. or radio programme should be regarded as an earnest talk with people, who want not only a truthful and prompt exposition of facts but also an in depth analysis of these facts and serious generalisations. We hope that together with the many millions of contributors to our press, Soviet journalists will always display a high degree of social involvement and sense of responsibility, being guided by the Leninist principles."⁵⁰

Letters sent by citizens to government, party and press through which people can express their views and criticise the

49. Ibid., p. 97.

50. Ibid., p. 98.

government, received a great attention during the Brezhnev period. The 1977 constitution by adding two new articles, people's right to write letters to officials and their consideration within limited time, gave legal recognition to public opinion.

The number of letters at all levels of the party kept on growing from year to year. New constitution is a good example of receiving letters of proposals and complaints from the people. In 1978 alone, over 700,000 letters were received. Around two million letters were received that year by the Central Committee of the Communist Parties of the Union Republics and by the territorial, regional and other party committees.

The table below shows the sharp increase in the citizens' letters to Party Bodies in the years 1977-80.

Table-1: Citizens' Letters to Party Bodies 1977-80

(A)	<u>Letters to Central and Local Party bodies</u>	<u>No. of letters</u>
	Received by the Central Committee between the 25th and 26th Party Congresses (1976-80)	3,152,000
	Received by the Central Committee in 1980 (before the 26th Party Congress)	671,000
	Received by republican, territorial, regional <u>okrug</u> , town and district party Committees between the 25th and 26th Party Congresses (1976-80)	9,000,000
	Received by Republican, etc. party Committees in 1980 (before the 26th Party Congress).	1,800,000

(B) Letters to the CPSU Central Committee.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Letters</u>
1977	657,360
1978	558,740
1979	570,880
1980	671,600

Source: Spravochnik Partiinogo rabotvika Vyp. 21
(Moscow. 1981) pp. 503-504.

In 1978-79 a letters' Department was also formed in the Central Committee Secretariat to analyze the mail systematically and completely and to help other party Committees to improve their work in this area, which received on an average about 1,500 letters everyday.

At the 1981 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Country's most important policy forum, Brezhnev expressed a need to open new channels for feedback. He announced the establishment of a new department of the Central Committee, a department of letters. This new department, with its Group for Analyzing Public opinion for Social Research and Development, was to be one of 24 departments that function as the party's overseers of policy and control and solicit feedback and study public opinion, self-selected, to be sure. Although past congresses have always referred to the importance of letters, this time Brezhnev devoted considerable attention to its development as a new feedback channel, remarking that letters form a vital tie between party and public.⁵¹ The need to obtain more audience feed back was stated by Brezhnev as follows: "Every party worker, every director (of

51. Ellen Mickiewicz, "Feedback, Surveys, and Soviet Communication Theory", Journal of Communication, Spring 1983, p. 108.

an economic enterprise) is obliged to examine with keen attentive consideration the letters, requests, complaints, of citizens as his duty before the people before the party".⁵²

In his address at the 26th Congress he said: " Letters and suggestions from citizens are an immensely important channels of the Party's living bond with the masses. The people have unbounded confidence in the party, speak candidly to it of the most pressing issues of public life, work, and everyday life, frankly state their views and concerns, and criticise existing short-comings. The Central Committee attaches great significance to work with letters and to prompt response to them. In the period under review this work was considerably improved, owing, in large part, to the formation of a letters Department in the Central Committee apparatus.

Speaking of letters, of which the CPSU Central Committee receives about 1,500 every day, I must say the following. Many of them are, regretfully, indications of serious omissions in the localities. Many of the questions raised by the people can and should be settled by the heads of industrial enterprises and district and town authorities. It is the duty of every party functionary, of every leader to the people and the party to examine letters, requests, and complaints from citizens with tact and consideration.

52. Ibid., p. 109.

I emphasize that this concerns letters that are sincere and honest.... Those who come forward with well-founded, business-like criticism do not have to hide their faces." ⁵³

Soviets at all levels also continued to get a number of letters by people criticising shortcomings and sending proposals. Soviets paid careful attention to the letters and requests of citizens and took steps to eliminate shortcomings and put right causes for complaint. During the discussion of the new constitution in 1977 over 20,000 letters were sent directly to the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet. ⁵⁴ Similar processes of consultation occurred when documents such as five year plans, or draft legislation more generally, were published in the press and comments from the public were specifically invited. The kind of letters received by the Soviets at all levels appeared to correspond fairly closely to the areas of policy for which they were directly responsible. A detailed study in Taganrog, for instance, found that housing and public order between them accounted for more than two-thirds (69 per cent) of the letters received by the local Soviets: the remaining 31 percent of letters touched on nineteen different subjects. The letters that the local Soviets received were for the most part individual complaints of various kinds; 77 per cent of the letters concerned purely personal or family matters, and no fewer than 96 per cent contained almost wholly negative assessments of various aspects of local life. ⁵⁵

53. no. 4, pp. 95-96.

54. Stephen white, "Political Communications in the USSR: Letters to the Party, State and Press", Political Studies, vol. 31, no. 1, March 1983, p. 49.

55. Ibid.

State bodies also received members of the public directly at their offices. The Chairman of the executive committee of a district Soviet in the Kaliningrad region, for instance, had been reported to receive about 40 or 50 visitors on the first and third Monday of every month between 11 A.M. or 8 P.M. According to the Presidium Decree on the consideration of the proposals, declarations, and complaints of citizens, leading officials of all state and public bodies were required to receive citizens in this way, at times which are convenient for citizens. ⁵⁶

The number of letters sent to press and newspapers had been increasing steadily over the years. The number of letters that reached each of the major Soviet daily paper, such as Pravda and Trud, was around half a million a year, and the total number of letters that reached all Soviet national papers taken together was estimated to amount to between 60 and 70 million a year. ⁵⁷ In 1980 alone Pravda received 581,700 letters. ⁵⁸

Table 2. Letters to Soviet Newspapers, 1975-81

Year	<u>Pravda</u>	<u>Izvestiya</u>	<u>Trud</u>
1975	456,000	467,858	548,174
1981	514,000	520,000	415,417

This table shows that letters to Soviet newspapers every year increased in a great number. ⁵⁹

56. Ibid., p.50.

57. Ibid., p. 51

58. Ellen Mickiewicz, "Political Communication and the Soviet Media System," in Joseph L. Noguee, ed., Soviet Politics: Russia after Brezhnev (New York: Praeger, 1985) p. 46.

59. Stephen white, no. 54, p.52.

In one year alone, more than two million letters were sent to central television and radio studios. To deal with this large-size mail, the central newspapers maintained large staffs, whose sole job was to catalogue, summarize, distribute, or respond to letters. All media, at all levels, encouraged the writing of letters and had a special sections for the analysis of and response to letters.⁶⁰ With this enormous volume of letters reaching the media, it is difficult to imagine that public opinion was not being tapped.

Polls and surveys were conducted frequently on various problems of society. Not only a central level even local party organizations also sponsored public opinion studies of their own. For example, a council on the study of public opinion at the Central Committee of the Communist party of Georgia was established in 1975 as a sort of possible model. Public opinion surveys were frequently cited as an aid to policy making by the reform-minded. First secretary of Georgia. It conducted about 100 sociological polls among tens of thousands of workers and office employees, Collective farmers, students, school children, pensioners and housewives. It analysed thousands of citizens' letters to the party and state bodies and the editorial offices of the mass media. In Moscow also district party organizations had such councils. In Leningrad, public opinion polls were being conducted

60. Ellen Mickiewicz, no. 58.

since 1967. The city was one of the important initiators of the systematic polling efforts in local party organizations.

A special group for analysing public opinion was set up in 1979 at the CPSU Central Committee. It thoroughly studied letters sent in by working people, their comments and proposals on important programmes advanced by the party in various spheres of life and analysed the results of public opinion polls.⁶¹

In this way, the democratic system and the tradition of studying public opinion were taken over from the Khrushchev period and every attempt was made to increase the role of public opinion in the Soviet political system.

Brezhnev relied in his work on the collective experience of masses. He always stressed that our democracy in action is the right of every citizen, every collective and every Republic to take part in deciding questions of social life, criticising shortcomings and taking an active part in eliminating them. Our state was, is and will continue to be a state of the working people, a state for the working people, a state which is governed by the working people, Brezhnev was reported to have repeatedly stressed.

61. Year Book USSR 1986 (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1986)
p. 96.

CHAPTER 3

PUBLIC OPINION DURING INTERREGNUM

PUBLIC OPINION DURING THE INTERREGNUM

It is striking that during the space of 15 months, from November 1982 to February 1984, the Soviet Union had two successions. Undoubtedly, frequent changeover at the top and resulting personnel turbulence in the lower reaches have their impact. Because of the rigid seniority system that prevails in the Soviet Union and the relative stability in leadership politics that came to be a hallmark of the Brezhnev era, deaths and incapacitation had taken a heavy toll as the average age of the leaders moved ever upward.

Changes in the leadership of the Soviet Union were so rare that they were treated like revolutions. The change finally took place on 10 November 1982, after Brezhnev's 18 years of long rule. Brezhnev's death came as no surprise, but it had not been expected that the man elected to succeed as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union would be Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, the former head of the KGB, a man who was certainly not Brezhnev's choice. The fact that he was not Brezhnev's choice had become increasingly apparent in the last few years.

The 75-year-old leader left behind no clearly designated successor. After Suslov (de facto deputy

general Secretary) Brezhnev's powers were divided up between his confidant Chernenko and Andropov, who, in May 1982, was again made Secretary of the Central Committee. The two men who seemed to be most acutely aware of the seriousness of the situation, became the main rivals in the tug of war over Brezhnev's succession. Part of the explanation for the recurring crisis in political succession lies in the fact that the Soviet political system lacked a constitutional procedure to govern the process of leadership change. One did not know when there would be change of leadership, what factors determined it, who the new leaders would be, nor what the range of powers the new leaders would possess. Thus every change in leadership in the Soviet Union came as a surprise, not only to those outside the country, but to the Soviet people as well.

Brezhnev's death came too early for Chernenko because he had not yet managed to bring about changes in the "collective leadership" - changes approved of by Brezhnev - which would have ushered in a change of the guards. The decisive factor governing the outcome of the tug-of-war between the two contestants for the post of General Secretary was the existing power constellation in the Politburo.¹

1. B. Meissner, "Brezhnev's Legacy in Soviet Politics", Aussen Politik, vol. 34, no. 2, 1983, p. 107.

That Andropov was for the Soviet leadership the best man to meet the challenges had never really been in doubt since his transfer from the KGB in May 1982 and promotion to the office of Party Secretary. His only rival Chernenko, Brezhnev's loyal protege for over 30 years, moved rapidly to consolidate his power after the death of Mikhail Suslov in January 1982. A provincial propagandist with no experience of industry, the economy or the outside world, Chernenko's only qualification for the position was Brezhnev's support, whereas Andropov had been a youth leader, an administrator, a diplomat in a critical post - as Ambassador to Hungary in 1956 - as well as head of the KGB possessing all vital qualifications.

Backed by Ustinov and Gromyko, who due to the necessity to arrive at a quick decision in the interests of the "leadership collective" as a whole, Andropov's candidature also drew support due to pragmatic reasons as well. Andropov who was not only experienced in the Party apparatus but also had police and foreign service experience. But at the same time, on the other hand, Andropov, whose intelligence was undeniable, had numerous weaknesses. At 68, he was the oldest Soviet politician to have assumed the office of General Secretary. He lacked the Charisma of his predecessors and, unlike them, he had no major power base of his own to fall back upon. He had no backing

of police machinery or certain groups of the military leadership. Andropov, therefore, had a much tougher time cementing his power base than did his predecessors.

Thus Andropov proved to be Brezhnev's true heir, not because he was picked by him or because he was liked by him, but because Brezhnev, by the basic style and themes and choices of his regime, eroded the obstacles that would have stood in the way of an Andropov twenty years before.

Andropov, 68, who headed the Soviet secret service, KGB, for 15 years, succeeded Brezhnev on 12 November 1982, as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, the country's most powerful post. The appointment of Andropov as the Soviet party chief confirmed what had for months seemed a distinct possibility. That the succession was not announced immediately after Brezhnev's death could be ascribed to the need to complete the formality of an election by the party Central Committee; there was clear enough indication when it was disclosed that Andropov would head the funeral committee. A unanimous decision, however, may only be a political facade, though the impression was strengthened by the news that Andropov's name had been proposed by Chernenko, widely believed to be the other principal contender for the post. The election of Andropov by the Central Committee ended speculation that

Chernenko, a close aide of Brezhnev, would immediately take over the party chairmanship. The nomination of Andropov by Chernenko was seen as a message of unity.

In November 1982, despite the speed of Andropov's accession, the succession was far from over. Even if the question of "who"? appeared settled, the more important question of "how much power, and for what"? remained open. How Andropov then moved to try to build power and authority, and what sources he drew on gave observers a valuable, if brief look at how Andropov was prepared to approach the general Secretary's classic roles as politician and problem solver.

Each of the four major leaders of the Soviet period prior to Yuri Andropov put his own stamp on the Soviet political system. Each one, by the manner in which he built his power and authority, by the policies he launched and the people he collected around him determined the basic character of developments in his period.

The fifth leader of the Soviet era who lasted only for fifteen months inherited several domestic problems which had become particularly evident. Under the guidance of Leonid Brezhnev the Soviet economy stagnated for years.

The industrial growth rate at the beginning of the 1980s was the lowest in the post-war years. Sluggish agricultural production had become a chronic problem. Consumer goods remained in short supply and much of what was available was of abysmally poor quality. Absenteeism, alcoholism, bribery, indifference to work standards, and theft of government property had become the most obvious signs that had set in within Soviet society. For years the country had been immobilized in a state of corruption economically, socially and politically.²

"The malaise, inertia and failure that had beset many realms of policy during Brezhnev's last years had created a mood of impatience and frustration, even among officials who did not know what to do to solve the problems at a price they were willing to pay".³ At all levels of Soviet society there was a widespread recognition of the need for reforms.

Every succession took place under the sign of some major problems and "the choice of Andropov to succeed Brezhnev reflected a mood within the Politburo and Central

2. Joseph L. Noguee, ed., Soviet Politics: Russia after Brezhnev (New York: Praeger, 1985), p. vii.

3. George W. Breslauer, "Power and Authority in Soviet Elite Politics", in n.2, p. 26.

Committee on behalf of getting the country moving again".⁴ Thus, despite a certain apprehension at the thought of being ruled by the former head of the KGB, there was a certain relief when Andropov was elected as General Secretary. Andropov's meteoric rise within the Politburo indicated that not only key individuals even Soviet people were also looking for decisive, but trustworthy, leadership in new directions. There was an air of expectancy after he was elected as General Secretary. It was supposed that the economy would benefit from greater labour discipline and new ideas. A blind eye would no longer be turned to corruption.

The prevalent view was that at least in the immediate future there would be no significant change of domestic course. When Lenin and Stalin died, Russia trembled, and the history of the Soviet Union was fundamentally altered. With Brezhnev dead, the conventional wisdom held that nothing of consequence will change. This is a measure of what the Soviet Union had become. Involved in past transitions of power, for every Soviet citizen, these issues were of the greatest consequence. It was exactly the problem that nothing might change in Moscow — and yet much might change. The Soviet regime combines a profound continuity with Russian history — including history before 1917, distinguished by persisting repression

4. Ibid., pp. 25-26.

and isolation from the main currents of the outside world - with the instability of dictatorial rule. The latter, paradoxically, is what gives hope for change. Each succession of power in the Soviet Union means an opportunity for something better.

Time had stood still in the Soviet Union, and the last few years of the ailing President's life were a time of political paralysis within the country as problems mounted at home and abroad. Andropov had to act decisively and fast to rescue the Soviet Union from what looked like an approaching social, political and economic crisis. The overriding priority for the new leadership was to revive the economy. Andropov was liberal and broad-minded enough to realize that radical measures were needed, even if these went against traditional ideology.

If style is the man (and this should be true of the communist world as well), then there was to be a qualitative change in the conduct of policies and postures in the post-Brezhnev Soviet Union. Andropov had a personality which was distinctively different from Brezhnev's. Though he had grown within the Soviet political system, he was not the grassroot product of the Communist Party. All the same, over the years he had emerged as a key man in clinching several sensitive issues. "Andropov

possessed the demonstrated intelligence, leadership capacity, technocratic orientation, and decisiveness to answer the yearning for change. And he possessed the toughness and background to reassure conservatives that change would not get out of hand".⁵

There existed a strong sentiment for controlled change that would not have an unanticipated snowball effect and threaten the privileged status of the political establishment. "Andropov moved quickly to project the image of a leader who would fulfill "the mandate" for controlled change. In his first speeches as general Secretary, Andropov dispensed with many of the empty slogans that had filled Brezhnev's speeches. He spoke frankly and unapologetically about the economic and social problems plaguing the country and promised to do something about them. He called for a concerted campaign against official malfeasance, against lack of discipline in the work place (absenteeism, alcoholism, malingering, high labour turnover, and worker pilfering or theft of state property), and against those who cover up such things. He promised to reevaluate old policies: oversubsidization of prices, excessively narrow wage differentials among strata within the working and specialist classes, and an unwillingness

5. Ibid., p. 26.

to reform public administration to make it less centralized and bureaucratized. There were, then, two strains within Andropov's proposals for controlled change: disciplinarian and reformist".⁶

During his first six months in office, Andropov actually put muscle behind only one of these orientations: the disciplinarian. He clearly recognized that linking a campaign for worker discipline to an attack on elite corruption, the combination of deteriorating mass welfare and growing inequalities and corruption could enhance the potential for social unrest.

"He pushed through a series of policies for cracking down on malfeasance, incompetence, and lethargy among officials and workers alike. Mobile police squads were dispatched during working hours to beer halls, public baths, stores with queues, and markets to catch workers who were carousing, bathing, or shopping when they should have been at work. Managers were punished for failing to report or discipline workers who arrived late to work, shirked their duties, came to work inebriated and so on. A considerable number of economic executives at all levels were fired, and some were put on trial for corruption".⁷

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

The first few months of his rule brought a number of instructive hints. Strong efforts were made to fight corruption, incompetence, and indiscipline by firing and prosecuting the worse offenders, relying to a great extent on the party apparatus and people.

There were many rumours about the reforms which Andropov was supposed to introduce. Some experimentation with reform was to be undertaken to increase productivity. In summer 1983, Andropov finally acted on the long-promised reform aspect of his program, though the reforms announced were exceedingly modest in scope. Beginning January 1, 1984, he revealed, five ministries (only two of which were all-union in jurisdiction) would experiment with new operating procedures. Managers of enterprises subordinate to these ministries would be given freer rein to decide how to reward productive workers, how to introduce labour technology, and how to plough profits back into production. The government would make available additional subsidies for managers to reward the best workers and engineers with large bonuses. Before paying bonuses, however, enterprises would be required to demonstrate that they have met their contractual obligations to customer enterprises.⁸

8. Ibid., p. 27.

Andropov did not use the exact word "reform", but he was blunt about the need for some drastic alterations in the way the economy was run. He had singled out four sectors to be kicked hard: the railways, which carried 70% of Soviet goods traffic, the coal industry, Iron and steel, and food industry. Andropov wanted not only to tighten up but to get at the roots of poor economic performance, bad management, lack of incentives, bottlenecks in supply and bad distribution.

Thus Andropov pursued reforms aimed at helping to surmount the economic difficulties faced by the Soviet Union consisting on the one hand of a campaign to combat corruption, cliquery and general inefficiency linked with the call for more discipline order and hard work and on the other hand there were limited reforms in agriculture and industries intensifying production by a limited extension of the rights of producer cooperatives and factories.

Brezhnev ruled in such a way as to satisfy the demands of the most powerful sectors in Soviet political and economic life, and there was a strong pressure on his successors to do likewise. Promoting the free flow of people and ideas could only succeed in an atmosphere of trust. They tried to reform economy, defending the principle of individual liberty. Gestures of openness, of willingness

to talk with whomever comes to power and to reconsider where they all stood, were certainly in order. Upon becoming party chief, like his predecessors, Andropov lost no time to establish a rapport with the masses and make them understand what was plain to him: The state could not give them more than they gave the state.

In the early months, the theme seen in the press was that the campaign against corruption and incompetence should be carried out by mobilizing from below. In early December, in one of the brief reports of Politburo meetings that became a regular Friday feature of the Soviet press after Brezhnev's death, Pravda carried an account of the Politburo's examination of letters received from citizens. However, a follow up editorial made it clear that most of the letters would be sent for action to the party obkoms and raikoms.⁹

A letter from Moscow truck drivers, for example, reminded Pravda's readers that trucks sit idle because their customers are slow about loading and unloading. Consequently, the repression campaign could not be pushed very far without provoking passive resistance, deepening demoralization and affecting economic performance further.

9. Helmut Sonnenfeldt, ed., Soviet Politics in the 1980s (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985). p. 12.

It became necessary to protect the letter writers and others who denounced their colleagues and superiors for their shortcomings on the job. Raids at bathhouses and other excesses soon stopped amid some embarrassment.¹⁰

From the beginning, therefore, the theme of reform could be heard. In his first major speech before the Central Committee in November 1982 Andropov said, "To sum it up, Comrades, there are many urgent tasks in the economy. Of course, I do not have ready recipes for their solution". He cited the need to give greater autonomy to producing units - a hoary theme - but at the same time spoke of the need to proceed cautiously to experiment. In this vein he suggested that local party committees and local Soviets should assume more responsibility for the production of consumer goods.¹¹

As for economic reform in general, Andropov's remarks were circumspect and cautious. The word 'reform' was not mentioned as such. He touched only briefly on the question of freeing factories and farms from the dictates of the central planners. Andropov's words in his speech on November 22, 1982, were widely noted:

"A lot has been said of late about the

10. Ibid., p. 13.

11. Ibid., p. 93.

necessity of broadening the independence of associations and enterprises, of collective farms and state farms", Andropov declared. It is thought that the time has come to take practical steps to resolve this problem. The Politburo has instructed the Council of Ministers and Gasplan to do this".¹²

"Here we must proceed with care, to conduct experiments if necessary, to weigh things, and also take into account the experience of fraternal countries. The broadening of autonomy must in every case be combined with a growth in responsibility and with a concern for the interests of the whole people".¹³

In November 1982 a Politburo meeting endorsed workers' letters urging action on law and order and discipline.¹⁴

Thus Andropov approved an economic experiment aimed at decentralized planning in the plants of five industrial ministries, giving their managers autonomy to take decisions normally taken at a higher level. In April 1983, section head of the Novosibirsk Institute of Economics and Industrial organisation, delivered a report on the economy concluding that the present day complex

12. Jonathan Steele & Eric Abraham, Andropov in Power - From Komsomol to Kremlin (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983), p. 157.

13. Ibid., p. 13.

14. Ibid., p. 93.

economy could no longer be regulated from a single centre and greater initiative and freedom must be given to the working people. Andropov confined himself to a limited reform experiment in five industrial ministries.

The fullest expression of what were presumably Andropov's own views came in the article published under his name in Kommunist in February 1983, entitled "The teaching of Karl Marx and Some Questions of Building Socialism in the USSR", on the 100th anniversary of Karl Marx's death. The theme that emerged from that article was reform-minded. The individual interests must be harnessed to serve society, but through the collective, particularly the brigade or link. The reward, in other words, should go not to the individual alone, but to the work team. Thus, in Andropov's mind, the causes of discipline, order, socialist orthodoxy, and efficiency could be served simultaneously. The entire spirit of what was being prepared, in its stress on the fundamentals of socialist property and collective rewards, was at the opposite pole from "marketization". Policy discussions in the spring of 1983 were to tighten up and improve management, notably through "collective contracts", while maintaining high levels of agricultural investment.

He then sought to give these improvements in

economy a character of permanency by codifying laws on work collectives. He stressed the need to give an important place to the question of further development of democratic principles in the management of production in the new edition of the party programme then under preparation. A new law on work collectives giving industrial workers a say in management decisions affecting them by making it obligatory on such matters as housing allocation, and shop floor managers' appointments, was published in draft form in April 1983 and passed by the Supreme Soviet in July.

The purpose of the new law appeared to be to modernise an existing Soviet practice without offering major concessions or watering down party control. It flashed out in legal form the broad principles of industrial democracy already contained in the new Soviet constitution of 1977. The law was partly a reaction to the fact that the Soviet work force is better educated than it used to be, and that some workers were asking for a greater say in decision-making. Under the law work collectives were permitted to "propose, advise, and suggest", changes which managers must "consider" and "respond to". Meeting of the collectives could be held whenever necessary, and not less than twice a year. The subjects which the collectives could discuss did not

include the appointment of managers, wage levels, or the setting of production norms. Mainly problems of industrial safety, the choice of which workers should receive bonuses, and the ubiquitous questions of 'discipline' were matters falling within its competence. Workers were encouraged to discuss the state of work discipline, and propose ways of punishing slackers.¹⁵

Pravda on June 19 said that these collectives "have become good forums of real, socialist self-government". They led, it was claimed, to greater participation of the workers in running enterprises make every Soviet citizen real master of the country's affairs and further deepen the democratic process.¹⁶

These laws, while encouraging local initiative and giving workers a greater participation in management, also made the work collectives solely responsible for plan targets. The measure facilitating an autonomy of sorts and establishing directness was typical of Andropov's concept of socialist democracy and an intended steps towards the establishment of an advanced socialist society. The principal judge and principal arbiter in determining the advisability of applying one sanction or another was the labour collective itself - the workers, collective farmers or office employees themselves. The law on labour collectives gave this right.

15. Jonathan Steele & Eric Abraham, n. 12, p. 163.

16. Masood Ali Khan, "Andropov Elected Soviet President", New Age, vol. 31, no. 26, June 26, 1983, p. 10.

Andropov also urged to form work brigades, a group of workers in the same part of the production process who are allowed to decide for themselves how to organise the work and distribute the pay. In the same way, he also showed interest in extending the brigade system known as the 'collective contract' in agriculture.

In this way, he was willing to tolerate some experimentation, and favoured a limited decentralization and greater encouragement of lower-level initiative, whether among private peasants, workers' brigades, or factory managers.

Andropov suggested ever broader discussion of draft on work collectives. It was widely discussed by the people throughout the country. Andropov underlined the importance of translating into life in full measure the Draft law on work collectives. The Soviet leader made a powerful plea for seriously implementing the law on work collectives. In this connection at the June 1983 Plenum of the Central Committee Andropov said "...the law must be implacable and its application inevitable. Protection of the interests of the people is one of the mainstays of our socialist democracy...we should declare a real war on such practices when our democratic principles and

standards are not supported by actions".¹⁷

While Andropov was stressing a real implementation of the laws enhancing the role of work collectives and public organizations and bridging the gulf that divided words and deeds, he did not agree to the western advocacy of establishment of some kind of "pluralism" as an "inalienable attribute of democracy".¹⁸ In his speech at the 112th anniversary of Lenin's birth on 22 April 1982 Andropov clearly declared: "In short, we communists are for developing democracy in the interest of socialism, not to the detriment of socialism".¹⁹

Andropov asserted that the people in his society alone know their power. In the same vein the leader of the USSR emphasised "the rights and possibilities of the (Soviet) worker to act as the master of production in all socio-political practice" and "a veritable socialist self-management of the people".²⁰

In his *Kommunist* article Andropov dwelt at length on the complexity of the process of turning "mine"

17. Y.V. Andropov, Speeches, Articles, Interviews (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1984), p. 16.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

20. "Moscow After Andropov," Frontier, vol. 16, no. 27, February 18, 1984, pp. 1-2.

into "ours", that is the real triumph of public ownership of the means of production. Andropov wrote, "The historical experience of real socialism shows that the turning of what is 'my own' privately owned into what is 'ours' and common to all is no simple matter. The revolution in the relations of ownership does not boil down to a single act as a result of which the basic means of production become the property of the whole people. It is far from one and the same thing to acquire the rights of a master and to become a real, wise and thrifty master. The people who have completed socialist revolution for a long time have yet fully to grasp their new position as supreme and undivided owners of all public wealth - to grasp it economically, politically and, if you wish, psychologically, developing a collectivist mentality and behaviour".²¹

He concluded: "The change in property relations does not remove by itself all the negative features of human relationships that have accumulated over the centuries."²²

In his *Kommunist* article Andropov referred to difficulties in the way of development of Soviet democracy. He wrote, "Soviet democracy has and...will still have difficulties of growth conditioned by the material potentialities of society, the level of consciousness of the

21. Y.V. Andropov, n. 17, p. 194.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

masses, their political culture and also by the fact that our society is developing not in hot house atmosphere, not in isolation from the hostile world around us..."²³

The new law on work collectives went into effect on August 1, 1983. In accordance with it, no major production or social question at enterprises or in institutions and organisations could be resolved without the direct participation of workers and office employees.²⁴

N.K. Baibakov, Vice-Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and Chairman of the USSR State Planning Committee, while speaking at the press conference for Soviet and foreign journalists held in Moscow on August 17, said, "Experience shows that the system of economic management still contains excessive regulation of the work of enterprises and restricts their rights in using funds and incentive systems and in making various economic decisions pertaining to the enterprises immediate activity. Therefore, the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet government have deemed it necessary, while consistently and persistently introducing proven forms and methods of management, to put into effect a system of additional measures to expand the rights of production associations

23. Ibid., pp. 204-5.

24. "New Laws on Labour, Management Scanned", The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, vol. XXXV, no. 33, 1983, p. 5.

and increase their responsibility for work results. We have decided to take a circumspect approach to the implementation of the new measures and, before extending the principles set forth in the resolution of the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers to all industry, to test them in five ministries: the Ministry of the Electrical Equipment Industry, the Ministry of Heavy and Transport Machinery, the Belorussian Republic Ministry of Light Industry, the Ukraine Republic Ministry of the Food Industry and the Lithuanian Republic Ministry of Local Industry. This approach will allow us to give fuller consideration to the special features of each branch and then, after generalization of the experiment; to extent all its best elements to the enterprises of other ministries".²⁵

Andropov also highlighted the possibilities for further democratizing the existing procedure for taking decisions on major matters of state and social life. He emphasised broader discussion on the questions relating to Trade Unions, Komsomol, and Women's organisations. He posed the following question : "And cannot greater publicity in work and the regular reporting back of leading executives to the population also help bring the activities of the party and state bodies closer to the needs and interests of the people".²⁶ Trade Unions as before,

25. Ibid.

26. Y.V. Andropov, n. 17, p. 15.

continued to conduct extensive work in labour collectives through the primary trade union organisations, using their broad rights at promoting the further enlistment of the working people in the management of production, the enhancement of the labour collectives' role and the strengthening of socialist labour discipline in all sectors of the national economy.

The long-term trend in Soviet leadership politics has been towards an increasingly collective leadership. The lack of electoral politics in Soviet leadership change has, paradoxically, also strengthened the trend toward collective leadership. Indeed, political leadership can make a difference, and even individual personality can have a major impact on policy overtones. But like Brezhnev, who always remained dependent on the power balances within the so-called collective leadership, Andropov was also dependent on the balance of power that existed before. He avoided any personality cult. When in Andropov's nominating speech to the Central Committee, Chernenko used several key phrases stressing collective leadership and described Andropov as a man who was worthy of the Central Committee's trust because he had assimilated the Brezhnevian style of work, his respect for the opinion of other comrades and passion for collective work, Andropov firmly echoed these themes and commented on

the collective wisdom of the party.²⁷

In his nomination speech, Chernenko called Andropov "a selfless communist dedicated to the cause of the Leninist Party....Members of the Politburo, he said, believed that Andropov had absorbed Brezhnev's style of leadership, Brezhnev's concern about the interests of the people".²⁸ He further praised what he called Andropov's modesty and respect for the opinion of others.

Although Andropov headed the Central Committee for only a short span of time, during that time the party, following the course of the 26th Congress of the CPSU and creatively developing it, ensured the country's steady advance in all directions of economic and social progress with the involvement of people as much as possible. Andropov devoted all his energies, knowledge and enormous life experience to the implementation of the Party's policy and strengthening of its ties with the masses.

The November 1982 Plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee was a model of cohesiveness between the Central Committee and its Politburo and a model of unity between the party and the people. In those difficult days

27. Helmut Sonnenfeldt, n. 9, p. 3.

28. "New Party Leader Pledges Continuity", International Herald Tribune, November 14, 1982, p. 1.

the Central Committee called on Communists and all the Soviet people to close rank even more tightly and to calmly and confidently carry out the policy charted by the 26th Party Congress. This appeal evoked a profound response in the hearts of millions of people.²⁹

All the conditions for the free discussion and for a comradely exchange of opinions had been created at Politburo and Secretariat of the CPSU Central Committee sessions. The need to make such work a more effective means of developing the masses' initiative, energy and commitment was felt.³⁰

In his speech at the Plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee on June 15, Andropov said that "The programme of the party in the present conditions should first of all be a programme of the planned and all-round perfection of developed socialism, and, consequently, of further advance to communism".³¹

Andropov wholeheartedly endorsed the idea of democratization of the party. In his article published in Kommunist in 1983 he wrote:

"Being the nucleus of the political system of Soviet society, the party itself sets an

29. The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, July 13, 1983, vol. XXXV, no. 24, p. 24.

30. Ibid.

31. "Programme to Guide Developed Socialism", New Age vol. 31, June 26, 1983, p. 10.

example of democratic organisation in all its activities. It elaborates and develops democratic principles which become part and parcel of socialist life in all of its spheres. It is one of the most important manifestations of the party's guiding role in society's life, of its inspiring influence on the masses".³²

Speaking of the development of the country's political system, the perfection of Soviet statehood, the expansion of socialist democracy, Andropov noted that many provisions of this type in the current CPSU programme have already been fulfilled, especially after the adoption of the new constitution of the USSR. As to a more long term perspective, he said, we, communists, see it in the gradual development of Soviet statehood into public self-government. We think this will happen by way of the further development of the state of the entire people and a broader involvement of the masses in managing the affairs of society.³³

Were the policy discussions limited to the two to three dozen top figures in the Politburo and the Secretariat, or did it include the thousands more who had a say in various phases of policy? Was the Soviet Union a dictatorship of the party, or did the government (and particularly the military-industrial core of it) have a

32. Y.V. Andropov, n. 17, p. 208.

33. See, n. 31.

meaningful share of power also? During Andropov period the economic tasks, work productivity and discipline, modernization of production and introduction of the latest scientific methods in industry and agriculture were thoroughly debated in the sessions of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Workers' collectives started participating in the discussion and regulation of the questions of enterprises management. In Soviet enterprises various commissions and groups were organised to improve productivity and to give a sense of participation to the workers - such as production conferences, technical councils, innovators' councils, etc. Besides the Party committee and the trade union body these were referred to as "workers' collectives".³⁴

The Marxist idea that to govern the new society is the task of the people, organised in communes, which was outlined by Lenin in the conditions of his country into the formulation the people themselves, united in the Soviets must run the state was followed by Andropov. He totally rejected the interpretation of self-government as "leading to anarcho-syndicalism, to splitting society into independent corporations competing with each other, to democracy without discipline, to the notion of rights without duties".³⁵

34. See n. 20.

35. Y.V. Andropov, n. 17, pp. 206-7.

Andropov saw Soviets of People's Deputies as a type of organizations through which the mass of the workers could participate directly in political life. Even before coming to power, in his report at a ceremonial meeting in Moscow commemorating the 112th anniversary of Lenin's birth on April 22, 1982 Andropov said: "...The Soviets are a form of political organisation which has opened up unsurpassed opportunities for collecting, accumulating, and turning to common advantage the creativity and initiative of the masses, for analysing a wide range of opinions and suggestions in solving any problem. This is a guarantee of adopting such decisions that meet precisely and completely the interests of all classes and social groups, nations and national minorities, all generations of Soviet society".³⁶

Major matters of state and policies of different fields were discussed openly in sessions of Supreme Soviet and people could be present at the discussion of all matters. The draft law on work collectives was widely discussed at the session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

Regarding the role of the local Soviets in his article published in *Kommunist* in 1983 Andropov said: "The experience of our democratic development in accordance

36. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

with the new constitution of the USSR needs to be given special attention and to be summed up. This refers, above all, to the invigoration and ever wider use of local initiative, to the more organic involvement of all work collectives in our common state work. The powers of local Soviets with regard to enterprises, institutions and organisations functioning on their territories have been substantially widened in recent years. The scope of activity of District, Regional, Territorial and Republican (Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics) Soviets will also be increasing in the course of implementing the decisions of the May (1982) plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee on the formation of agro-industrial amalgamations under their authority. The role of representative organs in the exercise of the most important function, the managerial and organising function, of the socialist state, is thus growing. One must also mention such a primary form of management of production, founded by the masses themselves, as the cost-accounting team".³⁷

Public organizations considered as a great means of expressing public opinion were encouraged to take part in the process of government and to defend the interests of the people. In his speech on 15 June 1983

37. Ibid., p. 206.

he said: "And what is the worth of the work of a trade union organization which does not dare raise its voice in defence of the interests of the working people, against particular irregularities in production? Or what is the activity of people's controllers worth if their signals are not heeded and much-needed measures are not taken?"³⁸

Andropov considered it important to involve public organisations in discussion of any state matter. On 15 June 1983 he said: "Let us take, for instance, the existing procedure for taking decisions on major matters of state and social life. There are possibilities for further democratising it. I have in mind ever broader discussion of drafts of such decisions in work collectives; the obligatory heeding, in relevant cases, of the conclusions of trade unions, Komsomol and Women's organisations; a maximally attentive approach to the proposals of working people".³⁹

Young people were encouraged to take the responsibility of their country and to be more active in deciding the question of state life. In his speech on 15 June 1983 Andropov said: "...The role of people's control has grown. The trade unions, now embracing practically all working people in towns and villages, are becoming more active."

38. Ibid., p. 16.

39. Ibid., p. 15.

40. Ibid.

Letters to government, Party and press through which people can express their views and criticise the government continued to receive attention during Andropov period. "The Politburo began to receive thousands of letters complaining about the lawlessness of the police, and since one of its own reports in December promised a serious response to letters from workers, it was forced to reconsider its own tactics. As a result, the government indirectly admitted its own responsibility for the fact that people have to queue during working hours - after all; practically all food shops, and indeed services in general, are usually open only between 9 A.M. and 6 or 7 P.M. In a resolution of the Council of Ministers of the USSR of 17 January, decision was taken to change the working hours of the trade network and of service sector organisations and to increase the number of shops, workshops, hairdressers, etc. which are 'on duty' in the evenings. It was further proposed that the opening times of enterprises, organisations and institutions in the service sphere be reexamined so that they are more convenient for workers'. By the end of January, the round-ups in Moscow and other cities were either no longer taking place or had become more selective."⁴¹ When Yuri Andropov succeeded Brezhnev, his first call was for more better from the population. He urged people to write letters exposing

41. Zhores Medvedev, Andropov, His Life and Death (London: Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp. 159-60.

corruption and mismanagement in economy.

At lower levels of the party hierarchy itself, there were elements of reformulation, of shifting from the archaic notion of media audiences and public opinion to a more probabilistic and complex notions. There was also an increasing awareness among these officials that the media system is efficacious only in so far as it knows the interests and values of the audience and satisfies those demands.

The press and other mass media, mouthpieces for public opinion, which have the functions of discovering and expressing views, opinions and informations and shaping public opinion, were more and more liberalised in Andropov period. In the short period that Andropov held power, certain moves were made which suggested the concern with media efficacy and audience response had high priority. The media carried a routine summary of the agenda items of the Politburo meetings. This once remote body, the political elite, was now presented as an issues oriented committee treating a number of questions. Readers were told what issues were discussed and what general measures were ordered. Obviously there was no way of knowing how fully the report reflects the actual agenda, but the predictable and informative look at the workings of the hitherto obscured

leadership was an important change.⁴²

The other major, indeed, revolutionary, communications' development under Andropov's regime was the use of a press conference conducted by the then chief of staff, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov and the Deputy Foreign Minister, Georgy Kornienko, and moderated by the International Information Department director, Leonid Zamiatin. This event, lasting more than two hours, was broadcast live from the Foreign Ministry auditorium after the Soviets had shot down Korean Airlines civilian passenger flight 007. Earlier in the year, in April, Foreign Minister Gromyko had held a press conference, but this later performance was remarkable, first for its responsiveness to a major international story, second for the extended public appearance of the chief of staff, and third for the sharp and, at times, emotional questions from the audience, including those taken spontaneously from foreign correspondents. Shortly after the pilots who were responsible for the incident were put on television and explained their story to the Soviet public. Still later, in December 1983, after the Soviets withdrew from the intermediate nuclear forces talks, Ogarkov, Kornienko, and Zamiatin once again gave a press conference. Moves of this sort, startling

42. Joseph L. Noguee, n. 2, p. 49.

and unusual for the Soviet public, underline the preoccupation with international news - a preoccupation of the Soviet elite as well as of the Soviet media public.⁴³

When Andropov came to power a shift in the policy towards literature, art and science was expected. Whereas Brezhnev took practically no interest in these problems, entrusting them to Suslov, Andropov clearly showed a deep interest in them. He summoned the President of the Academy of Sciences, Anatoly Aleksandrov, to see him on several occasions. He admitted that talented authors should be allowed a degree of freedom of choice of attitude and subject matter, at the same time he argued that literature, had the duty to help the party and state in its struggle for order.⁴⁴

There were few signs of softness in the first months of Andropov's rule. One was the release after almost a year's detention of a small group of so-called 'Euro-Communists', young academics who had advocated a liberalisation of the Soviet system and who were related to prominent figures in the establishment. The other one

43. Ibid.

44. Zhores Medvedev, n. 41, p. 154.

was permission to emigrate given to the group of Siberian Pentecostalists who had lived for some years in the basement of the American Embassy in Moscow after running in past the Soviet police guards.⁴⁵

The amnesty decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet dated 27 December 1982 during Andropov rule released a few categories of prisoners who had been sentenced for period of up to five years, such as war veterans, medalholders, and women etc. Certain special groups of people serving longer sentenced were also freed. Men over the age of sixty or pregnant women were also set free. Though the amnesty did not include anyone who has been convicted for particularly dangerous crimes against the state. Dissidents, writers and other protesters were released in a great number under Andropov.⁴⁶

There cannot be slightest doubt that Andropov meant what he said when he came to occupy the office of the General Secretary of the CPSU with his limited changes. He certainly wanted to reduce, if not end, corruption in high places and improve the efficiency of the economy by cutting down bureaucratic redtapism and improving productivity through a series of measures, which would have

45. Jonathan Steele & Eric Abraham, n. 12, p. 172.

46. Zhores Medvedev, n. 41, p. 151.

meant wider power for managers and greater incentives for workers. But it is doubtful whether he could have gone very far in either direction.

Change always comes slowly in the Soviet Union and 15 months was not a long time in politics for a 69-year-old whose health had already taken a turn for the worse. Andropov's comments about the need for careful experiments and close study of other socialist countries were revealing. Beneath a general framework of caution and without using the politically loaded word 'reform' Andropov argued for openness to new ideas and a willingness to take controlled risks. He believed in slow and steady progress, not in impetuous bursts of energy like Khrushchev. While fully conscious of the need to change, Andropov at the same time cautioned against hasty changes. Addressing a meeting of party veterans on 15 August 1983, Andropov said: "we must be very cautious when dealing with an economy of such size and complexity as our....., while preparing major decisions, we do our best to study each question thoroughly and resort to extensive experiments in order to analyse, calmly and without haste, the effect of suggested innovations...".⁴⁷

The crucial question for understanding the Andropov era is the justification for the reforms' limited

47. Y.V. Andropov, n. 17, p. 264.

scope. Andropov's efforts were blocked by Politburo-level opposition. At the Central Committee meeting in June 1983, he failed to move several of his supporters into the vacancies in the Politburo. This was a sign that the changes he had been talking about were running into opposition. He understood that reform of a large scope would face overt and covert opposition.

Limits to change were also imposed by his illness, which assumed serious proportions from autumn 1983 on. His health failed him at the crucial moment. Confronted with serious opposition, he was working to build for himself a political machine on which he could ultimately rely to implement and defend more far-reaching changes. The political scientist, watching the Kremlin as the naturalist watches his specimens, could only be disappointed that the Andropov experiment of greater decentralization in economy and other democratic steps was not allowed to proceed. As a former head of the KGB, he knew the political limitations of the Soviet system better than anyone else. He was a realist.

A man of strong will and a sound tactician with a sense of timing, Andropov appeared to have both the skill and the determination to reform the Soviet society. The picture of Andropov which emerges from close study

of his career is that of a cautious moderniser, a man who had the intellectual ability to recognise problems, the common sense and realism to admit them publicly, the imagination to look for, or to ask his aids to look for, workable solutions, and the political will to try to implement them. Soviet communists and all working people viewed him as a remarkable Leninist leader. The entire life of Andropov from simple worker to General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet was a vivid example of selfless service to the party and to the people.

His formidable health problems and short period gave Andropov no real chance to create a new distinctive era in Soviet history. He died before he could witness the fruits of his labours. But even his 15 months at the top of the Soviet political pyramid made a significant impact both inside and outside the Soviet Union. He did not live long enough to create an 'Andropov era', but he was still able to start some new political processes which could be broadly defined as the 'Andropov line'. He was in total command of himself and his country's affairs right till the end. Though he was critically ill, nothing about his illness was ever made known or publicly discussed.

Too brief and inconclusive an episode to count, some will say, a defective trial that should be thrown out of the series. Not so: even though his health deteriorated sharply within three months of his accession and he spent most of the remaining year out of public sight, Andropov nevertheless established himself clearly as a sole leader, outlined an authority-building strategy that, in its essentials, would most likely have characterized his term in office had he lived, and took equally revealing first steps toward consolidating his power. In these three aspects, the brief Andropov era was a true succession, and its lessons must be pondered over.

With Andropov's death the Kremlin question returned. Power had changed hands again within an unexpectedly short space of 15 months. Following the death of President Yuri Andropov the 72-year-old Chernenko assumed the highest and the most powerful post of General Secretary. Chernenko's unanimous election to the key post in the Soviet power structure at an emergency plenum of the CPSU Central Committee indicated a smooth changeover of leadership. Chernenko was the first septuagenarian to become leader of the CPSU and the first politician to achieve the highest office after failing in the previous bid. Hence, he was the first Soviet politician to make a comeback.

A close political ally and an aide of Brezhnev, Chernenko's accession to the top party job did not come entirely as a surprise. He was considered a front runner even to succeed Brezhnev himself in November 1982. But he stood down in favour of Andropov, and himself proposed the latter's name for the top party post.

The era of Chernenko was, and will probably remain the shortest in Soviet-history. In a country where leadership changes have in the past taken decades to occur, Chernenko's tenure of a mere 11 months was like a 100-metre dash-dazzling in its brilliance and unmatched in the burst of power. It was all over even before one knew it was started.

Much of Andropov's legacy was to remain unchanged and was carried forward. His successor in the party's chief post, Chernenko, had made that abundantly clear when at an emergency plenum of the Central Committee he etched out the ideals he would follow and the policies he would pursue. Chernenko told the Plenum that everything would be done to develop the labour activeness of the masses for the implementation of the measures aimed at ensuring a rise in the well-being of the people. Judging from his early speeches and actions Chernenko evidently intended to continue along the lines of his predecessors. While calling for strengthening centralized planning, he stressed the importance of providing

more scope for decision-making at lower levels. He had cited the need for a serious restructuring of the system for managing the economy. The new party chief had pledged himself to work for improving the people's well-being and consolidating the country's economic might. Towards that goal he had exhorted partymen to "carry on and advance by collective efforts" what was started under Andropov's leadership. That he had said would be the best way of paying tribute to Andropov and ensuring continuity in politics.⁴⁸

Chernenko said that the Soviet society had entered a historically lengthy stage of developed socialism. This was a stage of mature socialism. But it was only the beginning of the stage, he explained, when the views, sentiments or working people were formed under the influence not only of our achievement but also of shortcomings and difficulties. Therefore, the idea of perfecting the developed socialism must be adopted as the basis of not only theoretical but of the entire propaganda and educational work as well.

Possibly more significant was the fact that a number of the practices adopted after February 1984 were

48. Vinod Taksal, "Andropov Era", Link, vol. 26, no. 28, 19 February 1984, p. 12.

ones that Chernenko had been calling for years, such as greater attention to people's letters and greater openness in party decision-making.

In his Supreme Soviet election speech Chernenko said that the policy of improving the style and methods of the apparatus which was now a priority of the party leadership was being collectively worked out.

In his address to the plenary session meeting Chernenko clearly committed himself to the principle of collective leadership. As a man with an inclination to strike a balance he was much more likely than Andropov to fit into the collective leadership.⁴⁹

Chernenko dwelt upon the need to strengthen democratic practices within the party, for greater openness in party decision-making and freer debates in party meetings. Chernenko saw CPSU as an effective means of communist education of people in further developing and deepening democracy. It is essential, he emphasised, to reveal more deeply the importance of such fundamental values of socialism as the collectivist spirit & comradely mutual assistance, genuine power of the people and humanism and fraternal friendship among the peoples.

49. B. Meissner, "Soviet Policy from Andropov to Chernenko", Aussen Politik, vol. 35, no. 3, 1984, p. 246.

In several articles, Chernenko had called for a clearer delineation of the functions of party and state and for closer ties between the leadership and the masses.⁵⁰ The fact that he would best like to go even further was evidenced by his two time attendance at the anti-Stalinist play, "Thus we shall conquer" performed by Moscow's Artists Theatre.⁵¹

Even before coming to power in a 1981 article in Kommunist, the party's theoretical journal, Politburo member Chernenko noted that the party would be judged by its ability to recognise the specific interests of each class and each stratum of Soviet society and to correctly combine them with the essential general interests of the entire people, with communist objectives and ideals. For if the party leads poorly Chernenko observed "our policy risks losing its firm social base, its support on the part of the masses....We are firmly convinced that the incomplete or belated analysis of social interests, the neglect of the interests of any particular class or group, and the inability to find the socially necessary 'measure' for combining them are fraught with the danger of social tension, of political and socio-economic crisis".⁵²

50. Ibid., n. 1, p. 110.

51. Ibid., p. 114.

52. K.U. Chernenko, "The Leninist Strategy of Leadership", Kommunist, no. 13, September 1981, pp. 10-11.

On June 15, 1983 on the Plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Chernenko delivered a report emphasising socialist democracy which gave Soviet people broad possibilities for directing the state and society. The party looked at the further development and deepening of democracy as a powerful and effective means for the Communist upbringing of the working people and for moulding the new man. The CPSU Central Committee was urged to carefully study everything born of the people's creativity and encourage in every possible way the development of democracy in the most diverse sphere of public life - including the immediate production sphere.⁵³

Chernenko further observed: "Party has many channels of flexible, effective communication at its disposal that allow it to quickly pick up changes in popular sentiments and to study in depth the masses' interests and needs. These include the comments and letters of working people, questions to lecturers and propagandists, and sociological research. Azerbaijan, Belorussia, Georgia, Latvia, Uzbekistan and a number of Russian Republic and Ukraine Republic provincial party committees have amassed interesting experience in such work. It should be developed. We must

53. The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, July 13, 1983, vol. XXXV, no. 24, p. 5.

switch from appraising the state of ideological processes to actually forecasting them, from random studies of public opinion to systematic polls and perhaps we must even set about organising a center for the study of public opinion".⁵⁴

"While granting the leading role of propaganda's content, one must also not underestimate the importance of its form. The 26th CPSU Congress made this point clear. And we see that such forms of work as methods seminars, "open-letter days" and television dialogues generate interest in propaganda and make it possible to have frank discussions with audiences. We must not shy away from frank discussions with people. Moreover, we must not only be able to explain our policy and to reach the masses, but also to learn from the masses and, as they say, to draw sustenance from them. This should be not only a responsibility but also a requirement for every executive political speeches and regular business-like reports to the working people are the touchstone by which the quality of an executive and his capacity to organise and lead people are tested. The development of socialist democracy is inconceivable without extensive access to information.... we will continue this practice to ensure maximum possible information on issues of

54. Ibid. p. 10.

interest to the people. Obviously, we should make regular appearances on television and in the press obligatory for the executives of ministers, departments and party committees..."⁵⁵

He further said: "we must strictly proceed from Lenin's instruction that the Party "must soberly follow the actual state of class-consciousness and preparedness of the entire class (not only of its communist vanguard), and of all the working people (not only of their advanced elements)".⁵⁶

Talking about the hard core of party and government workers in his speech at a meeting with electorate on 2 March 1984, he said: "Approval by, and support from the people constitute an executive's authority. Whoever has lost them and whoever is deaf to the opinion of the masses cannot and must not hold an executive office".⁵⁷

While talking about giving freedom to workers he said that the CPSU Central Committee should attentively study everything that is born of the creativity of the people, should encourage in every way the development of democracy in the most diverse spheres of social life,

55. Ibid.

56. K.U. Chernenko, Speeches & Writings (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1984), p. 172.

57. Ibid., p. 231.

including directly in production. He said, "It is the duty of Party Committees to search constantly for ways to develop the initiative of the working man, to raise his role in the management of production, to inculcate in every Soviet citizen the feeling of being the full-fledged master of the country".⁵⁸

After coming to power in his speech at the extraordinary Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU on 13 February 1984 he said, "The whole of our experience confirms that the most important source of the party's strength has always been and always will be its ties with the masses; the civic activity of the millions of working people, their practical approach to production matters, to problems of public life".⁵⁹

Like this, in most of his speeches Chernenko stressed that the most important source of the Party's strength was, is and will be its contact with the masses, the public spirited activity of millions of working people. It is the duty of the Communist Party constantly to verify its course, its decisions and actions primarily by the thoughts of the working people.

58. Ibid., p. 177.

59. Ibid., p. 217.

The state organisations of power - Soviets of People's Deputies which were considered the best organs for expressing public opinion in the Soviet political system as they were spontaneous creation of the masses themselves, were given due importance in Chernenko period. While delivering a speech at a meeting with the electorate at the Kremlin Palace of Congress on 2 March 1984 he said, "...our legislations are directed at protecting the interests of the working people and at encouraging them to become more active in work and public life....The main thing is to make sure that both the existing laws and the new laws, which will be adopted, shall serve the flowering of socialist democracy and the interested involvement of ever broader masses in running production, the state and society".⁶⁰

He further said: "The success of the bodies of our people's government, primarily that of the Soviets, hinges on ever greater involvement of efficient and politically mature and thinking citizens in running the affairs of the state. Numbering tens of millions of men and women, the activists of the Soviets should be really active. The opportunities for this have considerably increased over the past few years. In particular, the Soviets at all levels have come to play a more important

60. Ibid., p. 242.

role in tackling a wide range of economic, social and political tasks. It is absolutely correct that the local Soviets have become involved deeper in co-ordinating the activities of the enterprises of the various sectors situated on their territory. It is good that they are increasing control over the production of consumer goods and the development of the services, and protection of the environment. In general it is necessary to continue to extend the controlling functions of the Soviets".⁶¹

In his speech at the Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee on 10 April 1984 he further explained the role of Soviets. He said, "It is through 2,300,000 deputies, representatives of the workers, peasants and intellectuals, working people of all nations and nationalities, and through tens of millions of activists that the affairs of the state are being run in our country.... We have been constantly, particularly since the adoption of the new Soviet constitution, extending the powers of the Soviets at all levels.

We have had a number of resolutions aimed at enhancing the role of the local Soviets in the construction of economic and cultural projects. We hope-and rightly-that this will help to ensure the comprehensive development of local economics, raise a stronger barrier to parochialism and make it possible better to meet the diverse needs of the population and to improve services to it".⁶²

61. Ibid., p. 230.

62. Ibid., p. 238.

It shows that Soviets, as organs of real power of the people expressing their interests and collective experience, were given as much powers as possible in Chernenko period.

Public organizations embracing the entire population of the country, which are also one of the chief channels for expressing the public opinion, were encouraged to play a broader part in the life of the country. Opinions of Trade Union and Komsomol were given a great importance in finalising any policy for the country. While giving a speech at the Extra-ordinary Plenary Meeting on 13 February 1984 he said, "...Trade union and young communist League organisations and economic managers have their work cut out for them. Much depends on the work collectives themselves. They now have extensive rights, which have been given legal force. Now they must be used more fully".⁶³

Talking about decentralizing economy he said in his speech "The system of economic management and the whole of our economic machinery are in need of serious restructuring. Work in this direction has only been started. It includes a large-scale economic experiment in broadening the rights and heightening the responsibility

63. Ibid., p. 218.

of the enterprises".⁶⁴ While giving a speech at a meeting with the electorate at the Kremlin Palace of Congress on 2nd March 1984 he said, "We have opposed and will oppose any actions motivated by narrow departmental or parochial interests. It should be frankly admitted, however, that in certain cases local initiative is handicapped, under the guise of opposition to parochialism. This is absolutely intolerable. Encouragement of economic initiative and creativity at the level of economic regions, associations and enterprises is one of the key tasks of national significance".⁶⁵

Under Chernenko's rule freedom of press, freedom of speech, assembly, demonstration through which people can express their opinion and get the chance to criticise the government were encouraged and guaranteed by Chernenko. The means of mass communication, which are intended to serve the workers' interests and are responsible for keeping people informed were regarded a real rostrum of the whole people.

In his speech at a meeting with the electorate on March 2, 1984, Chernenko said, "Informing people better of how things stand in reality, and throwing more light on

64. Ibid., p. 219.

65. Ibid., p. 227.

the work of Party and government organisations , are extremely important for the further development of the democratic foundations of the Soviet state. The mass media have an important role to play in this respect.... We expect....that they will be more bold in their expression of pressing issues".⁶⁶

Criticism was also encouraged under Chernenko's government. Even before coming to power in his speech on 14 June 1982 he had said "Criticism in the press is, certainly, a sharp weapon. And one should be able to use it without sidetracking from the positions of principledness and objectivity. To us a critical statement is no sensation but a signal, whose sole aim is to eliminate shortcomings".⁶⁷

After coming to power in his speech at a meeting with the electorate on 2 March 1984 he said: "Of course, it is always necessary to show consideration for suggestions and criticism from the public and to display intolerance for suppression of criticism in any form".⁶⁸

There had been a number of public discussions and surveys on party policies in a span of time. Chernenko's

66. Ibid., p. 230.

67. Ibid., p. 183.

68. Ibid., p. 230.

speech at a meeting with the electorate on 2 March 1984 is a clear example of it when he said: "There is probably no place in our vast country where the problems and future of Soviet schools are not being discussed. The problem of reforming the Soviet system of secondary education leaves no one indifferent. It concerns all, both old and young. Nationwide discussion of the "Guidelines for the Reform of General Education and Vocational Training" is a vivid example of how Soviet power tackles problems of national importance. It is an example of genuine democracy".⁶⁹ An opinion survey was also conducted by the Institute of Sociological Research.

Even before coming to power Chernenko saw work with letters as a barometer of public opinion. In his article "The vanguard role of the Communist Party" (Kommunist, no. 6, 1982) Chernenko pleaded for "reassessment of seemingly indisputable theses" in the light of "changing conditions". He gave a call for a resolute struggle against "dogmatism, ossification, of thought and the irrational initiation of existing models". It were Chernenko's efforts to force the party and state bureaucracies to be more responsive to letters from the public which resulted in the 10 December 1982 announcement of the Politburo concerning the value of citizens' letters.⁷⁰

69. Ibid., p. 229.

70. See Baruch A. Hazan, From Brezhnev to Gorbachev (New York, 1987), pp. 63-64.

In his report at the plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee on 14 June 1983, he noted, "The letters of readers, television viewers and radio listeners, and the dispatches from workers and peasant newspapers contributors are a sensitive barometer of public opinion, a full-flowing source of the thoughts, experience and initiative of the masses. And the editorial offices should use them in full measure. In their turn the Party Committees are obliged to see to it that each serious publication finds a live response, becomes an impulse to improve the state of affairs and to achieve new frontiers".⁷¹

After coming to power Chernenko noted that letters to the editors of newspapers should be regarded as "barometers of public opinion". Therefore, free flow of letters from working people to the Central Committee, to the newspapers and also to the Soviets at the levels were encouraged. When referring to the question of feedback, he cited three channels: letters, questions addressed to speaker at public lectures, and sociological research (understood as public opinion surveys). He concluded that "from the evaluation of the state of ideological processes, it is necessary to move on to forecasting, from uncoordinated research on public opinion to a systematic,

71. K.U. Chernenko, n. 56, p. 181.

and perhaps, even to the organisation of a centre for the scientific study of public opinion".⁷²

Letters to the editor were called a good form of public opinion, but it was the creation of a National Survey Research Centre that Chernenko seemed to regard as the decisive move in the improvement of feedback and more effective analysis of the communications audience.

"The seriousness of Chernenko's concern with media efficacy was seen very soon after Andropov's death. He presented to the media and to visitors to Moscow a new and less confrontational image, and within days after the funeral, Igor Moiseyev, the director of a famous dance company, had written an article for the New York Times calling for new cultural contacts on a person to person level".⁷³

There was considerable official encouragement of a more thorough study of public opinion. In April 1984, the largest most prestigious conference on public opinion ever held in the Soviet Union met in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia.

72. Joseph L. Noguee, n. 2, p. 61.

73. Ibid., p. 62.

In this way, Chernenko had called both for an expansion of public opinion polling and other methods of sociological research and more freedom to mass media that could provide the leadership with an accurate sense of the mood of the public and forecast its future behaviour, and for an expansion of public participation in the political process.

All these steps taken by Chernenko to enhance the role of public opinion in Soviet political system project him as a talented organiser of the masses. His consistent striving to be in contact with the masses, his attention to every human destiny, be it that of a talented scientist, a noted metallurgical industry worker, the mother of a soldier, or a young writer.

Chernenko offered a moderately reformist platform that suggested more aggressive experimentation with economic reform, greater democracy within the party, increased public involvement in policy-making, including more candid discussion of the nation's problems, and a measured decentralization of political power, especially to the union republic level at the expense of central authority in Moscow. He specifically lauded the Azerbaijan and Georgian republics for their loosening of controls over intra-party and public discussion and called for the

leadership's greater attention to sociological research and public opinion surveys.

Because of their advanced age and ill health, neither Chernenko nor Andropov served in office for more than a relatively brief transition period.

CHAPTER 4

GORBACHEV'S POLICY OF GLASNOST AND DEMOCRATIZATION
AND QUALITATIVE CHANGES IN FORMATION AND CONSULTATION
OF PUBLIC OPINION

GORBACHEV'S POLICY OF GLASNOST AND DEMOCRATIZATION
AND QUALITATIVE CHANGES IN FORMATION AND CONSULTATION
OF PUBLIC OPINION

Mikhail Sergievich Gorbachev's succession to Chernenko on March 11, 1985 came as a culmination point of a truly meteoric political career. Gorbachev rose from First Secretary of the Party organisation in the Stavropol Krai to the exalted number one position in the Party hierarchy just in 6 years. It was different from the previous ones in that he was considerably younger than his predecessors.

When Gorbachev came to power, he knew that his country was in what he called 'a pre-crisis situation'. The phrase was used by the new General Secretary at the June 1987 Plenum of the Central Committee. "The Brezhnev era, he said, was characterized by the appearance of "pre-crisis phenomenon". The clear implication was that, due to the pattern of Brezhnev's leadership, without the urgent actions undertaken by his successors, the Soviet Union would have found itself at present in a crisis situation".¹

The new General Secretary at the April 1985 plenum openly criticised his predecessors, under whose

1. Seweryn Bialer, "Domestic and International Factors in the Formation of Gorbachev's Reforms", Journal of International Affairs, vol. 42, no. 2, 1989, p. 284.

leadership in the past few years unfavourable tendencies had intensified. A retarding mechanism had developed in the economy which had its origins in the shortcomings that existed in the political system, and which had led to the neglect of housing, the food supply, transport and other matters of vital concern to ordinary people. Parasitic and consumerist attitudes had been growing in the society and the expense of socialist values such as labour enthusiasm and Soviet patriotism. Alcohol abuse, drugtaking and crime had become more widespread. The principle of collective leadership in the party had been violated. Leaders had placed themselves beyond the reach of criticism, and some had become accomplices in if not organizers of criminal activities. Whole republics, regions and ministries had been affected.²

Gorbachev had to manage a society that he admitted was close to becoming "unmanageable". Unfortunately, there were a few prescriptions left over from the founder to tell a modern leader what is to be done? In his book "Perestroika: New Thinking for our country and the world", Gorbachev writes:

"The classics of Marxism-Leninism left us with a

2. Stephen White, Gorbachev And After (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 28-29.

definition of the essential characteristics of socialism. They did not give us a detailed picture of socialism".³

Instead what evolved over the years after Lenin's death and through Stalin's extremism were, Gorbachev writes, forms that "were canonized, idealized and turned into dogma. Hence, the emasculated image of socialism, the exaggerated centralism in management, the neglect of the rich variety of human interests, the underestimation of the active part people play in public life, and the pronounced egalitarian tendencies".⁴

Gorbachev insisted that there is simply no alternative to reforming the current system. He realized that the need for change was brewing not only in the material sphere of life but also in public consciousness. People who had practical experience, a sense of justice and commitment to the ideals of Bolshevism criticised the established practice of doing things. Workers, farmers and intellectuals, Party functionaries centrally and locally, came to ponder the situation in the country. There was a growing awareness that things could not go on like this much longer.

Gorbachev's innate ability, frank diagnosis of

3. M.S. Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World (London: Collins, 1987), p. 45.

4. Ibid.

Soviet problems and apparently keen desire to leave his mark on history made him attempt basic economic and political reforms to improve the lot of the long suffering Soviet people. Even Gromyko in his nomination speech lauded the new leader's ability at "grasping the essence" of problems and organising people and finding a common language with them and noted Gorbachev as a strong leader capable of dealing with the nation's many problems.

There were three factors which promoted radical reforms by Gorbachev. They concern first, the domestic performance of the Soviet system during the Brezhnev era; second, the new and necessary conditions of Soviet economic growth under contemporary circumstances; and third, the changed nature of Soviet society and the conditions of its stability. These factors explain the urgency of the actions undertaken by Gorbachev and the direction of his reform agenda.

Gorbachev unfolded his radical reforms program at April 1985 plenum under the label of perestroika (meaning restructuring) through glasnost (meaning openness) for what he termed as renewal of the socialist system which in his opinion, was stagnating for several years besides being subjected to deformities brought about by criminal lawless activities at the highest level of state power. His programme

of restructuring was intended to remove the stangation, break the indifference of the public and draw them into creative socio-economic developmental activities in ever larger number, ensure the blossoming of a law-governed state, and above all democratise the country discarding the Stalinist monolith.

But it was not the April 1985 plenum where the reform program suddenly appeared. Even before coming to power at the October 1984 plenum, Gorbachev called for the party to "carry out profound transformations in the economy and in the entire system of social relations..."⁵

The first land mark in effecting such phenomenal changes was the Twenty-seventh Congress of the CPSU in February 1986. Described boldly as the "Congress of Creativity", it unfolded the contours of perestroika while analysing in depth the deficiencies, grievous errors and illegalities of the past. In fact, the Congress was the first major event which helped the Soviet people to question and demolish many of the shibboleths carefully nurtured for years. The seeds of what we witness today were sown at that Congress itself. None other than Gorbachev had applied the shock treatment at that Congress by daringly declaring: "It is not enough to see shortcomings and defects,

5. Donald R. Kelley, Soviet Politics from Brezhnev to Gorbachev (New York: Praeger, 1987), p. 123.

to stigmatise them. It is necessary to do everything so that they should not exist. There is no vanguard role of the communists generally; it is expressed in practical deeds". What is more, he had, while speaking about the CPSU at that time, urged the party members to "reconsider our entire work with a fresh party view - at all levels, in all echelons", and quoted Lenin to buttress his ideas: "when the situation has changed and different problems have to be solved, we cannot look back and attempt to solve them by yesterday's methods. Don't try - you won't succeed".⁶

Thus, Gorbachev found no other alternative than a fundamental renewal of society by way of opening up the potential of socialism inherent in its very nature. He realized that the party must display courage and will, abandon those notions of socialism which bore the imprint of certain conditions and especially the period of personality cult, rid itself of old notions of the methods of construction and most important of all, rid itself of everything that had, generally speaking, distorted socialism and fettered the people's creative activities.

6. Sumit Chakravarty, "USSR: A Historic Step", Mainstream, 17 February 1990, vol. XXVIII, no. 17, p. 6.

He concluded "that unless we activate the human factor, that is, unless we take into consideration the diverse interests of people, work collectives, public bodies, and various social groups, unless we rely on them, and draw them into active, constructive endeavour, it will be impossible for us to accomplish any of the tasks set, or to change the situation in the country".⁷

Gorbachev further said, "People, human beings with all their creative diversity, are the makers of history. So the initial task of restructuring - an indispensable condition, necessary if it is to be successful - is to "wake up" those people who have "fallen asleep" and make them truly active and concerned, to ensure that everyone feels as if he is the master of the country, of his enterprise, office, or institute.... Perestroika means mass initiative. It is the comprehensive development of democracy, socialist self-government, encouragement of initiative and creative endeavour, improved order and discipline, more glasnost, criticism and self-criticism in all spheres of our society. It is utmost respect for the individual and consideration for personal dignity".⁸

The fundamental distinctive feature of perestroika

7. M.S. Gorbachev, n. 3, p. 29.

8. Ibid., pp. 29-34.

was that it was called upon to unite as many people as possible in the effort to combat such phenomena as bureaucratism, corruption, abuse of office and so forth and everyone should feel personal responsibility.

Perestroika was conceived and carried through as a revolution in every sense of the term, but revolution was impossible without the masses themselves being revolutionised and making it their own affair. And it was impossible to revolutionise the masses without telling them the truth, explaining the past and imbuing them with a sense of responsibility for shaping the future in all spheres of life.

Under these circumstances it was particularly important to understand properly the fundamental truth that none but complete knowledge of all that is occurring in the nation, in every industry, in every workers' collective will enable us to bring about a situation on which the masses will really know everything, judge everything objectively and do everything consciously, as Lenin put it. Without this it was not possible to raise the people to act for the great cause of perestroika. As Lenin wrote "The people should be told the truth, only then will their eyes be opened and they will learn to fight against untruth".⁹

9. Ivan Laptev, "Glasnost, a Reliable Instrument of Perestroika", International Affairs, no. 6, June 1988, pp. 20-21.

The party, therefore, opted for fully informing the masses of its plans and objectives, of what has taken place previously in the country and what is going on today and of the causes of problems and shortcomings. This is what glasnost meant. There could, therefore, be no perestroika without glasnost. Gorbachev insisted that perestroika and glasnost were interrelated processes and glasnost was a reliable instrument of perestroika. To make perestroika successful everything must be done through glasnost.

In June 1986 in a speech before a special gathering of writers, Gorbachev said: "Restructuring is going very badly. We have no opposition. How then can we check up on ourselves? Only through criticism and self-criticism. The main thing is - through glasnost. There cannot be a society without glasnost".¹⁰ Thus, glasnost - the term variously rendered in English as "openness", "candor", or "publicity" - was one of the most exciting dimensions of the revolution that General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev had brought to the Soviet Union.

The concept of glasnost was not new. 'The term became known in Russia during the last decade of Tsar

10. Robert V. Daniels, Is Russia Reformable?: Change and Resistance from Stalin to Gorbachev (Boulder & London: Westview Press, 1988). p. 118.

Nicholas's reign (1825-55), when debates were held on the projected emancipation of the serfs and what came to be known as the Great Reforms. Introduced by enlightened bureaucrats within the central government, glasnost at that time meant an exchange of opinions within the bureaucracy about the country's much needed social and economic transformation (preobrazovaniye). Nineteenth-century champions of glasnost viewed debates within the government as an effective tool for correcting failures of bureaucratic institutions and thwarting corrupt practices among officials'.¹¹

During the reign of Alexander II (1855-81), several liberal-minded officials attempted to extend glasnost to a genuinely open political debate in order to co-opt groups of radical intelligentsia and to check the growth of the revolutionary movement in Russia. Alexander II used the glasnost policy to describe his reforms in the 1860s.¹²

The concept of glasnost also existed during the early Soviet period. The term was first mentioned in Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's works on the economic and political organisation of the socialist state during 1918-19. In these works, Lenin advocated the open and public criticism of economic

11. Natalie Gross, "Glasnost: Roots and Practice", Problems of Communism, vol. 36, no. 6, November-December 1987, p. 69.

12. Martin Crouch, Revolution and Evolution: Gorbachev and Soviet Politics (New Delhi: Prentice-Hall, 1990), p. 69.

inefficiency and of the cumbersome state bureaucracy. Lenin defined glasnost as "a sword that itself heals the wounds it makes". He saw the function of glasnost as a means to castigate bureaucratic malpractice and stimulate public participation in political life, that is to say, to strengthen the regime's legitimacy.¹³ In Lenin's view, "the state is strong when the masses know everything, render their opinion on every issue, and consciously respond to every policy".¹⁴

It should be noted that Lenin's view of glasnost differed fundamentally from the western concept of the free flow of information. Glasnost was intended to promote the best interests of the regime which set the parameters within which divergent opinions could be voiced.

Stalin also expressed support for the principle of glasnost. After the Shakhty affair (1928) which marked the beginning of Stalin's campaign against so-called class enemies of the state he wrote these words:

"In order to move forward and improve relations between the people and the leaders we should keep the valve of self-criticism open. We should give the Soviet people an opportunity to criticize their leaders for their mistakes so that the leaders do not put on airs and the masses do not distance themselves from their leaders".¹⁵

13. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 45, pp. 390-2.

14. Ibid., vol. 35, p. 21.

15. J.V. Stalin, Works (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1952). pp. 31-32.

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

The concept of glasnost changed in the post-Stalin period, but more in terms of emphasis than essence. During the Khrushchev era, the media was directed to criticize Stalinism and its political supporters. Brezhnev had curtailed public criticism of Stalinism and had restricted artistic freedoms, although he had expanded policy debates among experts and elites on selected issues.

Glasnost played a central role in Gorbachev's efforts to push through his revolutionary perestroika (restructuring) of Soviet social and economic life in the hope that he could shock the USSR out of the "period of stagnation" into which it sank under Brezhnev. Glasnost became most tangible evidence of perestroika, particularly since the 1986 chernobyl disaster. In Gorbachev period glasnost meant an open portrayal for readers, viewers and radio listeners of what was happening in their country and abroad. The aim of glasnost was to make Soviet people better informed, more erudite, more convinced and more confident of the rightness of their cause.

Mikhail Gorbachev appeared to have been impressed with the rational, technocratic approach to glasnost by Professor Zasurskiy, the Dean of the Moscow University School of Journalism that glasnost was imperative for the country's technological development, especially in the areas of electronic media, computer and information sciences and to overcome the trends towards inertia and stagnation in Soviet society.¹⁶

Gorbachev appeared to have believed that glasnost would of itself help to bring about a more energetic and constructive atmosphere in the Soviet workplace and thus to reverse the economic stagnation of the later Brezhnev years. "Broad, up-to-date and honest information", he told a conference in December 1984, "is a sign of trust in people, respect for their intelligence and feelings, and their ability to make sense of developments". Equally, it raised the level of labour activism, reduced bureaucracy and helped to avoid errors in party and state work.¹⁷

"The better the people are informed", Gorbachev told the Central Committee that elected him, "the more consciously they act, the more actively they support the party, its plans and programmatic objectives".¹⁸ People, he wrote in

16. Y. Zasurskiy, ed., Journalism in the Political Structure of Society (Moscow: Politizdat, 1974), pp. 81-82.

17. M.S. Gorbachev, Izbrannye rechi i Stat' i 6 vols. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987-89), vol. 2, p. 95.

18. Ibid., p. 131.

his perestroika "should know what is good, and what is bad, too, in order to multiply the good and combat the bad", glasnost would help them to gain a better understanding of the Soviet past and present, and "on the basis of this understanding, to participate in the restructuring effort consciously".¹⁹

Gorbachev had encouraged criticism of management and personnel at industrial enterprises for failure to meet production norms and to develop new technologies. He had argued that, by stimulating competition between enterprises and creating the incentives for employees to change their attitudes towards work, glasnost improves sluggish labour productivity. The General Secretary had also called for holding discussions at party, Komsomol, trade union, and enterprise meetings in order to stimulate mass participation in decision-making on local issues.²⁰

Citizens' participation in lower level policy-making, Gorbachev evidently believed, would restore the public's eroded trust in the Communist leadership and its ideology. As the Soviet leader pointed out during the January 1987 CPSU Central Committee Plenum: "It is necessary that accountability go hand in hand with a lively and

19. M.S. Gorbachev, n. 3, p. 75.

20. Natalie Gross, n. 11, p. 71.

principled discussion, criticism and self-criticism, business-like suggestions....Then we will satisfy Lenin's requirement that the work of elected officials and organizations be open to everyone....Then there would be no reasons for complaints and appeals to high-level authorities".²¹

The policy of glasnost encouraged public criticism of the party apparatus, the state bureaucracy, and individual officials up through the republic level. In practice, it meant that major institutional actors, i.e., the party, the Komsomol, the ministries, the military, the KGB, and the judiciary, came regularly under fire in the Soviet press.

Certainly glasnost meant far fewer limits on the freedom of the press than anyone could have believed to be possible just before Gorbachev's coming to power. Writers, journalists, historians and social scientists, who for decades had suppressed their frustrations and kept rigidly to the party line, now competed with each other in daring to loosen further the bonds of censorship.

The Soviet press had started reporting nationality conflicts, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, the poor quality of medical care, problems of poverty and vagrancy,

21. Ibid.

draft-dodging demonstrations and strikes and other controversial issues - that is, problems associated with social justice that as a rule had been previously mentioned in the Soviet press only with reference to Western capitalist societies.²²

The quality of public information had steadily deteriorated during the Brezhnev period by discontinuing the publication of any information. The first Soviet post war census, in 1959, was published in sixteen volumes in 1962-63, but it became notably slimmer as the 1970s progressed, and by the early 1980s it was down to a positively anorexic 574 pages compared with 880 pages. Figures of life expectancy, which was evidently declining, were not updated. The latest available figures, in the early 1980s, were those for ten years earlier. Figures on infant mortality were simply discontinued.²³

A very different approach to the provision of information began to emerge in the Gorbachev era under a central statistical administration which was given a new name - the USSR State Statistics Committee - and a new head appointed in 1987.²⁴ The first Gorbachev issue, published

22. Ibid., p. 72.

23. Stephen White, n. 2, p. 85.

24. Pravda, 9 August 1987, p. 3.

in 1986, was almost thirty pages larger than its predecessor, more important, it contained a wealth of information that had not been available for many years. Figures for infant mortality, for instance, were again reported: at 26 per thousand live births. Life expectancy figures returned, at 64 for men and 73 for women, which were still up to ten years less than those for other industrial nations.²⁵

The handbook on population contained the first-ever systematic data on abortions in the USSR. The figures reported were, by international standards, remarkably high. There were 101.2 abortions for every thousand women aged between 15 and 49 in 1986 and it was even higher for the RSFSR.²⁶

The first figures on suicide for many decades appeared in early 1989.²⁷ The new figures appeared on Soviet crime also. "The data, drawn from the files of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, were the first of their kind to appear since the 1920s. Absolute levels of crime, the figures suggested, were lower than in most developed capitalist countries. The rate, however, was increasing sharply. The overall level of reported crime, per head of population, rose by 17.8 per cent in 1988 compared with 1987.²⁸ There were further increase in 1989 and 1990.

25. Pravda, 16 December 1988, p. 3.

26. Naselenie SSSR 1987. Statisticheskii Sbornik (Moscow: Finansy i Statistika, 1988), pp. 318-9.

27. Komsomol' skaya Pravda, 18 January 1989, p. 1.

28. Stephen White, n. 2, p. 87.

Thus, under glasnost abortion, suicide and crime which were forbidden themes before became open for discussion.

Another subject on which Soviet authorities released more quantitative data was drugs problem. One of the earliest articles was by the then minister of the interior, Alexander Vlasov, who admitted in early 1987 that it was a serious and growing concern. The number of registered addicts were 46,000. But 80 per cent of Soviet addicts were less than twenty-one years old, and their number was increasing.²⁹

"There were revelations of many other kinds in the Gorbachev years. The first useful figures for Soviet and Warsaw Pact troops and weapon numbers, for instance, were reported in early 1989. Gorbachev, speaking at the Congress of People's Deputies in May 1989, provided the first meaningful figures for Soviet defence expenditure: at 77 billion rubles, or 15 per cent of the state budget, it was four times higher than the figure previously published. Prime Minister Ryzhkov, speaking at the same gathering, gave the first-ever official figures for the cost of the war in Afghanistan and the extent of Soviet foreign debt".³⁰

Other manifestations of glasnost included more

29. Pravda, 6 January 1987, p. 2.

30. Stephen White, n. 2, p. 91.

complete reportage on accidents and disasters. Chernobyl nuclear plant accident was covered by the press and road deaths began to be reported fully for the first time in 1988. Articles criticizing the lack of glasnost in a particular area usually gave hint at the need for personnel changes. Of course, corruption in the higher echelons of power had been no secret to the Soviet public. Public criticism of those responsible for administrative shortcomings helped Gorbachev to oust from the leadership men too set in their ways or too hostile to his methods to work with him. The exposure of corruption and incompetence in the Moscow administration facilitated the removal from the Politburo of Viktor Grishin.³¹

Glasnost met the demands of intellectual elites for the right to learn the truth about their own society from official sources of information instead of dissident literature and foreign radio broadcast. Furthermore, literary elites had been granted considerable freedom in discussing politically sensitive issues in their work. Works which were published in the West decades ago, finally appeared in Soviet literary journals. The same was true with respect to films and the theatre.

31. Iain Elliot, "How Open is "Openness"? Survey, vol. 30, no. 3, October 1988, p. 8.

There was a change in the official treatment of dissidents. It was in 1986 that a new approach emerged to be dramatically launched by Gorbachev's telephone call to Academician Sakharov in his Gorki exile, inviting him to return to active public life in Moscow. Hundreds of 'prisoners of conscience' were released from detention, and the kinds of non-violent activities for which most had been sentenced ceased to attract punishment.³²

Glasnost provided a fascinating opportunity to learn more about the Soviet past. De-Stalinization made the main feature in fulfilling Gorbachev's promise to leave "no blank pages" in the Soviet history books. Soviet writers had been allowed to scrutinize Stalin's policy of collectivization, to condemn the purges and criticize Stalin's legacy in contemporary Soviet political life.

De-Stalinization had progressed to such an extent that a special Politburo commission was established under Mikhail Solomentsev to investigate the repressions and to rehabilitate victims. Most of the Stalin's major rivals had been "rehabilitated", i.e., declared innocent of any legal wrong doing and reinstated in the ranks of the communist party. Among those rehabilitated in Gorbachev's glasnost campaign were fifteen agrarian economists who were

32. T.H. Rigby, The Changing Soviet System (Hants: Edward Elgar, 1990), pp. 216-7.

purged in the 1930s for opposing collectivization. Similarly, Valery Mezhlauk, head of the state planning committee, commissar for heavy industry, and a deputy premier, who perished in 1938, was praised in the Soviet press because his criticism of superfluous centralism and bureaucracy were relevant in the highest degree.³³

A special tribute was paid to Nikolai Bukharin whose theory of "market socialism" was consistent with some aspects of Gorbachev's economic reform.³⁴ His ideas were praised openly. Even more astonishing is the fact that Lenin's judgement was called into question, while Trotsky was no longer portrayed as the quintessence of evil.³⁵

Due to openness policy Article 6 of the Constitution describing Communist Party as "the leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system", had also been removed. Informal groups appeared, mass demonstrations took place without police interference, and high-ranking party members were criticised by name and their removal demanded.³⁶ At the nineteenth June party conference public allegations were made that some of the

33. Iain Elliot, n. 31, p. 20.

34. F. Burlatskiy, "A Political Testament", Literaturnaya Gazeta, 22 July 1987, p. 2.

35. David E. Powell, "Soviet Glasnost: Definitions and Dimensions", Current History, October 1988, p. 323.

36. Pravda, July 2, 1988, p. 3.

delegates were "criminals". A sealed envelop allegedly identifying these individuals was presented to the General Secretary in the presence of all 5,000 delegates, photographers and television crews.³⁷

Thus, Gorbachev's policy of glasnost was a means and process of informing people, a state of public opinion and a method of shaping it, a lever of managing public affairs and a manifestation of feedback between superiors and subordinates, central and local bodies, political leaders and the masses. It was a policy ensuring participation of masses in political activity, for it enabled them to exercise control, gave them access to adequate information and helped them in freely choosing the right solution.

The general public could offer constructive ideas on how to improve the governmental and economic operations which they personally observed. This helped the leadership steer the country toward better-functioning governmental and economic operations. Promotion of glasnost had a direct contact with destinies of perestroika. In a speech on January 1987 Gorbachev said: "Openness, criticism and self-criticism are vital for us. They are major requisites of the socialist way of life. If someone believes that

37. David E. Powell, n. 35, pp. 323-4.

we need these only for criticising past drawbacks he is making a big mistake. The main point is that openness, criticism and self-criticism, democracy are necessary for our advance, for accomplishing immense tasks. We shall not be able to accomplish these tasks without the people's active involvement. This is why we need all this".³⁸

In conclusion, one can argue that unrestricted freedom of public opinion or political discussion had never been so strongly promoted in Soviet society.

The question arises where glasnost's boundaries lie, whether it was regarded as an end in itself or as an instrument to promote political, economic and social change. Glasnost most assuredly was not what the Westerners understand as freedom of speech or freedom of the press. Greater Candor in the mass media and intellectual life was a prerequisite for democracy and freedom, but it was only a step in that direction. Soviet officials were careful to present glasnost as part of the democratization of their system, rather than as a sign of its transformation into a democracy.

Gorbachev himself was not always clear about the distinction between glasnost in the Soviet Union and

38. Mikhail Gorbachev, Reorganization and the Party's Personnel Policy (Moscow, 1987), p. 77.

traditional Western interpretations of "freedom of information". On the one hand, he announced to a Central Committee Plenum in January 1987, "We need democracy as much as we need air". The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), he went on, "is firm in its conviction that the people should know everything. Openness, criticism and self-criticism, and control carried out by the masses will guarantee the healthy development of our society...." A month later, the General Secretary referred to glasnost as "an indispensable precondition for the democratization of society, one of the most important guarantees that the changes we have begun will be irreversible".³⁹

It follows that glasnost was a highly important expression of Soviet society's democratization, a new feature of the socialist way of life, a form of collective comprehension of all the manifestations and contradictions of the latter. Democracy was impossible without the freedom of thought and speech, without an open and wide clash of opinions, and without a broad critical view of life. In the absence of glasnost there could be no democracy and hence no real participation of the people in government or policy making. Glasnost was a vehicle for interaction between the

39. David E. Powell, n. 35, p. 321.

leaders and the people making it possible to give the people the right orientation.

On the very day of his election as General Secretary, Gorbachev called for "the further perfecting and development of democracy and the whole system of the socialist self-government of the people".⁴⁰ It was conventional, too, that the General Secretary should appeal for the further activation of the masses - which in the context of a steeply declining growth rate was to be construed as an attempt to get people to work more effectively and to respond more readily to the party's initiatives.

Initially it appeared that Gorbachev was conforming very much to the tradition, treating democratization as a distinctly subordinate element in his programme for accelerating socio-economic development. Within six months, however, he had broken the mould. "I wish, comrades", he told the October 1985 Plenum, "to emphasise as forcefully as I can: without the utmost widening and deepening of socialist democracy, that is, without the creation of conditions for the daily, active and effective participation of all working people, their collectives and organisations, in resolving the problems of governmental and social life, we cannot go forward with success".⁴¹

40. M.S. Gorbachev, n. 17, p. 130.

41. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 8.

At the 27th Congress he then underlined the vital place of democratization in his programme by insisting that "...acceleration of society's development is inconceivable and impossible without a further development of all aspects and manifestations of socialist democracy".⁴² His view that democracy entailed an extension of the rights and freedoms of the citizen and a strengthening of socialist legality and the implication of his claim that the socialist order developed successfully only "when the people itself in reality administers its affairs, when millions of people participate in political life",⁴³ these elements in his treatment of democracy at the congress alarmed the traditionalists. Democratization had been the essence of his policies of the April plenum and the XXVII congress.

By the summer of 1986 signs were becoming unmistakable that his talk about ordinary people participating in political life was to be taken seriously. In his book "Perestroika: New Thinking For Our Country and the World", Gorbachev wrote:

"...Only through the consistent development of the democratic forms inherent in socialism and through the expansion of self-government

42. "Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the XXVII Congress delivered by M. Gorbachev," Soviet Review, March 1, 1986 (New Delhi: Information Deptt. of USSR Embassy), p. 59.

43. M.S. Gorbachev, n. 17, pp. 241-2.

can we make progress in production, science and technology, culture and art, and in all social spheres....Perestroika itself can only come through democracy".⁴⁴

Gorbachev criticised the severely centralized management system and made a plea for "more boldly advancing along the path of expanding the rights of enterprises and their independence, introduce economic accountability and, on this basis, increase the responsibility and stake of labour collectives in the final results of work".⁴⁵ On 27th Congress the Central Committee of the CPSU defined its aim of carrying out all-round democratization of management, heightening the part played in it by work collectives, strengthening control from below, and ensuring accountancy and publicity in the work of economic bodies.

Criticising that little room was left for Lenin's idea of the working people's self-management, Gorbachev said in January 1987 that in the Soviet Union, conditions must be created and the suitable forms of production organisation must be evolved for making workers feel that they are the real masters of their enterprises. He

44. Ibid., p. 32.

45. Pravda, 24 April 1985, p. 2.

stated in a speech that "a house can be put in order only by a person who feels that he owns the house".⁴⁶

A new law was made on 30 June 1987 providing greater autonomy and making enterprises genuine cost accounting, self-supporting and self-financing. Elections of enterprise managers were held directly through secret ballots by their own employees. Collective farms and cooperatives were encouraged to work openly.

The fullest statement of Gorbachev's conception of democratization was his address to the 19th Party Conference. Telecast nationally to the Soviet public in lengthy excerpts during the evening news, the Conference symbolically endorsed Gorbachev's appeal to the Soviet people to "learn democracy and public openness". The Conference, after an extended debate adopted a series of resolutions calling for the further democratization of Soviet society and reform of the political system. The changes that were agreed included an entirely new electoral law, which was intended to provide for a degree of competition between candidates, and a set of constitutional amendments which established a new state structure including a full-time working parliament for the first time in modern Soviet history. A Constitutional Review Commission - in effect a Constitutional Court - was also established as a

46. Mikhail Gorbachev, n. 38, p. 27.

step towards what Gorbachev called a 'socialist system of checks and balances'.⁴⁷ The Conference succeeded as a new beginning for democracy in the Soviet Union.

Party programme, adopted in a revised version at the 27th Congress, also referred to the perfection of the electoral system and to the development of its democratic principles. The elections to the local Soviets were held in June 1987, which were timid steps to permit voters an element of choice in a small proportion of electorates. A small minority of district and city party secretaries were chosen in contested elections in 1987 and a considerably larger proportion in 1988. For the first time in Soviet history the contested elections at regional and republic levels were held on 26 March, 1989.⁴⁸ It was the elections to the newly established Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR in March 1989 that saw the first major breakthrough to democracy of choice. It was a big step towards democratization of Soviets.

The aim of the restructuring of political system was to ensure full authority to the Soviets of People's Deputies as the basis of the socialist state system and self-government

47. Pravda, 30 November 1988, p. 2.

48. T.H. Rigby, n. 32, p. 219.

in the country and replacement of the functions and activities of government and administrative agencies by those of Party agencies. The powers and functions of the Soviets were decentralized to ensure the highest possible level of initiative and independence at the local level.

In the process of democratization Gorbachev realized the need for the profound democratization of the party and insisted that there must never again be a recurrence of the deformations that had taken place during the cult of personality and stagnation periods. Democratization of the electoral process within the party was seen as a matter of prime importance. The new party rules highlighted the need for genuine democratization of intra-party debates and decision-makings. The new party rules guaranteed the collective nature of work of all party bodies, pluralism of opinions, freedom of criticism, multifaceted approaches and platforms, the holding of referendums in special cases, the minority's right to uphold its views and the fulfilment of decisions adopted by the majority. The principle of democratic centralism was renewed to ensure democratic unity of party ranks.

Besides inner-party democracy, a historic step

had been taken by the Soviet leadership towards ending the monopoly of power so far enjoyed by the CPSU in Soviet life since the October Revolution of 1917. On March 13, 1990, Article 6 of the USSR Constitution was amended removing the communist Party's monopoly on political power.⁴⁹ Some thousands of organised groups which had started functioning as alternative parties by 1989, were allowed to engage in active criticism of aspects of the Soviet social and political order and to work for changes. Taking away the CPSU's leading and guiding role in Soviet society paved the way for a multi-party democracy in the USSR.

Democratization of party and state organisation will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

Besides democratizing state and party institutions, public discussions on several important issues were encouraged. The number of letters from the people to the press, state and party organizations were regarded as a main form of expressing public opinion and of great political importance. Moreover, public opinion polls had also been conducted by a number of all-level party and state organisations, which is one of the indications of the maturity of

49. Gordon B. Smith, Soviet Politics: Struggling with Change (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1992), p. 123.

socialist democracy.

In 1988 All-Union Institute for the Study of Public Opinion was established in Moscow under the auspices of the Trade Union Council and the State Committee on Labour and Social Questions.⁵⁰ The polls covered a wide range of topics, from assessment of work organizations to the future of perestroika. A detailed analysis of these developments will be taken up in chapters V and VI.

Thus, strong steps were taken by Gorbachev to democratize Soviet society, designed to ensure that ordinary people once again felt themselves to be masters of their own destinies. Democratic reforms in all spheres of Soviet life unleashed the powerful human factor, combining central guidance from above with new and effective mechanisms of control from below. The further democratization of Soviet society was the main task of perestroika without which its success was impossible.

50. Stephen White, n. 2, p. 241.

CHAPTER 5

PUBLIC OPINION AND STATE AND PARTY ORGANISATIONS
DURING GORBACHEV'S POLITICAL REFORMS

PUBLIC OPINION AND STATE AND PARTY ORGANISATIONS DURING
GORBACHEV'S POLITICAL REFORMS

Public opinion in the Soviet Union was at least notionally one of the most important forms of real democracy which pre-supposes an active and direct participation of the people in governing the political, economic and social processes. It was supposed to play an increasingly greater role in solving the problems facing the socialist society and expressed the democratic nature of the Soviet state. Socialism is unthinkable without the daily creative activity of millions of like-minded persons. The building and all-round development of socialism are impossible without the most direct involvement of all working people in social management, without the constant improvement of organizational forms by means of which the masses are involved in a free discussion of outstanding issues and decision-making pertaining to the ways of building a new society. As Lenin pointed out, "the political system and political authority under socialism is authority open to all, it carries out all its functions before the eyes of the masses, is accessible to the masses, springs directly from the masses, and is a direct and immediate instrument of the popular masses, of their will".¹

1. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 10, p. 245.

The Preamble of the 1977 Constitution noted, that among other specific features of developed socialism, "it is a society of true democracy, the political system of which ensures effective management of all public affairs, ever more active participation of the working people in running the state, and the combining of citizens' real rights and freedoms with their obligations and responsibility to society".²

Soviet state organizations, Soviets of People's Deputies and the Communist Party, are regarded as the chief channels of expressing public opinion in the Soviet political system. It goes without saying that the Soviet state and the Communist Party always devised methods useful for studying the public opinion and taking due account of it. These methods served as a sensitive barometer making known the interests of the mass of the working people.

With the building of developed socialist society in the USSR the state of proletarian dictatorship was claimed to have been transformed into a state of the whole people. The state of the whole people, it was asserted, expressed the will and interests of the entire people and ensured a harmonious combination of the interests of various classes, sections and groups, nations and nationalities,

2. Boris Topornin, The New Constitution of the USSR (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), p. 235.

collectives and individuals. Its main specific feature lay in the fact that the people, who were the subject of power, and society as the object of social management actually coincided. This was a state founded, as Lenin put it, "... on a truly democratic, truly internationalist basis..."³

The people exercise state power through Soviets of People's Deputies, an organ expressing the interests of the whole people, which constitute the political foundation of the USSR. Communists always considered the absolute power of popular representation as a most important means of ensuring the supremacy of the people within the state. "We cannot imagine democracy", wrote Lenin, "even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions".⁴ Under socialism popular representation functions as a form of the expression of popular sovereignty, and popular sovereignty as a source of popular representation.

The state organisations of power, Soviets of People's Deputies were considered the best organs for effectively expressing social aspirations, opinions and mood of the masses as they were spontaneous creation of the masses

3. V.I. Lenin, n. 1, vol. 21, p. 414.

4. Ibid., vol. 25, p. 424.

themselves. Under socialism, Lenin said, "for the first time in the history of civilized society, the mass of the population will rise to taking an independent part, not only in voting and elections, but also in the everyday administration of the state".⁵ Since its inception the Soviets were considered to be based on the masses. As Lenin hailed them, "An authority open to all, it carries out all its functions before the eyes of the masses, springs directly from masses and is a direct and immediate instrument of the popular masses, of their will".⁶

With the adoption of the new constitution the role of the Soviets of People's Deputies in the political system of Soviet society as the most democratic body of state power became more important. Article 2 of the Constitution proclaimed "All power in the USSR belongs to the people. The people exercise state power through Soviets of People's Deputies, which constitute the political foundation of the USSR. All other state bodies are under the control of, and accountable to, the Soviet of People's Deputies".⁷

The Soviets of People's Deputies, which are the all-embracing organisations of the people and the embodiment of

5. Ibid., pp. 487-8.

6. Ibid.

7. Boris Topornin, n. 2, p. 237.

their unity, are one of the expressions of public opinion in the state system of the USSR. Soviets embody the democratic nature of Soviet system: the multinational, federative structure of the socialist state. Lenin described the Soviets as such organs of power in which "the entire population is learning the art of administration".⁸

The strength of the Soviets and the entire state apparatus, for that matter, lay in their unity with the people. There was no problem touching on the vital interests of the people that could be settled without the participation of the popular masses.

The meaning of the drawing of the working people into state management lay, not only in the fact that they themselves determine their destiny and supervise social development but also in the fact that only with their participation in government was the state apparatus capable of fully utilising, in the interests of social progress, the advantages of the Soviet socialist system. The highest Leninist principle of socialist democracy aimed at enabling the people to fully exercise state power.

8. V.I. Lenin, n. 1, vol. 27, p. 272.

Soviets as an instrument of drawing the whole of the people into the practical work of the administration, constituted a system of representative bodies of the people. They were formed from the representatives of the working people freely elected and replaceable at any time by the masses. People directly elected deputies of Soviets at all levels. The election of deputies to the Soviets at all levels was a means for drawing broad sections of the people into political activity. This presented an excellent occasion for the most extensive expression of public opinion in the Soviet political process. It provided a means for drawing broad sections of the people into political activity. Elections of deputies gave chance to the people to voice their opinions.

People actively participated in elections. They did not merely participate but themselves managed the elections from the beginning to the end. People nominated candidates for Soviets through public organisations at general meetings that held discussions on several candidates. Article 100 of the 1977 Constitution stated: "The following shall have the right to nominate candidates: branches and organisations of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, trade unions, and the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League; cooperatives and other public organisations; work collectives, and meetings of servicemen

in their military units.

Citizens of the USSR and public organisations are guaranteed the right to free and all-round discussion of the political and personal qualities and competence of candidates, and the right to campaign for them at meetings, in the press, and on television and radio".⁹

Candidates at meetings could be proposed by local public organisations as well as by individual citizens. The various nominees were fully discussed at the meeting. The USSR electoral law guaranteed the free and critical discussion in these meetings of any number of candidates and a majority vote decided which one was to be nominated to represent this or that collective. Millions of citizens took active part in the election campaign. The state provided the people and their organisations all the resources necessary to conduct their campaign.

Election preparation and election itself, organisation of voting and counting of votes was the function of working people themselves. Election Commissions appointed for elections involved millions of citizens. They were formed from representatives of party, trade-

9. Boris Topornin, n. 2, pp. 267-8.

union, komsomol and other public organisations. All this enabled every citizen to express his views and allow party and local government bodies to be better aware of the sentiments and will of the people.

In this way, the electoral arena provided, the most massive and varied opportunities for participation, and in effect it was structured to embrace the whole of adult society. Whether as candidates, campaigners, election officials, or simple voters, the elections engaged the Soviet citizens in legitimising the regime, demonstrating the unanimous harmony of the society.

Local Soviets played a vital role in ensuring broader involvement of workers, collective farmers, engineers, technicians etc. in the verification of fulfilment of the directive of the party and government along with Party Committees and People's control agencies. In local Soviets more effective participation of the masses in the actual work of the government was ensured. Local Soviets were mass organs of state power which were closest to the population. They involved ordinary citizens more directly. For example, there were numerous election meetings at which the electors could meet the candidates. This was not always possible in republic and Supreme Soviet elections. Local elections gave voters the chance to bargain with

local officials over minor matters in-so-far as small favours might be exchanged for votes. The local Soviets were ideally suited to safeguarding the interests and rights of each citizen.

Yet despite all these formal provisions ensuring the role of public opinion in Soviets of People's Deputies, until Gorbachev's reforms changed the face of the Soviet political system, the Government, or state apparatus, in the USSR did not make major decisions affecting the domestic or foreign policies of the country. Rather, the principal function of the state apparatus was to implement policies articulated by the Party leadership. One of the central objectives of the process of Gorbachev's political reforms was "All power to the Soviets" and more generally a shift of executive authority from party to state institutions. The Soviets, in Gorbachev's view, served as the basis of a system of genuinely socialist democracy during the revolutionary years, but soon afterwards fell victim to bureaucratisation and over-detailed regulation by party committees.

In his book "Perestroika New Thinking For Our Country and the World", Gorbachev wrote: "There can be no democratization of society while the Soviets are not involved in the process and their status and activity are

not exposed to revolutionary transformations.... Their real powers lay in the fact that, once created by the masses, they expressed and safeguarded working people's interests. The underlying feature and the secret of their rapid, even spontaneous spread throughout the country was in the fact that they made decisions and implemented them on their own while being in the focus of the public eye, under open control of all those whom their moves might concern. It was a unique and efficient way to combine direct democracy and representative democracy.

However, when the command-economy system of management was propelled into existence, the Soviets were somehow pushed back. Quite a few issues were resolved without their participation, or just left undecided to grow into problems. This lessened the prestige of the Soviets. From that moment the development of socialist democracy began to slow down. Signs appeared that the working people were being alienated from their constitutional right to have direct involvement in the affairs of state. As a result, the principle of the socialist revolution - that power must not only be for working people but also be wielded by working people - was gravely impaired.¹⁰

10. M. Gorbachev, Perestroika New Thinking For our Country and the World (London: Collins, 1988), pp. 110-11.

To enhance the role of Soviets one of the earliest measures of political reform to be directly identified by the General Secretary was electoral reform, which was mentioned briefly in his report to the XXVII Congress in 1986. "It was 'apparently time' he told the delegates, 'to make necessary corrections in our electoral procedures', as well as in the work of the Soviets more generally. The Congress went on, in its resolution on the report, to consider 'correct and timely' the raising of issue of electoral change, and the Party programme, adopted in a revised version at the Congress, also referred to the 'perfection of the electoral system' and to the development of its 'democratic principles'".¹¹ However, the issue of electoral reform was raised directly by none of the speakers at the Congress and the discussion on electoral change was a product of the January 1987 Central Committee plenum.

"Gorbachev himself suggested to the plenum that voters should be able to consider several candidacies and that larger constituencies should be formed for this purpose, each of which would return several members. These proposals were broadly endorsed by the plenum and were then

11. Stephen White, "'Democratisation' in the USSR", Soviet Studies, vol. 42, no. 1, January 1990, p. 4.

carried forward in further discussion in the general and specialist press. There was strong support in the discussion, from both academic specialists and members of the public for an end to the 'crude modelling' of membership of the Soviets, under which the same proportions of women, workers, young people and others were returned year after year, and for a degree of choice among candidates. There was widespread agreement that the vote should be an active rather than a passive one, requiring voters to do more than drop the ballot paper, unmarked and even unread, into the ballot box in order to record a vote in favour".¹²

Under a system of that kind, a war and labour veteran told the newspaper Izvestia, "you pull a pencil out of your pocket - everyone can guess your intentions. Young Pioneers or poll attendants are standing by the polling booth. If you go into the booth, it is clear that you voted against the candidate. Those who don't want to vote against go straight to the ballot box. It is the same at plant trade union elections and party election conferences. You cannot even go off into a corner by yourself before a curious eye is peering over your shoulder".¹³

12. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

13. Izvestia, 10 February 1987, p. 1.

Influenced by considerations such as these and by some evidence that existing arrangements were losing their ability even to mobilise the population, still less convince it,¹⁴ a decree was issued on 29 March 1987 which indicated that an 'experiment' would be conducted in the local elections that were due to take place later that year. The most important feature of this experiment was that, as Gorbachev had urged, a number of large multi-member constituencies were to be formed in which 'as a rule' more candidates would be nominated than seats available. Those who failed to secure election but whose vote was sufficient could become 'reserve deputies', with the right to attend meetings and to secure a full mandate if the elected deputy had for any reason to stand down.¹⁵

"In the event only 23,141 of the 2,251,273 constituencies (just over 1%) were formed on this new multi-member basis, which duly returned 94,184 (or 4.2%) of the 2,231,766 deputies elected on 21 June 1987. Press reports nonetheless made clear that these were elections at least slightly different from those that had preceded them: there were some prominent casualties and, particularly in the multi-member constituencies, survey and other evidence indicated

14. Stephen White, "Reforming the Electoral System", Journal of Communist Studies, vol. 4, no. 4, December 1988, pp.1-2.

15. Pravda, 29 March 1987, p. 2.

a greater degree of voter interest and approval".¹⁶

In his report to the 19th Party Conference Gorbachev concluded that "competitiveness had made the elections 'more lively, the voters more interested and the deputies more conscious of their responsibilities', and called for the new principles to be extended more widely. It should be possible, for instance, to nominate an unlimited number of candidates, and to discuss them freely; and district election conferences should become 'democratic forums for a competitive selection of candidates'. The choice from among these competing candidates should then be made by a 'lively and free expression of the will of the electorate', leading to the selection of 'principled, vigorous and experienced deputies' who could 'effectively represent their constituencies and work energetically on government bodies".¹⁷

A Supreme Soviet by-election in January 1988¹⁸ and republican by-elections in October 1988¹⁹ had already taken place on the basis of these new principles.

To make it clear that these practices were to become universal, the new electoral law which was published in draft

16. Stephen White, n. 11, p. 5.

17. Ibid., p. 5.

18. Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo, 1988, no. 6, p. 59.

19. Izvestia, 26 October 1988, p. 3.

form on 23 October was adopted in its final form on 1 December 1988.²⁰ "The right to nominate was extended to voters' meetings of 500 or more (Article 37), and an unlimited number of candidates could be put forward (Article 38). Deputies could not hold governmental posts at the same time as they exercised their representative duties (Article 11) - this is what Soviet jurists called the 'principle of incompatibility' - and they should normally live or work in the area for which they have been nominated (Article 37). Candidates were required to present their 'programmes' to the electorate (Article 45), and they had the right to appoint up to ten campaign staff to assist them (Article 46). Electors, for their part, were to pass through a booth or room before casting their vote and make a positive indication of their preference unless (exceptionally) only a single candidate was contesting (Article 53). The new law was to apply to all future elections, beginning with the national elections in March 1989 which, the Central Committee promised at its meeting on 28 November 1988, would be 'unlike all those that had preceded them'.²¹

20. Pravda, 23 October 1988, pp. 1-3 (draft); Pravda, 4 December 1988, pp. 1-3 (Law).

21. Stephen White, n. 11, p. 6.

The reforms advocated that "as professional politicians, Soviet deputies will be elected on a competitive basis through secret balloting from a mix of at-large (multi-candidate) and single-member districts. Electoral campaigns will encourage open debate of policies and priorities among the candidates."²²

Until 1989, elections of Soviets of People's Deputies were of little significance in the determination of policy in the USSR; rather, they were exercises in mobilizing citizens for symbolic purposes. Under previous policies all candidates were put forward by the party and ran unopposed. Citizens could vote against a candidate and, in rare instances, candidates were defeated because they failed to garner 50 per cent of the votes. Since the electoral process was designed more as a display of national unity and support for the CPSU than as a mechanism for citizens to influence policies, conflicts.

In elections to local Soviets as early as 1987, by way of "experiment", Soviet voters were offered a choice of candidates only in approximately 5 per cent of the constituencies. The elections to the new Congress of People's Deputies on 26 March 1989 came as a big breakthrough

22. Joel C. Moses, "Democratic Reform in the Gorbachev Era: Dimensions of Reform in the Soviet Union, 1986-1989", The Russian Review, vol. 48, 1989, p. 260.

in the Soviet electoral system.²³ March 1989 elections were so different from what were called "elections" in the Soviet Union in the past that they had little in common except the name. For the first time in the seventy-two years history of the USSR, relatively free competitive elections were held.

For the first time, ordinary Soviet citizens were really involved into the process of selecting their legislators and, in many cases, had the opportunity to choose among several candidates. Candidates were nominated for ballots at grass-roots meetings in their factories or neighbourhoods. Their nominations were then be approved by a district conference of electors. These sessions tended to be boisterous affairs at which disgruntled citizens gave vent to their frustrations and anger.

In the context of elections, the stage was set for the first trial of strength between the party apparatus and the popular initiative groups across the country. It is important to stress here that by the spring 1989 elections the local party bureaucracy and the unsanctioned clubs had a year of rising tensions behind them. Prohibitions, disbandments and fines were well remembered.

23. Archie Brown, "Political Change in the Soviet Union", World Policy Journal, vol. 6, no. 3, Summer 1989, p. 479 (According to Stephen White 1% constituencies).

The question: 'why do we have to ask for permits from them?' gave way increasingly to the slogan: 'No to Elections Without Choice!'.²⁴

The election campaign triggered the informals into action. All across the country they began to enjoy a new and exhilarating experience - the right to campaign in elections and support candidates opposed to the local hierarchies. In addition to the existing informal associations, new ones emerged in many cities. These were primarily the so-called 'Residents' Initiative Groups'. Their task was to mobilize residents in their electoral districts for alternative candidates.

Local authorities systematically violated electoral law by packing nomination meetings with their men, intimidating opposition candidates and disrupting residents' nomination initiatives. That gave rise to the slogan: 'Let's Throw the Bastards Out!'. On 15 March 1989 in Leningrad a rally took place attended by 1,000 people. It was sponsored by the 'Alternative', 'Democratic Restructuring' and 'Memorial' clubs. It was decided to convene a Forum of Leningrad Society, and to work for a united front of all clubs against the apparatus. To coordinate the efforts

24. Vladimir Brovkin, 'Revolution From Below: Informal Political Associations in Russia 1988-1989', Soviet Studies, vol. 42, no. 2, April 1990, p. 249.

of all the clubs a new committee, 'Election 89' was formed. It printed leaflets and set pickets against the uncontested candidate, obkom first secretary Solovev. Some picketers were detained by the KGB 'for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda'. This only added fuel to the fire. It was the 'Election 89' committee that played such a crucial role in defeating all the Leningrad Party bosses in the elections".²⁵ The March 1989 elections provided a series of unexpected defeats for local party and state officials including many who had tried to prevent the nomination of a competitor. The new electoral law, for instance, had opened up the political process to a wide variety of groups and organisations.

Moscow was unrecognisable in those days in March 1989: meetings and rallies at enterprises, televised debates among candidates, activists from various clubs passing leaflets at metro station entrances and a bitter campaign against Eltsin by the Party apparatus.

Approximately three-quarters of the territorial elections to the Congress were competitive ones, but even running in a single-candidate district was no guarantee against defeat, as a number of party officials discovered

25. Ibid., pp. 249-50.

to their dismay when they failed to secure 50 per cent support from those who voted.

A negative vote could be cast by crossing out the names of the candidate or candidates a voter wished to reject. However, all voters had to mark their ballots, even if they wished to support the prospective deputy in a single-candidate election. This was an important change from previous Soviet electoral practice, whereby voters were not obliged to enter the voting booth at all. To drop an unmarked ballot in the ballot box counted as support for the candidate and was the normal way of voting. To make any mark at all on the ballot was, up until the 1989 elections, to draw attention to oneself as a probable negative voter. Thus, the 1989 national elections were the first in Soviet history to combine universal adult suffrage with secrecy of the ballot and the competitive principle in at least a majority of seats".²⁶

Thus, the elections on 26 March 1989 were notable for being the first exercise of electoral democracy in the history of the USSR. These elections were the most free to have been held in the Soviet Union since the elections to the Constituent Assembly in 1917. A number of non-Party

26. Archie Brown, n. 23, p. 480.

candidates were elected to the Congress and in most constituencies, for the first time, Soviet voters had a genuine choice between candidates - where that choice was denied them, they took their revenge by ensuring that the single candidate failed to receive the fifty per cent of electoral support needed to qualify for election.

No doubt, more reforms were necessary in order to improve the electoral process. Nevertheless, Gorbachev had placed the Soviet Union on a course toward more democratization and citizen participation that fundamentally altered the nature of the political system.

Not only democratic elections but there was general agreement that the Soviets should become 'genuine centres of the elaboration and adoption of all major state decisions in the field of legislation and administration'. This meant, for instance, that deputies should be chosen for their professional qualities rather than their social origins, and that they should be able to devote much more of their time to representative duties. The party, equally, should work exclusively through its representatives in the Soviets and make no attempt to discipline them even if - exceptionally - a decision was taken which was at variance - with CPSU policy.

Gorbachev pleaded for making the maximum use of the potentialities of Soviet representative bodies for securing full power for the people and for uniting and mobilizing the masses. In his report at the 27th Congress he said: "That, with the passage of time, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Supreme Soviets of the Union and autonomous republics are becoming increasingly businesslike and effective in their activity is most welcome. It is their duty to progressively improve legislation, supervise the enforcement of law and check on the actual outcome of the work done by each state body and each executive".²⁷

In order to enhance the efficiency of the work of Soviets of People's Deputies, the CPSU Central Committee, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Council of Ministers of the USSR issued a special statement in 1986 greatly expanding their rights. The statement envisaged a complex of measures aimed at making every body of state authority, be it a republican, territorial, regional, district, city or rural communisty Soviet, capable of ensuring an accelerated economic, social and

27. "Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the XXVII Congress delivered by M. Gorbachev", Soviet Review, March 1, 1986 (N.Delhi:Information Department of USSR Embassy), p. 60.

cultural development within its area of jurisdiction and facilitating an enhanced use of all available opportunities to better serve the people's needs. The statement dealt with all the main aspects of the activity of the Soviets of People's Deputies and was a legislative act to be observed by all.²⁸

The January 1987 Plenary Meeting called on Party Committees to keep strictly to the line of enhancing the role of the Soviets, avoiding interference in their affairs. The 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU also pointed out that "the Reform of the political system is primarily aimed at ensuring the full authority of the Soviets of People's Deputies as the basis of the socialist state system and self-government in our country....Party policy-economic, social and ethnic - should be conducted primarily via the bodies of people's representatives...".²⁹

In Gorbachev's speech at the 19th Party Conference the resumption of full authority by the Soviets was in fact the central proposal. "The Soviets", he made clear, "must have more adequate, independent and stable sources of revenue, and greater control over local enterprises".³⁰ There were over 52,000 local Soviets of People's Deputies in the territorials, regions, districts, cities, settlements

28. USSR Year Book 1988 (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1988), pp. 92-93.

29. USSR Year Book 1989 (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1989), p. 72.

30. Stephen White, n. 11, p. 7.

and rural communities of the USSR in the Gorbachev period. They directed state, economic, social and cultural development within their area of jurisdiction; endorsed plans for economic and social development and the local budget; ensured observance of the law; supervised land use, organised the work of various educational establishments; the protection of citizens' rights etc.

Though the local Soviets had indeed significant rights, it was stressed at the 27th CPSU Congress that "for the time being their ability to tackle many of the local problems is limited; there exists excessive centralization in matters which are not always clearly visible from the centre and can be much better solved locally".³¹

Gorbachev's report at the 27th Congress recommended a course of promoting the autonomy and activity of local Soviets and informed that proposals were being worked out to make each Soviet "a full and responsible master in all things related to meeting the people's everyday needs and requirements, in using the allocated funds, the local potentialities and reserves, coordinating and supervising the work of all organizations as concerns servicing the population".³² He suggested "a thorough examination of the

31. See, n. 29, p. 92.

32. See, n. 27, pp. 60-61.

relationship between the Soviets and the centrally-managed enterprises in their territories, and enhance the local bodies' concern for the results of their work".³³

Resolution of the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU also stressed that "...the management of local affairs must be reorganised along the lines of self-government, self-financing and self-sufficiency".³⁴

From the 19th Party Conference in mid-1988 until early 1991, Gorbachev frequently spoke about the desirability of enhancing the scope and responsibilities of regional and local Soviets.

In his address to the 28th CPSU Congress Gorbachev said:

"Revolutionary changes are now taking place in the activity of republican bodies of power, which are gaining jurisdiction over much of what was previously handled by the centre. This gives them new opportunities....The status of the local Soviets is also changing radically under the local Soviets and self-administration Act. They will now have large material resources at their disposal, which must be used rationally in the interests of districts and towns. If we add that the Soviets now have a new legislative basis and new organisational forms, and that the structure and status of the apparatus of the Soviets are changing radically, we will see that there truly are many vitally important

33. Ibid., p. 61.

34. See, n. 29.

problems. We are all vitally interested in the new government bodies asserting themselves more quickly. And the Party committees must in every way promote the processes of democratization and the Soviets' assimilation of their new powers".³⁵

In Gorbachev period some Union Republics insisted on having greater power when deciding questions of building enterprises on their territory under the jurisdiction of the all-union ministries, or when implementing projects which might adversely affect the ecological demographic or social situation in the region. Perestroika had introduced significant changes in this sphere. Questions of local interest were now decided in a more democratic way. A number of important and large-scale projects, such as the construction of the hydro-electric power stations or nuclear power stations, the extension of chemical works or large land improvement projects had been revised taking the arguments of the local population and local public opinion into due consideration.

Soviet leaders did not simply dictate policies, expecting local officials, enterprises and workers to obey dutifully. Politics and political conflict existed in the Soviet Union and policy was the outcome of an ongoing struggle of competing pluralistic interests.

35. Documents and Materials: 28th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1990), pp. 27-28.

Regional secretaries played a vital role in policy implementation, coordinating regional planning, interpreting central policy guidelines within the context of local conditions, resolving conflicts among enterprises and agencies, bargaining with state officials for regional appropriations, and bearing ultimate responsibility for the successor failure of policies within the region.

The new elected legislature was a more serious body than the one that carried that name previously. The new legislature, Gorbachev announced, unlike the rubber-stamp body which it would replace, would remain in session for about eight months of the year instead of eight days. The reform stressed that "convening in formal sessions or in legislative committees for several months each year, deputies at each level will have real power to make laws, select and remove state officials at their respective levels, effectively manage socio-economic policies, and pass on budgets. Local budgets will be funded by significantly increasing the tax base for local governments (taxes on profits) assessed on state enterprises and cooperatives".³⁶

36. Joel C. Moses, n. 22, p. 26.

Resolution of the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU deemed "it necessary to enhance the legislative, managerial and supervisory functions of the Soviets, to transfer decision-making powers to them on all important questions relating to government, and the economic and socio-cultural spheres, and to restore the prerogative of elective bodies over the executive and over the apparatus of the latter....The work of the Soviets should be reorganised: the scope of the questions which they alone decide at their sessions should be expanded..."³⁷

Besides insisting on giving more rights to People's representatives, Gorbachev also underscored the need to heed public opinion at the Soviets' sessions. At the 27th Congress he said: "At their sessions, the Supreme Soviets should lay greater emphasis on discussing the proposals submitted by trade unions, the Komsomols, and other social organisations, the reports of administrative bodies, the situation in different branches of the economy and the development of various regions".³⁸

The newly adopted laws on the role of the Soviets at the restructuring stage encouraged democratic attitudes by the Soviets and their executive bodies as they acted.

37. See, n. 29.

38. See, n. 27, p. 60.

The pivot of their activities was to be their closer link with the people. The new decisions let the Soviets arranged their work in such a way as to become the true bodies of popular government.

Not only the powers and role of people's representative in the Soviets of People's Deputies were enhanced, people were encouraged to take part directly in the work of Soviets. In the socialist state of the whole people, the development of democracy is closely connected with the practice of voters giving mandates to their deputies, the latter's accountability to their electors and reports to their constituencies and the right to recall deputies.

The Soviets of people's Deputies - elected directly by the people were in their work guided by their electors' mandates, being subordinate to, and under the control of the people. During the pre-election campaign the electors made their suggestion and give the candidates their mandates. "These mandates were an expression of the most diverse requirements of the population, reflecting the specific interests of individual groups of working people and of society as a whole. Fulfilment of these mandates was therefore an important part of the work of the Soviets and of their deputies".³⁹ The deputy's mandate

39. M.A. Krutogolov, Talks on Soviet Democracy (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), pp. 103-4.

and his concern to fulfil it were part of the genuine Leninist tradition of democracy.

Gorbachev instructed Deputies to follow the mandates given to them by their electors at nomination meetings. While talking about local Soviets in his speech at the 27th Congress he said: "As they receive the electorate's mandate, local government bodies undertake responsibility for all aspects of life on their territory. If someone may be allowed to say, "this is none of my business", this approach is certainly unacceptable to the Soviets. Housing and education, public health and consumer goods, trade and the services, public transport and the protection of nature are all paramount concerns of the Soviets".⁴⁰ The 19th Party Conference also stressed that "...we must ensure a situation at all levels would work openly, in full view of the electorate...."⁴¹ Practice shows that 9 out of 10 mandates were implemented in the Gorbachev period.

Besides electing deputies for Soviets, people had the right to recall them if they have not justified their trust. The right to recall was given concrete expression and practical guarantee by the law on the recall of a deputy of the Supreme Soviet, passed on 30 October 1959

40. See, n. 27.

41. See, n. 29, p. 73.

and corresponding laws in the Union Republics.⁴²

A deputy could be recalled at any time by a majority decision of his constituents. "The decision was taken by an open vote after discussion in which each public organisation and each citizen had the right to unimpeded action in support of or against the decision to recall".⁴³ Thus, from raising the question of recall to establishing the results of the elections, the entire process took place with the direct participation of the electorate, work collectives and public organisation. Gorbachev's process of democratization and the increasing role of public opinion in Soviet political system called for a real mechanism for deputies' recall by the people. This right to recall existed just not on paper. The use of it was said to run high.

Deputies elected by people at all levels were not free from accountability to the voters after their election. They had to report regularly to their electors about their activities. The law also stipulated that Deputies of the Supreme Soviet must report at least once a year and Deputies of the local Soviets at least twice a year to their electorate.⁴⁴ Gorbachev's reforms strongly stressed regular

42. M.A. Krutogolov, n. 39, p. 97.

43. Ibid.

44. Boris Topornin, n. 2, p. 185.

reports by deputies on their work to electorates.

Soviet people directly participated in the vigorous activities of the people's voluntary organisations - which were a graphic example of the growing democratization of Soviet society. This involvement in the work of the Soviets, standing commissions and executive committees was, as it were, a school of statehood and civic maturity and it was raised to a higher level by Gorbachev's reforms. These voluntary organisations (called aktiv) of people at local level were engaged as voluntary workers in various standing commissions and committees of local Soviets - which is a good example of self-administration in Gorbachev period. These activists participated in sessions of the Soviets, in the sittings of the executive committees and in the standing commissions. They took an active part in the discussion of the reports of the people's deputies and heads of the organs of state power. This involvement of ordinary citizens in the actual work of government enlisted not only their physical power but their criticism and suggestion. In this way, people's daily participation in the state affairs was extended to a great number by Gorbachev.

People's control committees which were organised to take up complaints against the functioning of various ministries and which were empowered to rectify the errors, provided yet

another channel through which people participated in affairs of the state. The district, town, regional and territorial control committees were set up by the corresponding Soviets of working People's Deputies. The members of such Committees were selected from among the workers, collective farmers, office employees, specialists and journalists etc. All committees included representatives from different groups of the population, people of all trades, ages and positions. Thus, People's Control Committees assured broad participation of working masses in managing the affairs of the state.

Gorbachev's report to the 27th CPSU Congress stressed activating people's Control Committees in everyday practice. In fact, if implemented sincerely, the mechanism of People's Control Committees groups and teams had the potentiality of enabling every citizen to actively influence administrative decision-making, verify fulfilment of decisions, and get the requisite information about the activity of the apparatus.

Meetings, discussions practical and theoretical conferences, general gatherings of workers, collective farmers and office workers at their enterprises, farms and institutions were just some of the means for drawing wide sections of the population into participating in the work of legislation. People more actively took part in the free and open discussion of key issues concerning their

life and drafting of laws and measures of All-Union and local significance. Thus, only after nationwide discussion the new laws were passed by the Supreme Soviet. At the 27th Congress Gorbachev said: "Our Constitution provides for nation-wide discussions and referendums on major issues of our country's life and for discussions of decisions passed by local Soviets. We must expedite the drafting of a law on this highly important question. We must make better use of such reliable channels for the development of direct democracy as meetings of citizens, constituents' mandates, people's letters, the press, radio, T.V., as well as all other means of eliciting public opinion and of making a quick and attentive response to the people's needs and mood".⁴⁵

The new electoral law and constitutional amendments were published in draft form on 23 and 24 October 1988 respecting, leaving about a month for a Soviet-style debate. According to Gorbachev's report to the Supreme Soviet on 29 November, millions of citizens participated in the discussion, and more than 3,00,000 specific comments or proposals were submitted. In response to these proposals, 32 of the 62 articles in the electoral law were revised, and 26 of the 55 articles in the constitutional amendments".⁴⁶ The debate published and,

45. See, n. 27, pp. 64-65.

46. Stephen White, n. 11, p. 10.

at countless meetings of an official or unofficial character, unpublished - covered a wide range, from technical imperfections in the two drafts to the food supply and law enforcement.⁴⁷

The new Supreme Soviet was supposed to emphasise different spheres of policy and the whole nation was involved in its proceedings by means of radio and T.V. and free access for all interested citizens. In the summer of 1989, as Gorbachev addressed the new Congress of People's Deputies, he appeared to look out upon a country in which major political decisions would henceforth be determined by the relatively free interplay of individuals and interest groups. "The two week session, replete with the clash of ideas, personalities and interests, with arresting revelations, and with spontaneous outbursts and passionate debate, galvanised the tens of millions of Soviet people who watched it on television".⁴⁸ The reform process, seen in this perspective, was part of a much wider movement of democratising change in the communist system.

47. Ibid., p. 11.

48. T.H. Rigby, The Changing Soviet System (Hants: Edward Elgar, 1990), p. 221.

People participated not only in nation-wide discussion but also criticised Soviets' activities by writing them letters which strengthened and broadened the link between Soviets and the people and ensured the participation of the population in the conduct of state. In their turn, the Soviets also encouraged work with letters. As far back as 1967 the first comprehensive draft of an all-union legal provision regarding letters from the public was prepared which was adopted in a decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet on 12 April 1968. The New Constitution also by introducing two new articles, Article 49 and Article 58, gave official recognition to citizens' rights to submit letters and criticism to state organisations and obligation of officials to respond to them within specific time limits.

Gorbachev encouraged Soviets to work with letters and Soviets at all levels got a large number of letters by people criticising shortcomings and sending proposals. Thus 80,000 letters were received concerning the New electoral law out of which only 700 opposed the changes. The great majority of comments, however, were reportedly favourable. The general theme of the comments was one of broad support.⁴⁹

49. Stephen White, n. 11, p. 11.

A number of surveys and polls were conducted on new electoral law on public opinion. These surveys indicated that the introduced changes were popular. Public opinion poll in the Ukraine, for instance, revealed that a very high proportion of the voters approached from 81 per cent to 95 per cent - favoured the limited experiment of 1987 by which more candidates were nominated than seats available in a small number of constituencies. Another poll conducted by the Institute of Sociological Research and the Institute of State and Law of the USSR Academy of Sciences found that 58 per cent of those asked were in favour of the electoral experiment, but that 77% supported it after the elections had taken place.⁵⁰

Surveys conducted in 1989 indicated that a majority of voters took a positive view of the new electoral arrangements (only 19.4% saw no real improvement over those of earlier years), and that about half of those asked thought that the elected Soviets would work better.⁵¹

The first Congress of People's Deputies, according to a series of telephone polls conducted while it was in session, was followed closely throughout the country: from 61 per cent, in the Kazakh capital Alma-Ata, up to

50. Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo, 1988, n. 11, p. 42.

51. *Ibid.*, 1989, n. 7, p. 24.

92 per cent, in the Georgian Capital Tbilisi, claimed to be watching or listening to its proceedings 'constantly' or 'more or less constantly' (Moscow and Leningrad came in between, with 87 and 78 per cent respectively)".⁵²

Between 79 and 88 per cent of those polled, in various republican capitals, thought the Congress was operating 'completely' or 'more or less democratically'.⁵³

Between 52 per cent (in Kiev) and 80 per cent (in Tallinn) of respondents were largely or entirely in agreement with the views that had been expressed by the deputies from their area at the Congress; and the overwhelming majority of all cases (from 81 to 93 per cent) supported the election of Gorbachev as Chairman of the Supreme Soviet.⁵⁴ Over 1,41,000 members of the public, prompted no doubt in part by the continuous television transmission of its proceedings, were sufficiently moved to send telegrams or other communications to the Congress as it was meeting.⁵⁵

In this way, in Gorbachev period the Soviets had become a strong and complex system of bodies combining legislative, managerial and control functions. With the profound process of socio-economic restructuring under way

52. Stephen White, Gorbachev and After (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 68.

53. Izvestia, 29 May 1989, p. 8.

54. Ibid., 31 May 1989, p. 7 and 29 May 1989, p. 8.

55. Pravda, 20 July 1989, p. 2.

in the country, the Soviets, as the USSR's political basis, had become the main instrument of changes. Reform advocates foresaw the transformation of Soviets into the dominant sovereign legislative institution of the entire political system. As the influence of the CPSU declined, power shifted to the Supreme Soviet and the republic Soviets.

It is true, that Gorbachev's proposal to the 19th Party Conference that the Party first secretaries should also head Soviets and later the creation of the post of President - paved the way for his own assumption of the two supreme offices - was hardly the most obvious way of protecting the fledgling democracy of the Soviets against the party. Yet despite the retrograde character of the provision for making the party secretaries heads of the Soviets, there took place an overall activation of the Soviets at all levels.

In addition to the Soviets of People's Deputies, Communist Party of the Soviet Union was also the prominent barometer expressing public opinion, exponent and mainstay of socialist democracy. The drawing of the working masses into managing social and political affairs—such was the road followed by the Communist Party in developing the Soviet political system and the democratic principles of

state and social life. The Communist Party played an important role in the development of Soviet democracy and showed its tremendous constructive efforts to provide conditions for the exercise of citizen's rights and freedoms and for their active participation in the work of state and public organizations, in the building of communism. It was the tried and tested militant vanguard of the Soviet people, which united, on a voluntary basis, the more advanced, politically more conscious section of the working class, collective-farm peasantry and intelligentsia of the USSR. The CPSU held the leading place in the socialist political system.

Article 6 of the Constitution announced:

"The leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organizations and public organizations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The CPSU exists for the people and serves the people". 56

Since its birth Lenin did his utmost to make it a mass party in the full sense of the term. Lenin observed: "We can administer only when we express correctly what the people are conscious of. Unless we do this, the communist party will not lead the proletariat, the proletariat will not lead the masses".⁵⁷ Lenin saw the necessary condition

56. Boris Topornin, n. 2, p. 238.

57. V.I. Lenin, n. 1, vol. 33, p. 304.

for the party's success in its ability to link up with the broadest masses of the working people, to carry on all its activities among the masses, and to win the confidence and support of the broad masses and not to lag behind them.

Before the October Revolution, Lenin wrote, "to do service to the masses and express their interests, having correctly conceived those interests, the advanced contingent, the organisation, must carry on all its activity among the masses, drawing from the masses all the best forces without any exception, at every step verifying carefully and objectively whether contact with the masses is being maintained and whether it is a live contact. In this way and only in this way, does the advanced contingent train and enlighten the masses, expressing their interests, teaching them organization and directing all the activities of the masses along the path of conscious class politics".⁵⁸ Throughout its history (with the exception of the cult period) the CPSU had always worked among the people.

The Communist Party, not linked to any departmental, professional or local interests, was the highest form of the socio-political organisation of the working people. Active

58. Ibid., vol. 19, p. 40.

involvement of workers, peasants and intellectuals in public activities through party membership was one of the main ways to attract them into running the affairs of society and the state. For millions of workers the party was a school of political education, where they learnt the techniques of leadership which are the starting point for their work in various posts.

In Gorbachev's political reforms it was believed that the success of the reform of the political system decisively depended on the work of the party and made it binding on all party organisations and all communists to act vigorously and creatively in the tackling of the issues at hand. As the initiator and vigorous champion of the reform, the party had to effectively discharge its mission as the political vanguard of the working class and all working people. Perestroika, Gorbachev told the 19th Party Conference in 1988, could 'not be accomplished without the guiding activity of the party, without giving effect to its political course. Without this perestroika (would) be doomed politically, ideologically and organisationally.⁵⁹

Although party's constitutionally guaranteed vanguard position (Article 6) was abandoned in later years

59. M.S. Gorbachev, Izbrannye rechi i Stat'i 6 vols. (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987-89), vol. 6, p. 382.

and multi-party system was introduced, even then Gorbachev announced that the CPSU must properly remain the 'political leader' of the wider society.⁶⁰

Gorbachev admitted with a surprising candour that, 'let us say frankly, centrifugal tendencies, the integrating role of the party is irreplaceable'.⁶¹ Gorbachev's speech of 25 April 1989, ended with a ringing declaration that 'the party remains the natural political leader, the sole realistic force capable of ensuring stability on the basis of revolutionary changes...'⁶²

In the process of restructuring, the CPSU demonstrated once again that it was the vehicle of the programmatic goals of society and the vanguard of the people. It produced an objective critical analysis of present state of Soviet society and the party itself; proposed the programme of perestroika, rallying the mass of the people around its ideas and organised practical work to effect a revolutionary restructuring of social relations. More generally, the further democratization of Soviet society had become the party's most urgent task.

The CPSU with its 20 million members could 'ensure

60. Pravda, 23 March 1989, p. 1 and 15 January 1990, p. 2.

61. Pravda, 31 March 1989, p. 2.

62. Ibid., 27 April 1989, p. 2.

the transition to a renovated democratic model of socialism, without dangerous cataclysms and with minimal expense for society'.⁶³ Gorbachev emphasised the great role of the party 'as the organizing and integrating force in society'. Political platform of the party was needed as never before and it was to express 'the interests of the whole people'.⁶⁴

The party, Gorbachev observed, had to learn "'to live and work in conditions of democracy'; firmly discarding 'all attempts to return to the old methods'. Its cadres should 'emphatically change their style of work, go out to meet people, live with their problems, interests and cares. To act within the old terms of reference - 'to allow or not to allow, to permit or not to permit' - was no longer acceptable. 'This's all gone already. That's nostalgia for authoritarian methods! Strength and courage consist in knowing how to guide people, to convince by the strength of logic, partiinost and devotion to socialism, to unite and consolidate. Try to do that without dialogue'!"⁶⁵

The party needed restructuring of its own activities. In his speech of 17 June 1986 Gorbachev said:

"The activity of millions of working people, the scale and depth of people's creative endeavour - the decisive factor of acceleration - in many respects depend on how

63. Pravda, 24 February 1989, p. 2.

64. Ibid., 11 January 1989, p. 1.

65. John Gooding, "Gorbachev and Democracy", Soviet Studies, vol. 42, no. 2, April 1990, p. 216.

Party organisations operate. Only by replacing the human being at the Centre of Party work will we be able to carry out the tasks set by the Congress. The essence of the radical restructuring of Party work lies precisely in turning to people, to real work".⁶⁶

There was broad agreement that party should reconsider the doctrine of democratic centralism so that lower party organisations and individual members enjoyed a greater degree of autonomy. At the 27th CPSU Congress Gorbachev said:

"The purpose of restructuring Party work is that each party organisation—from republican to primary—should vigorously implement the course set by the April Plenary Meeting and live in an atmosphere of quest, of renewal of the forms and methods of its activity. This can only be done through the efforts of all the Communists, the utmost promotion of democracy within the party itself, the application of the principle of collective leadership at all levels, the promotion of criticism and self-criticism, control, and a responsible attitude to the work at hand. It is only then that the spirit of novelty is generated, that inertness and stagnation become intolerable".⁶⁷

It was found impossible for the CPSU to play the vanguard role in perestroika and in the renewal of

66. M.S. Gorbachev, Speeches and Writings, vol. 2 (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987), p. 23.

67. See, n. 27, p. 83.

Soviet society without a profound democratization of its activities. In the emergent politics of the market, in other words, the party had to acquire the arts of persuasion and the path of democratization. To lead the political reforms the party had to restructure itself with the promotion of democratic ideals and norms of behaviour.

Gorbachev's aim appeared nothing less than transformation of the whole traditional culture of the party and its most fundamental assumptions. A party that was remote, authoritarian, addicted to closed-door methods and of its essence above the law would metamorphose itself into one that engaged in constant dialogue with the people, was ready to argue its case against the most extreme opponents, was open-handed in its methods and would humbly place itself beneath the law. A party which might indeed have cared before but had manifestly failed to show that it did would now have to prove that it was caring, would have to respond not only to what it deemed people to need but to what they themselves thought that they needed. The transformation Gorbachev aspired to was so profound that it was hard to see the new party bearing much more than a nominal resemblance to the one from whose ashes it had to arise.⁶⁸

68. John Gooding, n. 65, p. 216.

In his report to 28th Congress of CPSU Gorbachev said:

"The Party will be the vanguard of society and will be able to act successfully only if it is wholly aware of its new role, completes its democratic reforms rapidly and learns to work with the masses in a new way more promptly. It is necessary to overcome the alienation from the people we have inherited from the past. This is to be achieved first of all by renewal of the activity of primary party organisations, by appointing new personnel and by enhancing their authority".⁶⁹

In Gorbachev period pursuing the Leninist course, CPSU considered the study of public opinion as of great significance. It created the necessary conditions for probing and monitoring public opinion through carefully conducted research. It always attached primary importance to strengthening of its ties with the masses. The party strove to develop democratic principles in all spheres of the creative work of the masses so that their consciousness be raised and their organisation improved, so that the working class and all the working people be drawn into the process of state administration and solution of all problems affecting society.

In his report to the 27th Congress Gorbachev had said, "The party is the guiding force and the principal

69. See, n. 35, p. 58.

guarantor of the development of socialist self-government. Playing the leading role in society, the Party is itself the highest form of a self-governing socio-political organization. By promoting inner-party democracy and enhancing the activity of communists at all levels of the political system, the CPSU sets the right direction for the process of furthering the people's socialist self-government and broadening the participation of the masses and of each person in the affairs of the country".⁷⁰

The new Edition of the Party programme and an updated version of the Rules which were adopted at the 27th Congress also enhanced the party's guiding role in society in the process of advancing Soviet democracy, active involvement of people in its activities and highlighted the need for further deepening the democratic character of the socialist system. The new Party programme put forth the task of "consistent and unswerving furtherance of the people's socialist self-government".⁷¹ Gorbachev said: "Our Party programme aims at the most effective exercise of all forms of direct democracy, of direct participation by the popular masses in the elaboration, adoption and execution of governmental and other decisions".⁷²

70. See, n. 27, pp. 59-60.

71. Ibid., p. 59.

72. Ibid., p. 63.

Thus, the New Party programme referred to advancing Soviet democracy and increasingly promoting socialist self-government by the people on the basis of active and effective participation of working people, their collectives and organisations in decision-making concerning the affairs of state and society as the strategic line of development of the political system of Soviet society.

The amendments and additions introduced into the Party Rules said that the CPSU while remaining in its class essence and ideology the party of the working class, has become the party of the whole people. The party existed for the people and served the people. It defined the general guidelines of the country's development, ensured the scientific guidance of the people's creative activities, and made their effort to achieve the ultimate goal - the victory of communism - organised, planned and purposeful.⁷³

In his report to the 27th Congress Gorbachev drew attention to the question of improving the forms and methods of party leadership. The resolution on the political report stated that Party pays special attention to the exercise of all forms of direct democracy which should be further improved through citizens' meetings, constituents' suggestions,

73. See, n. 28, p. 68.

the press, radio and television, letters by working people and all other means of expressing public opinion.⁷⁴ The resolution further stated that the party regards the deepening of citizen's rights and freedoms and the strengthening of their guarantees as its primary duty.

All this indicated Gorbachev's efforts to make party more democratic and his concern to broaden the participation of the working people in running the affairs of society and state and to create conditions for all round flourishing of the individual.

The main idea of the January Plenary Meeting of 1987 too was to promote democracy in the economy, in politics and within the party itself. The creativity of the masses was considered the decisive force of perestroika. Since its inception, the party had been built at different levels of the political system. Party had adopted a cellular structure. That is, in every factory, every collective farm, every enterprise, every hospital in which there were three or more party members, a primary party organisation was formed. The party relied on the primary party organisations in every factory, enterprise, and collective to be its "eyes and ears at the grass-root level", reporting on problems, inefficiency, and mismanagement. In Gorbachev

74. Ibid., p. 65.

period the CPSU consisted of 4,33,000 primary party organisations.

Party membership was open to any citizen. Mass recruitment into the party had been a feature of every period of crisis in the history of the Soviet regime, and the succession crisis following Lenin's death was no exception. In an effort to pack the CPSU with his supporters, Stalin launched the "Lenin enrollment" in 1924. In three months, the party expanded by more than 40 per cent, and by 1927, the CPSU totaled 1.3 million members.⁷⁵ The longest, most sustained increase in the party's ranks came during the Khrushchev era. Members were also recruited to a large extent during the Brezhnev years. It was increasing every year since 1905 when it had a membership of just 8,400. In Gorbachev period with over 20 million members it had really become a mass political organisation through which people directly participated in the administration of the country.

Enhancing the role of public opinion the Draft Rules adopted by 27th Congress contained a number of provisions expanding the opportunity to verify thoroughly

75. Gordon B. Smith, Soviet Politics: Struggling with Change (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1992), p. 95.

the personal characteristics of applicants for party membership with due account taken of the opinion of non-members. For this purpose the good practice of admitting members to the party at open meetings was written down in the Rules.⁷⁶ The 19th Conference of CPSU also stressed that admission to the party should be discussed at open party meetings.

According to the New Regulation of the Rules, young people up to the age of twenty five (in contrast to the previous Rules, which set this age limit at twenty-three) may join the party only through the Leninist Young Communist League.⁷⁷ All this implied Gorbachev's efforts to make the party a mass based one and involving a large number of people in it.

The party's democratic principles were manifested primarily in the fact that all leading bodies were elected. The electiveness ensured active participation by party members in forming party leading bodies and exercising the right to elect or be elected as stated in the party rules. But under the existing system, party posts were filled not by election but by appointment, and often for life. Gorbachev's reform stressed that party committees

76. See, n. 28, p. 68.

77. Ibid.

and bureaus above the enterprise level would be increasingly elected from the pool of average party members and non-officials. Secretaries of primary party organisations, regional committees, city committees, members of party committees and delegates for party forums should be elected directly, with alternate candidates according to platforms; voting should be secret and candidature should be proposed freely. 'We consider', he had argued, 'that the elective principle does not only not undermine but, on the contrary, increase the authority of the leader...'; as for enhancing the 'democratic' element in democratic centralism, that will make for a party which is more united, disciplined, active and responsible.⁷⁸

Discussions were held and proposals made for providing a choice of candidates at all elections to the party office and it was insisted that positions should be held for a limited period. There should be a 'periodic renewal of elected and non-elected cadres', with a maximum period of tenure.⁷⁹ Selection must be made by secret ballot from a large number of candidates than seats available.

The report of the General Secretary and New Party Rules adopted by the 27th Congress emphasised the principles

78. Pravda, 28 January 1987, p. 3.

79. Kommunist, 1988, no. 3, p. 37.

of systematic renewal of the composition of party bodies and of continuity of leadership in election of all party bodies from primary organizations to CPSU Central Committee. His report on January 1987 envisaged genuine contested elections within the party. Gorbachev's speech to the party conference on 28 June 1988 announced that party officials, like their state counterparts, were to be elected by secret ballot from a choice of candidates, and they were to hold office for no more than two five year terms in a row.⁸⁰ Restrictions limiting the terms of office in elective posts were to be a major guarantee against stagnation within the body of the party's functionaries.

The 19th Conference viewed democratization of the electoral process within the party as a matter of prime importance. The election of members and secretaries of all Party Committees - up to and including the CPSU Central Committee - should feature free discussion by the candidates, voting by secret ballot and an opportunity to nominate more candidates than there are seats to be filled. According to Gorbachev's reform primary party organisations were to nominate their own states to urban district party committees to be voted on at urban-district conferences. The enhancement of the independence of primary party organizations was a vital matter of party structure.

80. Materialy XIX Vsesoyuznoi Konferentsii Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soyuza (Moscow: Politizdat, 1988), pp. 124-6.

Thus, reforms attached great importance to enhancement of the prestige of elective party bodies and of secretaries of primary party organisations, creating stimulating working conditions and overcoming the passivity of party members. These reforms, like their counterparts in the state system, gradually began to be implemented. Competitive elections to party office had indeed begun to take place as early as February 1987, when a local party secretary in the Kemerovo region was chosen by secret ballot from two competing candidates.⁸¹

That public opinion on social problems should be given the fullest recognition found its expression in the continued increase in the number of elected party activists, particularly from among workers and peasants. The party leader's mandate, entrusted to him by communists, was to be verified and confirmed by the representatives of the people at all levels of the Soviet system.⁸² As John Gooding observes: "What this suggests is not that the Soviets are being delivered into the hands of the party, but rather that the party is being brought out of its isolated eminence and made accountable to civil society in a way that will be as flattering as possible to its amour - propre. The compliment paid to the party by the new structure is thus

81. Pravda, 10 February 1987, p. 2.

82. Pravda, 29 June 1988, p. 4.

rather like that paid to the healthy person who is asked to donate a lot of blood".⁸³

Gorbachev's political reforms highlighted the principle of recall for party officials. In his book, "Perestroika: New Thinking for our country and the world" Gorbachev writes: "...Communists should have the right to recall mid-term those members of elective party bodies who fail to fulfil their duties or who have disgraced themselves, and, if necessary, to elect a new elective party in its entirety".⁸⁴

The genuinely democratic character of the party's activity also manifested itself in the principle of collective leadership. In Lenin's understanding of the term, collective leadership implied that "everyone is held personally responsible for a definite, strictly and precisely defined job or part of a job".⁸⁵ Collective leadership in CPSU meant that all members of the party without exception participated, in various forms, in working out party policy, taking important decisions and translating them into reality. This means that every

83. John Gooding, n. 65, p. 214.

84. M. Gorbachev, n. 10, p. 289.

85. See, n. 18, p. 48.

communist was obliged to thoroughly study and generalize the experience of the masses, know their sentiments and requirements. Only the joint experience and ideas of millions of workers could tackle the multitude of problems that arose in the practice of building communism. The Rules of the party also stated: "The supreme principle of party leadership is collective leadership, which is an absolute requisite for the normal functioning of party organisations.... The cult of the individual and the violation of inner-party democracy resulting from it must not be tolerated in the party; they are incompatible with the Leninist principles of party life".⁸⁶

Given the one party system which had evolved in the course of Soviet Union's history, the existence of a permanent system ensuring free dialogue, criticism, self-criticism, self-control and self-assessment within the party and within society was a matter of vital importance for Gorbachev. Free debate and democratic discussions resulting in a majority decision with the minority submitting to it was replaced by platforms which resulted in the creation of different factions.

86. Cited by L.G. Churchward, Contemporary Soviet Government, Second Edition (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 206.

The New Party Rules adopted by the 27th Congress made an important contribution to the development of the principle of responsibility of party members. It stressed broad development of inner-party democracy with strict discipline, organisation and cohesion of party ranks with the initiative and activity of all its members.

The New programme adopted by the 27th Party Congress attached special importance to increased intra-party democracy and the supervision of all levels of party leadership to prevent the emergence of autonomous centres of power. The programme reaffirmed the principle of collectivity and public openness as key elements of party leadership.⁸⁷

According to party rules the party members were free to "discuss freely questions of party policy and activities of party meetings, conferences and congresses etc."⁸⁸ Major party issues were widely discussed in the highest and lowest party organs by party members as Lenin first stressed that public opinion should be taken within the party above all on certain aspects of politics.

The New Party Rules adopted by 27th Party Congress stressed the importance of "free and effective discussion"

87. Donald R. Kelley, Soviet Politics From Brezhnev to Gorbachev (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1987), p. 228.

88. L.G. Churchward, n. 86.

of the party policy in the party.⁸⁹ The January 1987 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee which elaborated a broad set of measures underscored the need for ensuring that the nomination and promotion of topechelon officials proceeded in an atmosphere of utmost openness and that due account was taken of the opinion of party organisations and public.

The 19th Party Conference regarded the full restoration of the Leninist principle of collective discussion and decision-making as a key factor in democratizing the party. It is inadmissible for the party apparatus to usurp the functions of elective bodies and for the role of communists to be reduced to attendance of party meetings and the rubber-stamping of lists of candidates and draft resolutions.

The conference favoured more extensive participation by CPSU Central Committee members in the work of the Central Committee Politbureau, regular reports by the Politbureau to Central Committee Plenary Meetings, and the establishment of commissions made up of Central Committee members and dealing with various aspects of domestic and foreign policy.

89. Documents and Resolutions: 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (New Delhi, 1986), pp. 337-8.

Democratization of the Party's affairs demanded the broadest possible openness in the work of all party organisations and their governing bodies. The conference supported the proposal of publishing verbatim records of Party Committee Plenary Meetings and draft decisions on major party and public matters.⁹⁰

Addressing the 28th Congress Gorbachev said:

"The democratization of the Party presupposes the participation of all its members and structures in evolving party policy by means of all-Party and regional discussions and referendums, the right of individual communists and groups to reflect their views in platforms, the collective and open work of all Party bodies, and freedom of criticism. The deep-going transformation of inner-party relations and party activity aims at ensuring the democratic unity of the CPSU ranks and at preventing factional splits".⁹¹

There is no doubt that in practice in the functioning of the party centralism had been emphasised at the expense of democracy even after the internal exploiting classes had been eliminated. Over centralism resulted in curbing the initiative of primary party units and prevented the party members' participation and involvement in the formulation of policy and reviewing decisions.

90. See, n. 29, p.77.

91. See, n. 35, pp. 92-93.

Within the party, the influence of rank and file party activists and primary party organisations were to be enhanced in Gorbachev's reforms. The Draft Rules adopted at the 27th Party Congress insisted on enhancing the capability of primary party organisations. At the 27th Party Congress, Gorbachev reported: "The Drafts of the New Edition of the Programme and of the Rules have been thoroughly discussed at meetings of primary party organisations, at district, city, area, regional and territorial election conferences and at Congresses of the Communist Parties of Union Republics".⁹²

Primary party organisations were now obliged to hear the reports of communists on the fulfilment of their statutory duties and party assignments. Such reports were to be made on a regular basis and became a norm of party life.

The 19th Party Conference attached great importance to democratizing the work of the primary party organisations. It announced: "we should begin by promoting their independence, and freeing them from petty regimentation by superior bodies. We have to enhance the prestige of elective party bodies and of secretaries of primary party organisations, creating stimulating working conditions and overcoming the passivity of some of our party members".⁹³

92. See, n. 27, p. 98.

93. M. Gorbachev, n. 10, p. 288.

The Conference further stated that "Our prime task is to fully restore the Leninist version of democratic centralism, which implies free discussion at the stage when a particular question is being considered, and united action when the majority has adopted the decision".⁹⁴

In his speech at the 28th CPSU Congress Gorbachev said, "...we should do everything to establish the power of the Party's rank and file in the CPSU on the basis of all-embracing democracy, comradeship, openness, glasnost and criticism".⁹⁵

The role of the primary party organisations was enhanced in investigating shortcomings in the administration of the institution with which it was associated. This was referred to as pravo kontrolya ("the right of control"). Until 1971, pravo kontrolya was granted only to PPOs in economic enterprises, factories and farms. Under the new party rules, PPOs in state administrative agencies, local Soviets, ministries, and scientific and other institutions were authorised to exercise "control".⁹⁶

Elected from a broad cross-section of party members, committee members at all jurisdictional levels of the party

94. See, n. 29, p. 76.

95. See, n. 35, p. 74.

96. Gordon B. Smith, n. 75, p. 105.

assumed a much more direct role in drafting party decisions.

Talking about criticism and self-criticism in his report to the 27th Congress Gorbachev said:

"More urgently than before there is now the need to promote criticism and self-criticism and to step up efforts to remove window-dressing. From the recent past we know that where criticism and self-criticism is choked, where talk about successes is substituted for a party analysis of the actual situation, all party activity is deformed and a situation of complacency, premissiveness, and impurity arises that leads to the most serious consequences. In the localities and even in the centre there appeared quite a few officials who reacted painfully to critical remarks levelled at them and went so far as to harass people who came up with criticism".⁹⁷

At the plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee in January 1987 Gorbachev said that in the party, leaders had placed themselves beyond the reach of criticism and some had become 'accomplices in - if not organizers of - criminal activities'. Whole republics, regions and ministries had been affected.⁹⁸

Many party organisations in the regions were unable to uphold principles or to attack with determination bad

97. See, n. 27, pp. 85-86.

98. Stephen White, n. 11, p. 3.

tendencies, slack attitudes, the practice of covering up for one another and lax discipline. More often than not, the principles of equality among party members were violated. Many party members in leading posts stood beyond control and criticism, which led to failure in work and to serious malpractices.

"With a one party system, which history formed and rooted in our country', Gorbachev told the 19th Party Conference, 'we need a constantly active mechanism to ensure the contrasting of opinions and criticism and self-criticism in party and society'".⁹⁹

Therefore, this mass-based party, truly of the people, flexible responded to the needs and moods of the working people and adequately reflected their interests.

Besides taking public opinion inside the party, the party placed its policies for public discussion.

At the 27th Party Congress Gorbachev highlighted the need of a party characterized by openness and publicity of plans and decisions by the humaneness and modesty of communists.

99. Pravda, 29 June 1988, p. 6.

The New Edition of the CPSU programme, the Revised CPSU Rules and Guidelines for the 12th Five Year Plan and for the 15-year period until the year 2000, these three documents had been placed before public for discussion before the 27th CPSU Congress adopted them in their final form. About two million people expressed their ideas concerning the CPSU Rules. Having examined the results of the discussion, the Central Committee of the Party deemed it essential to introduce in the Draft Rules a number of substantive additions and clarifications. At the 27th CPSU Congress Gorbachev said: "On the whole Comrades, the discussion of the CPSU programme and Rules has been exceptionally fruitful. They have helped in the amplification of many ideas and propositions, in the clarification of formulations and in improving the wordings. Allow me, on behalf of our Congress, to express profound gratitude to the communists and all Soviet people for their business - like and committed participation in discussing the pre-Congress documents".¹⁰⁰

The 19th Conference also reaffirmed that public discussion should be practised nationwide and regional, economic, ethnic, youth, ecological, social and other problems and public opinion should be studied and taken into account.

100. See, n. 27, p. 103.

People began to take a genuine interest in the situation in the country, to put forward proposals on how to improve work, and to make critical remarks.

In this way, we find that the work of the party organisations was more open than ever before. The Soviet people were not only widely informed of the work of the party through the media and meetings, but they themselves actively participated in the formulation and implementation of party policies. All this proved the tremendous role of the masses in the process in which the party's policy was shaped as a people's policy, meeting the vital interests and aspirations of the working people.

Besides public discussion, the party encouraged people to lodge written complaints and suggestions for its activities and policies. Direct communication and letters had become the major feedback linking the Soviet leadership with the masses. A number of letters were received everyday by the Party Central Committee putting suggestions on various issues. Letters were also sent to the general secretary in person, "and Gorbachev quoted from them to justify the 'democratization' of party and state life that was approved at the January 1987 Central Committee plenum and the economic reform programme that was approved the following June.

All the delegates to the 19th Party Conference, in June 1988, were provided with a special digest of the letters that had been reaching party headquarters from members and ordinary citizens throughout the country. Gorbachev was asked, during a visit to Leningrad in October 1987, if letters from ordinary people actually reached him. Yes, they did, he replied; he tried to read as many of them as possible, and took many home with him for further study".¹⁰¹

A number of letters were sent by people in connection with the New Party Programme. Divergent opinions had been expressed in these letters concerning details of the programme provisions. Some people held that the programme should be a still more concise document, a kind of brief declaration of the Party's intentions. Others favoured a more detailed description of the parameters of economic and social development. Many of the letters were devoted to social policy. All these suggestions were taken into account before final adoption of New Party Programme.

That there was full freedom of writing critical letters in the Gorbachev period is indicated by a number of open letters concerning reforms. Nina Andreeva, a Leningrad Chemistry teacher, was perhaps the most celebrated figure who wrote an open letter to Sovetskaya Rossiya,

101. Stephen White, n. 52, pp. 244-5.

"'I cannot forgo principles'. She complained of the exaggerated attention that was being paid to the Stalinist past and warned that attempts were being made to undermine the party's leading role".¹⁰² Nor was Andreeva alone in her concerns. There had been wide spread resentment, for instance, at the profiteering that had been engaged in by some cooperatives, and at the higher prices, food shortages and housing and transport difficulties that appeared to have accompanied reconstruction.

There was "an open letters to Gorbachev in early 1989 written by Alexander Gelman, Daniil Granin and four others, warning that party officials were attempting to 'sabotage' political reform and that party headquarters were dominated by a 'dictatorship of mediocrities'".¹⁰³

The stream of citizen's letters containing various complaints against party bodies and suggestions about reforms was growing steadily. The Politburo discussed these letters, gathering them together at regular intervals. This helped the country's leadership to keep abreast of the course of events, to assess its policies properly and readjust them, and to work out modern methods for handling things.

102. Stephen White, n. 11, p. 20.

103. Ibid., p. 18.

Together with letters, polls and surveys conducted by all-level party organisations, traditionally served as a means of self-expression for ordinary citizens in the Soviet system. Polls of a professional and nationally representative character were carried out by the CPSU's Academy of Social Sciences.

In his book, "Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World", Gorbachev wrote:

"...we must be able not only to readjust our policies in line with the reaction of the masses and with the way they are reflected in public mind, but we must ensure feedback, that is, encourage the people to give us ideas, suggestions and advice, including via direct contact with them". 104

In the context of Gorbachev's reforms a very large-scale national poll conducted by the Central Committee's Academy of Social Sciences nonetheless revealed that, although 75 per cent believed more glasnost and democratization of public life was necessary, only 30 per cent were actually willing to take an active part in such a process.¹⁰⁵

Thus, a number of polls were conducted by the party to ascertain public opinion after Gorbachev's advent to power.

104. M. Gorbachev, n. 10, p. 72.

105. Izvestia, 4 September 1987, p. 1.

He had announced at the beginning of his reforms that democratic principle of referendum on party policies will be incorporated into party rules and initiative will be invested in primary party organisations.

Thus, we find that state and party bodies were restructured in such a way so that more and more people could claim their involvement in state affairs. There was a considerable encouragement of a more thorough study of public opinion. Public opinion constituted one of the main aspects of the work of the state and party bodies as the guiding and directing force of Soviet society, striving to advance and extend socialist democracy. This showed the great efforts of the state and party bodies to take cognizance of public opinion as well as to take the people into confidence while deciding policies and seeking more rational ways of implementing it.

Undoubtedly Gorbachev's far reaching political reforms involving both state and party bodies and his efforts in direction of ascertaining public opinion opened up vast opportunities to convert the party-led formal Soviet democracy into a real democracy of energised Soviets. However, with the benefit of hindsight one is led to the conclusion that Gorbachev's perestroika was far from a well meaning

attempt at perfecting or renewing socialism. It was used as a smoke-screen to launch an ill-fated drive towards capitalism. Gorbachev, in fact, followed a strategy aimed at first mobilising public opinion in favour of pluralism of views and democratization through political reforms. Pluralism of views was then used for preparing the ground for acceptance of a multi-party system based on pluralism of forms of property, again a cover for ascendancy and monopoly of private property. Gorbachev's failure to tackle the nationality question and his attempt to draw support from the nationalist led national fronts in the republics ultimately weakened the Soviet federal state resulting in its complete disintegration.

CHAPTER 6

PUBLIC OPINION AND THE SOVIET PRESS AND PUBLIC
ORGANISATIONS UNDER GLASNOST

PUBLIC OPINION AND THE SOVIET PRESS AND PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS
UNDER GLASNOST

In the state, press plays a vital role as one of the most powerful manifestations of freedom of speech and expression. The press, in all its shades, represents opinion to such an extent that as a forum of discussion of public questions, it holds the foremost place. Hence freedom of press is considered a cornerstone of democracy.

The press is a great interpreter between the government and the people. If the press is fettered, both the government and the people suffer. It is indeed inherent in the freedom of each individual that his country's press should be free, for the press is often in the real sense the individual's mouth piece and his ears.

In a democracy the citizen has the right to learn facts, to hear attitudes in a case, to form his own opinions and if he wants, to give expression to it. For this he looks to the press, and this because he expects the press to perform this service and provide this opportunity for him. Therefore freedom of press is a matter of vital concern for him.

For the press to play a vital role in moulding public opinion, it is necessary that it should be independent

and free. In other words, it should not be controlled by government agencies. It is only when the press functions without any shackles and without interference from any quarter that it can build genuine and effective public opinion. The press needs to function in an atmosphere of freedom in order to function as an open forum for the ventilation of all shades of opinion and viewpoints.

The freedom of press includes not only freedom of speech which manifests itself by oral utterance but freedom of expression whether such expression is communicated by written words or printed matter. It relates to all expressions by the medium of mouth, printing, writing, pictorial or audition such as the cinematograph, the radio, T.V. etc. or any other manner.

The role of press and especially free press in a socialist society set-up is of utmost importance. The socialist democratic form of society demands of its members an active and intelligent participation in the affairs of their community whether local or national. It assumes that they are sufficiently well-informed about the day-to-day issue to be able to form broad judgement required by an election and to maintain between elections the vigilance necessary in those where governors are their servants and

not their masters. It also increasingly demands an alert and informed participation not only in the political process but also in the efforts of the community to adjust its social and economic life to increasingly complex circumstances. Hence socialist democratic society needs a clear and truthful account of the events, of their background and their causes, and a forum through which individuals and groups can express a point of view or advocate a cause. The responsibility for fulfilling these needs unavoidably rests in a large measure on the press.

The Soviet press is described in the large Soviet Encyclopedia as a Press "of a new type...the most revolutionary, advanced, and powerful in the world".¹ Within Soviet society the press was assigned the role of educating great masses of workers to appreciate and obey the Soviet system. It was a means by which the masses could know what the party is thinking and doing, and what the party wants them to think and do. The aim of the information did not consist in commercializing news, but educating great masses of workers, in organising them under the executive direction of the party for clearly defined tasks.

1. Robert Conquest, ed., The Politics of Ideas in the USSR (London: Bodley Head, 1967), p. 67.

What an individual does was not important enough to warrant a news story unless it helped in the fulfilment of the plan. Articles on an individual's achievement in agriculture and industry, for example, were printed in order to inspire others to follow the example. Consequently, the Soviet press carried only that news which described the building of Soviet society: news of construction, decision of government bodies, descriptions of the agricultural and industrial plans, the granting of awards to outstanding individuals for their good work, and so on. Thus, the press in the Soviet Union worked as a mouthpiece of government without revealing the truth.

The first Soviet decree on the press, signed by Lenin immediately after he had seized power, apologised for the restrictions it contained - all hostile newspapers were, in effect, banned. This situation was stated to be "of a temporary nature and will be revoked by special order once normal conditions have been restored to public life".²

Neither Lenin nor his successors showed any inclination to sign this 'special order'.

Although freedom of press was guaranteed by the USSR Constitution, it was, however, to be taken as first

2. Ibid.

and foremost material independence of newspapers and magazines from private owners which was imparted in 1918 by the first Soviet Constitution. It proclaimed: "To make sure that the working people are genuinely free to air their views, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic abolishes the dependence of the press on capital and provides all technical and material means for the publication of newspapers, pamphlets, books and all other printed matter to the working class and poor peasants, and ensures free distribution of the printed matter all over the country".³

No newspaper or periodical in the USSR was owned privately. Newspapers published only what government wanted and did not have the right to publish critical material from people criticising government and its policies. It was forbidden to publish what has not been checked out for its validity thoroughly. Thus, the work of the press was projected as constructive, to secure the development of socialism and avoid criticism and truth in putting before the people by informing only what is good for socialism.

For seven decades Soviet citizens could not speak

3. Ibid., p. 74.

or write candidly without fear of reprisals. Censorship was all pervasive. According to Hedrick Smith, the list of topics not to be discussed by journalists, consisted of five pages and included economic problems, shortages, lives; price increases, and salaries; inequities and special benefits (especially those received by party and state officials); crime statistics and other adverse social indicators; foreign policy involvements of the USSR (such as the invasion of Afghanistan, arms sales, and international aid); details of the private lives of Soviet leaders and their families and advance word about their traveling schedules; the activities of dissidents, religious believers, and other unofficial groups; national or ethnic demonstrations or expressions; statistics or reports on illnesses such as cholera; the activities of the KGB and the Soviet military; accidents and natural disasters; and censorship (acknowledging the existence of censorship was itself tabooed).⁴

The Brezhnev leadership had carried out a policy of tight censorship and directed harsh punishment against those who offered even mildly critical remarks on social problems. "It even banned Western rock a music on the grounds that it would "corrupt Soviet youth".⁵ By the 1980 it was recognised

4. Hedrick Smith, The Russians (New York: Ballantine Books, 1976), pp. 474-5.

5. Gordon B. Smith, Soviet Politics: Struggling with Change, Second Edition (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 186.

that pervasive censorship itself was contributing to the malaise of Soviet society. Social problems could hardly be redressed in an effective manner when their existence was denied by the leadership.

Although this picture had already started to change in the 1960s, it was not until Gorbachev's accession that shortcomings in the official media and indeed in the quality of Soviet public life in general - became the object of close attention at the highest levels of the leadership. From the outset Gorbachev committed himself to a policy of openness embracing not only the printed media but also radio, television and all areas of creative arts.

Whereas previous Soviet leaders did not dare permit freedom to the press and frank discussion or open criticism for fear that it would destabilize the system, Gorbachev was the first leader to argue that frank and open criticism can strengthen the system, rather than undermine it. Within weeks of assuming the General Secretaryship in March 1985, Gorbachev declared: "Timely and frank release of information is evidence of trust in people, respect for their intelligence and feelings, and their ability to assess events".⁶

6. Ibid., p. 187.

The decision to remove restrictions on the Soviet media brought the entire Soviet history into the arena of a fresh debate. Mikhail Gorbachev, for political reasons, chose freedom of the press and Soviet cultural life as the first arena in which to implement his policy of glasnost. "In March 1986, Chief of the Soviet publishing industry, Mikhail Nenashev called upon journalists to be more open and critical. He described the news and features in the Soviet press as an "over simplified picture of the reality, which was far from the real". He also urged journalists to become professionally bold: "Let us call successes, successes, shortcomings, shortcomings and mistakes, mistakes".⁷

It quickly became apparent that, whatever its limitations, the policy of glasnost meant a substantial expansion of artistic opportunities available to creative artists and their audiences. Books were being published, movies were being screened in theatres and aired on television, and paintings were being exhibited that even five years ago would never had reached their intended audience.

In his report to the 27th Congress of the CPSU Gorbachev said: "In our day, which is replete with dynamism

7. A.G. Modak, "The Gorbachevian Policy of Openness", India Quarterly, vol. 45, no. 1, January-March 1989, p. 61.

and changes, the role of the mass media is growing significantly.... Newspapers, journals, and television programmes encapsulated life with its achievements and contradictions, and there is a more analytical approach, civic motivation, and sharpness in bringing problems to light and in concrete criticism of shortcomings and omissions".⁸

More than past leaders, in fact, Gorbachev had made it a practice to meet with editors and other executives in the ideological establishment both before and after high-level political forums to advise them on the appropriate balance in their coverage of the themes associated with the policies adopted at the meeting. After the 27th Party Congress, Gorbachev met with media executives to explain the tasks from the Congress to them. Two weeks after the January 1987 Central Committee plenum, Gorbachev had a six-hour-long meeting with media executives, reviewing the significance of the plenum and indicating the ways the media should aid in implementing its decisions. Again, after the June 1987 Central Committee plenum, Gorbachev addressed a conference of media representatives at the Central Committee to explain the objectives of the perestroika programme and the ways the media should contribute to its fulfilment.⁹

-
8. "Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Congress delivered by M. Gorbachev", Soviet Review (New Delhi: Information Department of the USSR), March 1, 1986, p. 95.
9. Thomas Remington, "A Socialist Pluralism of Opinions: Glasnost and Policy-making under Gorbachev", The Russian Review, vol. 48, 1989, pp. 286-7.

He held a fourth meeting with the media in early January 1988, a meeting which, lasted seven hours.¹⁰

The 19th Party Conference noted the important role played by the mass media in expanding glasnost. It called upon them to cover all aspects of the activity of party, government and public organisations, to further the consolidation of socialist society, to actively propagate accumulated experience and to act as an instrument of people's control over the state of affairs in the country. The conference considered it absolutely intolerable for anyone to block critical publications in the press, just as it is opposed to the publication of unobjective information that affects the honour and dignity of a citizen.

The conference noted "...The points of view of all sides in a controversy should be reflected in the mass media impartially and without distortion. No one has a monopoly on the truth, and there should be no monopoly on glasnost.... A system of continuous and exhaustive information about the state of affairs must be set up at enterprises, in villages and towns, regions, republics and the country as a whole, and citizens, the mass media, work collectives and public organisations should have the legal right to receive the information they wish".¹¹

10. Yegor Yakovlev, "Checking Our Watches", Moscow News, no. 3, 24-31 January 1988, p. 4.

11. M. Gorbachev, Perestroika: New Thinking For Our Country and the World (London: Collins, 1987), pp. 306-7.

The first big test of Gorbachev's glasnost policy in the press was the accident at the chernobyl nuclear reactor in the Ukraine in April 1986. Initially, the leadership maintained tight secrecy on news coverage of the disaster and even denied that there was a problem. In the weeks following the accident, however, press reports, television coverage, and news conferences gradually reconstructed the events surrounding the accident. This Soviet handling of the chernobyl episode represented a departure from previous practice.¹²

Then there were events like riots in Kazakhstan, the Red Square picketing by Crimean Tatars, the release of Sakharov from internal exile etc., which also got impressive publicity.¹³ With the chernobyl episode and other examples the accidents and disasters also received extraordinary coverage in newspapers.

More glasnost was now present in the Soviet press. To begin with, the press had started applying the Congress principle to the effect that in Soviet society there must be nothing off limits to criticism. Sharply critical publications had appeared on the most diverse problems - shortcomings and failings in the economy, education and culturel.

12. Gordon B. Smith, n. 5.

13. A.G. Modak, n. 7, p. 61.

Journalists even named the people responsible for the omissions and violators of Soviet laws and party principles. But this was not enough to remedy the situation. There were many instances now when the press not only exposed bureaucrats, eye-washers, grabbers, discipline violators, spongers, but also offered concrete measures and provided answers to the question "What is to be done"? as it discussed the political experience of perestroika.

One comes across media criticism of such features and institutions as were once regarded as sacred. Even the party journal - *Kommunist* - was launching attacks on matters such as large and wasteful subsidies, inflationary trends, misutilisation of resources and so on.¹⁴ The authorities themselves were now publishing things for which people would a short time previously have been arrested.

People - both in the Soviet Union and watching from abroad - had been looking for signs pointing to the institutionalisation of glasnost. One such sign was a draft law on the press. Approved by working groups of the parliamentary commission on glasnost, legislation, and culture in the fall of 1989, it banned preliminary censorship and stipulated the right of public organisations to establish their own newspapers.¹⁵

14. Ibid.

15. Joshephine Woll, "Glasnost and Soviet Culture", Problems of Communism, November-December 1989, p. 40.

For reform advocates, law on freedom of information and the press was of paramount importance to foster democratic values and attitudes. It revised the traditional role of the media as an instrument of the party to mobilize public opinion. The law required the media to regard the advocacy of citizens' interests as their primary function. The media was required to generate public debate over problems and policy options from opposing viewpoints, survey public opinion and submit their findings to Soviet deputies before laws could be passed, and defend norms of open discourse and conflict.¹⁶

According to the proposed law "the disclosure of information to journalists would become legally mandatory for all government officials, unless they cite in writing specific areas of national security under which the information would fall. Even then, journalists would have a legal right to appeal to the courts, and officials would be criminally liable for attempting to obstruct the gathering of information by journalists executing their right and obligation under the law.

The law will retain the primary responsibility of the Soviet media to serve the party, but the latter was to

16. Joel C. Moses, "Democratic Reform in the Gorbachev Era: Dimensions of Reform in the Soviet Union, 1986-1989", The Russian Review, vol. 48, 1989, p. 265.

be understood in a general sense, clearly distinguished from serving party officials. The party were now to stand for public openness and democratization, and the media was to exercise its responsibility to serve the party by a vigorous pursuit of information and defense of public opinion".¹⁷

The liberal version of the law was to reduce censorship and control over the media and public opinion by the party.

Asked in a poll in 1989 what had been the most important outcome of perestroika, the largest single group of respondents cited 'glasnost', truthfulness of information in the press, radio and television. Economic reform - the transfer of enterprises to self-financing and new forms of management - came second, and changes in the government and electoral system came third.¹⁸ It was, of course, much easier to allow the publication of (for example) Doctor Zhivago than to fill the shops with foodstuffs. And yet the scale of the change, in just three or four years, was remarkable.¹⁹

17. Ibid., pp. 265-6.

18. Izvestia, 22 April 1989, p. 6.

19. Stephen White, Gorbachev and After (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 97.

The new changes were clearly popular - Soviet newspapers and journals, for example, put on circulation, some at a spectacular rate, and there was an estimated fall of about half in the number of Soviet citizens who regularly listened to Western radio broadcast.²⁰ The Soviet censor, interviewed for the first time in November 1988, confirmed that the list of official secrets had already been reduced by about one-third and that it would be reduced still further in the future; indeed censorship as such was nominally abolished in 1990.²¹

"In Gorbachev period more than 18,000 newspapers were published, with a combined circulation of more than 200 million. They ranged from Trud (Labour), the newspaper of the labour unions, with a circulation of 18.7 million, to mimeographed leaflets of tiny splinter parties and movements, such as Doverie (Trust) and Svobodnoe Slovo (The Free World). The main party newspaper, Pravda (Truth) had a circulation of 10.7 million in 1988".²² Izvestia the official organ of the state claimed a circulation of between 8 and 9 million. Komsomolskaya Pravda (Komsomol Truth), with a circulation of more than 10 million, was the organ of the communist youth organisation.²³

20. Pravda, 21 February 1989, p. 1, and Sovetskaya Kul'tura, 9 July 1988, p. 2. For the fall in Western Radio listening see Izvestia, 1 June 1991, p. 1.

21. Izvestia, 3 November 1988, p.3 and 9 October 1990, p. 8.

22. Gordon B. Smith, n. 5, pp. 188-9.

23. Ibid., p. 189.

Argumenty i fakty (Arguments and Facts), a weekly, had evolved from an obscure tabloid with a circulation of only 10,000 to a major publication selling more than 31 million copies every week.²⁴ It published short, factual pieces, interviews and public opinion polls.

In 1989, the editor of Argumenty i fakty, Vladislav Starkov, published the results of a popularity survey in which Gorbachev came in behind several of his critics, including Yeltsin, the human rights activist Andrei Sakharov, and Gavriil Popov, Mayor of Moscow. Starkov was called to Communist Party headquarters and told to resign. He refused to comply, however, noting that the party had no authority to make such a request.²⁵ Argumenty i fakty remained an ardent voice in favour of glasnost and reform.

Another strongly reformist newspaper was the Moscow News. Begun in 1930 as an English-language newspaper, Moscow News appeared in several languages, including Russian.

In addition to these central newspapers, there were more than 7000 regional and local papers.²⁶

24. John Newhouse, "Chronicling the Chaos", The New Yorker, 31 December 1990, p. 39.

25. Gordon B. Smith, n. 5, p. 189.

26. Ibid.

One important function of Soviet newspapers was to receive and publish letters from Soviet citizens. Letters to the editor related to a wide variety of subjects: suggestions, petty grievances, complaints about housing conditions, consumer complaints, and criticism of mismanagement by low level officials. Soviet authorities reported that between 60 and 70 million letters were received every year; Pravda alone received more than half a million.²⁷ On the discussion of new electoral law Pravda received 3,000 letters in the first three weeks of the discussion, and 5,666 over the month as a whole.²⁸

Officials of all ranks were obliged to respond in written form to any criticism directed at them in the press. All letters were supposed to be answered. Many were referred to local party, state, industrial legal and other officials for action. There were many instances reported every year in which corrupt officials were dismissed following probes into citizens' complaints sent to newspapers.

For instance, one or two letters which show that newspapers in Soviet Union had full freedom to publish critical material from the people. The paper Argumenty i Fakty's daily postbag was more than 7,000 letter criticising and suggesting changes. A letter by a person, named K. Ilichovsk published in Argumenty i Fakty contained the following passages:

"It doesn't matter

27. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia and the Soviet Union (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 407.

28. Stephen White, "Democratization' in the USSR", Soviet Studies, vol. 42, no. 1, January 1990, p. 10.

how many bad things are said about Comrades Stalin, Yagadev, Khrushchev and Beria. I will never believe them. Yes, Comrade Stalin was very severe and his power was very severe and when he was in power he shot a lot of people. He was quite right to do this. Who was shot? People's enemies. Let us thank him for all that. None of the common people, even those who were in camps, will say anything bad about him or suspect him of injustice.²⁹

Nina Andreeva's letter criticising Gorbachev's reforms, published in Sovetskaya Rossiya is another good example. Similarly there were a number of such critical letters published in newspapers everyday.

More than five thousand journals and magazines were published in forty-five languages of the USSR and twenty-three foreign languages, covering a wide array of specialized and regional audiences.³⁰ One of the most widely read magazines in the USSR was Ogonek, a weekly devoted to covering lively and controversial political issues. Its circulation swelled from 2,60,000 to more than 4,600,000.³¹

29. Ron McKay, ed., Letters to Gorbachev (London: Michael Joseph, 1991), p. 170.

30. John L. Scherer, ed., USSR Facts and Figures Annual, vol. 9 (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1985), p. 11.

31. John Newhouse, n. 24, p. 38.

After the abolition of Article 6 of the Constitution in March 1990 and the passage of the new Law on the Press, the ability of party and government bodies to control newspapers and magazines directly was severely reduced. Ogonek and several other publications became independent and self-financing.

Gorbachev also fostered glasnost, especially in literature and the arts, to win support among the influential intelligentsia. The intelligentsia had traditionally been viewed as an important political constituency for reform. Gorbachev used glasnost to liberalize social theory, relying on the liberal intelligentsia to supply the intellectual content supporting his policies, and thus to employ the Central media to popularize and publicize the general contours of the reform programme. Indeed, probably no Soviet leader since Lenin had devoted as much personal attention to ideology and the mass media as Gorbachev, who in speeches since before he became General Secretary had repeatedly explicated the ideas at the core of his programme of reconstruction.³²

Gorbachev's Presidential Council, which advised him on major policy issues, until it was disbanded in November 1990, included two prominent writers, Chingis

32. Thomas Remington, n. 9, p. 288.

Aitmatov and Valentin Rasputin.³³ Under the influence of glasnost, long-suppressed novels, plays, films and other works were made available to the public.

The creative unions, the organisations that oversee the arts, had become even more important now than they were in the past, because the traditional cultural authorities in the Soviet Union (such as the censorship offices, the Ministry of Culture, and the Cultural Department of the CPSU Central Committee) had by and large withdrawn to the sidelines; direct and preemptive intervention in the cultural sphere was now reserved for matters having major political repercussions. At the 27th Party Congress Gorbachev said:

"Our unions of creative workers are rich in tradition and they play a considerable role in artistic life and the life of the entire society for that matter. The main result of their work is measured not by resolutions and meetings, but by talented and imaginative books, films, dramas, paintings, and music needed by the society and which can enrich the people's intellectual life".³⁴

One of the unions was Writers' Union. Gorbachev's glasnost policy had a dramatic impact on the literary world.

33. Gordon B. Smith, n. 5, p. 196.

34. See, n. 8, pp. 96-97.

The General Secretary revealed his hand as early as June 1986, when he convened a group of leading writers and appealed for their support in reforming society against the resistance of 'the managerial stratum' in the ministries and party apparatus, which does not want to give up its privileges".³⁵ In 1986 the Writers' Union replaced its old leaders, voting in writers and reformists to its board of management. With the party's consent, it agreed to scrap the organ of censorship, glavlit, that had so emasculated Soviet literature since the days of Lenin. The state publishing monopoly too had gone. Many writers since 1986 had set up, or had been encouraged to set up, publishing co-operatives of their own with the full backing of the Writers' Union.

As for the writers under Gorbachev, two strands had become apparent. First writers from the past, whose works had been banned for decades were now being published, the stored-up cultural legacy of several generations. Pasternak's *Dr Zhivago* appeared in the mass circulation monthly Novy Mir in 1988. The first 1987 issues of "thick" literary magazines began to publish anti-Stalinist works such as Anna Akhmatova's Requiem and Aleksandr Tvardovsky's Po Pravu Pamyati (By Right of Memory). Neither poem had previously seen the light

35. T.H. Rigby, The Changing Soviet System (Hants: Edward Elgar, 1990), pp. 213-4.

of day, even though they had been written in the 1960s. Yuri Trifonov's novel Ischeznoveniye (The Disappearance) (on the repressions in the 1930s) and Anatoli Pristavkin's I Nochevala Tuchka Zolotaya (And a Golden Cloud Spent the Night) (on the deportation of the Moslems from the Northern Caucasus) gained widespread attention.³⁶

The wartime epic of Vasili Grossman, Life and Fate, the deeply anti-Stalinist works of Andrei Platonov, the poetry of Nikolai Gumilyev and even the still living dissident poet Joseph Brodsky, who emigrated in 1972 and won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1987, are other notable examples. "The magazines in Moscow, Leningrad, and Rostov almost competed to publish ferociously critical novels and short stories by Vladimir Dudintsev, Daniil Granin, Vladimir Tendryakov, Sergei Antonov, and Boris Mozhayev. There were poems by Anatoli Zhigulin, Boris Chichibabin, Olga Berggolts, Boris Slutsky, and Nikolai Gumilyov".³⁷

Secondly, much new published work opened up fresh areas for political debate. Works began to be published by deceased or emigre writers, such as Georgi Ivanov and Vyacheslav Khodasevich. The elderly Anatoli Rybakov published a major autobiographical novel in 1987, Children of the Arbat,

36. Roy Medvedev and Giulietto Chiesa, "In a Time of Change", Dissent, Summer 1990, p. 317.

37. *Ibid.*

which dealt with the purge years, the murder of Kirov at Stalin's behest in 1934, and the exile to Siberia of the 22-year-old hero on unsubstantiated charges of political subversion. He also portrayed Stalin more unsympathetically than any previously published Soviet novel had done. For the first time people could read a broad and truthful fresco of the life of the country and of the Kremlin during a period of dramatic changes. For the first time in Soviet literature the figure of Stalin was placed in the center of a novel.³⁸

Vasily Bykov wrote about the disastrous impact of collectivisation in paving the way for the low morale of 1941.

Just after coming to power in his address to the 27th Party Congress Gorbachev said:

"Criticism and self-criticism are a natural principle of the life of our society. Without them there can be no progress. It is time for literary and art criticism to shake off complacency and servility to rank, which erodes healthy morals, remembering that criticism is a social matter and not a sphere serving an author's vanity and ambitions".³⁹

38. Ibid., p. 318.

39. See, n. 8, p. 96.

Radio and Television also played an important role under glasnost. At the 27th Congress Gorbachev reported:

"Our television and radio networks are developing rapidly, acquiring an up-to-date technical level. They have entered life solidly as all-embracing media carrying information and propagating and asserting our moral values and culture. Changes for the better have clearly appeared here: television and radio programmes have become more diversified and interesting, and there is a visible aspiration to surmount established stereotypes, to take the diversity of the interests of audiences into account more fully".⁴⁰

There were more than 300 radio stations in the USSR broadcasting in seventy languages.⁴¹ People in the Baltic republics and other northern regions could receive radio and television broadcast from Finland and Sweden, while citizens in the Far East could pick up Japanese radio and television show.

In Gorbachev period, there were some 85 million television sets in the USSR (more than the number of households), and television broadcasts reached approximately 98 per cent of the population.⁴² "Under the influence of

40. Ibid., p. 95.

41. John L. Scherer, n. 30, p. 311.

42. See, N. 27, p. 408.

glasnost, Soviet television had changed dramatically. Lively and provocative programmes, such as Vzglyad (Viewpoint), Shestсот Sekund (600 Seconds) and "Dvenadtsatyi etazh" (Twelfth Floor), offered biting exposes in a format much like that of "60 Minutes". On the eve of Gorbachev's 1987 speech denouncing Stalin, Moscow television screened a documentary film called Risk-1, about the use of terror and summary executions during the Stalin period".⁴³

Documentary films were often telecast on all-union television to enormous audiences. In such feature films as Little Vera and Nikolay Gubenko's Restricted Zone, and in such documentaries as Is It Easy to be Young?, Are You Going to the Ball?, and Solovetskiy Power, contemporary social and ecological problems and legacies from the Stalinist past were depicted with an honesty that was not possible even a few years ago.⁴⁴

Soviet entertainment programming showed the effect of glasnost. Prior to 1986, prime time was devoted largely to sporting events, political commentary, and reruns of movies about World War II. Now one channel included an extended programme of rock music videos patterned after MTV.

43. Gordon B. Smith, n. 5, pp. 192-3.

44. Josephine Woll, n. 15, p. 42.

Perhaps the most dramatic changes of all, however, took place on Soviet T.V. with the institution in late 1986 of the practice of interviewing visiting Western politicians and other figures, and of spacebridges which brought together groups of ordinary citizens in Soviet and foreign cities. Soviet T.V. began to feature studio discussions involving Western politicians such as Helmut Schmidt and David Owen, and visiting ministers - Margaret Thatcher and George Shultz, for example - were interviewed live with simultaneous translation.⁴⁵

Under the advent of glasnost, arts were seen as serving a political as well as an aesthetic purpose. Lenin decreed: "Art belong to the people. It must penetrate with its deepest roots into the very midst of the toiling masses. It must be intelligible to these masses and moved by them. It must unite the feeling, thought, and will of these masses in elevate them. It must awaken in them artists and develop them".⁴⁶

Various creative unions in Soviet Union exercised substantial influence and indeed control over artistic life

45. Izvestia, 11 April 1987, p. 7.

46. V.I. Lenin, cited in Edward J. Brown, Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature, 1928-1932 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), pp. 178-9.

in the country. Two of the unions were those of theatre workers and of cinema workers which had changed radically under Gorbachev. After forcing the retirement of their conservative old-guard leadership at the earliest opportunity (in April-May 1986), both unions implemented a series of roughly parallel decisions to increase decentralization and to encourage democratization of decision-making. Most of the country's film studios and a number of theatres had become essentially self-financing.

Eighty-three theatres all over the country were participating in an experimental agreement with the state by which they had gained much greater artistic autonomy (for instance, in the choice of repertory) as well as financial responsibility. A variety of new organisational forms were introduced to support existing theatres and to encourage the creation of new theatres.⁴⁷

A new agency - Agency of Amateur Theatres was created. Independent local theatres were funded by party committees, the Komsomol, and other groups and were fueled by the enthusiasm of theatre fans. The All-Russian Association of Artistic Workshops was created in the fall of 1987 by the RSFSR Theatre Union, which acted like a

47. Josephine Woll, n. 15, p. 41.

Western producer, funding directors to stage plays and organize troupes.

Mikhail Shatrov's play Further...Further... Further, and some other plays had stimulated much excitement. In his play Shatrov charged Stalin with ordering Sergey Korov's murder and Trotsky's execution. Permission was granted to Mikhail Shatrov to stage another historical play which mirrored the Gorbachevian attacks on excessive militarism expounded by the previous regime. The play informs people of the Leninist insistence of signing a peace treaty with Germany in 1917-18. The openness of this type of theatre blessed by Gorbachev had got a direct bearing on the re-examination of Soviet history.⁴⁸

Like theatres, film studios also had virtual autonomy in all artistic matters - selection of scripts, casting, contractual airing of directors and actors, freedom of expenditure etc. The USSR cinematographers' union (which comprised all film workers, and not only cameramen) was the first to introduce these changes, beginning with its blackballing of the entire old-guard of the film-making industry at its May 1986 Congress.

48. A.G. Modak, n. 7, pp. 61-62.

Elem Klimov, a director whose films released in the West include Rasputin and Come and See, was chosen to lead the union in place of hard-liner Lev Kulidzhanov.

Filip Yermash, the conservative head of Goskino (the official overseer of the film industry) was replaced in December 1986 by the more professional and open-minded Aleksandr Kamshalov. A Commission of Writers, directors, critics and representatives of Goskino created in August 1986 by the union to handle disputes, and to investigate the fate of "repressed" movies had succeeded in releasing some 80 of the more than 100 films held back from distribution over a period of 20 years for all kinds of political reasons.⁴⁹

They included several films by Aleksey German (Road Check and My Friend Ivan Lapshin); Gleb Panfilov's 1979 Theme, once unacceptable because of its allusion to Jewish emigration and its portrayal of a successful literary hack; and Aleksandr Askoldov's 1968 Commissar, in which a pregnant Red Army Commissar during the Civil War leave out her confinement and bears her child in the home of a poor Jewish family, leaving the baby with them when she goes back to fight.⁵⁰

49. Josephine Woll, n. 15, p. 42.

50. Anna Lawton, "Toward a New Openness", in Daniel J. Goulding, ed., Post New Wave Cinema in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 39.

Thus, glasnost or openness had transformed the Soviet media. There had been an opening up of the media along with a tolerance for, and even encouragement of, iconoclasm in all areas of cultural, social, economic and political life. No longer the tame mouthpiece of the nation's leadership, much of the Soviet Fourth Estate had been transformed into a critical and frequently probing press, determined to leave almost no stone unturned in search of the facts, acting as a mouthpiece for public opinion.

Glasnost transformed public consciousness by creating a different set of expectations and a new kind and level of public discourse on every issue, artistic and political. Glasnost had meant a major expansion of artistic opportunities available to creative artists and their audiences.

One of the principal channels of the Soviet people's participation in social management was public organisations involving nearly the entire adult population of the USSR. The public organisations were an integral part of the Soviet political system. Under socialism together with the state the public organisations were important components of the political pattern of Soviet society and of the system of socialist democracy. State power, being the main form of socialist democracy, harmonized with the work of the various mass public organisations.

In accordance with the constitution of the USSR, all citizens of the country had the right to unite in public organisations. Article 51 of the constitution stated, "In accordance with the aims of building communism, citizens of the USSR have the right to associate in public organisations that promote their political activity and initiative and satisfaction of their various interests".⁵¹ Public organisations participated in running state and public affairs and resolving political, economic and socio-cultural issues. Participation in these affairs helped to develop social awareness and a sense of civic responsibility. The public organisations made an important contribution to the task of educating the citizens in the spirit of high political awareness.

The socialist public organisations had long held an important position in the life of society both because they were necessary as forms of organising the masses and the collective action of the workers and because they had a special role to play in relation to the individual. They guaranteed the conditions and provided the means for the fulfilment of many social and political functions performed by the individual in socialist society.

51. Boris Topornin, The New Constitution of the USSR (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), p. 254.

The state and party primarily expressed the common basic interests of all the working people, their common will, while the public organisations expressed the specific interests and requirements of individual sections and groups of working people. They united people according to their occupation, age or place of work. They also served to ensure that those sections of the working people they represented were able to participate in running the affairs of society and the state.

Personal interest was the principal motive for a person to join some public organisation. It was essentially a matter of people's associations according to their interests. People entered public organisations owing to their desire and inclination to unite their efforts to fulfil a programme of action that will further their interests. The existence of a variety of public organisations resulted from the variety of interest in society. There were hundreds of various voluntary societies in the USSR, of which more than 100 were national organisations. Their membership reached 210 million. These public organisations included - trade unions, cooperative societies, young communist league, and work collectives etc. Individual participation in these public organisations gave considerable opportunities not only for the satisfaction of a particular group of public interest, for whose sake the organisation existed, but

also for achieving the fuller satisfaction of individual interests and subjective rights. The citizen entered the public organisation voluntarily, having definite aims which reflected the degree to which he had combined public and personal interest, a factor which varied according to the organisation. Thus, such organisations helped people to become more politically involved and independent and helped to satisfy their many interests.

In socialist society the relationship between the individual and the public organisations necessarily took on a political character and developed on a truly democratic basis. Under socialism all activities of public organisations were a form of socialist democracy. Each was organised on the principles of democracy and appointment by election - guaranteeing the all round development of the individual, the active participation of all citizens in the running of society and the state and the broad expansion of democracy and political initiative of the working people in the period of communist construction. Public organisations were based on the principle of self-government. By carrying out their work among the population and managing their own internal affairs, the public organisations were a form of socialist self-government by the working people.

A typical feature of socialist democracy lies in the drawing of mass voluntary organisations of working people into governing the country. Article 7 of the constitution stated: "Trade Unions, the All Union Leninist Young Communist League, cooperatives and their public organisations, participate, in accordance with the aims laid down in their rules, in managing state and public affairs, and in deciding political, economic, and social and cultural matters".⁵² The public organisations actively participated in the running of state and public affairs and the solution of political, economic, social and cultural problems and in improving the social and political structures of society.

The working people's active participation at all levels of the administrative process being improved both through the state organs and through the wide network of mass public organisations was headed by the Communist Party. The party exercised its guiding role through the state and public organisations and united and directed their efforts towards the building of communism. The further improvement of the work of the people organizations was an important and necessary part of the party work in strengthening the system of democracy. Party committees at all levels

52. Ibid., p. 238.

regularly discussed questions related to the activity of public organisations, helping to improve the structure of their leading bodies and the style of their work. This allowed for coordinated effort and united action between party bodies and public organisations.⁵³

The Central Committee of the CPSU urged the use of all means of educational work to involve the people in the conscious activity of raising the effectiveness of production and running public affairs, mould noble goals, cultural requirements, and high moral conduct as the standard for each person, and promote the rational utilization of free time.⁵⁴ The public organisations made use of specific methods of mass education. The Communist Party highly valued this aspect of their work and strove to strengthen it ideologically and organisationally by drawing up a scientifically based programme for their joint efforts. In this connection mention should be made of the fact that the party showed particular concern about the educational work of the trade unions and the Komsomol. In its work of providing a communist education for the growing generation the party invariably relied on the Leninist Komsomol as its true and reliable assistant.

53. USSR Year Book 1986 (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1986), pp. 86-87.

54. Soviet Democracy in the Period of Developed Socialism (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979), p. 217.

The resolution of the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU stressed:

"The CPSU will do its utmost to help public organisations reappraise their role in society and exploit their potential more vigorously in the cause of renewal. The aim is to further the advancement of the nationwide patriotic movement in support of perestroika".⁵⁵

As components of the system of socialist democracy the mass organisations, as has already been stressed, were one of the most important organisational forms of drawing the working people into government.

Under socialism state power, being the main form of socialist democracy, harmonized with the work of the various mass public organisations. Such a relationship came into being literally from the first days of Soviet power. The Soviets did not emerge as state organs but as grass-roots organisations of the people, as organs for directing the working people's revolutionary struggle. They were set up as mass organizations and far from enjoying the powers of state organs they were, in fact, harassed by the landowners' and capitalists' state, which they opposed. As organs of state power the Soviets were established by the October Revolution. For the first time in

55. USSR Year Book 1989 (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1989), p. 75.

history, mass organisations of the people became fully empowered organs of the state, constituting the basis of the entire state apparatus. They lost nothing of their old qualities, remaining mass organisations, embodying the will and interests of the working people.

"The Soviets, which combine the feature of a government body and a mass organisation of the people", said the programme of the CPSU, "operate more and more like social organisations, with the masses participating extensively and directly in their work".⁵⁶ These words give a clear expression to the specific feature of the Soviets as representative organs of power and popular self-administration, a feature which springs from their very nature.

The public organisations were linked in many ways with the state organs, cooperating with them and influencing their work. The state in turn relied on the public organisations, legally sanctioned their work, and directed and supervised some of them, e.g., cooperatives. A complex system of interconnections between the state and the public organisations developed in the socialist countries.⁵⁷ In one sense one could refer to the public organisations as "participants" in state power. The various types of public

56. B. Shchetinin and Dr. S.C. (Jr.), ed., Fundamentals of Soviet State Law (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971), p.116.

57. See, n. 54, pp. 84-85.

organisations interacted with state organs and involved the working people in running the state affairs, being in this sense active participants in exercising state power.

Cooperation between the state and public organisations allowed in some cases certain of the functions performed by the former to be passed over to the latter. Such, for example, were the functions of the trade unions involving the supervision over social insurance, the network of sanatoria and rest-homes and controlling the enforcement of labour legislation. There were a considerable number of matters that the state organs alone were entitled to decide with the agreement or participation of the appropriate public organisations.⁵⁸

The public organisations, having their representatives in the higher and local organs of state power, used various means to influence the work of the state administrative bodies, actively participated in the solution of questions of home and foreign policy, and gave their full support to the policies of the state and promoted their implementation. The state did not interfere with the affairs of public organisations. They took an active part in the formation

58. M.A. Krutogolov, Talks on Soviet Democracy (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), p. 88.

of bodies of government and the drawing up of legislative acts and government decrees. Mass organisations, through their all-Union and Republican bodies were given the right to submit proposals and other initiatives in the USSR Supreme Soviet and the Supreme Soviet of the Union Republics for consideration. When the state put forward new legislative bills for countrywide discussion, such organisations sent thousands of proposals and amendments to the USSR Supreme Soviet. The Central Government bodies issued decree jointly with Central and Republican mass organisations. Participation of mass organisations in state affairs was also manifested in their representatives sitting on the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet and included in the ministries boards, committees, departments and other government bodies. From raising the question of recall of deputy to establishing the results of the voting, discussion and decision of these questions took place with the direct participation of the electorate, work collectives and public organisations.

Thus, growing role of mass organisations of the working people in the Soviet political system was expressed in their being increasingly drawn in performing state functions together with government bodies. This form became widespread and was practised in most varied spheres of Soviet life. During the course of communist construction

the relationship between the public and state organisations was sought to be further improved and greater harmony in their work attained. But the essential condition for this was a clear division of functions between the party, trade-union and other organisations. This also referred to the relationship between the public organisations and the Soviet state. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that public organisations were not an independent social power but existed alongside the state power or authority.

The role of mass organisations continued to grow constantly during the period of Gorbachev. The influence of mass organisations was growing with every passing year. They encouraged their members to take part in the resolution of the urgent problems facing society and as a result Soviet people were becoming more active in society. This process was markedly intensified since the 27th Congress of the CPSU.

In his address to the 27th Congress Gorbachev said:

"An ever more active involvement of social organisations in governing the country is needed in our time. When the work of our social organisations is considered from this angle, however, it becomes obvious that many of them are lacking in sufficient initiative. Some of them try to operate above all through their regular staff, in a bureaucratic way, and lean only a little on the masses.

In other words, the popular, creative, independent nature of social organisations is not being fully realised by far".⁵⁹

Gorbachev instructed public organisations to involve as much people as possible. The rights of public organisations were being broadened, and laws on the rights of trade unions, voluntary societies and YCL were being elaborated.

Concerning the role of public organisations the resolutions of the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU also pointed out:

"The reform of the political system presupposes a restructuring of public organisations, which are an important component of this system. Trade unions, the YCL, cooperatives, women's veterans' and other organisations express the interests and aspirations of various sections of Soviet society and help the party and the state to shape domestic and foreign policies in a way that organically combines the interests of all our people. The recent emergence of several new public associations and alliances to assist the socialist renewal should be viewed as a positive development".⁶⁰

While highly appraising the activities of public organisations, the conference noted the need to democratize their affairs, grant more independence and responsibility to their work and resolutely overcome such shortcomings

59. See, n. 8, p. 62.

60. See, n. 55, p. 75.

as the obsession with organisational matters, formalistic attitudes and the decline of initiative.

The Soviet Union's largest organisation of working people were the trade unions. They consisted of workers, office employees, collective farmers and students. The role of the trade unions was explained by Lenin who said: "It (the trade union) is an organisation designed to draw in and to train; it is, in fact, a school: a school of administration, a school of economic management, a school of communism. Though formerly an instrument of struggle against bourgeois rule and capitalist exploitation, trade unions became a formidable constructive force in the building of socialist and communist society after the victory of the October Socialist Revolution.⁶¹

The trade unions, dealt during pre-glasnost period with such questions as the establishment of work quotas, labour protection measures, wages and salaries, and social insurance. They dealt with matters affecting all Soviet citizens (housing allocation, improvement of trade and social services and organisation of leisure).⁶² Trade unions actively participated in the resolution of production, social

61. Devendra Kaushik, Soviet Political System: Perceptions and Perspectives (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983), p. 121.

62. M.A. Krutogolov, n. 58, p. 85.

and cultural issues. There were 7,06,000 local trade union organisations in the country.⁶³

"Trade Union Committees controlled housing, construction and distribution and supervise cultural and medical services. Every year they concluded collective agreements which envisaged mutual obligations, including those on special issues, with the management of enterprises. If a manager violated a collective agreement on labour laws, or uses bureaucratic methods in his work, the trade union committee could take a vote of no-confidence and insisted that he be fired. However, the management had no right to fire workers or transfer them to other jobs without the consent of the trade union committee."⁶⁴

One of the main forms of the working people's participation in managing production was the standing production conferences elected from among industrial and office workers at trade union meetings. These commissions had the right to hear reports of managers and give them recommendations on all questions connected with production, wages and salaries, fixing production quotas, labour conditions, everyday life and cultural services.⁶⁵

63. See, n. 55, p. 166.

64. Ibid., p. 165.

65. Ibid.

The trade unions were independent from the government. Prices could not be raised, and labour conditions, wages, salaries and pensions could not be changed without their approval. No organisation, other than the trade unions themselves, could control trade unions' financial activity. Moreover, trade unions administered part of the state budget earmarked for social insurance.

The trade unions, exercised increasing influence not only on industrial but also on agricultural production, on public education and on safeguarding the working people's rights.

In the Gorbachev period trade unions' membership numbered 140 million, which was, 99.5 per cent of all industrial and office workers, collective farmers, and students of vocational, specialized secondary technical schools and higher educational establishments.⁶⁶

Regarding the role of trade unions in his address to the 27th CPSU Congress Gorbachev said:

"In our country, the trade unions are the largest mass organisations. On the whole, they do a lot to satisfy the requirements

66. USSR Year Book 1988 (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1988), p. 147.

of factory and office workers and collective farmers, to promote emulation, tighten discipline and increase labour productivity.... The trade unions, however, should always give priority to social policy, to promoting the working people's interests. Properly speaking, this is the basic purpose of their activity. The all-union central council of trade unions and other trade-union bodies enjoy extensive rights and control vast enough funds, both the state's and their own. It is up to them, therefore, to make wide and sure use of them, instead of waiting for somebody else to fulfil the tasks they are charged with".⁶⁷

Talking about the role of trade unions in his book "Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World", Gorbachev said:

"What our country is undertaking and the issues it is tackling implies a re-evaluation of the role of trade unions in social affairs. It should be said first and foremost that our unions are a formidable force. No labour law can be drafted unless endorsed by the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. On all questions concerning labour laws, their enforcement and the safeguarding of the working people's rights the trade unions have the final say. If a manager fires a worker without asking the union for approval, a court of law automatically makes the decision invalid without any deliberation, in as much as the trade union has not been consulted for its opinion. No economic development plan, for one year or five years, is submitted to the Supreme Soviet unless approved by the trade unions. When the plans are in the making, the trade unions participate as well at all levels.

67. See, n. 8, p. 62.

Social insurance, the running of sanatoriums and recreation resorts, tourism, physical training and sports, and the rest and recreation of children are all the responsibility of the trade unions. Consequently, they wield real power. But, alas, over the past few years there has been less trade union activity. On some issues they have yielded their prerogatives to economic managers, while not enjoying some rights effectively enough.

So, having set about restructuring, we saw that the work of the trade unions could not be termed satisfactory. During my trip to the Kuban region, I reproached trade union leaders for pandering to managers, sometimes going so far as dancing to their tune. I asked them whether it was not high time they took a position of principle, and stood up for working people"?⁶⁸

The 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU also criticised the AUCCTU for being too slow in restructuring its work and for still featuring excessive regimentation, formalism and a lack of genuine responsiveness to people's needs.⁶⁹

Gorbachev felt that the new role of the trade unions in conditions of perestroika should consist primarily in giving a stronger social orientation to economic decisions, offsetting technocratic encroachments which have become widespread in the economy in the last few years. This meant that the trade unions should be more active in elaborating the social sections of economic plans, and, if need be, setting forth and upholding their own alternative proposals.

68. M. Gorbachev, n. 11, pp. 113-4.

69. See, n. 55, p. 165.

Trade union committees were to acquire teeth, and were not be convenient partners for management. Bad working conditions at some enterprises, a poor health service, substandard locker rooms - trade union organizations seemed to have got used to all this. But Soviet trade unions had the right to monitor managerial compliance with labour contracts, the right to criticize management, and even the right to demand that a director who failed to comply with the legitimate interests of the working people be removed from office.

A new law, law on the State Enterprises was adopted by the Soviet Parliament on 30 June 1987 offering greater autonomy and making enterprises self-financing and financially self-supporting. With the adoption of the new law, workers throughout the Soviet Union under its provisions of self-management now had the right to elect and remove their own administrative superiors subject only to a final "confirmation" of their choice by their respective state ministries. This new law was a remedial measure for narrowing the arena of ministerial interference in the management of enterprises. Workers self-management had been perceived as critical to spark the sense of commitment and initiative among Soviet workers to accomplish effective decentralization of the economy. But the reality

was that widespread skepticism among workers, strong opposition by enterprise managers, and ambiguities in the 1987 law had limited its execution. Without legal mechanisms or arbitration procedures, the law invited workers' skepticism and got stalemated when individuals elected by the collectives were rejected by ministries. Reform advocates regarded this ambiguity in the law as symptomatic of the problem throughout Soviet society.⁷⁰

The economic reforms had substantially broadened the functions of the trade unions relating to the protection of members' rights. The control functions of trade union members in the production sphere, in housing construction and in the realm of culture and education were expanding. The institution of public inspectors which had been in existence for many years exercising their functions in the sphere of production, trade and the distribution of housing, were encouraged to work more openly. In this way, part of the functions belonging to government bodies were turned more and more to public organisations.

On the trade unions at the 28th Congress Gorbachev made the following observations:

"Working people's organisations, called upon above all to defend their economic interests and rights and to oppose, as Lenin put it,

70. Joel C. Moses, n. 16, p. 258.

"administrative exaggerations" have always had an important place in the life of our society. But, as is known, they performed primarily auxiliary functions and were placed in a subordinate position. This also accorded with the traditional image of the trade unions as "levers", "conveyor belts" and so on. Such an approach has naturally distorted to a certain extent the very purpose of the trade unions, and is unacceptable at a time when society is being transformed and democratized". 71

Thus, under glasnost trade unions were encouraged to take direct part in running the country and enjoyed the broadest support of the CPSU and the Soviet state. Through the trade unions, workers and other employees had a say in deciding the most important questions of Communist construction, and in acquiring proficiency in public self-administration.

Naturally, it was not only the trade unions that participated in running production. A valuable contribution to economic management came from other working people's organizations, such as the Young Communist League. The co-operative societies, of which the collective farms were an essential part, constituted one of the forms of producer association of the working people.

71. Documents and Materials: 28th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1990), p. 43.

The All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, the Komsomol, another mass organisation of the working people, was of essential importance. Lenin taught Komsomol members to combine their studies with participation in the common labour of workers and peasants, with the practical solution of problems of labour, no matter how small or simple.⁷²

From the moment the Soviet Republic came into being the Communist Party had been drawing youth into state administration. An important role in this was played by the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR which was signed by Lenin in 1921 and entitled On the Practical Training of the Russian Young Communist League. The decree was designed to strengthen the organs of Soviet power with new reserves from among the ranks of the young workers and peasants.⁷³

The Communist Party looked upon youth as an active creative force among the Soviet people and was concerned that the younger generation and its vanguard, the Komsomol, should take active part in running the affairs of society

72. F. Kalinychev, ed., Soviet Socialist Democracy (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968), p. 240.

73. M.A. Krutogolov, n. 58, p. 234.

and in the work of the state organs. At the 27th Party Congress Gorbachev said:

"Together with the YCL, the Party, government and economic bodies should consistently seek to promote deserving young people to high posts in management, production, science and culture".⁷⁴ Young Communist League workers under the guidance of the Communist Party actively implemented its policy. In term of organisation, the Young Communist League was independent. The party's influence on the YCL was not like petty tutelage.

Under Gorbachev rule, the Young Communist League with a membership of over 40 million, between the ages of 14 and 28, was greatly involved in participation in the running of public affairs and the young generation's role in economic and cultural development. Young people were concerned with a wide range of problems involved in the further development of socialist democracy, environmental protection, implementation of the food, energy and other national economic programme. Members of the Young Communist League actively participated in the efforts to boost production, raised its efficiency, improved the quality of output and combined the advantages of socialism with the achievements of the contemporary scientific and technological revolution. The Young Communist League sponsored the development of key industrial branches and participated in the reconstruction and modernisation of the industry as a whole.

74. See, n. 8, p. 63.

Discussing the role of the young people in his book, "Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World", Gorbachev observed:

"We have arranged things so that not a single important youth problem is tackled without the Komsomol's opinion being taken into consideration.... The Komsomol and youth people have to be given an opportunity to really show their worth. The young have to be free of petty guardianship and supervision; we should teach them by placing responsibility on them and by trusting them in real endeavours".⁷⁵

The January 1987 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee called upon Party leaders to pay greater attention to the labour, ideological and moral steeling of young people. Gorbachev pointed out that there were two prime areas in the life and work of the young. First, they had to master the entire arsenal of the ways to democracy and autonomy and breathe their youthful energy into democratization at all levels, and to be active in social endeavours. Acceleration and any progress at all were impossible without it. Each young person had to feel that he was involved in everything that was going on in the country. Second, the younger generation must be prepared to participate in the extensive modernization of the economy, above all through computerization and the introduction of new technologies and

75. M. Gorbachev, n. 11, p. 115.

materials. Intellectual renewal and enrichment of society were what was expected of the young.

The Komsomol was founded on democratic centralism. All leading members of this organisation were elected. Free and businesslike discussion of the urgent problems was an inalienable right of each member and a major principle of inner-Komsomol democracy. The activity and initiative of members were encouraged. The 20th YCL Congress in 1987 noted that the overall democratization of the young people's life was the main way to overcome the organisations' lingering shortcomings. Young people made wide use of the right to freedom of speech and assembly.⁷⁶

Together with the other public organisations the Komsomol actively participated in the formation and work of the organs of state power. Over the years of Soviet power and under conditions of socialist democracy the various forms were defined and possibilities extended for participation of youth in state construction. Young people had a real opportunity to influence decisions on questions on a country-wide scale. More than one-fifth of all deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet were under the age of 30. One third of all the deputies to the Supreme Soviets of the Union and autonomous republics were young men and women. More than 1,00,000

76. See, n. 55, p. 166.

young men and women were elected to leading trade union bodies, and over one and a half million YCL members took part in the work of people's control bodies.

YCL bodies had the right to initiate legislation. They, as well as rank and file members, took part in nationwide discussions of proposed laws and cooperated with the Soviets of people's Deputies on the issues to do with young people's upbringing and their involvement in managing the affairs of state. YCL organisations also took part in nominating deputies.

YCL members organised special groups which supervised the work of various enterprises and institutions, found additional production reserves and helped eliminate shortcomings; these groups were called Komosmol searchlight.

In Gorbachev period the rights of the Komsomol in all spheres of social life increased. It was a matter of everyday experience in the Soviet Union for many suggestions concerning the life and work of young people to be submitted to the state organs by the Komsomol. The youth gave their support to the policy of perestroika, or restructuring. They were becoming more and more socially active. Tens of millions of young men and women, for instance, took part in discussing the theses of the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU. The young people's confidence in the party had grown.

The representation of youth in the organs of state and their broad participation in solving matters of economic, social and cultural importance were a clear demonstration of public opinion.

The Komosmol was an active and constructive force in Soviet society. In Gorbachev period, Soviet Komsomol was a mass political youth organisation operating on democratic principles. The Komsomol was an effective force which was an organic part of the mechanism of socialist democracy and public opinion.

In his address to the 28th CPSU Congress Gorbachev said:

"...Efforts have already been made to transform and restructure the Komsomol....We should, naturally, give all-out support to the Young Communist League organisations, while fully respecting their independence". 77

Another mass organisation of the working people - co-operative societies - also had an important function in Soviet society. It consisted of collective farms, consumers' societies, housing societies and other co-operative organisations, which involved working people in developing agricultural production, distribution of consumer goods through the network of consumers' societies, and so on.

In the pre-glasnost period co-operatives decided a wide range of questions connected with the work of clubs, schools and old people's homes, thus going beyond the realm of purely productive activity.

In Gorbachev period under glasnost the part played by the various co-operatives in the life of the Soviet people was bound to increase. In May 1988 a Law on Cooperatives was enacted to promote the establishment of cooperatives in manufacturing and services in order to reduce shortages in consumer market and to improve the quality of goods.⁷⁸

As Prime Minister Ryzhkov pointed out in proposing the new law, large state - run enterprises had found it difficult to respond to the changing consumer preferences, and what was needed was the promotion of small and medium sized production units with flexible structures geared directly to the market. The new cooperatives were specifically encouraged to draw those engaged in individual economic activities into their operations; they were also intended to absorb workers who had been required to leave other employment because of the introduction of new technology or other changes.⁷⁹

78. Stephen White, n. 19, p. 118.

79. Izvestia, 1988, p. 10.

The cooperatives were, in principle, exempted from obligatory state plans and state orders, although they were required at least to inform the relevant authorities of their intentions. Cooperatives could fix their own prices, except when producing for state orders or using state supplied materials; they were entitled to conduct foreign trade transactions and keep a significant part of the hard currency that they earned.⁸⁰

Cooperatives not only remained in business but were increasingly making their presence felt. According to the Russian Republic's State Committee on Statistics, more than 50,000 cooperatives were active in the Republic in 1989, employing in excess of 1 million people.⁸¹ By January 1991 there were 2,45,300 cooperatives of various kinds in operation in the USSR, more than twice as many as a year previously.⁸²

The most important of all the cooperative societies was the collective farm. The basic principle underlying the organization of collective farm was that they were managed collectively. The CPSU programme stated:

80. Stephen White, n. 19, p. 119.

81. E. Ivanov, "Kooperativy Rossii", Pravda, January 9, 1990, p. 3.

82. Stephen White, n. 19, p. 119.

"The Party sets the task of continuously improving and educating collective-farm personnel, of ensuring the further extension of collective farm democracy and promoting the principle of collectivism in management".⁸³

The democratic principles underlying collective farm management provided for the decision of important problems directly by the members, the electivity of the leading bodies, the collegial functioning of these leading bodies, their responsibility before those who elected them, and lastly, the right to recall, before the expiry of their term of office, those who failed to justify the trust of members. The collective farms were thus self-governing social organisations. The common will of all members interested in better and more efficient management was strikingly mirrored in collective-farm democracy.

In Gorbachev period this collective farm democracy was being expanded through the extension of democratic rights of collective farms and their members. Each collective farm was a democratic, independent and voluntary organisation of peasants who had united to carry on communal large scale socialist farming based on social means of production and collective labour. Together with the state farms (state agricultural enterprises), the collective farms had become a most important factor guaranteeing the agricultural growth.

83. See, n. 72, pp. 229-30.

Under Gorbachev higher bodies had stopped needlessly interfering in the planning of agricultural production at the collective farms, for they only fettered the members' initiative. Many local problems were being settled by the farmers themselves, who were being given increasing material incentives.

In the third week of November 1985 a State Agro-Industrial Committee was established. The new body assumed responsibility for administering all agricultural production and processing, replacing 5 ministries, namely, agriculture, fruit and vegetable growing, rural construction, meat and dairy industry and the State Committee for production and technical servicing of agriculture. The step was intended to curtail the powers of ministerial bureaucracy.

On the introduction of the lease system in agriculture, the Soviet leader totally changed the position. At the July 1988 Plenum of the CC of the CPSU, Gorbachev sought to plead the case for universal application of the lease system. Advocating long-term leases of "25-30 and even 50 years", Gorbachev said:

"Generally speaking, the question should be put as follows, nobody should have the right to deny people the possibility of working on a lease contract basis".⁸⁴.

84. Documents and Materials, Plenary Meeting of the CPSU, CC, Report by M. Gorbachev, Resolution July 29, 1988 (Moscow: NPA Publishing House, 1988), p. 29.

At the January 1989 meeting of scientific and cultural workers in Moscow, to Abalkin's remark that "different forms may suit the Baltic region and Central Asia", Gorbachev made a rejoinder that "even two neighbouring collective or state farms can choose different paths".⁸⁵

Thus, rights and freedom of collective farms were increased in various ways.

In addition to the trade unions, YCL and Cooperatives and collective farms, there were numerous voluntary societies, creative unions and other independent mass organisations. Every society and union functioned in some definite spheres: scientific, cultural and educational, sports and defence associations.

Active participation in the work of mass organisations enriched the life of Soviet people, promoted their initiatives and talents, taught them to administer social affairs, and helped to mould the harmoniously developed man, the active builder of the new society.

An important role in advancing culture in Soviet society was played by creative organisations: unions of writers, artists, composers, architects, journalists, and

85. M. Gorbachev, To Build up the Intellectual Potential of Perestroika (Moscow: NPA Publishing House, 1989), p. 7.

theatrical societies. They published newspapers and magazines. Major changes in the activities of these unions had taken place since the 27th CPSU Congress. The tumultuous upsurge of creative activity was organically linked with the restructuring and democratization of the entire life of the society. All their work was conducted on a voluntary basis, their aims and purposes being formulated in their rules.

For millions of working people the creative organisations were a daily school providing the knowledge and habits for active social and political involvement. Thus in socialist society the public organisations fulfilled a twofold function in relation to the individual:

- (a) they were the effective means for drawing citizens into mass political work both within and outside the organisation;
- (b) they continually enhanced the level of socio-political activity among the people, teaching them the appropriate skills and developing their best qualities as builders of communism.

All the processes involved in the development of Soviet democracy and public opinion were guided by CPSU, which was regarded the leading and directing force of the Soviet people and its tried and tested vanguard.

The growth of public organisations, unions and associations of workers, farmers and intelligentsia was a sign of the Soviet people's high political and social activity. The CPSU and the Soviet state saw to it that the strength of tens of millions of people in these popular associations was used with maximum efficiency, economically and effectively. Under glasnost there was no sphere of social life in the USSR in which popular associations did not operate.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

The theme of public opinion is among the "eternal" themes of human thought. It has a particular meaning for the political scientist. When elaborating the concept of a political system or state, a political regime or human rights, when studying their actual operation the scientist manifestly or implicitly proceeds from a definite model of public opinion.

As a social formation, socialism is unthinkable without the daily creative activity of millions of like-minded persons united in collectives. The emphasis on inseparable relationship between socialism and democracy has been a common theme in Soviet writings since the time of the October Revolution. Implicit in the Soviet political system and its political culture was the high degree of citizen's political activity. Soviet democracy insisted not only that everyone could but that everyone should take part in the management of the new society.

In the period of the Tsars people were not consulted in anything. People had to obey their command. Parliament, Constitution, President, Prime Minister, Legislature, initiative, referendum all these terms were quite obscure to the people. Under the pressure of the short-lived

Revolution of 1905 a representative assembly Duma was formed, but half of its members were nominated by the Tsar himself. It was also ineffective as a law-making body. Complete absence of democratic rights and freedoms of the people and total absence of democratic traditions gave no scope for formation of public opinion.

With the victory of the October Revolution of 1917 the Soviet state ensured the active participation of the working people in managing the affairs of society and state and a combination of man's real rights and freedoms with his civic responsibility. For the first time in human history a system of genuine government by the people came into being and the unity of the state and people's sovereignty was sought to be attained.

Inseparable ties with the masses was Lenin's basic creed and credo. To him revolution was possible only when the masses were really conscious of its need and took active part in it. He gave full credit to the will and action of the masses for the victory of the October Revolution. To conclude on the basis of Lenin's views about "pushing from without" the working class to transform its trade union consciousness into revolutionary consciousness, that Lenin was in favour of an elitist leadership of professional revolutionaries over the masses,

is to distort the Leninist teaching of the duty of the Communists to convince the backward elements among the masses. The leadership was not only to teach the masses but also to learn from them. The role assigned to the leadership of professional revolutionaries by Lenin namely that of igniting their (the masses) revolutionary consciousness by providing a spark did not negate the importance of their role. The entire emphasis of Lenin was on persuading and convincing the masses. By his immense and manifold contribution to the development of direct democracy through the introduction of such institutions as the right to recall the elected representatives, referendum on important public issues and workers' control and the importance attached by him to work with letters from the public, Lenin elevated the role of public opinion to a new height.

In the period of Stalin's personality cult there was complete eclipse of public opinion. Under Stalin the party as a functioning political institution waned in importance. Stalin did not inform the Central Committee or the Members of the Politburo about his personal decisions concerning very important party and government matters. This was a serious breach of the party rules. No party Congress was convened between 1939 and 1952, party conferences

were discontinued after the eighteen, in 1941. Under Stalin the representative role of the Soviets declined as they became almost purely administrative bodies. This was severely limited by the burgeoning ministerial apparatus. People were afraid not only to meet foreigners but even to talk freely among themselves. An atmosphere of suspicion, mistrust and fear pervaded everywhere. Public opinion was unanimous on all important issues because every kind of thought was constrained by fear of offending the jealous and suspicious master of the Kremlin. Thus, under Stalin there was little room for a real participation by any segment of the population.

Following Stalin's death the new leadership under Khrushchev advocated the revival of public opinion at all levels. This ranged from expanding the powers of the union republics to rejuvenating the trade unions and the local Soviets. The decisions of the Twentieth Party Congress which emphasised the principle of collective leadership, the new Party programme adopted in 1961 along with the new Party Rules created a free atmosphere necessary for formation of public opinion and enhancing its influence on important policy matters. The Party Congresses began to be convened more frequently. The Soviets which provided the best platform for expressing the public opinion and which were reduced to the function of rubber-stamping the

decisions of the party leadership during the period of Stalin, again re-emerged. Their authority was strengthened and their meetings were held more frequently providing opportunity for public criticism of individual ministries and government policies. Such laws as the Pension Law in 1956, Industrial Re-organisation Draft in 1957, etc. were adopted after considerable discussions in the Supreme Soviet. In 1959, the right to recall deputies was legalised by Supreme Soviet. A number of deputies were recalled not only from the local Soviets but from the Supreme Soviet as well. Khrushchev's enunciation of the new concept of the "state of the whole people" was an important step in the direction of extending Soviet democracy and elevating the role of public opinion. Khrushchev also introduced a new institution - the public opinion polls. Several such polls were conducted in the 1960s. These polls helped the leadership in gathering information needed to achieve greater efficiency and to combat apathy and instil a higher sense of participation among various strata of the population.

A new stage in the development of public opinion was inaugurated by the 1977 Constitution under Brezhnev. The new constitution not only gave official recognition

to the role of public opinion but also extended its scope by adding several new Articles, as for example, Article 5 which provided that major matters of state shall be submitted for nationwide discussion and put to a popular vote (referendum). In Article 9 constant responsiveness to public opinion was regarded as a principal direction in the extension of socialist democracy. Article 49 made it obligatory for concerned authorities to answer citizens' letters within the specific time. Article 57 provided the Soviet citizens the right to legal protection, i.e., protection by the courts against any encroachments upon life and health, property, personal freedom, honour and dignity. Article 58 made provision for the right to appeal in a court of law against unlawful actions by officials of the government and also to indemnification for damages incurred by such unlawful actions.

Public discussion of drafts, laws and economic plans became a widespread feature of the Brezhnev period. The adoption of the 1977 Constitution after nationwide discussion of its draft provided the best example of the new stress on public opinion. Eighty per cent of the adult population of the USSR, about 14,000,000 citizens

participated in this discussion in 1,500,000 meetings. Public discussions were also held on such laws as Fundamentals of Legislation on Marriage and the Family, Public Health, Labour, Land etc. and on various issues of concern.

Policy towards the Soviets and mass public organisations emphasised their growth in terms of both size and degree of public involvement. Promoted as the "organs of genuine democracy", expressing the "aspirations and interests of the entire nation", the Soviets were to be the key to the regime's efforts at revitalizing democracy. This was particularly evident at the local level. Local Soviets enjoyed both numerical expansion and a significant increase in responsibility and presumably, budget. The right to recall existed just not in theory. Its use ran to 600-700 cases per year. In all a total of 8,000 deputies were recalled during the 1959-81 period in the local Soviets. More than 100 deputies from Supreme Soviet, Union and autonomous republics and 12 deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR were recalled during the same period. Soviets at all levels were also actively working with the people's letters criticising shortcomings and sending proposals.

Brezhnev emphasised the increasing participation of workers in all areas of state and social administration. He underscored the continuation of this process as essential for the attainment of communism. One of the most important results of the new consensus on public opinion was the expanded role granted to the organs of people's control.

A new development was the establishment of special bodies for studying public opinion which took note of the changing mood of the public on important policy matters by conducting polls and surveys.

The 1961 Party Programme stated that the party considers it its duty always to consult the working people on major questions of home and foreign policy, to make these questions an object of nationwide discussion and to attract more non-members for participation in all its activities. The Soviet people were widely informed about the work of the party through the media and meetings. Besides public discussions the party encouraged people to lodge complaints and written suggestions over its activities and policies. Letters from the people to party organs strengthened and broadened the link between the party and the people and provided

a means for expression of public opinion and sources of information about the people's interests and requirements to the party.

Since the 1960s public opinion Research Groups had been formed by a number of all-level party organisations to conduct surveys and polls. The party's work on consideration of letters had also been improved. In 1978 alone the Central Committee of the Party received 7,00,000 letters while around 2,00,000 letters were received by the Central Committee of the Union Republics and by territorial regional and other party committees. In 1978, a Letters' Department was formed at the Central Committee Secretariat to analyse the mail systematically and comprehensively. A special group for analysing public opinion was set up in 1979 at the CPSU Central Committee. A Council on the study of public opinion was established at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia in 1975. By 1980, it had conducted 100 sociological polls. Moscow and Leningrad Party Organisations had also established such councils.

Andropov sensed the mood of the people and tried to revive their faith in the basic values of honesty, integrity and a clean administration. Not surprisingly,

Andropov first turned to an extensive anti-corruption campaign. The programme was conceived as coming as much from below as from above. Some thousands of letters complaining about corruption were featured in the press and on television.

Andropov also encouraged wide-ranging debates on economic reforms. Law on labour collectives introduced in July 1983 promoted a limited form of self-management which extended the scope for organised groups of workers to discuss questions concerning their work. The law encouraged the use of the brigade system whereby groups of workers themselves decided on the allocation of tasks and distributed the pay. It was an attempt to introduce self-overseeing mechanism on the shop floor by instilling a greater sense of responsibility. In agriculture there was a renewed emphasis on the 'link' system, later known as the 'collective contract', in which a group of 50-100 agricultural workers were offered a piece of land, equipment, seeds, and so on, and were paid by results. They were allowed to keep any profit on crops produced over and above the plan. It saw greater local initiative and decentralization as an alternative to Brezhnev's wasteful investment strategy for improving agricultural productivity.

The principle of collective leadership in the work of party bodies from the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee to local committees was also practised. An atmosphere was sought to be created for free exchange of views and discussions. The need to strengthen party's ties with the masses was repeatedly emphasized.

Andropov favoured greater autonomy for the Soviets and seemed willing to risk the possibility of loosened party control over the state apparatus to stimulate local initiative. He called for a reduction in the size of both the party and state bureaucracy and pleaded for strengthening socialist democracy. He also called for greater openness in informing the public of the leadership's activities and plans. In the short period of Andropov, press and other mass media were made more and more free. The live telecast of a press conference conducted by the then Chief of Staff, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov and the Deputy Foreign Minister, Georgy Kornienko and International Information Department director was an example of it. A small group of so-called 'Euro-Communists' who supported the liberalisation of the Soviet system were released and permission to emigrate was given to a group of Siberian Pentecostals.

who had been living for some years in the basement of the American Embassy in Moscow. A number of prisoners were released under the amnesty decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet dated 27 December 1982.

The successor of Andropov, Chernenko was a person with broad experience of party work and particular penchant for strengthening the party's ties with the masses. He stressed the need for greater openness in party decision making and freer discussions in party meetings. Soviets were directed by Chernenko to protect the interests of the people and encourage them to become more active in public life. The Soviets at all levels were becoming more involved in tackling a wide range of economic, social and political tasks.

Public opinion was encouraged by freedom of the press and mass media. Public discussions and criticism on party policies were promoted. 'Work with letters' was considered as a barometer of public opinion by Chernenko. Party Committees were obliged to see to it that each serious publication finds a live response. Chernenko considered letters, questions addressed to speakers at public lectures and sociological research (understood as public opinion surveys) as the three channels

of feedback. There was an official encouragement for a deeper study of public opinion. A conference on public opinion was held in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, in 1984.

The emergence of Gorbachev on the Soviet political horizon in early 1985 was a watershed in Soviet history. Public disenchantment with the inertia of the late Brezhnev period, coupled with the memory of Andropov's and Chernenko's fumbling moves towards internal reforms, gave Gorbachev an opening, indeed, a mandate to press ahead with a radical programme called perestroika (restructuring of socio-economic set up) and glasnost (openness) for the renewal of socialist society. Both these terms changed the style and outlook of the Soviet citizens. Public opinion was considered as an essential component of Gorbachev's economic and political reform programme. The essence of perestroika lay in uniting socialism with democracy and reviving the Leninist concept of socialist construction. Through democratization, actively involving Soviet citizens in the administration of governmental and other public organisations, he hoped to enhance his overall reform agenda by giving ordinary citizens a greater stake in determining their future while simultaneously

increasing their commitment to regime goals. Since the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Central Committee and the 27th Party Congress there was an unprecedented growth in the role of public opinion. The policy of giving more and more freedom to people was defended on the ground that Lenin also believed in the same policy. Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev were, of course, criticised for their distortion of the Leninist line and for inadequate reforms.

The Soviet system was permeated with a critical spirit. People were encouraged to criticise management and personnel at industrial enterprises and were also called upon to holding free discussions at trade union, Komsomol and enterprise meetings in order to stimulate mass participation in decision-making. The independence and rights of enterprises were expanded and principles of genuine cost accounting, and self-financing were introduced a new law on enterprises on 30 June 1987. According to this law all members of the enterprise administration, from the director or the enterprise down to brigade leadership were to be elected by secret ballot which strengthened control from below and ensured accountability and publicity in the work of economic bodies. The Law on

cooperatives was also adopted on May 26, 1988 which permeated cooperatives to function in all spheres of the economy and hire full-time contract employees as per requirement.

Under political reforms the slogan of "Power to the Soviets" was further advanced by introducing a new electoral law on 1 December 1988 widening their powers. A large number of multi-candidate constituencies were formed in which more candidates were nominated than seats available. The goal of this effort was to rid the voting procedure of formalism and to see to it that the election campaign was held in an atmosphere of broader democracy with the interested participation of the people. The first ever contested elections of Soviets at all levels in 1989 pointed to the high degree of political activity of the people who gave a mighty mandate to the forces of democratisation and pluralism. The session of the newly elected Supreme Soviet of the USSR was to remain in session for about eight months of the year instead of eight days.

Local Soviets' elections in 1987 and a Supreme Soviet by-election in January 1988 and republican by-elections in October 1988 had already taken place on the basis of these new principles. Deputies were made more

accountable to their electorate. The decision-making powers on all important questions relating to government, economic and socio-cultural spheres were transferred to them. Local Soviets were strengthened in several ways as they directed state, economic, social and cultural development within their area of jurisdiction.

Gorbachev also retained Brezhnev's emphasis on People's control. In his 27th Party Congress speech, he included People's control as one of the instruments providing each citizen the possibility of actively influencing administrative decisions. In contrast to the past practice of submitting long reports on shortcomings of administrators, People's control were asked to focus on more practical measures.

Gorbachev's most radical reforms were related to the direct elections of party functionaries including party secretaries at district, city, regional, and territorial party organisations by secret ballot for a limited period. Party was restructured by placing the human being at the centre of party work. The New Party Programme and an updated version of the Rules adopted at the 27th Party Congress aimed at the most effective exercise of all forms of direct democracy, of direct participation

by the popular masses in the elaboration, adoption and execution of governmental and other decisions, all connected with advancing public opinion. Democratization of party itself, application of the principle of collective leadership at all levels, pluralism of opinions and criticism these principles were highlighted by the New Party Rules. Primary party units' initiative was encouraged. Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution which guaranteed "the leading and guiding role of the Communist Party was amended in the Supreme Soviet session in March 1990 and equal opportunities were given to other parties, social organisations and mass movements to actively participate through their representatives in shaping state policies and in running state and public affairs. This laid the foundation of the multi-party system in Soviet Union.

People were encouraged to participate actively in the free and open discussion of key issues. Millions of people participated in the discussion of new electoral law and more than 3,00,000 specific comments or proposals were submitted. In response to these proposals, 32 of the 62 articles in the electoral law were revised and 26 of the 55 articles in the Constitutional amendments. The New Edition of the CPSU programme, the Revised CPSU Rules and

Guidelines for the 12th Five Year Plan and for the 15-year period until the year 2000, these three documents had been placed before public for discussion before the 27th CPSU Congress adopted them in their final form. About two million people expressed their ideas concerning the CPSU Rules. Soviets and Party at all levels were encouraged to work with letters. A large number of letters were received everyday by Soviets and the Party Central Committee criticising shortcomings and putting suggestions on various issues. 80,000 letters were received by the Soviets concerning the New electoral law. A large number of letters were sent by people in connection with the New Party programme. Letters were sent to the General Secretary also in person and freedom of writing critical letters was asserted by Nina Andreeva, Alexander Gelman and five others and by a number of open letters concerning reforms.

A number of polls and surveys were conducted on public opinion on new electoral law. Polls of a professional and nationally representative character were carried out by the CPSU's Academy of Social Sciences. In 1988 All-Union Institute for the Study of Public Opinion was established in Moscow under the auspices of the Trade Union Council and the State Committee on Labour and Social Questions.

Under the policy of glasnost restrictions on the Soviet media were removed and artistic opportunities were expanded to creative artists and their audiences. A law on the press was adopted in 1989 which removed preliminary censorship. Sharply critical publications started appearing on the most diverse problems. Between 60 to 70 million letters on a wide variety of subjects were received every year. Articles regarding drug addiction, prostitution, homelessness, inflation, unemployment, groups of professional criminals, draft-dodging, pacifism, police brutality, and a host of other phenomena that were allegedly alien to socialism were published. Data regarding topics like infant mortality, life expectancy and venereal disease - information that had been suppressed for many years were found in statistical handbooks and journals. In addition, protest marches, demonstrations, and even race riots were presented as normal items for news coverage. Under the influence of glasnost Soviet radio and television changed dramatically. The new elections received unprecedented coverage on television where two regular programmes, 'Power to the Soviets' and 'Towards the Elections', gave candidates and voters an opportunity to air their views. The live telecast of the session was something new. Studio discussions involving Western politicians such as

Helmut Schmidt and David Owen began to be featured by Soviet T.V. and visiting foreign statesmen such as Margaret Thatcher and George Shultz were interviewed. Lively and provocative programmes, such as "Vzglyad" (viewpoint), "Shestsot sekund" (600 Seconds) etc. and documentary films like "Little Vera" and Nikolay Gubenko's "Restricted Zone" etc. were screened which was not possible even a few years before.

The works of the writers from the past which had been banned for decades were published such as Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago, anti-Stalinist works like Anna Akhmatova's Requiem and Aleksandr Tvardovsky's Po Pravu Pamyati, etc. The writings of other Soviet authors - most prominent among them Anatoli Rybakov's Children of the Arabat, Aleksandr Bek's The New Assignment and Vasili Grossman's Life and Fate - began to be published. The same was true with respect to films and the theatre.

Thus, a large number of steps were taken by Gorbachev to enhance the role of public opinion in the restructuring of economic and political system. The initiative and creativity of the masses and the active participation of the widest sections of the population was considered the prerequisite for the success of perestroika. Once again people

felt themselves to be the masters of their country. Powerful human factor was unleashed by the democratic reforms in all spheres of Soviet society combining central guidance from above with new and effective mechanism of control from below.

Without doubt Gorbachev's political reforms, democratization and glasnost had a great potential for making a real advance in the direction of converting a formal type of Soviet democracy into a real democracy of socialist self-management. However, this opportunity could have been realized only if he had been sincere and consistent towards his professed aims of perestroika, namely, renewal of socialism. His political and spiritual mentor Aleksandr Nikolaevich Yakovlev had stated before the Constitutional Court during the CPSU trial that he and Gorbachev had both from the very beginning set before themselves the goal of pulling down the Soviet socialist system. This fact has now been owned by Gorbachev himself in an excerpt from his new book published in the Time magazine of 11 May 1992. Gorbachev's aim was as he has now confessed to break the Communist Party itself and not to reform it. He wrote: "I knew that system from within... I had no fear... but I knew their power! I knew that what I am able to say today I couldn't have said then. I had to beat them at

their game".

While Gorbachev continued to pay lip service to perestroika's priority of socialist development, a group of radicals led by Yakovlev and Yeltsin had an entirely different priority, the restoration of private property and private enterprise and the establishment of the parliamentary system of the Western type. In the name of bringing Russia back to the mainstream of world civilization they wanted to root out from the consciousness of the people all vestiges of an ideology of collectivism. In the nationalist garb under the banner of various national fronts initially organised to lend support to perestroika, supporters of capitalization began to mobilize the masses unleashing the forces which eventually destroyed the Soviet federation. An organizationally weak Communist Party ideologically disoriented by a reformist leadership could not reverse this tide. The so-called August Coup was used as a cover to stage a real coup in December 1991 resulting in the liquidation of the USSR itself. Behind the back of the Soviet parliament Gorbachev launched the so-called Novo-Ogarevo process which was nothing but horse-trading with the Presidents of the republics to preserve his personal powers. In this game,

he was beaten by the one upmanship of Yeltsin who in turn conspired with the President Kravchuk of Ukraine and President Shushkevich of Byelorussia at Belovezh near Minsk to brow beat Gorbachev.

Thus the USSR was wound-up primarily on account of an intensified power struggle among a pack of shortsighted politicians with no real commitment to socialist democracy. This, however, does not mean that the then existing Soviet system did not call for far-reaching reforms. The tragedy lies in the fact that the system was dismantled just at a time when it could have achieved a breakthrough in the direction of making it really responsive to public opinion. It is not difficult to understand President Yeltsin's motives in contriving at the disintegration of the USSR. The continuation of the other less reform-minded Soviet republics in a single federal state or even a loose confederation of states would have obstructed Yeltsin in his programme of launching a crash programme of building capitalism in Russia.

From the point of view of social progress the demise of the Soviet political system need not be decried if it had resulted in its replacement by a liberal democracy even of a bourgeois type. This hasty

implementation of economic reforms has only resulted in the decimation of the professional classes which form the nucleus of a middle class which alone is the mainstay of any democracy worth its name.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- Andropov, Y.V., Speeches and Writings (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983).
- Brezhnev, L.I., Speeches and Articles (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972).
- , Following Lenin's Course: Speeches and Articles (1972-1975) (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975).
- , Questions of Development of the Political System of Soviet Society (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977).
- , Socialism, Democracy and Human Rights (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980).
- Chernenko, K.U., Speeches and Writings (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1984).
- Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1945).
- Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, approved by the Second Congress of Soviets of the USSR on 31 January 1924, selected from USSR: Sixty Years of the Union 1922-82 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982).
- Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Adopted by the Extraordinary 8th Congress of the Soviets of the USSR on 5 December 1936, Selected from USSR: Sixty Years of the Union 1922-82 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1982).
- Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Adopted at the Seventh (Special) Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Ninth Convocation on 7 October 1977 (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1989).

CPSU Congress Reports - 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1956-1986).

Documents and Resolutions: XXVIIth Congress of the CPSU (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1986).

Documents and Materials: 28th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1990).

Gorbachev, M.S., Speeches and Writings (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1986).

-----, Perestroika: New Thinking for our Country and the World (London: Collins, 1987).

-----, The August Coup: The Truth and the Lessons (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991).

Gromyko, Andrei, Memories from Stalin to Gorbachev (London: Arrow Books, 1989).

Khrushchev, N.S., Forty Years of the Great October Socialist Revolution: Report to the Jubilee Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on November 6, 1957, Moscow.

Lenin, V.I., Collected Works (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), vol. 33.

-----, Collected Works (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963-1969). vol. 45.

On the Party's Tasks in Fundamentally Restructuring Management of the Economy, Report by M.S. Gorbachev General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, At Plenary Meeting of CPSU Central Committee, Moscow, June 25, 1987.

Speech by M.S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee at the Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, New Delhi, February 18, 1988.

Speech by M.S. Gorbachev at the Meeting of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, November 26, 1988. Soviet Review, vol. 26, No. 1, January 1989.

Stalin, J.V., On the Draft Constitution of the USSR (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1945).

Stalin, J.V., Works (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1952-1954), 7 vols.

The 19th CPSU Conference: A New Way of Looking at things and Making Decisions (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1988).

To Build up the Intellectual Potential of Perestroika, M.S. Gorbachev Meeting at the CPSU Central Committee with workers in the Sciences and Culture, January 6, 1989 (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1989).

Trotsky, Leon, The Permanent Revolution (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970).

Secondary Sources

Books

Adams, Jan S., Citizen's Inspection in the Soviet Union: The Peoples' Control Committee (New York: Praeger, 1977).

Afanaselv, V.G., Systamnaste obshchestvo (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980).

Armastrong, J.A., Ideology, Politics and Government in the Soviet Union: An Introduction, Rev. edn. (New York: Praeger, 1967).

Avtorkhanov, A., Stalin and Soviet Communist Party: A Study in the Technology of Power (New York: Praeger, 1959).

Balzer, Harley D., Five Years that Shook the World: Gorbachev's Unfinished Revolution (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

Baradat, Leon P., Soviet Political Society (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1986).

- Barghoom, F.C., Politics in the USSR (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1972).
- Berdyayev, Nicolas, The Origin of Russian Communism (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1937).
- Bezuglov, A., Soviet Deputy (Legal Status) (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973).
- Bialer, Sewerng, Stalin's Successors: Leadership Stability and Change in the Soviet Union (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
- Bogart, Leo, Press and Public (Hillsdale: N.J. Lawrence Erlbaum, 1981).
- Breslawer, George W., Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Soviet Politics (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982).
- Brinton, Crane, The Anatomy of Revolution (New York: Vintage, 1952).
- Brown, A.H. and Jack Gray, eds., Political Culture and Political Change in Communist States (London: Macmillan, 1977).
- Brzezinski, Z., Power and Principle (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983).
- Buzek, A., How the Communist Press Works (New York: Praeger, 1964).
- Cannor, Walter D. and Giteman, Zvi Y., Public Opinion in European Socialist System (New York: Praeger, 1977).
- Carr, E.H., A History of Soviet Russia (London: Macmillan, 1950-1953).
- Carter, Gwendolen M., The Government of the Soviet Union (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972).
- Chekharin, E., The Soviet Political System under Developed Socialism (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977).
- Chernivsky, M., Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).
- Childs, H.L., An Introduction to Public Opinion (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940).

- Churchward, L.G., Contemporary Soviet Government (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).
- , Soviet Socialism: Social and Political Essays (London & New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987).
- Cocks, Paul and others, The Dynamics of Soviet Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).
- , Developed Socialism: Theory and Practice (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983).
- Cohen, Stephen F., Rethinking the Soviet Experience (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).
- Cohen, Stephen F. and Katrina Vanden Heuvel, eds., Voices of Glasnost (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989).
- Colton, Timothy J., The Dilemma of Reforms in the Soviet Union (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1984).
- Conquest, Robert, The Harvest of Sorrow (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).
- Crankshaw, Edward, Khrushchev's Russia (Australia: Penguin Books, 1959).
- Crouch, Martin, Revolution and Evolution: Gorbachev and Soviet Politics (New Delhi: Prentice Hall, 1990).
- Dahl, Robert A., A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).
- Daniels, Robert V., Is Russia Reformable?: Change and Resistance from Stalin to Gorbachev (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988).
- Davies, R.W., Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution (London: Macmillan, 1989).
- Deutscher, Isaac, Stalin: A Political Biography (New York: Vintage, 1949).
- Developed Socialism: Theory and Practice (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983).
- Dyker, David A., ed., Soviet Union Under Gorbachev: Prospects for Reforms (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

- Florinsky, Michael T., Russia: A Short History, Second Edition (London: Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1969).
- Friedgut, T.H., Political Participation in the USSR (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).
- Gleason, Abbott, Peter Kenez and Richard Stites, eds., Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).
- Gorashkov, M.K., Partiinie Organisations i Obshchestvennoe mnenie (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980).
- Grey, I., The First Fifty Years: Soviet Russia 1917-1967 (New York: Coward, 1967).
- Hahn, Jeffrey W., Soviet Grassroots: Citizen Participation in Local Soviet Government (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).
- Hammer, Darrell P., The Politics of Oligarchy (Hinsdale, Illinois: The Dryden Press, 1974).
- Harding, Neil, ed., The State in Socialist Society (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).
- Hazard, John, H., The Soviet System of Government, Fifty Edition (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980).
- Hill, Ronald J. and Peter Frank, The Soviet Communist Party (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981).
- Hill, Ronald J., Soviet Union: Politics, Economics and Society from Lenin to Gorbachev (London: Frances Printer, 1985).
- Hingley, Ronald, The Tsars, 1533-1917 (New York: Macmillan, 1968).
- Hollander, G.D., Soviet Political Indoctrination: Development in Mass Media and Propaganda Since Stalin (New York: Praeger, 1972).
- Hopkins, W., Mass Media in the Soviet Union (New York, 1970)
- Hough, J.F. and Fainsod M., How the Soviet Union is Governed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

- Hulicka Karel, and Hulicka Irenl M., Soviet Institutions : The Individual and Society (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1967).
- Huszar, G.B., Soviet Power and Policy (New York: Crowell, 1954).
- Inkeles, A., Bauer, R.A., The Soviet Citizen: Daily Life in a Totalitarian Society (Cambridge: Mass Harvard University Press, 1959).
- Inkeles, A., Public Opinion in Soviet Russia (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).
- , Social Change in Soviet Russia (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).
- Jacobs, Everett M., ed., Soviet Local Politics and Government (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983).
- Juvilar, Peter H. and Marton Henry W., ed., Soviet Policy-making: Studies of Communism in Transition (New York: Praeger, 1967).
- Kaiser, Robert G., The People & the Power (New York: Atheneum, 1976).
- Karobinnikov, V., Piramida mnenie Obshchestvennoe mneie: Priroda i Funktsii (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981).
- Kassof, A., Prospects for Soviet Society (New York: Praeger, 1968).
- Kaul, T.N., Stalin to Gorbachev and Beyond (New Delhi: Lancer International, 1991).
- Kaushik, Devendra, Soviet Political System: Perceptions and Perspectives (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983).
- Kelley, Donald R., ed., Soviet Politics in the Brezhnev Era (New York: Praeger, 1980).
- Kenez, Peter, Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization 1917-1929 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
- Konstantinov, F.V., The Role of the Socialist Consciousness in the Development of the Soviet Society (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1950).

- Krutogolov, M.A., Talks on Soviet Democracy (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980).
- Lane, David, Politics and Society in the USSR (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970).
- , State and Politics in the USSR (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985).
- Lelchuk, V. and others, A Short History of Soviet Society (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971).
- Lenin, V.I., Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution (Calcutta: B. Mitra, 1942).
- Leonhard, Wolfgang, The Kremlin Since Stalin (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).
- Linden, Carl, Khrushchev and the Soviet Leadership, 1957-1964 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966).
- Lodge, M.G., Soviet Elites Attitude Since Stalin (Columbus: Merrill, 1969).
- Lowell, A. Lawrence, Public Opinion and Popular Government (New York: Hongmans Green and Co., 1914).
- McCauley, Martin, Soviet Union After Brezhnev (London: HEB, 1983).
- Mc Cully, Martin, ed., Khrushchev and Khrushchevism (London: Macmillan Press, 1987).
- McKay Ron, ed., Letters to Gorbachev: Life in Russia Through the Postbag of Argumenty i Fakty (London: Michael Joseph, 1991).
- Mc Neal, Robert H. ed., Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev: Voice of Bolshevism (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, INC., 1963).
- Medvedev, Roy A. and Medvedev Zhores A., Khrushchev: The Years in Power (London: Oxford University Press, 1977).
- Medvedev, Z., Andropov (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).
- , Andropov His Life and Death (London: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

- Meyer, Alfred G., The Soviet Political System (New York: Random House, 1965).
- , Leninism (New York: Harvard University Press, 1972).
- Mickiewicz, Ellen P., Media and Russian Republic (New York: Praeger, 1981).
- , Split Signals: Television and Politics in the Soviet Union (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- Moore, B. Jr., Soviet Politics: The Dilemma of Power, the Role of Ideas in Social Change (New York: Harper, 1965).
- Nogee, Joseph L., ed., Man, State and Society in the USSR (New York: Praeger, 1972).
- , Soviet Politics: Russia After Brezhnev (New York: Praeger, 1985).
- Nove, Alec, Stalinism and After: The Road to Gorbachev 3rd ed. (Boston: Unwin and Hyman, 1989).
- , Glasnost in Action (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).
- Pipes, Richard, Russia under the Old Regime (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974).
- , The Russian Revolution (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990).
- Rabinowitch, Alexander, Prelude to Revolution (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968).
- Reed, John, Ten Days that Shook the World (New York: International Publishers, 1919).
- Rezvitski i Litchnast, Individualnost Obshchesvo: Prollema Individualizatsii i ee Sotsialno filosofski Smysl (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1984).
- Riasanovsky, Nicholas V., A History of Russia, 2nd ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).
- Rigby, T.H., Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom 1917-1922 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

- Rigby, T.H., The Changing Soviet System: Mono-Organisational Socialism from its Origins to Gorbachev's Restructuring (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1990).
- Ross, Cameron, Local Government in the Soviet Union (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).
- Rostow, W.W. and others, The Dynamics of Soviet Society, Rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1967).
- Safarov, R.A., Obshchestvennoe Mnenie i gosudarstvennoe Upravlenie (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975).
- Schapiro, Leonard, The Origin of Communist Autocracy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955).
- , The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (New York: Random House, 1960).
- , The Communist Party of the Soviet Union 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 1970).
- Schulz, D.E. and Adams, J.S., Political Participation in Communist System (New York: Pergamon Press, 1985).
- Scott, D.J.R., Russian Political Institutions, 3rd ed. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1965).
- Shaffer, Harry G., ed., The Soviet System in Theory and Practice (New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, 1965).
- Shlapentokh, Vladimir, Soviet Ideologies in the Period of Glasnost (New York: Praeger, 1988).
- Smith, Gordon B., Public Policy and Administration in the Soviet Union (New York: Praeger, 1980).
- , Soviet Politics: Struggling with Change (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1992).
- Sonnenfeldt, Helmut, ed., Soviet Politics in the 1980s (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985).
- Soviet Democracy in the Period of Developed Socialism (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979).
- Spring, D.W., ed., The Impact of Gorbachev: The First Phase, 1985-90 (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991).

- Steele, Jonathan and Abraham Eric, Andropov in Power - From Komsomol to Kremlin (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983).
- Tarasulo, Isaac J., ed., Gorbachev and Glasnost: Viewpoints from the Soviet Press (Wilmington Delaware: SR Books, 1989).
- Topornin, Boris, The New Constitution of the USSR (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980).
- Tucker, Robert C., The Soviet Political Mind: Stalinism and Post-Stalin Change, Rev. ed. (London: George Allen and Unwin LTO, 1972).
- , The Soviet Political Mind: Stalinism and Post-Stalin Change (London: George Allen and Unwil LTO, 1973).
- , ed., Stalinism (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977).
- Ulam, Adam, The Bolsheviks (New York: Collier, 1965).
- Urban, Michael, E., More Power to the Soviets: The Democratic Revolution in the USSR (Hants: Edward Elgar, 1990).
- USSR: Perestroika, Democratization and Glasnost, Compiled by Leonod Sobolev (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1989).
- Venturi, Franco, Roots of Revolution (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1960).
- White, Stephen, Gorbachev and After (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- Wolfe, Bertram D., Three who Made a Revolution (New York: Dell, 1948).
- Zemtsov, Ilya, Andropov: Policy Dilemmas and the Struggle for Power (Jerusalem: Israel Research Institute of Contemporary Society, 1983).

ARTICLES

- Abrams, M., "Public opinion, Polls and Political Parties", Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 27, No.1, Spring 1963, pp. 9-18.
- Ageshin, Y., "Constitution of Developed Socialism", International Affairs, no. 12, December 1977, pp. 77-87.
- Alksnis, Victor & others, "Three perspectives on the past, present and future of the USSR", Economic Review, vol. 17, no. 4-5, July-August 1991, pp. 32-35.
- Allison, Graham T., "Testing Gorbachev", Foreign Affairs, vol. 67, no.1, fall 1988.
- Amann, Ronald, "Searching for an appropriate concept of Soviet Politics: The Politics of Resistant Modernization", British Journal of Political Science, vol. 16, no. 4, Oct. 1986, pp. 475-95.
- Amann, Ronald, "Empire Strikes back : The Interplay of Economic and Political change in the Soviet Union", World Today, vol. 43, Aug-Sept. 1987, pp. 118-121.
- Amann, Ronald, "Soviet politics in the Gorbachev era: The end of hesitant modernization", British Journal of Political Science, vol. 20, no.3, July 1990, pp. 289-310.
- Andropov, Y.V., "Soviet Society And Socialist Democracy", Socialism : Theory and Practice, vol.9, No. 38, Sept. 1976, pp. 41-47.
- Arkhipov, R.V. and others, "Path to privatization", Problems of Economics, vol. 34, no. 8, December 1991, pp. 23-34.
- Aron, Leon, "What glasnost has destroyed", Commentary vol.88, no. 5, November 1989, pp. 30-34.
- Axelrod, R., "Structure of Public Opinion on Policy Issues", Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 1, Spring 1967, pp. 51-60.

- Barrington, Paul Fitzgerald, "Crisis of the Soviet Empire", Strategic Digest, vol.20, no.11, Nov. 1990 pp.3165-71.
- Belin 'Kii': Vkh, and Rakhimov A.R., "Current Problems in the Study of Socialist Democracy", Soviet Sociology, vol.17, no.1, Summer 1978, pp. 83-101.
- Benn, David Wedgwood, "Soviet Propaganda : The Theory and Practice", World Today, vol. 41, no.6, June 1985, pp. 112-115.
- Bettelheim, Charles, "More on the nature of the Soviet System", Monthly Review vol. 38, no.7, 1986, pp. 31-41.
- Bezme, klaus von, "Economics and Politics in a Socialist Country: Gorbachev's New Concept", Government & Opposition, vol.23, no.2, Spring 1988, pp. 312-45.
- Bhasin, Prem, "System and Stalin", Janta, vol. 29, No. 30, Sept. 1974, pp. 8-10.
- Bhattacharya, Sunil, "Communism, democracy and freedom", Radical Humanist, vol. 53, no.7, October 1989, pp.13-17.
- Bhattacharya, S., "Will Soviet Union Survive?", Radical Humanist, vol. 54, no.12, March 1991, pp. 6-10.
- Bialer, Seweryn, "USSR after Brezhnev", Headline Series no.265, 1983, pp. 7-60.
- Bialer, Seweryn & Afferica, Joan, "Genesis of Gorbachev's World", Foreign Affairs, vol. 64, no.3, 1985, pp. 605-45.
- Bialer, Seweryn, "Domestic and international sources of Gorbachev's reforms", Journal of International Affairs, vol.42, no.2, Spring 1989, pp. 283-98.
- Bialer, Seweryn, "Passing of the Soviet Order," Survival, vol. 32, no.2, March-April 1990, pp. 107-20.

- Bloice, C., "Soviet Union tomorrow: the Problem at the base", Political Affairs, vol.69, no.5, May 1990, pp.8-11.
- Bogomolov, Oleg T., "Origins of change in the Soviet Union", Adelphi papers, no. 247, Winter 1989-90, pp. 16-28.
- Bogomolov, O., "Changing image of Socialism", Social Sciences Quarterly Review, vol. 21, no. 3, 1990, pp. 84-94.
- Borovik, A., "Waiting for Democracy", Foreign Policy , no. 84, fall 1991, pp. 51-60.
- Brahm, Heinz, "Disintegrating Soviet Union and Europe", Aussen Politik, vol. 43, no. 1, 1992, pp. 43-53.
- Brand, H., "Reforming the Soviet Economy", Dissent, Winter 1992, pp. 12-15.
- Brovkin, vladmir, "Revolution from below: informal political associations in Russia 1988-89", Soviet Studies, vol.42, no.2, April 1990, pp. 233-58.
- Brown, Archie, "Soviet Succession: from Andropov to Chernenko", World Today, vol. 40, no. 4, 1984, pp. 222-31.
- Brown, Archie, "Gorbachev: New man in the Kremlin", Problems of Communism, vol. 34, no. 3 May-June 1985, pp. 105-14.
- Brown, Archie, "Change in the Soviet Union", Foreign Affairs, vol. 64, no. 4, Summer 1986, pp. 1048-68.
- Brown, Archie, "Gorbachev and Reform in the Soviet System", Political Quarterly, vol. 58, no. 2, 1987, pp. 139-51.
- Brown, Archie, "Political change in the Soviet Union", World Policy Journal, vol. 6, no.3, Summer 1989, pp.469-502.
- Brown, A., "Soviet Politics in the 1980's", Salavonic and East European Review, vol.68, no. 4, October 1990, pp. 725-30.

- Burg, S.L., "European Republics of the Soviet Union", Current History, vol. 89, no.549, October 1990, pp. 321-24.
- Burks, R.V., "Coming crisis in the Soviet Union", East European Quarterly, vol. 18, no.1, March 1984, pp. 61-71.
- Butterfield, Jim, "Agricultural reform in the Soviet Union: Obstacles to effective reform at local level", Economic and political weekly, vol. 25, no. 2, January 13th 1990, pp. 113-17.
- Byrnes, Robert F., "Changes in the Soviet political System: Limits and likelihoods", Review of Politics, vol. 46, no. 4, October 1984, pp. 502-515.
- Cantwell, F.V., "Public opinion and the legislative process", American Political Science Review, vol. 40, no.5, Oct. 1946, pp. 924-35.
- Cartledge, Bryan, "Second Russian revolution", International Relations, vol. 10, no. 1, May 1990, pp. 1-12.
- Chakravartty, Sumit, "USSR: A historical step", Mainstream vol. 28, no. 17, February 1990, p. 6.
- Chernenko. K.V., "CPSU: Control and Verification", Socialism: Theory and Practice, no. 3, March 1977, pp. 17-23.
- Chernenko, Konstantin, "Interview", Reprints from the Soviet Press vol. 38, no. 8, April 30, 1984, pp. 5-10.
- Chirovsky, Nicholas L. "Soviet economy at the time of Perestroika", The Ukrainian Review, vol. 37, no. 4, winter 1989, pp.3-12.
- Chkhikvadze, V., "Soviet Political System Genuine Democracy", International Affairs, no. 2, Feb. 1985, pp. 37-46.

- Collins, Robert F., "Soviet Weaknesses and problems",
Military Review, vol. 63, no. 8, August 1983, pp. 60-72
- Colton, Timothy, J., "Soviet Union under Gorbachev", Current History, vol. 84, no. 504, pp. 305-309.
- Courtesy, S.W.B., "Declaration on formation of commonwealth of Independent states", Link, vol. 34, no. 21, 5th January 1992, pp. 34-35.
- Dain, L., "Democracy as perceived by Public opinion Analysis",
Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science,
vol. 28, no. 4, Nov. 1962, pp. 571-82.
- Daniels, Robert V., "Glasnost revised: The limits of Gorbachev's reforms", New leader, vol. 74, no. 2, 28th January, 1991, pp. 7-9.
- Das, Sitanshu, "Turmoil in USSR", Link, vol. 32, no. 49, July 15, 1990, pp. 4-7.
- Draper, Theodore, "Soviet reformers: from Lenin to Gorbachev",
Dissent, vol. 34, no. 3, Summer 1987, pp. 287-301.
- Drezper, T.O., "Soviet Reforms: From Lenin to Gorbachev",
Dissent, vol. 34, no. 3, Summer 1987, pp. 287-302.
- Dzhafarli, T.M., "Study of Public Opinion, a necessary condition for adoption of correct decisions", Soviet law and Government vol. 17, no. 3, Winter 1978-79, pp. 9-21.
- Evans, Alfred B., "Rereading Lenin's State and Revolution",
Slavic Review, vol. 46, no. 1, Spring 1987, pp. 1-19.
- Farooqui, M., "Perestroika and New Political Thinking",
Party Life, vol. 24, no. 5, 1988, pp. 1-7.

- Fedoseev, P.N., "Soviet People as builder of Communism", Soviet Studies in Philosophy, vol. 16, no. 4, Spring 1978, pp. 3-22.
- Frank, Peter, "Perestroika in crisis", World Today, vol. 45, no. 11, November 1989, pp. 185-87.
- Gaidar, E., "At the beginning of a new phase: An economic Review", Soviet Review, vol. 33, no. 1, January-February 1992, pp. 14-31.
- Gidadhubli, R.G., "Andropov's last testament", Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 19, no. 16, 21 April 1984, pp.668-71.
- Girishin, Viktor, "Party Policy and mass Creativity", Problems of Peace and Socialism, vol. 10, no. 5, May 1982, pp. 5-14.
- Glazov, Yuri., "Yuri Andropov: A New leader of Russia", Studies in Soviet Thought, vol. 26, no. 3, 1983, pp. 173-217.
- Gooding, John, "Gorbachev and democracy", Soviet Studies, vol. 42, no. 2, April 1990, pp. 195-232.
- Gorbachev, Mikhail, "Success of Perestroika is in the hands of the People", Socialism : Theory and Practice, vol. 7, July 1988, pp. 5-14.
- Grey, Robert D. and others, "Soviet Public Opinion and the Gorbachev reforms", Slavic Review, Summer 1990, pp. 261-71.
- Gromyko, A.A., "Along the road of the October Revolution: Along the course of creativity and Peace", Reprints from the Soviet Press, vol. 39, no. 11-12, December 15-31, 1984, pp. 5-34.
- Gross, Natalie, "Glasnost: Roots and Practice", Problems of Communism, vol.36,n.6, Nov-Dec. 1987, pp. 69-81.

- Gupta, Rakesh, "Perestroika: Transition with participation", International Studies, vol. 27, no. 1, January-March 1990, pp. 1-16.
- Gupta, Rakesh, "Commonwealth of Independent States initiated", Link, vol. 34, no. 21, 5th January 1992, pp. 4-7.
- Gustanson, Thane and Mann, Dawn, "Gorbachev's Next Gamble", Problems of Communism, vol. 36, no. 4, July-August 1987, pp. 1-20.
- Halstead, John, "Chernenko in office", International Perspectives May-June 1984, pp. 400-12.
- Hays, G., "Socialism, democracy and the one party System", Marxism Today, vol. 16, no. 2, Feb. 1972, pp. 62-63.
- Hill, Ronald J., "Exit Andropov -reenter Chernenko", Communist Affairs: Documents and Analysis, vol. 3, no. 4, October 1984, pp. 464-69.
- Hough, J., "Political Participation in the Soviet Union", Soviet Survey, vol. 28, no. 1, 1976, pp. 3-20.
- Hough, Jerry, "Soviet Politics under Andropov", Current History, October 1983, pp. 332-33.
- Hough, Jerry F., "Gorbachev's politics", Foreign Affairs, vol. 68, no. 5, winter 1989-1990, pp. 26-41.
- Howe, Irving, "Glosnost watch: Gorbachev meets up with History", Dissent, Spring 1988, pp. 265-73.
- Huber, Robert T., "Gorbachev's first five years", Items vol. 44, no. 2-3, June-September 1990, pp. 25-30.

- Iasin, E., "Destalization and privatization", Problems of Economics, vol. 34, no. 8, December 1991, pp. 5-22.
- Ilyinsky, I., and Rozhko, I., "Soviet Political Democracy", Reprints from the Soviet Press, vol. 41, no. 8, 1985, pp. 43-52.
- Iyer, V.R. Krishna, "New Soviet Constitution and Human Rights", Mainstream, vol. 17, no. 12, November 18, 1978, pp. 20-3.
- Jones, Ellen, "Committee decision-making in the Soviet Union", World Politics, vol. 36, no. 2, January 1984, pp.165-88.
- Kamath, P.M., "American Perception of the Gorbachev reforms", Strategic Analysis, vol. 15, no. 11, April 1992, pp. 17-28.
- Kassof, Allen, "Moscow discovers Public opinion Polls", Problems of Communism, vol. 10, no. 3, May- June 1961, pp. 52-55.
- Khan, Masood Ali, "Andropov elected Soviet President", New Age, vol. 31, no. 26, 26 June 1983, p. 10-11.
- Kudriavtsev, V.N., "Constitution of the State of the whole people", Soviet law and Government, vol. 17, no. 1, Summer 1978, pp. 3-17.
- Kuznetsov, Vasili, "Effectiveness and Reality of Soviet Democracy", Social Sciences, vol. 17, no. 1, 1986, pp. 10-24.
- Laptev, "Glasnost, a reliable instrument of Perestroika", International Affairs, no. 6, January 1988, pp. 20-26.
- Laqubur, W., "Glasnost and its limits", Commentary, vol. 86, no.1 July 1988, pp. 13-24

- Laquer, Walter, "Learning about the Soviet Union: What we know about the Soviet Union", Current, no. 253, June 1983, pp. 35-50.
- Lewin, Moshe, "Perestroika: A new historical Stage", Journal of International Affairs, vol. 42, no. 2, Spring 1989, pp. 299-316.
- Lukyanov, A., "Soviet Government: A form of People's Power", Reprints from the Soviet Press, vol. 30. no. 2, 31 Jan. 1980, pp. 21-30.
- Machan, Tibor R., "Fantasy of Glasnost", International Journal of Social Economics, vol. 16, no. 2, 1989, pp. 46-53.
- Mates, Leo, "Gorbachev-Achievements and Shortcomings", Review of International Affairs, vol. 41, no. 977, 20th December, 1990, pp. 16-18.
- McCauley, Martin, "Change of guard at the Kremlin: from Andropov to Chernenko", Soviet Jewish Affairs vol. 14, no. 2, May 1984, pp. 3-18.
- Medvedev, Roy, "Politics after the coup", New left Review no. 189, October- September 1991, pp. 91-110.
- Mehrotra, O.N., "One year of Andropov", Strategic Analysis, vol. 7, no. 9, December 1983, pp. 712-17.
- Meissner, Boris, "The Transition in the Kremlin". Problems of Communism, vol. 32, no. 1 January-February, 1983, pp. 8-17.
- Meissner, Boris, "Soviet Policy from Andropov to Chernenko", Aussen Politik, vol. 35, no. 3, 1984, pp. 242-61.

- Mickiewicz, E., "Policy Applications of Public Opinion Research", Public Opinion Quarterly vol. 36, 1972-1973, pp. 566-578.
- Modak, A.K. "Gorbachevian policy of openness", India Quarterly, vol. 45, no. 1, January-March 1989, pp. 46-70.
- Modak, Ashok, "Gorbachev & Bureaucracy", International Studies vol. 27, no. 3, July-September 1990, pp. 209-26.
- Moses, Joel C., "Democratic reform in the Gorbachev era: Dimensions of reform in the Soviet Union, 1986-1989", Russian Review, vol. 48, no. 3, July 1989, pp. 235-70.
- Mote, Max E., "Electing the USSR Congress of people's deputies", Problems of Communism, vol. 38, no. 6, November-December 1989, pp. 51-6.
- Mukhopadhyay, A.K., "Perestroika, Glasnost & Search for a theory of Socialist practice", Asian Studies, vol.8, no.4, 1990, pp. 1-13.
- Murarka, Dev, "Andropov's first four months", Mainstream, vol. 21, no. 30, 26 March 1983, pp. 9-10.
- Murray, Leo, "Studying Soviet realities", Contemporary Review, vol. 258, no. 1504, May 1991, pp. 233-36.
- Narayanswamy, R., "End of Gorbachev's Era", Economic and Political weekly, vol, 26, no. 31-32, August 1991, pp. 3-10.
- Naumov, V., and others, "CPSU'S historical path in the light of new thinking", Social Sciences, vol. 20, no. 4, 1989, pp. 23-45.
- Ober, Robert F., "Power and Position in the Kremlin", Orbis vol. 26, no. 4, Winter 1983, pp. 849-68.

- Oduev, S.F., "Problem of interests in Socialist Society", Soviet Studies in Philosophy, vol. 30, no. 3, Winter 1991-92, pp. 25-42.
- Olcott, Martha Brill, "Yuri Andropov and the National question", Soviet Studies, vol. 37, no. 1, January 1985, pp. 103-17.
- Palei, L.V., & Radzivanovich, K.L., "How to carry out economic reforms: Points of view and reality", Soviet Studies, vol. 42, no. 1, January 1990, pp. 25-37.
- Panda, Rajaram, "Emerging crisis in the Soviet Union", Foreign Affairs Reports, vol. 40, no. 8-9, August-September 1991, pp. 1-25.
- Parsons, Haward, L., "On the new constitution of the USSR", Political Affairs, Vol. 56, no. 11, November 1977, pp.7-14
- Perlo, V., "Economic and Political crisis in the USSR", Political Affairs, vol. 70, no. 8, August 1991, pp. 10-18.
- Pipes, R., "Gorbachev's Russia: Breakdown or crackdown?", Commentary, vol. 89, no. 3, March 1990, pp. 13-25.
- Powell, David E., "Soviet glasnost: Defination and dimention", Current History, October 1988, pp. 321-24, 44-45.
- Remington, Thomas, "Socialist pluralism of opinions: Glasnost and policy-making under Gorbachev", Russian Review, vol. 48, no. 3, July 1989, pp. 271-304.
- Rigby, T.H., "Political Patronage in USSR from Lenin to Brezhnev", Politics, vol. 18, no. 1, May 1983, pp. 84-89.
- Roeder, Philip G. "Soviet policies and Kremlin Politics", International Studies Quarterly, vol. 28, no. 2, June 1984, pp. 171-94.

- Rush, Myron, "Succeeding Brezhnev". Problems of Communism, January-February, 1983, pp. 2-7.
- Rutland, Peter, "Gauging glasnost: Soviet Studies and the Gorbachev phenomenon", International Affairs vol. 66, no. 1, January 1990, pp. 137-42.
- Sabherwal, O.P. "Andropov legacy part of Soviet System", Link, vol. 26, no. 28, 19 February 1984, p. 13.
- Safarov, R.A., "Problems of Public Opinion Research", Soviet Law and Government, vol. 16, no. 3, Winter 1977-78, pp. 58-75.
- Safarov, R.A., "Minor Referendums in the USSR: How and Why they are Conducted", Socialism: Theory and Practice, no.6, June 1980, pp. 53-58.
- Sallnow, John, "What Price Perestroika", Geographical Magazine, vol. 62, no.1, January 1990, pp. 10-15.
- Schifter, Richard "Glasnost: The dawn of freedom", World Affairs vol. 151, no. 1, Summer 1988, pp. 17-23.
- Shah, Rajiv "Anti-Democratic offensive at CPSU Congress", Link, vol. 32, no. 49, July 15, 1990, pp. 8-10.
- Shulman, Marshall, "Can change be Sustained ?" Socialism: Theory & Practice, vol. 7, no. 204, July, 1990, pp. 68-70.
- Simes, D., "Gorbachev's time of troubles", Foreign Policy, no.82, Spring 1991, pp. 97-117.
- Slider, Darrell, "Party Sponsored public opinion research in the Soviet Union", Journal of Politics, vol. 47. no.1, Feb.1985, pp. 209-29.

- Smith, Grahm, "Back to the future: Perestroika and the restructuring of the Soviet economy", Geography, vol. 75 no. 3, July 1990, pp. 271-73.
- Som, Pijush, "Perestroika and after: A critique of developments in former Soviet Union", Mainstream, vol. 30, no. 24, 4th April 1992, pp. 23-28.
- Taksal, Vinod, "Andropov era," Link, vol. 26, no. 28, 19 February 1984, pp. 9-11.
- Tavarez, Rafael, "Passing off Old ideas as new thinking, Problems of Peace & Socialism, vol. 33, no. 4, April 1990, pp. 91-93.
- Ticktin, Hillel, "Andropov: Disintegration and Discipline", Critique, no. 16, 1983, pp. 111-122.
- Unger, Aryech L., "Political participation in the USSR: YCL and CPSU", Soviet Studies, vol. 33, no. 1, January 1981, pp. 107-24.
- White, Stephen, "Political Communication in the USSR: Letters to Party-State and Press", Political Studies, vol. 31, no. 1, March 1983, pp. 43-60.
- White, Stephen, "Democratization in the USSR", Soviet Studies vol. 42, no. 1, January, 1990, pp. 3-25.
- Wilhelm, John Howard, "Crisis and Collapse: What are the issues?", Soviet Studies, vol. 42, no. 2, April 1990, pp. 317-27.
- Woll, Josephine, "Glasnost and Soviet Culture", Problems of Communism, vol. 38, no. 6, November- December 1989, pp. 40-50.

Yakovlev, Yegor, "Glasnost gleanings: Conservatives on retreat", Mainstream, vol. 28, no. 33, 9th June 1990, p. 33.

Zivanov, Sava, "Disintegration of the Soviet Union", Review of International Affairs, vol. 42, no. 998-1000, 1991, pp. 17-19.

Zlotnik, Mark., "Chernenko's Program", Problems of Communism, vol. 31, no. 6, Nov-Dec. 1982 pp. 70-75.

Zlotnik, Marc D. "Chernenko Succeeds" Problems of Communism, March-April, 1984, pp. 17-31.

Newspapers

Izvestia (Moscow)
Kommunist (Moscow)
Literaturnaya Gazeta (Moscow)
Literaturnaya Rossiya (Moscow)
Pravda (Moscow)

Journals

Adelphi Papers (London)
American Political Science Review (Washington D.C.)
Aussen Politik (Hamburg)
British Journal of Political Science (London)
Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science (Toronto)
Commentary (New York)
Contemporary Review (London)
Critique (London)
Current (Bombay)
Current History (Philadelphia)
Dissent (New York)
East European Quarterly (Boulder)
Economic and Political Weekly (Bombay)
Economic Review (Sri Lanka)
Foreign Affairs (New York)

Foreign Affairs Reports (New Delhi)
Foreign Policy (Washington)
Geography (Scheffield)
Geographical Magazine (London)
Government and Opposition (London)
Headline Series (New York)
India Quarterly (New Delhi)
International Affairs (London)
International Affairs (Moscow)
International Perspectives (Ottawa)
International Relations (London)
International Studies Quarterly (Surrey)
Janta (Bombay)
Journal of International Affairs (New York)
Journal of Politics (Gainesville)
Link (New Delhi)
Mainstream (New Delhi)
Military Review (Fort Leavenworth)
Monthly Review (New York)
New Age (New Delhi)
New Leader (New York)
New Left Review (London)
Orbis (Philadelphia)
Party Life (New Delhi)
Political Affairs (New York)

Political Quarterly (London)
Political Studies (London)
Politics (Canberra)
Problem of Communism (Washington D.C.)
Problem of Economics (New York)
Problems of Peace and Socialism (New Delhi)
Public Opinion Quarterly (Princeton)
Radical Humanist (New Delhi)
Reprints from the Soviet Press (New York)
Review of International Affairs (Belgrade)
Review of Politics (Netredame)
Russian Review (Cambridge)
Slavic Review (Stanford)
Slavonic and East European Review (London)
Social Sciences Quarterly Review (Moscow)
Socialism: Theory and Practice (Moscow)
Soviet Jewish Affairs (London)
Soviet Law and Government (New York)
Soviet Review (White Plains)
Soviet Sociology (New York)
Soviet Studies (Moscow)
Soviet Studies in Philosophy (New York)
Strategic Analysis (New Delhi)
Strategic Digest (New Delhi)
Studies in Soviet Thought (Dordrecht)
World Policy Journal (New York)
World Today (London)

3045