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“It seems the Western interpreters of Marxism are right when they say it is an outdated gospel.” Such a harsh condemnation of communist ideology might be expected from some persecuted Soviet dissident or perhaps a war-drumming functionary in Washington. However, this quote is from none other than Anatoly Chernyaev, a high-level apparatchik working for the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union who found himself disillusioned with the state of Soviet society in the 1970s. In much the same way, Georgi Arbatov, the director of the Soviet Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada, declared that, “one had a particularly sickening feeling inside because of the intolerable propaganda.” From these perceptions of the Soviet Union in the 1970s, Chernyaev and Arbatov would rise to become personal foreign policy advisors to Mikhail Gorbachev and active reformers in the 1980s. The current restrictions on research in Russia have turned the personal writings of Chernyaev and Arbatov into resources of nearly exclusive importance on the history of the Soviet Union in the 1970s. Not only were Chernyaev and Arbatov highly placed individuals within the Soviet government, they were remarkably intelligent, creative, and observant men who recorded their thoughts, impressions, and memories of the Soviet Union as it was before the implosion of the communist system. Secondly, Chernyaev and Arbatov recognized how the Soviet Union had gone astray and recorded evidence of its waywardness for posterity. Lastly, Chernyaev and Arbatov’s realizations in the 1970s as to the bankruptcy of the entire Soviet apparatus, coupled with their unique positions within that apparatus, specifically
conditioned and prepared them to work for the reformation of the Soviet Union when the proper opportunity presented itself with the election of Gorbachev as leader of the Soviet Union in 1985. For their singular contributions to the historical narrative of the Cold War, documentation of the factors leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union, and efforts with Gorbachev to overhaul the Soviet system, Chernyaev and Arbatov can no longer remain as little-known figures in the historiography of the end of the Cold War.
To Mom, my first teacher, and Dad, whose sacrifices made that education possible, and to the “good fight.”
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INTRODUCTION

With a resurgent Russian menace towards Europe, especially Ukraine, many people have begun to wonder if the Cold War is on again, or even if it was ever over in the first place. From 1946 to 1991, the titanic struggle between the United States of America and its Western European allies versus the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics engulfed the globe and informed nearly every event of the second half of the twentieth century. Whether in the form of democratic capitalism or totalitarian communism, ideology lay at the root of the conflict, a conflict that would test and ultimately be decided by the strength of those disparate ideologies. For many who lived through the Korean Conflict, Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam War, or collapse of the Berlin Wall, thinking of the Cold War as history can oftentimes be a disorienting experience or an inconceivable realization of how much time has passed since those events.

As relatively new history, one that is steeped in obfuscating propaganda from both sides, historians have much to discover and learn about the Cold War, particularly the end of the Cold War. Utilizing western sources, historians have been able to analyze the Cold War with some regularity, but that endeavor only represents half of a story that was at its core bilateral. Public access to Soviet archives and primary sources was nonexistent during the Cold War, and has been little better in the less than forthright regimes which have been the heirs to the Soviets in Russia. In fact, after a brief period of access immediately following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the doors to the Russian archives slammed shut to curious scholars and have remained largely so ever since. In the former Eastern bloc countries where less repressive governments have succeeded in holding onto power, former communist archives have been more available to scholars, although the Russian archives remain still off limits.
Until such time when the seal on the Soviet archives is re-broken and historians can resume their quest in their traditional environs, scholars must hunt in other places for sources of information on life in the USSR and the end of the Cold War. Two non-governmental sources with considerable potential are the diaries and memoirs of Soviet citizens and officials who witnessed or even participated in the events leading up to the downfall of the Soviet Union. As eyewitness accounts, these primary sources can help to contextualize what is already known about the Cold War, as well as illuminating the darkened corners of that history.

The diaries of Anatoly Chernyaev and the autobiography of Georgi Arbatov are sterling examples of two such sources. Both Chernyaev and Arbatov were key actors in the unfolding drama of the Cold War. As trusted advisors of Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in the 1980s, Chernyaev and Arbatov not only witnessed decisive events in the history of the Cold War, they had an active hand in the shaping of those events. Although historians are automatically intrigued by the adventures of these men in the 1980s due to their association with Gorbachev, his unprecedented attempts to reform the Soviet system, and the far-reaching implications of said reforms, these two men have also left the world an untapped commentary on the decade of antecedents in the 1970s that made the Gorbachev miracle possible.

While news stories often appear to be spontaneous occurrences to the groggy-eyed public, nearly everything has its causes in preceding events and circumstances. The earth-shattering events of 1985 onwards for the Soviet Union were no exception. Therefore, the rise of Gorbachev and ideas of glasnost, perestroika, and the Sinatra Doctrine must have had their origins in earlier events. Due to the opaque nature of the Iron Curtain and the highly secretive regime that held court behind that curtain, these changes were a surprise to the global community. Ever since the Russian Revolution in 1917, no one outside of the Soviet Union had
a thorough or unfiltered knowledge of events or society in the USSR, so naturally the change of
course and then collapse of the Soviet Union appeared to be quite abrupt. In order to gain a more
complete understanding of the fall itself, historians need to discover what was transpiring within
the Soviet Union prior to the momentous events which led to its official demise, thereby making
the work of diarists and memoirists such as Chernyaev and Arbatov even more vital, given the
unavailability of Soviet archival material.

To wit, the writings of Chernyaev and Arbatov disclose telling details about the inner
workings of Soviet society that preconditioned the reform efforts of the 1980s. While
momentous, the rise of Gorbachev alone was not sufficient for socio-political reform in the
Soviet Union. Rather, Gorbachev was dependent upon a network of governmental insiders who
were already established within the Soviet apparatus and who were desirous of political reform.
Chernyaev and Arbatov belong to this group of reform-minded Soviet apparatchiks. Moreover,
these eager reformers had much in common with the dissidents of the communist bloc who in
their opposition to Soviet rule had split from society. For these intellectual dissidents, the fine
arts became a realm of release and expression in the midst of Soviet repression. In the same
manner, Soviet functionaries such as Chernyaev and Arbatov who were disillusioned with the
state of Soviet communism consciously sought refuge in the consumption of the fine arts—
theater, literature, paintings, etc. Hence, both intellectual dissidents and future Soviet reformers
actively worked together to construct an arena of fine arts that served as a subversive space of
public discourse in the absence of a free and uncensored public sphere in the Soviet Union.

In the wake of these facts, Chernyaev and Arbatov have taken on newfound importance.
As if their contributions to historic events were not enough, the current restrictions on research
have turned the personal writings of Chernyaev and Arbatov into resources of nearly exclusive
importance on the history of the Soviet Union in the 1970s. Not only were Chernyaev and Arbatov highly placed individuals within the Soviet government, they were remarkably intelligent, creative, and observant men who recorded their thoughts, impressions, and memories of the Soviet Union as it was before the implosion of the communist system. Secondly, Chernyaev and Arbatov recognized how the Soviet Union had gone astray and recorded evidence of its waywardness for posterity. Lastly, Chernyaev and Arbatov’s realizations in the 1970s as to the bankruptcy of the entire Soviet apparatus, coupled with their unique positions within that apparatus, specifically conditioned and prepared them to work for the reformation of the Soviet Union when the proper opportunity presented itself with the election of Gorbachev as leader of the Soviet Union in 1985. For their singular contributions to the historical narrative of the Cold War, documentation of the factors leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union, and efforts with Gorbachev to overhaul the Soviet system, Chernyaev and Arbatov can no longer remain as little-known figures in the historiography of the end of the Cold War.¹

¹ The historiographical literature review of this work appears as its own section, Chapter 3.
In 2004, former Soviet official Anatoly Chernyaev entrusted his personal diaries to the care of the National Security Archive. Chernyaev served as Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev’s hand-picked advisor on foreign policy from 1986 until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Born in 1921, Chernyaev served in the Soviet military following Germany’s invasion of Russia in World War II. After the Allied victory, Chernyaev obtained a degree in History from Moscow State University, the same institution where he would spend nearly a decade teaching history classes in the 1950s. After leaving the university, Chernyaev worked as an editor for Problems of Peace and Socialism, a Marxist journal based in Prague. Then, Chernyaev’s governmental career began when he entered the service of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1961. Chernyaev eventually rose to the position of deputy head of the International Department, where his “daily duties…centered around the international communist movement, [and] interactions with representatives from European communist parties.”

During his time at the International Department, Chernyaev distinguished himself, “as an innovative thinker and reformer,” and eventually became one of Mikhail Gorbachev’s right-hand men in the 1980s. Chernyaev was heavily involved in crafting Gorbachev’s public speeches,

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
and exerted a preponderance of influence on Gorbachev’s new approach to Soviet foreign relations. Chernyaev’s importance to Gorbachev and relevancy to Cold War history is evidenced by the fact that Chernyaev personally accompanied Gorbachev on the Soviet leader’s now-legendary conferences with U.S. President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Moreover, Chernyaev was one of the leading supporters of glasnost and perestroika within the Soviet government. In fact, Chernyaev helped Gorbachev to write *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, and was directly involved in formulating and implementing the concepts of perestroika.

As a leading functionary within Gorbachev’s reformist government, Chernyaev gave his diaries to the National Security Archive, “in order to ensure full and permanent public access to his notes - beyond the reach of the political uncertainties of contemporary Russia.” Undoubtedly, Chernyaev’s own background as an historian figured prominently into this decision; a scholar in his own right, Chernyaev has written five books and many articles that have appeared in various international journals. With Chernyaev’s blessing, the National Security Archive has conveyed the task of translating and editing these diaries to Anna Melyakova and Svetlana Savranskaya, respectively. The diaries cover an expanse of twenty years from 1972 through 1991. Consequently, Chernyaev’s diaries are a privileged account of events behind the Iron Curtain from an active participant in those events, including the collapse

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12 Ibid.
14 The National Security Archive, “The Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev.”
16 The National Security Archive, “The Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev.”
of the Soviet Union. In seeking the publication of the diaries, Chernyaev was motivated by a desire to aid historians of the Cold War in their quest for new sources on the Soviet Union and the demise of communism in Eastern Europe.\(^ {17}\) While Chernyaev’s diaries from the 1980s and 1990s are imminently fascinating for their discussion of Gorbachev’s time as leader of the Soviet Union and the breakup of the Soviet Union itself, the recently released diaries from 1972, 1973, and 1974 contain similarly revelatory insights about the world on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Although the Soviet Union would not formally crumble until 1991, the diaries of Anatoly Chernyaev document the disintegration of Soviet society, ideology, and economy in the early 1970s.

Before launching into an analysis of the Chernyaev diaries, a word remains to be written about the authenticity and credibility of said diaries. Firstly, the diaries were translated and released for public consumption by the National Security Archive, a recognized organization regularly utilized by scholars which specializes in the dissemination of political documents. If there was anything suspicious or questionable about the legitimacy Chernyaev’s diaries, it is reasonable to believe that the National Security Archive would have taken appropriate steps to warn the public about such irregularities, if for no other reason than to safeguard the integrity and scholarly character of the institution. As the situation stands, the National Security Archive electronically published the diaries without any red flags or disclaimers, thus indicating the Archive’s implicit faith in their reliability.

Furthermore, as a more explicit vote of confidence for the diaries, Svetlana Savranskaya, the National Security Archive editor of the diaries and herself a scholar of the Cold War, personally vouches for the trustworthiness of Chernyaev’s writings. According to Savranskaya, 

\(^ {17}\) Ibid.
the original diaries were written in ordinary, Soviet-era calendar notebooks, and, “show no signs of ex post facto editing or re-writing.” Moreover, the handwriting is consistent throughout the diaries, and Savranskaya confirms that, “there is no doubt as to their authenticity.” During the editorial process prior to publication, Chernyaev was contractually permitted to indicate certain entries which he wished not to appear in the documents released to the public, however, Savranskaya assures that this omitted material was largely of a personal nature, and not of particular use to the prospective researcher. From an editorial perspective, Savranskaya therefore is quite certain of the overall integrity of the diaries.

Additionally, the secondary literature which comments on the diaries speaks to the fact that the academic community has accepted the diaries as a credible and reliable source. In an article on Chernyaev’s 1991 diary, Amy Knight from The New York Review takes the diary at face value and even refers to it as, “remarkable.” Likewise, David E. Hoffman, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of The Dead Hand: The Untold Story of the Cold War Arms Race and its Dangerous Legacy, does not question the genuineness of Chernyaev’s diaries. Rather, Hoffman raves about diary’s value as a primary source, saying, “‘There is nothing else quite like it…It is a major contribution to our understanding of this momentous period.’”

Moreover, Chernyaev’s diaries are featured in a massive edited volume about the collapse of Communism entitled, Masterpieces of History: The Peaceful End of the Cold War in

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18 Svetlana Savranskaya, E-mail Response to Author, 2 July 2014.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
Europe, 1989. This work was published through the Central European University Press, and edited by Svetlana Savranskaya, who was also responsible for editing the Chernyaev diaries themselves. In the acknowledgements, Savranskaya specifically singles out Chernyaev’s diary, bestows praise upon Chernyaev, and expresses no reservations about the diary’s veracity.24 Certainly, as editor, Savranskaya was in a position to judge the trustworthiness of Chernyaev’s diaries and ultimately bore responsibility for ensuring the academic dignity of the volume. A book review of this compilation noted the presence of Chernyaev’s diary in the work, but did not question the source’s standing.25

Furthermore, Chernyaev’s diaries serve as the basis of Chernyaev’s own book about Mikhail Gorbachev, *My Six Years with Gorbachev*. Three separate book reviews of Chernyaev’s work on Gorbachev not only cite his heavy reliance on his personal diaries in assembling the book, but also laud Chernyaev for producing one of the most even-handed and enlightening discussions of Gorbachev ever written.26 Apparently, these reviewers took no issue with Chernyaev’s source material. What is more, former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Jack F. Matlock, Jr., wrote the Foreword to Chernyaev’s book and personally attested to the integrity of Chernyaev’s diary entries: “As one who was present at many of the events and encounters Chernyaev describes, I can testify to the accuracy of his

descriptions, at least of those matters that I, too, observed.”27 To further allay any fears about Chernyaev’s credibility as an author, Matlock writes: “Equally important, his [Chernyaev’s] explanation of things we outsiders could not observe directly, such as Gorbachev’s mood, motivations, and perceptions, rings absolutely true. His is a more objective and insightful account of the perestroika period than the one we find in Gorbachev’s own, more lengthy memoirs….”28 Indeed, Matlock unhesitatingly gives Chernyaev’s work a resounding vote of confidence. Lastly, Sir Rodric Braithwaite, former British Ambassador to the Soviet Union, William Taubman, an expert on Nikita Khrushchev from Amherst College, Archie Brown, distinguished scholar of Soviet politics from Oxford University, and renowned academician of the Soviet Union Stephen F. Cohen from New York University all vouch for the personal integrity and character of Chernyaev himself.29 While the inevitable, albeit seemingly slight, chance remains that Chernyaev might possibly be engaged in subterfuge, the preponderance of evidence indicates that the Chernyaev diaries are worthy of trust, or at least that the nonchalant dismissal of them and their contents would appear to be a most unreasonable course of action.

In order to fully understand and appreciate Chernyaev’s commentary on the Soviet Union in 1972-1974, one must first take a look at what Chernyaev reveals about himself in the diaries. While not quite on the scale of Teddy Roosevelt, Chernyaev enjoyed the “strenuous life” of physical activity. Chernyaev mentioned playing tennis on multiple occasions.30 In fact, tennis

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28 Ibid.
appeared to be part of Chernyaev’s morning exercise regimen. Chernyaev’s approval of physical activity was evident in his assertion that sports afforded him the opportunity to be, “surrounded by youth and healthy bodies, the self-confident and calm life of sport.” If tennis seemed a somewhat odd activity for a Soviet bureaucrat, Chernyaev’s other favorite sport—skiing—seemed stereotypically Russian. While Chernyaev did not specify what style of skiing he did, the descriptions of his ski trips appear to indicate that he participated in cross-country skiing, a far-more taxing sport than conventional down-hill skiing. On one occasion, Chernyaev mentioned skiing in excess of three hours and estimates that he skied at least forty kilometers in that day’s outing. As a man of fifty-two years old in 1973, Chernyaev took pride in his enduring athletic ability: “At least to others, I don’t look like someone who’s just out on a stroll, or skiing for exercise. I look like a racer, though an aging one.” In fact, Chernyaev fancied himself to be enjoying a resurgence in his skiing prowess and bodily vigor: “While I was skiing, I thought to myself that I couldn’t ski as well 20 years ago, and I wasn’t in such good physical shape, either.” Though a seemingly irrelevant detail, Chernyaev’s salutary participation in sports set up a sharp contrast between Chernyaev’s active life and the world of stagnation that Chernyaev observed around him.

As a refinement to his more outdoorsy side, Chernyaev also comes across to his readers as very much a man of the arts. According to diary entries, Chernyaev attended the theater at

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36 Ibid.
least six times in 1972-1974. Chernyaev also referenced other plays that he had seen previously. No opponent of the silver screen either, Chernyaev mentioned watching “Amarcord,” the award-winning film by acclaimed Italian director Federico Fellini. Likewise, Chernyaev recorded his visit to the Tretyakov Gallery to view an exhibit of Boris Musatov’s paintings. Similarly, Chernyaev related his attendance at the, “Artists of Moscow,” expo in the Soviet capital. Moreover, Chernyaev estimated that he had gone to the Russian Museum twelve times and that his most recent visit, “left me completely stunned…. At one point, Chernyaev even exclaimed that his, “yearning for intellectual stimulation,” was satiated only in viewing works of art, and mentioned attending a special exhibit of portraits at the Museum of Fine Arts. Another clear example of Chernyaev’s preoccupation with surrounding himself as much as possible with artistic creativity was his visit to the museum dedicated to the Russian poet, actor, and playwright Vladimir Mayakovsky. In the same vein, Chernyaev shrewdly used his trip to Great Britain on International Department business as an opportunity visit the National Gallery and the British Museum. While very much admiring the National Gallery, Chernyaev remarked, “It is not as rich as the Louvre, the Roman or Florentine ones, but more varied than the last two,” thereby seeming to indicate his previous attendance at those world-renowned art centers as well. Nor did Chernyaev find himself walking through these museums alone. On

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43 Ibid., May 9, 1972.


46 Ibid., December 5, 1974.

47 Ibid.
the contrary, Soviet citizens attended museums and art expositions in droves, and Chernyaev encountered waiting lines that were, “miles-long every day – weekdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and under pouring rain.” Clearly, something about art fulfilled a need not only in Chernyaev, but for many other Soviets as well.

In literature, Chernyaev appeared to appreciate the full gamut of writers. While reading a book by Fyodor Dostoyevsky—an anthology of art, interestingly enough—, Chernyaev compared him to Alexis de Tocqueville, the great Frenchman of letters. Somewhat conceitedly however, Chernyaev went on to assert that because Dostoyevsky was Russian, “he is ten times more powerful than Tocqueville.” Gratuitous remarks aside, this comment presupposes a prior familiarity with the writings of Tocqueville on Chernyaev’s part. In fact, Chernyaev admitted to having read Tocqueville’s *The Old Regime and Revolution* in a diary entry from late 1972. Moreover, Chernyaev was no mean reader of books, but rather quite the analyst and aficionado of literature, as evidenced by his commentary on Dostoyevsky’s *Demons*: “I am intoxicated by the language more than the plot…Every phrase you want to re-read a dozen times and memorize…Every phrase revolves on endless mockery and irony.” Besides Dostoyevsky, Chernyaev was very well read on other influential Russian literary figures including, Vissarion Belinsky, Innokenty Annensky, and Alexander Herzen. In reference to poetry, Chernyaev raved about the work of Alexander Pushkin, the preeminent Russian poet: “Why do people keep coming back to him? He is universal like any genius, and like all the greats – he is ‘eternal.’…I see the poem in its entirety, its balance, as well as each stanza and each syllable.”

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50 Ibid.
surprisingly, given his dual love of museums and Pushkin, Chernyaev visited the Pushkin Museum, conspicuously during the annual remembrance event held in honor the poet’s death.55

However, Chernyaev’s reading list was not entirely ethnocentric. In addition to the aforementioned Tocqueville, Chernyaev specifically mentioned that he was reading, or had read at some point, Blaise Pascal, Paul Valéry, Andre Maurois, and Marquis de Custine, all Frenchmen, as well as works from William Faulkner, an American, Giorgio Bocca, an Italian, and Ferenc Fejtő, a Hungarian.56 Of particular interest are the two books from Bocca and Fejtő which Chernyaev admitted to reading in 1974. Chernyaev described Bocca’s *Palmiro Togliatti* as a book of, “facts about the life of a man who adapted to Stalin out of necessity in order to become a great man and oppose Stalin’s legacy.”57 Given the way Chernyaev worded his description of the work, his weariness with the Soviet system, and the role that he would later play in Gorbachev’s reform efforts, one can only wonder if Chernyaev identified with or drew inspiration from Togliatti’s ability to survive and live to fight another day. Moreover, Bocca was not a communist writer, so the fact that Chernyaev was reading him or even had access to his work is intriguing and indicative of Chernyaev’s efforts to seek out non-communist influences. Coincidently, Chernyaev recorded his reading of *Palmiro Togliatti* in the same diary entry which he began with a short rant against the staying-power of Stalinism and the crippling effect it continued to exert upon the Soviet political apparatus.58 In much the same way, Chernyaev’s own description of Fejtő’s *Lenin’s Legacy*, “a former Hungarian communist who fled to the U.S.,” seems to betray a detectable desire to be shed of communist monotony and an endless

56 Ibid., January 25, 1974; October 8, 1974; November 15, 1974.
57 Ibid., October 8, 1974.
58 Ibid.
cycle of mediocrity.\textsuperscript{59} Aside from the American fiction of Faulkner, Chernyaev also revealed that he had read Zbigniew Brzezinski’s more pragmatic \textit{Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era}.\textsuperscript{60} In fact, Chernyaev heaped unsolicited praise upon Brzezinski’s book: “After you have your fill of Brzezinski…it becomes impossible to write anything serious for publication. Everything will be unbelievably hackneyed, with demagoguery and lies.”\textsuperscript{61} Similar to Chernyaev’s enjoyment of sports, Chernyaev’s acute appreciation of artistic and literary expression illustrated his creativity and open-mindedness vis-à-vis the chicanery, group think, and propaganda of the Soviet Union.

Lastly, Chernyaev showed himself to be largely dissatisfied with the life that communism had afforded him. Chernyaev suffered from a kind of melancholy of spirit: “I wait for Saturday and Sunday as a promise of freedom and rest…But they are always the days of uneasiness. You read something that you left unfinished, you look through something, sort something. And you always want to go somewhere, meet with someone, see something – a museum, an exhibition…”\textsuperscript{62} The distress that Chernyaev was experiencing was evident in his demoralized tone; he was clearly searching for meaning in his life. A highly self-aware man, Chernyaev realized that he was engaging in escapism: “These are all attempts to run away from myself, to hide behind the appearance of activity.”\textsuperscript{63} Perceptively, Chernyaev pin-pointed the cause of his unhappiness: “It is because I do not have my own work in life, something outside of my job.”\textsuperscript{64} Working for the Communist Party had become Chernyaev’s life, and he had found it wanting. The only solution for his despondency was for Chernyaev to submerge himself in working for the

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., November 15, 1974.
\textsuperscript{60} Chernyaev, \textit{The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1972}, May 9, 1972.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., April 23, 1972.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
Communist Party itself, “where you get caught up in the rhythm of the bustle, in which the important things are intertwined with trifles and pointless stress, and you forget that the general meaning of life was lost long ago.” With dejection, Chernyaev admitted that no solace could really be found in his work either: “And my job, most of the time, is a profanation of real aspirations. I write articles and reports for [Boris] Ponomarev, texts for [Leonid] Brezhnev and others…I will be 51 soon. What have I done in my life? Nothing really that would be worthwhile for my successors.”

Deploring the total lack of socio-political mobility available to him, Chernyaev as early as 1973 resigned himself to being stuck in the International Department for the rest of his productive years. From Chernyaev’s point of view, the future held no promise of hope or improvement. According to Chernyaev, his bosses and political superiors were stuck in the past, and his job was becoming obsolete: “The sphere of my work – the communist movement – is hopeless and either dying or completely changing.”

Disillusioned with communism and estranged from the staleness of the Soviet Union, little did Chernyaev anticipate his promotion under Gorbachev and the indispensable role he would play in bringing this Soviet tedium to an end.

Throughout the diaries, Chernyaev maintained a running commentary on what he perceived as the negative state of Soviet society. For all the supposed orderliness of a communist society, Chernyaev saw nothing but disorder and incongruity all around him. While walking around Moscow, Chernyaev pointed out that there are police on nearly every corner and exclaimed, “how much police we have! And hoards of people’s guards, too.”

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65 Ibid., August 11, 1972.
66 Ibid., April 23, 1972.
68 Ibid.
added the ironic comment, “This is…‘order.’” On this same outing, Chernyaev looked out over a street packed with vehicles and affirmed that most of the automobilists lived within walking distance of their destinations, yet insisted on driving. Sarcastically, Chernyaev remarked that, “this is ‘order’ too.” After hearing Soviet head of state Nikolai Podgorny deliver a public address, Chernyaev castigated the speech, saying it, “consisted of the necessary phrases, old tired formulas and banalities – this is also a symbol of ‘order,’ of stability, of the ‘establishment’!” Chernyaev reached the outer limits of his exasperation when Podgorny’s speech was concluded with the playing of the “Internationale”: “[T]his was also a component of ‘order,’ because there exists a decision to play the ‘Internationale’ because we need official revolutionary enthusiasm for our ‘order.’ Try to express that!” With palpable infuriation, Chernyaev pointed out the ridiculousness of the revolutionary anthem being used as a tool of social control to maintain the status quo. As with Podgorny’s speech, Chernyaev saw the bungling public activities of the Soviet Union as doing more harm than good and going a long way towards helping to lower the esteem of the Soviet government in the minds of the general population. Commenting on a pretentious state ceremony for Moldova held by the Soviet government, Chernyaev wrote with exasperation that, “the public does not see any point in these performances…All that people notice are the speech defects, the absurdities of the ‘protocol,’ etc. In other words, from the perspective of building authority, all these countless anniversaries and speeches are backfiring.” Instead of helping to revive civic pride and national patriotism,

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70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
official functions of the Soviet government had become instances of bemusement for the Soviet citizenry who increasingly saw the nonsensicality of their ruling institution.

Interestingly, Chernyaev’s discussions of his visits to artistic events were often the occasions of his critiques of the Soviet system. In his anger that a play which he believed to be horrible was receiving critical acclaim, Chernyaev indirectly hinted at the political disillusionment that was taking hold in the Soviet Union: “Our intelligentsia…are so consumed by their escapism from reality, that in their ‘protest’ they turn to whatever may come their way. Disgusting!”76 Apparently, educated people were dissatisfied with communism, but had yet to find the proper means of channeling that frustration into meaningful action, at least according to Chernyaev’s way of thinking. For Chernyaev, being a dissident involved more than embracing subpar plays. At the “Artists of Moscow” expo, Chernyaev found the art underwhelming, but did note an overarching theme in the paintings that were displayed: “Terrifying escapism from reality.”77 Chernyaev attributed this escapism to, “the element of political indifference and thoughtlessness. It seems people are sick of the official theme of ‘Social Heroism’ and the like.”78 Undoubtedly, Chernyaev’s own unsatisfactory life was echoed by the artists who likewise had become entirely disenchanted with life under communism. Therefore, Chernyaev was not alone in his attempts to escape the unsavory reality that lay before him.

In the theatrical performances themselves, Chernyaev saw potshots being taken at Soviet society, even despite the work of government censors. In the play, “Ascent of Mount Fuji,” Chernyaev recognized the horror of being purged and the futility of *ex post facto* rehabilitation in the line, “‘That came later (rehabilitation), but then was not later!’”79 In other words,

77 Ibid., April 3, 1972.
78 Ibid.
rehabilitation, especially of the posthumous style, was of no consolation to a person caught in the middle of a purge. Even though the play “Under the Skin of the Statue of Liberty” was supposed to deride the United States, Chernyaev asserted that the play did the exact opposite and ended up satirizing and ridiculing the shortcomings of the Soviet Union. 80 Because the play said one thing, but did another, Chernyaev explained that the Soviet censors were at a complete loss at how to deal with this play. 81 On the one hand, the play clearly incriminated the Soviet Union; on the other hand, the idea that a derisive play about the United States was actually a critique of the Soviet Union was absurd. 82 Paradoxically, the censors initially pulled this derogatory play about the United States out of circulation because it was too critical of the Soviet Union. 83 Chernyaev concluded his rather amusing account of this whole ironic episode with the somber remark that, “This hypocrisy is the sad result when society is not allowed to look at itself in the mirror, even though everyone knows what it really looks like.” 84 However, Chernyaev did reveal that the play “Pushkin” successfully, “use[d] Pushkin’s words to throw a cheeky challenge to the present order.” 85 Furthermore, Chernyaev said that communist officials and commoners alike recognized the attack on Soviet society, but were too busy clapping and, “laughing mischievously” to object. 86 The amusing anecdotes aside, Chernyaev was keenly aware of the growing dissatisfaction with the communist social system in the USSR.

Moreover, Chernyaev saw that the people of the Soviet Union were suffering a deep spiritual crisis. Chernyaev made no bones about saying, “There is a void in spiritual life.” 87

81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.; October 17, 1972.
84 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
Chernyaev perceived this spiritual void being manifested in several concurrent phenomena. Firstly, Chernyaev noted a fervent re-interest in the communist revolutionary period among the general population. In the early 1970s, Chernyaev noticed a proliferation of books, academic articles, and pieces of art dealing with or drawing inspiration from the Russian Revolution. Chernyaev also declared that, “The increasingly frequent (and increasingly stylized – for the convenience of contemporaries) references to the civil war era are indicative,” of Soviet society’s interest in its own past. Whereas some people might chalk up this resurgence in materials about the early days of the Soviet Union as, “the desire for ideological purity and selflessness,” Chernyaev cast a somewhat larger net: “The search for spirituality is based on Soviet tradition.” While the validity of Chernyaev’s assertion about Soviet tradition here can be disputed, he nevertheless was referring once again to this concept of a spiritual deficiency among the people of the Soviet Union. Chernyaev himself was caught up in the mythos of the Russian Revolution, declaring unabashedly, “And what an era it was! What spiritual wealth our Revolution and Soviet Republic had!” Of course, the operative word here “had” is in the past tense and betrayed Chernyaev’s rueful acknowledgement that the Soviet Union had long since lost any inspirational spark it might have held formerly. Hence, Chernyaev insinuated that Soviet citizens were looking back to the Russian Revolution and civil war as sources of spirituality, in the sense of the word that incorporates ideas of inspiration, simplicity, and nostalgia.

91 Ibid.
Secondly, Chernyaev observed that the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville were receiving a wide reading among the Soviet intelligentsia. As mentioned earlier, Chernyaev demonstrated a knowledge of Tocqueville in his discussion of Pushkin. Chernyaev was also a member of the Soviet intellectual community. Therefore, Chernyaev lent indirect credence to his own remark about Tocqueville being read by Soviet thinkers. This observation becomes even more fascinating vis-à-vis the national interest in the Russian Revolution when one considers the titles of Tocqueville’s two most famous works, Democracy in America and The Old Regime and the Revolution, books about democratic institutions in America and the French Revolution, respectively. While everyday Soviets turned to their Russian Revolution for spiritual nourishment, Soviet intellectuals subconsciously sought out classic exposés of democracy and revolution for spiritual relief from the constant droning of communist propaganda.

Lastly, Chernyaev described the burgeoning fascination with World War II: “But even more remarkable is the deep-seated and passionate, indestructible like a guilty conscience, interest in the ‘Great 1941.’” Undoubtedly as a result of the Nazi invasion, Chernyaev declared that, “The year 1941 was the culmination in the development of Soviet social consciousness.” While the Russian Revolution established the Soviet nation-state, the resultant civil war and economic chaos caused untold suffering for millions of Soviets and did very little to impart national unity. Therefore, Chernyaev cited the national emergency of World War II as the birth of widespread Soviet nationalism and common-cause. Chernyaev was simply describing the classic “rally around the flag” scenario that occurs in times of national distress. However, World War II was also undoubtedly a point of pride where Soviet citizens could claim victory over the

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94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
menace of Nazi-Germany. Just as Americans look back on World War II as the clear-cut war between good and evil when they feel disillusioned with the U.S.’s morally dubious wars since 1945, so too did Soviets remember the Great Patriotic War as the “good ol’ days” before the stagnation of communism. Shrewdly, the Soviet government preyed upon this preoccupation with World War II for its own stabilization and legitimacy by helping to foster continued patriotic feeling through the designation of Novorossiysk and Kerch as “Hero Cities,” for the role they played in halting and turning back the Nazi assault into the Soviet Union.\(^96\) Evidently, the Soviet government was not above exploiting public sentiment about World War II to keep the population focused on the heroic past and the government’s association with that victorious past, rather than on the uninspiring and lackluster present. Amazingly, Chernyaev believed that the spiritual crisis which he was describing was strongest among the, “‘combat generation,’ the people who lived through the war and are eager to do everything they can to prevent the dangerous (in its irreversibility) leakage of spirituality from public consciousness and life.”\(^97\) The ironic validation of Chernyaev’s supposition is that he himself was a member of the combat generation and served in the Soviet armed forces. Not only were the people of the Soviet Union looking to the Great Patriotic War for spiritual solace, the very people who experienced the war were the ones who are most disturbed by the spiritual degradation and lackluster society they saw about them.

Perhaps the most telling example of the condition of Soviet society presented by Chernyaev was the story he related about a Russian fifth-grader on a class tour. The tour guide in the story might very well be Chernyaev’s wife, although this fact cannot be established with

Regardless, what can be substantiated is that the tour guide was at minimum a close personal acquaintance of Chernyaev, so Chernyaev at least heard the story from a participant, rather than through the grapevine. During the course of the tour, a schoolboy shocked the tour guide with statements of what he saw as the absurdities of Soviet society: “We have two buildings near my school, they are from the XVII century. There’s a sign on them that they are historical monuments and are maintained by the State. What kind of maintenance is it, if they are completely run down, debilitated, and neglected?” Wishing to engage the little whippersnapper in light conversation, the tour guide inquired if the boy liked learning about ancient history. The boy’s answer caught everyone by surprise: “No… I study the year 1937!” Realizing that the tour guide was flummoxed by his reply, the school boy continued undeterred: “Don’t you know what 1937 is?” “How do you study it, where do you get materials and so on?” “Yes, it’s hard to get any materials. But I will not give up. I have to find out how it became possible for so many innocent people, revolutionaries, and Leninists to be killed!” Chernyaev’s only comment on the episode epitomized the low point to which the Soviet Union had fallen: “This is a fifth grader.” Chernyaev might as well have written, “How bad do things have to be when even a schoolboy realizes enough to call out Soviet society as an abject failure.”

Although an official employee of the Soviet government, Chernyaev began to have serious doubts as to the viability of communism as a governing ideology in the 1970s. Deep within himself, Chernyaev believed that Marxist-Leninism has run its course and had become

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99 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
more of a hindrance than a help to the Soviet Union: “In their day these dogmas had a real meaning for social development, especially in our country, and this lasted for a long time. But now they turned into ideological myths, into obstacles and dangers for our society, and the source of its moral corruption.”

Furthermore, Chernyaev committed the most heinous of crimes; he began to question the writings of Karl Marx himself. Chernyaev gave a fascinating description of his reaction upon rereading Marx’s *The Communist Manifesto*: “I got a strange feeling. Marx and Engels were claiming things about capitalism of their day that it hasn’t completely reached even now. As for the development of the forces opposing it, it seems the Western interpreters of Marxism are right when they say it is an outdated gospel. I need to do some brainstorming.” For Chernyaev, the cat was out of the bag; Marxism was not infallible after all. Dissatisfied with the Soviet Union and his life under that system, Chernyaev went to the foundational document of communism and found it wanting. Similarly, Chernyaev recounted his reflections after rereading Vladimir Lenin’s “Reply to Kievsky” and “On Caricature of Marxism” by writing, “When you think deeply about the text of these two wonderful works, Lenin’s famous thoughts appear differently than they do in our customary ideological interpretation.”

While Chernyaev’s faith in Lenin was seemingly unshaken, he obviously had serious concerns about the way the current Soviet government interpreted, understood, and appropriated for self-preservation what Lenin had written. With these doubts, Chernyaev was swimming in dangerous waters, and admitted as much in his concluding comment on Marx: “But I could never write this publicly about the ‘Commmmanifesto’…."

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107 Ibid.
Ironically, before those remarks about Marxism, but in the same diary entry, Chernyaev had pondered the relative strength of communist ideology. After listening to a communist apparatchik from Britain run his mouth about how inept capitalism was in England, Chernyaev ruefully quipped that if capitalism was as defunct as this apparatchik said it was, then communism should have overtaken Britain long ago.\textsuperscript{110} Either capitalism was an intrinsically superior system, or communism was just so weak that it was incapable of besting even inefficient capitalism; neither conclusion was particularly comforting to someone stuck on the wrong side of the Iron Curtain.

Entertainingly, Alexis de Tocqueville made his way back into Chernyaev’s diary during his critique of communism. Several days before his assault on \textit{The Communist Manifesto}, Chernyaev stated that, “All of Western thought goes back to Tocqueville. So do I.”\textsuperscript{111} This statement is very odd coming from a Soviet official whose ideological father would be expected to be Marx or at least Lenin, and once again reinforces this idea that Tocqueville held a notable audience in the Soviet Union. Moreover, this short diary entry came to an abrupt end with the conclusion: “Also on Tocquville [\textit{sic}]: “The revolution broke the historical reality for the sake of abstract theories, but the power of abstract theories (others?) formed long before the revolution, in an era when society for [\textit{sic}] forgetting any participation in political activity.”\textsuperscript{112} More importantly, this quote can be read in the context of the communist revolution: “The revolution [\textbf{Russian Revolution of 1917}] broke the historical reality [\textbf{Tsarist rule}] for the sake of abstract theories [\textbf{communism}], but the power of abstract theories (others?) formed [\textbf{Marx and Engels}] long before the revolution [\textit{outdated}]....” Apparently, the quotation made enough of an impact

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., December 7, 1972.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
on Chernyaev for him to write it down, but the fact that he did not elaborate upon it is confusing.

Still, read in the context of the communist revolution and Chernyaev’s doubts about Marxism in December 1972, the quote does appear to be a further acknowledgement of Marxist-Leninism’s growing obsolescence in the mind of Chernyaev.

However, Chernyaev was not the only one to experience this growing revulsion to communist ideology. In a postscript to his 1973 diary, Chernyaev wrote that communist ideology had lost all its legitimacy in the eyes of the people, even among government functionaries like himself: “As a quasi-religion, it was dead at the core. Nobody believed in its dogmas, from top to bottom. For the first time, official ideology (as a theory) met with internal opposition, which could no longer be stifled by Stalinist means. Sakharov and the dissident movement appeared; they criticized and condemned Soviet power by appealing to its own laws and policies.”113 What is more, Soviet ideology had, from Chernyaev’s point of view, “lost all sense of clarity, not to mention its appeal,” among the general population of the Soviet Union.114 Although the old adage says that ideas cannot be killed, ideologies need people to believe in them or they lose their power. Therefore, Chernyaev’s assertion that no one was really on board with communism anymore did not bode well for its future. Aside from the obvious dissident voices of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sakharov, Roy Medvedev, and others, Chernyaev referenced some articles in a scholarly journal that he came across as another manifestation of this shift away from communism.115 In particular, he applauded a scholar named Al. Yanov for, “looking at society realistically and writing about it without demagoguery,” something that would have been unthinkable previously.116 Commenting further on Yanov’s article and the

116 Ibid.
journal as a whole, Chernyaev wrote: “He [Yanov] talks about, as do all the serious articles in the journal, the rational development of society in accordance with its historical and ‘national’…possibilities and conditions, not about building communism.”117 Apparently, commoners, government officials, and scholars were all in the process of giving up on Soviet communism by the 1970s. Despite this growing disillusionment with communist thought, Chernyaev provided the reason for why communism would endure in the Soviet Union almost another two decades by relating the pithy proclamation of an inebriated tank commander who he had overheard at a birthday party: “‘What’s keeping Soviet power propped up? Its authority, you think? That evaporated long ago! We are keeping it up, that’s who! That’s why we will always be in good shape.’”118 Apart from the drunken bravado about Russian military strength, this statement is a goldmine of insights on the state of communism in the Soviet Union. First of all, the commander would have never openly made such a declaration under ordinary circumstances. However, as alcohol has a way of making people brutally honest, the quote probably represents the commander’s true feelings about the Soviet Union. Secondly, the commander declared that the Soviet government had lost its authority. The Soviet government drew its authority from communist ideology, so the commander was corroborating Chernyaev’s own position that communism had become illegitimate in the minds of the people and was only being paid lip-service. Now, Chernyaev could add a military leader to his list of communist apostates. Lastly, the tank commander lucidly admitted that the only reason why the Soviet Union would continue to exist will be because of its military, and by extension, police power and the fear of reprisal against those who dared to contradict Soviet ideology.

117 Ibid.
However, Chernyaev’s main issue with Soviet communism was that it was simply failing to deliver on its promises of a utopian dictatorship of the proletariat or at least an acceptable society. For example, Chernyaev picked up on the acute difference between appearance and reality. On the surface, Chernyaev said, “the store shelves are full of goods, the prosperity is evident and obvious. But the “middle class” and intelligentsia profit from it mostly, the workers much less so. The gap is growing, as are internal tensions.”\textsuperscript{119} So much for socio-economic equality, much less a workers’ paradise, because communism was clearly not benefitting the Soviet proletarian workers. In fact, Chernyaev said that communism had created a society of institutionalized and materialistic bureaucrats who could care less about the principles of Marxist-Leninism and, “for whom ‘Moskvich’ and ‘Volga’ cars were no longer enough, they want Mercedes.”\textsuperscript{120} Reality simply did not conform to the jargon of communist ideology. Likewise, although Chernyaev was personally in favor of Leonid Brezhnev’s pursuance of détente with the U.S., he related the exasperation of Professor Kovalyov, who declared that détente was undermining communist ideology.\textsuperscript{121} As chairman of the Department of Scientific Communism at Moscow State University, Professor Kovalyov exclaimed: “[W]e are concluding economic agreements with capitalism for 30-50 years…We are helping them to emerge from crises, etc….Then how are we to teach scientific communism and talk about the death of capitalism?”\textsuperscript{122} Clearly, Professor Kovalyov was pointing out the irreconcilability of preaching the triumph of communism over capitalism, and then pursuing trade contracts with the U.S.\textsuperscript{123} Again, Chernyaev saw the communist ideology of the Soviet Union as contradicting itself.

\textsuperscript{119} Chernyaev, \textit{The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1972}, May 9, 1972.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
Moreover, Chernyaev sympathized with the impossible situation that Professor Kovalyov was faced with as an educator: “[H]e comes into daily contact with students, for whom the things they see on TV and read in newspaper[s]…and the things they hear from the pulpit of ‘scientific communism’ in their seminars and such – these are two very different things. They do not overlap in any way, there’s not even a hint of similarity.”¹²⁴ These students were smart enough to pick up on the disparity and come to their own conclusions about the actual viability of communism.¹²⁵ Hence, Chernyaev identified the inconsistencies and contradictions of communist ideology as severely undermining its legitimacy and utility, a critique he apparently shared with not a few sections of Soviet society in the early 1970s.

In addition to the sobering remarks on the decrepitude into which the Soviet Union was falling, Chernyaev recorded similar assessments on the dire state of the International Communist Movement. As deputy head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the government agency responsible for managing the International Communist Movement, Chernyaev had nothing but opprobrium to heap upon the entire concept of international communism. Chernyaev’s dismay with the International Communist Movement was hinted at earlier in a previously mentioned quote where Chernyaev lamented that, “the communist movement – is hopeless and either dying or completely changing.” Such a statement was mild compared to Chernyaev’s true feelings about the International Communist Movement. Even though Chernyaev was a communist Soviet bureaucrat whose official job for the Soviet government was to promote and oversee the expansion of communism abroad, Chernyaev saw the communist movement as nothing but a millstone around the neck of the Soviet Union: “The Communist Movement right now is nothing

¹²⁴ Ibid.
¹²⁵ Ibid.
more than an ideological addendum to our foreign policy, and [an] archaic ‘argument’ that we
are still an ‘ideological authority,’ and not just a superpower.”126 Likewise, Chernyaev
continued his diatribe, writing, “The Communist Movement as an independent force with its own
laws and objectives is nothing but a disadvantage to us right now. It is best to ignore it as
such….”127 Commenting on his own field of work, Chernyaev declared, “it is totally idealistic to
offer objective analyses of the movement and to attempt to develop a strategy for the
International Communist Movement.”128 According to Chernyaev, the Marxian prophesy of an
international communist revolution engulfing the globe turned out to be a myth, and Soviet
efforts in this direction were futile and burdensome. If anything, Chernyaev perceived a retreat
of communism, not an expansion of it: “So the historical communist movement as it was
envisioned 30 years ago is being eliminated…Moreover, the communist parties themselves are
disappearing as an independent ideological-political category.”129 In fact, Chernyaev derisively
referred to international communism as, “the squalor of “our” communist movement.”130
Chernyaev specifically cited the Communist Party of Australia as an example of the “squalor”:
“Their undertaking is really a lost cause.”131 Furthermore, Chernyaev firmly asserted that the
supposedly triumphant communist revolutions of the mid-twentieth century had nothing to do
with the superiority of Soviet communist ideology: “[T]he ‘revolutionary process’ took a
different route from what we expected for 50 years. We won with our ‘realpolitik,’ based on
strength and bullying, but not with our ideology. The more successful our policies, the greater
the damage to our ideology….”132 In other words, communist revolutions around the world

127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid., December 30, 1972.
130 Ibid.
succeeded only through brute force, either in the form of direct Soviet military support or indirectly through a Soviet military umbrella.

To make matters worse, Chernyaev revealed that his bosses within the International Department were clueless about the futility of the Soviet Union’s continued sponsorship of the International Communist Movement. According to Chernyaev, the director of the International Department, B.N. Ponomarev was out of touch with reality: “So in a global-strategic sense, B.N. is archaic. He cannot see even the deep contradictions in his own work. He shrugs off the problems to keep his head above water.”\footnote{Ibid.} From Chernyaev’s description, Ponomarev comes across as a “good little commie” who does his job without making waves; critical thinking was not required. Furthermore, Chernyaev thought that international communism was being severely mismanaged by party officials who were stuck in the past, uncreative, and adverse to the adaption that was vitally necessary if the communist movement was to be salvaged.\footnote{Ibid., June 10, 1973.} To this effect, Chernyaev declared, “The people who control our relations in this sphere…have become cemented in the era of the ‘Short Course’…and do not allow it to naturally develop into something constructive, revolutionary in a new way and at the same time relevant to us.”\footnote{Ibid.} The “Short Course” to which Chernyaev referred was \textit{The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union}. Published in 1938, this extremely influential work promulgated Soviet ideology and promoted the excessive ideas of Stalinism. With a Soviet leadership steeped in such outdated and ruinous beliefs, Chernyaev saw no hope for a revitalization of the communist movement that was on a collision course with irrelevancy.
Unintentionally, Chernyaev provided his readers with a brief case study that illustrated the lunacy of the whole International Communist Movement. In February 1973, Chernyaev explained that Moscow was hosting a, “closed conference of European Communist Parties on youth issues….”\textsuperscript{136} Although Chernyaev personally helped to organize the conference, he was at a complete loss as to why the conference had to be done in “closed” session.\textsuperscript{137} Chernyaev revealed that nothing controversial was going to be discussed at the conference, so this formality seemed inexplicable to him.\textsuperscript{138} After pondering for a while, Chernyaev divulged his further bafflement: “In fact, it’s not really clear what the purpose of this meeting is….”\textsuperscript{139} One can almost hear Chernyaev exclaim “Aha!” when he finally figured out what the youth conference was all about: “[W]e just have to show to ourselves and the parties that the ICM [International Communist Movement] is internationally active.”\textsuperscript{140} Apparently, the youth conference was being held for the sole sake of holding a conference; the Soviets had to at least pretend the International Communist Movement was alive and well, even though it clearly was not, at least from Chernyaev’s perspective. After the conference was over, Chernyaev remarked, “it’s not clear why this conference was necessary,” thereby vindicating his theory that the conference was bogus in the first place.\textsuperscript{141} Similarly, Chernyaev showed how personnel issues continued to hamstring the communist movement, as evidenced by the fact that the wrong people were assigned the conference: “[T]he geezers working on youth issues are just too old.”\textsuperscript{142} A conference where old white men were supposed to sit around and talk about youth issues was doomed to hilarity. Not only was the conference a total sham, Chernyaev explained how it was a

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., February 20, 1973.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., February 24, 1973.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
drain on the resources of the Soviet Union: “Today I was signing forms to issue pocket money to
the people arriving for the youth conference (100 rubles per person, and that’s for two days!
Considering that their living arrangements and other services are taken care of). I thought to
myself, all of this is ‘at the expense of the Tambov peasant.’”\textsuperscript{143} In other words, the youth
conference did not accomplish anything, was never intended to accomplish anything, provided
compensation for the participants, and wasted taxpayer money in the process. Surely, Chernyaev
was sadly shaking his head as he wrote, “I think no other country could have borne the duty of
internationalism for so long.”\textsuperscript{144} Obviously, the myth of the International Communist Movement
was a complete drag on the Soviet system.

To add insult to injury, Chernyaev disclosed the fact that communist parties around the
globe were rejecting Soviet leadership of the International Communist Movement. Just as
Chernyaev perceived that Soviet ideology was losing its legitimacy at home within the Soviet
Union, so too was Marxist-Leninism becoming obsolete in the minds of international
communists: “Nobody believes us anymore, no matter how we…try to explain our Marxist-
Leninist purity.”\textsuperscript{145} Indeed, Chernyaev explained that the global communist community was
simply no longer captivated with the course of Soviet communism: “[N]obody believes in our
‘revolutionary example’ anymore.”\textsuperscript{146} Communist parties outside of the USSR were put off by
the Soviet Union’s haughty attitude and unwillingness to admit the mistakes and shortcomings of
its system: “Until we [Soviets leadership] renounce the self-imposed mindset that “we are a
socialist country and they [other communists] are a socialist country, so how is it possible that
they criticize the CPSU-Lenin’s Party,” we will close the way to understanding what is

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., February 20, 1973.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{145} Chernyaev, \textit{The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev}, 1972, October 17, 1972.
\textsuperscript{146} Chernyaev, \textit{The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev}, 1974, April 5, 1974.
happening and following a consistent policy that is realistic and clear to all.”\textsuperscript{147} In the meantime and until the Communist Party of the Soviet Union figured out how to operate in these changed circumstances, Chernyaev stated flatly, “Our fraternal parties are simply drifting away from us, from our influence.”\textsuperscript{148} Similarly, Chernyaev declared that détente and the lessening likelihood of nuclear war had also emboldened communist parties to stop kowtowing to the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{149} Somewhat ruefully, Chernyaev gave an example of what he believed was running through the minds of these communist parties: “‘While there was a possibility of nuclear war, we were with you, because you were the only power capable of preventing war. And when the threat is practically gone, excuse us, but we will do our business ourselves.’”\textsuperscript{150} Likewise, Chernyaev explained that another of the unintended consequences of détente was that it was forcing the Soviets to lessen the stringency of its ideological foundations to foreign policy, thereby undermining the basis by the Soviets traditionally justified its oversight of international communism and interference in the affairs and policy of non-Soviet communist parties in Europe and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{151} Here again was evidence of the supposedly “soft power” policy of détente slowing eroding away at the legitimacy of the Soviet Union. Peering into his crystal ball, Chernyaev predicted that if the present situation continued, “we [Soviet Union] will have complete sterilization of real content in our connections with them [other communist parties]. We have already come very close….”\textsuperscript{152} As proof of his assertions, Chernyaev described the formal visit of Australian communists to the Soviet Union, during which representatives of the Communist Party of Australia had the audacity to categorically state their grievances against the

\textsuperscript{147} Chernyaev, The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1972, October 17, 1972.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{151} Chernyaev, The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1974, July 13, 1974.
Soviet Union in an audience with Chernyaev’s boss, the director the International Department.\footnote{Ibid., October 21, 1973.}

Apparently impressed, Chernyaev recorded the list of Australian objections in his diary:

\begin{quote}
“[T]hat the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] is leading a hegemonic policy in the ICM, that peaceful coexistence is only the public interest of the USSR, that the Soviet Union is a country with only a “socialist base” as opposed to a socialist society, we [Soviet Union] are stifling democracy, suppressing dissent with prisons and mental hospitals…the CPSU is aiming to split the communist and labor movement in Australia….”\footnote{Ibid.}
\end{quote}

As mentioned previously, Chernyaev had very low expectations for the success of the Australian Communist Party, but even this runty communist party had no fear of blasting the Soviet Union and its handling of the International Communist Movement.

In particular, Chernyaev related that the communist parties of Western Europe wanted absolutely nothing to do with the Soviet Union or its brand of communism. After an encounter with the International Secretary of the Swedish Communist Party, Chernyaev remarked, “Once again I was convinced that Western communist parties are less and less likely to identify their policies with us.”\footnote{Ibid., November 4, 1973.} In fact, Western European communist parties were beginning to self-identify.\footnote{Ibid.} As proof of this phenomenon, Chernyaev explained how Western European communist parties were eager to participate in the, “conference of Western European communist parties in Brussels,” but were dragging their feet about attending the, “Common European Conference of all socialist countries….”\footnote{Ibid.} During Chernyaev’s conversation with the International Secretary of the Swedish Communist Party, the secretary mentioned that the conference of Western European communist parties would probably be the occasion for discussion on, “a common model for the future of socialism for developed capitalist
countries.”\textsuperscript{158} The secretary concluded, “that this will be an \textbf{anti-model},” [Chernyaev’s emphasis], which Chernyaev understood to mean, “everything opposite of the Soviet Union!”\textsuperscript{159} Apparently, even other communists thought that communism had gotten out of hand behind the Iron Curtain. These communist parties were so repulsed by the excesses and inefficiencies of Marxist-Leninism that, “More and more often they (the British, French, and Italians) emphasize[d] that the ‘Soviet model, the Russian example’ is not acceptable for them.”\textsuperscript{160} From his privileged position within the International Department, Chernyaev concluded that the communist parties of Western Europe were simply done with Soviet leadership and taking orders from Moscow: “What they want is to consolidate the communist parties and left-wing forces in Western Europe. They want their own Western European revolutionary path and their own truly Marxist model of socialism…”\textsuperscript{161} Chernyaev’s own critique of Soviet society was validated by the attitude of Western European communists, who, “Under no circumstances do they want to identify with Soviet and Eastern European communism.”\textsuperscript{162} Likewise, this categorical rejection of Soviet leadership on the part of Western European communists only served to strengthen Chernyaev’s assertion that the International Communist Movement was an unrealistic concept that burdened the Soviet Union tremendously. If the international communist parties were so eager to disassociate themselves from the Soviet Union, Soviet sponsorship of the International Communist Movement and the work of the International Depart were utterly pointless.

In order to illustrate just how unequivocally Western European communist parties were disavowing Soviet Marxist-Leninism, Chernyaev related his experience of reading \textit{A Democratic\footnote{\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.}\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.}\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., September 14, 1973.\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.}
Challenge. This book was written by Georges Marchais, the leader of the French Communist Party, and outlined the political platform and intentions of the party. Commenting on the book, Chernyaev wrote, “this is more of challenge to the Marxist-Leninist type of socialism than to capitalism.” Then, Chernyaev proceeded to list in his diary some of the principles laid out by Marchais. Regarding economics, Marchais declared that the French Communist Party was against collectivization and a state-run economy. Should the party come to power in France, it would generally preserve the right to private ownership of the means of production and would limit itself to simply regulating the national economy. In the realm of political rights, Marchais proclaimed the party solidly opposed to censorship and would ensure the continuance of democratic elections in France. As a unguarded slap in the face of the Soviet Union, Marchais also announced, “One-party rule is out of the question,” and that the party had no interest in making communism, “into the official social ideology,” of the state. Aghast, Chernyaev was left wondering, “what do the abovementioned points and our [Soviet] textbooks on historical materialism, scientific communism, the history of the CPSU, and hundreds of other books and articles in theoretical and political journals have in common?” The question went unanswered on the pages of the diary not due to the intricacy of the answer, but rather due to its devastating, obvious, and thundering simplicity: Nothing. Somewhat playfully, perhaps as a rueful coping mechanism, Chernyaev imagined a potential barefaced retort of Marchais if the French communist were queried on his break with Moscow:

“[W]e will keep doing our thing, with a long-term goal of our “own,” Western European, truly developed socialism. You, the socialist countries, should not

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164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
166 Ibid.
167 Ibid.
168 Ibid.
169 Ibid.
meddle in this, you would only harm our relationship with our allies (the Social Democrats), and harm us in the eyes of public opinion, because we do not want the kind of socialism you have in the USSR and in the “people’s democracies,” and moreover, “our masses” do not want it either.”

A pretend repudiation it may have been, but such was the unexaggerated state of the International Communist Movement from Chernyaev’s less than enviable position within the Soviet institution supposedly in charge of this runaway train. Irrevocably demoralized by all the utterly nonsensical hoopla about the “glorious and triumphant” International Communist Revolution being successfully championed by the intrepid Soviet Union, Chernyaev simply asked, “what is left of the communist movement... What ideological unity can we speak of?”

While the Western European communists were tired of the Soviet leadership of international communism, they remained largely non-confrontational with the Soviet Union. However, Chernyaev revealed that other communist countries were not as benign and were blatantly uncooperative or even downright hostile towards the Soviet Union. In 1972, Chernyaev explained that the Soviets were becoming aware of increased nationalism in Ukraine. At a Politburo meeting, Soviet leaders discussed the implications of a Ukrainian pro-nationalist manifesto. The manifesto was written by Ukrainian dissidents and the overarching theme was one of, “anti-‘russification’ and pro-separation.” The problem for the Soviets was that the manifesto had been written in 1966, and they had only just found out about it in 1972. What was worse, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine was well aware that such a manifesto had been written and that nationalism was growing, but decided against passing

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173 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
along this information to the Soviets.\textsuperscript{176} Based upon his observations, Chernyaev believed that nationalism had already done its damage in Ukraine: “And now, the only ‘practical’ and ‘political’ quality considered when picking candidates is whether he is Ukrainian. If yes, then he is automatically a good candidate.”\textsuperscript{177} In other words, politicians of Russian ethnicity who had previously held sway in Ukraine were being ditched in favor of ethnic Ukrainians, simply because they were Ukrainian.\textsuperscript{178} This state of affairs was a new and unexpected phenomenon from the Soviets’ viewpoint.\textsuperscript{179} According to Chernyaev, “the dislike and even hatred of Russians is growing on the basis of a spreading belief…that everything is going badly because the Russians are holding everything at the top, and they are incompetent and stupid.”\textsuperscript{180} Chernyaev declared that these ideas were the handiwork of, “the local Party and government apparatus,” which was only interested in looking out for itself.\textsuperscript{181} Even though these institutions were communist in nature, Chernyaev cited, “the local political apparatus,” as the “main repository,” of nationalist sentiment in the Ukraine.\textsuperscript{182}

Ukraine was not the only country giving the Soviet Union fits in the early 1970s; Vietnam was being highly uncooperative as well. Interestingly, in Chernyaev’s writings, the Soviets only ever referred to “Vietnam”; the discriminators of North and South are never used. Obviously however, when the Soviets spoke of “Vietnam,” they clearly meant “North Vietnam.” In 1972, Chernyaev recorded the visit of the ambassador of North Vietnam to Moscow.\textsuperscript{183} Publicly, the Soviet media promoted the image of unity and common-cause between the Soviet

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., April 23, 1972.
Union and North Vietnam, but Chernyaev disclosed that Brezhnev was actually highly upset because the Vietnamese were leaving the Soviet Union completely in the dark about the Vietnam War. Chernyaev described the frustration of Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders over being left in the dark on North Vietnamese military operations: “[W]e did not know anything about the plans for the offensive, nor its goals, not [sic] its real progress.” We find out about it only through the published reports of “our common enemy.” Apparently, Soviet-Vietnamese relations were so dysfunctional that the Soviets had been relegated to learning about the war through American sources. During the meeting with the Vietnamese ambassador, the Soviet leadership demanded that the ambassador express their irritation to the North Vietnamese government. One year later in 1973, relations had not improved, as evidenced by a statement made during a Politburo meeting by the Soviet defense minister: “The Vietnamese still are not giving us the downed U.S. aircraft; they won’t let us near the B-52 or the American sea mines.” From all indications, North Vietnam was thumbing its nose at the idea of the “community of communists” and the Soviet Union’s “right” to insert itself to the affairs of other communists as it saw fit.

Of course, the annoyances of Ukraine and North Vietnam were nothing compared to the trouble the Soviet Union was having with the People’s Republic of China. That China was not content to take a backseat to the Soviet Union as the leader of international communism can be seen in remarks written down by Chernyaev that came from the Soviet foreign minister in reference to China: “Our country [Soviet Union] has no intention of conceding its place in the

184 Ibid.
185 Ibid.
186 Ibid.
world, which it holds by right.’”188 In applauding détente’s success in returning sanity to U.S.-Soviet relations, Chernyaev’ indicated his own fears about the rationality of Chinese actions in the comment: “Although, there are still plenty of reserves for madness: China….”189 One particular piece of evidence of Chinese antagonism which Chernyaev recorded was Zhou Enlai’s report at the 10th Congress of the Communist Party of China.190 Zhou was the number-two man in the communist government of China behind Mao Zedong. In Zhou’s report, he referred to the Soviet leaders as, “‘the new tsars,’” and as a, “‘Soviet-revisionist-imperialist clique.’”191 If Zhou intended on making friends in Moscow with those remarks, he was very much mistaken.

Although some ambiguity exists in Chernyaev’s diary about the following point, Zhou also appeared to have referred to Brezhnev himself as the, “‘leader of Soviet imperialism.’”192 If the eleventh commandment of the Republican party used to forbid criticism of other Republicans, the eleventh commandment of communism was that communists are not supposed to call other communists naughty names, especially not names with “imperial” in them. In addition to being incensed over Zhou’s remarks, the Soviets were concerned about China coming under the U.S. sphere of influence.193 After all, President Nixon had just visited China the previous year. In fact, the Soviets described Zhou as a “pro-Western technocrat….”194 Even Chernyaev himself came away from Zhou’s report worried and annoyed: “In my opinion, the most important reality from the CPC Congress is that Zhou Enlai, who holds the real power, has personally forever associated himself with the ‘course toward the West’ plus Japan, [and] with anti-Sovietism, by

191 Ibid.
192 Ibid.
193 Ibid.
194 Ibid.
insulting Brezhnev (from such a podium!).”\(^{195}\) Even before this episode with Zhou, when Chernyaev was asked to draw up a summary of Soviet foreign policy concerns, he included, “The Chinese…are finally ‘slipping through’ as the main danger,” in his analysis.\(^{196}\) Moreover, Chernyaev revealed that a Soviet Plenum meeting in 1973 concluded that, “the Chinese are really our #1 enemy.”\(^{197}\) This conclusion was seconded by the International Department’s specialist on southeastern Asia, who told Chernyaev, “‘war is inevitably coming from China. If not in 5 years, then in 10, and if not 10 then 15.’”\(^{198}\) Furthermore, this Asian expert suggested that Soviet foreign policy should be geared towards creating a pro-Soviet communist bloc consisting of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines in Asia to counter China.\(^{199}\) For this Soviet sinologist, the stakes were high in Asia: “‘We need to create a serious hostile front for China. If we miss the opportunity and China gets influence over Southeast Asia with the help of the Japanese, it’s over for us. A billion Chinese people! No nuclear power of ours can stop this force.’”\(^{200}\)

Fittingly, nuclear war with China was a topic that had entered Chernyaev’s mind as well, and he was not thrilled with how the Soviets were dealing with that possibility. Firstly, Chernyaev’s lack of confidence in Soviet contingency planning for nuclear war with China was evident when he wrote, “What struck me is that our estimates of China’s nuclear capacity are much less than U.S. estimates….”\(^{201}\) Furthermore, Chernyaev was horrified to discover that the Soviet military establishment was basically kicking the can of the Chinese nuclear threat down the road by euphemistically estimating that Chinese nuclear force was two decades from

\(^{195}\) Ibid.
\(^{196}\) Ibid., April 16, 1973.
\(^{197}\) Ibid., April 29, 1973.
\(^{200}\) Ibid.
\(^{201}\) Ibid., April 29, 1973.
reaching Soviet levels. Commenting on the lackadaisical approach this potential crisis and the bizarre predictions of Chinese nuclear might, Chernyaev wrote, “Alright. But in 15-20 years even if they [the Chinese] do not reach our capacity, they will get close. And our current capacity is enough to destroy all the vital centers of our country several times over. What then?” As evidenced, Chernyaev and other people within the Soviet government did indeed have real fears about the threat that China posed to the Soviet Union. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, Chernyaev’s diaries go a long way towards invalidating the image that the U.S. government had promoted among its citizens during the early days of the Cold War about communism being a monolithic force around the world that eagerly marched to the beat of a drum being played in the Kremlin.

Lastly, Chernyaev detailed the woeful inefficiencies of the Soviet state-run economic system. In a postscript to the 1973 diary, Chernyaev gave his opinion on the Soviet economy: “The economy was in a state of depression. But not the kind of depression that is normal for a capitalist economy and that is a part of cyclical renewal. It was the beginning of stagnation and irreversible decline.” The first of many problems plaguing the Soviet economy was lack of capital. Following a 1972 Politburo meeting, Chernyaev paraphrased from a report given by the head Soviet economic planner, Nikolai Baibakov: “We [Soviet Union] have nothing to sell for hard currency. Only timber and pulp. This is not enough, plus we are selling it at a large loss for us. We also cannot ride forward only on the sale of gold.” At a Central Committee Plenum session the following year, Chernyaev discovered more disturbing news about Soviet exports: “Finland exports 10 times less timber, but makes twice as much currency from the export, than

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202 Ibid.
203 Ibid.
we do. That is because we export it in basic raw form.”206 Similarly, Chernyaev chronicled a speech by Brezhnev where the Soviet leader described the failure of Soviet investments by informing the listeners that, “‘We [Soviet Union] still get about 90 kopeks per every ruble of investment, while the Americans get the reverse (90 dollars for every dollar of investment).’”207 While Brezhnev must have inadvertently exaggerated the strength of U.S. investments, the point remains that Soviet investments performed noticeably lower than American investments.

Because of this severe shortfall in Soviet capital, the leaders of the Soviet Union were compelled to consider U.S. proposals for exploitation of Soviet petroleum fields, in particular a U.S.-built pipeline in Siberia.208 In answer to the question why the Soviet Union could not exploit Siberian petroleum without outside investment, Baibakov explained that, “If we refuse [the U.S. plan], we will not be able to even approach the Vilyuysk reserves for at least 30 years…we have no metal for pipes, nor for machines or other equipment.”209 In the same vein, Baibakov outlined an offer from Japan to permit the Japanese to conduct offshore oil drilling around Sakhalin.210 Baibakov indicated that the Soviets might as well accept the Japanese offer because the Soviet Union did not possess the wherewithal to conduct the drilling itself.211 Hence, Chernyaev described how the Soviets were so strapped for cash that they could not even exploit their own resources and were forced consider alternatives that would have given economic benefits to their own enemies.

Secondly, Chernyaev narrated how the deeply flawed Soviet economy gave rise to a phenomenon known as “pushers.”212 Pushers were, “people sent from companies and agencies

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208 Ibid., April 8, 1972.
209 Ibid.
210 Ibid.
211 Ibid.
212 Ibid., February 6, 1972.
to obtain necessary materials,” for these businesses and offices to function.\textsuperscript{213} Apparently, these pushers had to “push” and urge providers to fulfill their contracts in a timely manner.\textsuperscript{214} Thankfully, Chernyaev included in his diary a hypothetical example given by the deputy chairman of the State Logistics Committee explaining why pushers had become necessary:

> “If, for example, the director of a metallurgical plant responds to the pleas of the people whom he supplies with piping by saying that he may fulfill the supply plan for the first quarter, but he will supply only 13 percent of the order in January, 27 percent in February, and the rest in March…How is the plant supposed to work when it has such a supplier? What is it going to pay its workers?”\textsuperscript{215}

As suppliers were provided with no motivation from the state to carry out production with any uniformity, businesses dependent on materials from further up the line were forced to hire pushers to essentially beg suppliers to coordinate with the businesses which depended on products being delivered to them with consistency. As if the fact that the Soviet economy had necessitated the existence of pushers was not bad enough, Chernyaev revealed that pushers were themselves corrupt and took “business trips” to, “celebrate anniversaries of superiors in Moscow, to set up fraudulent deals, for tourism purposes, etc.”\textsuperscript{216} Paradoxically, the pushers were supposed to help alleviate some of the chaos within the Soviet Union, and instead, they ended up adding to and becoming a part of the institutionalized inefficiency.

Furthermore, Chernyaev provided endless examples that illustrate just how inefficient and out of control the Soviet economy really was. For all the hoopla about Soviet heavy industry, Chernyaev disclosed that, “Sixty-seventy million tons of metal goes to waste in our manufacturing processes. Based on the tonnage of our metalworking machines, we produce as much as the U.S., Japan, and the FRG [West Germany] combined; but based on numbers of

\textsuperscript{213} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid.
machines made from that metal and their efficiency, we are far behind each of these countries.”217 Moreover, the Soviets had to utilize more metal in fabrication than would have been necessary otherwise, i.e., if the metal they had were producing in the first place had not of been of such low quality.218 From Chernyaev’s accounts, waste seemed to be a huge problem that the Soviet economy was failing to address: “A huge amount…of grain that was collected this year was stored in piles out in the open air. It rotted. The losses of grain, cement, fruits and vegetables, etc., are counted in the millions of rubles due to lack of packaging and delayed transportation.”219 When Chernyaev directly compared Soviet production with capitalist economies the result were correspondingly depressing: “We produce three-quarters less material from one cubic meter of wood than the capitalist countries. Our aircraft and car engines have a much lower motor capacity than theirs.”220 Likewise, Chernyaev explained how the Soviet Union failed to meet a timetable deadline in building a pipeline for Germany, and was sued by Germany for fifty-five thousand dollars per day for breach of contract.221

Similarly, Chernyaev’s diaries portrayed Soviet factories as bastions of state-run anarchy. As proof, Chernyaev recorded a demoralizing oversight that occurred in a Soviet textile factory: “In Kursk we built a knitting mill with foreign equipment to make the types of fabric that are in short supply. But it works only at half capacity because there are not enough workers. It turns out when the factory blueprint was created, they forgot about housing.”222 Even more egregious was the story that Chernyaev told about what went wrong with the Salavat glass-polishing factory: “[I]t turned out that the equipment that was installed does not polish the glass, but breaks

218 Ibid.
219 Ibid.
220 Ibid.
221 Ibid.
222 Ibid.
it. It all had to be melted down. We still have not found the responsible party."223 Obviously, a centrally managed economy can still suffer from crippling quality control issues. Even Brezhnev himself was appalled by the incompetence of Soviet manufacturing. In his diary, Chernyaev recorded one of Brezhnev’s speeches in which the Soviet leader discussed his visit to the state-of-the-art tire plant at Barnaul.224 After inquiring as to why the plant was turning out only half as many tires as it was capable of, Brezhnev was told by the factory hands that the plant had been allotted thirty months to achieve full-scale production, and that the plant was still within that probationary period.225 Suspiciously, the factory achieved maximum output just three months after Brezhnev’s visit.226 After hearing this news, Brezhnev drew his own conclusions about the tire plant, and his displeasure was evident: “‘So: 30 months and 3 months! What is going on? Laziness, irresponsibility, stupidity, or a crime?!’”227 Clearly, the factory workers had been intentionally dragging their feet on ramping up tire production. They had been allotted thirty months to do so, and were content to keep to that pace, even if it was entirely unnecessary; Brezhnev’s visit was the only reason why the facility was jolted into efficiency. Also, Chernyaev explained that construction of the KAMAZ truck plant, “was estimated at 1 billion 700 million rubles. Now it appears that it will take another 2.5 billion, and then perhaps more.”228 Indicatively, Chernyaev simply concluded his list of depressing economic news from the Central Committee Plenum with, “Etc., etc.” Evidently, Chernyaev was merely providing a sample of the economic blights infesting the Soviet Union.

223 Ibid.
225 Ibid.
226 Ibid.
227 Ibid.
Thus, Anatoly Chernyaev laid out a heretofore unknown history of the Soviet Union in the 1970s, one that not only offered crisp appraisals of nearly all aspects of the Soviet experience, but also revealed the maturation of a communist functionary into an informed critic who would work alongside Gorbachev in his efforts to mitigate the excesses so astutely perceived by Chernyaev years before real change was even possible. To a man of Chernyaev’s intelligence, education, military service, and artistic tastes, the Soviet Union offered a life devoid of meaning and filled with the drudgery of laboring under and in the service of an ideological system filled with contradictions and inefficiencies. Soviet society was dystopia incarnate, the International Communist Movement was some demented cross between a joke and a noose, and the phrase “economy of the Soviet Union” could easily have been misunderstood as a contradiction in terms. Fittingly, Chernyaev himself summed up the black hole of self-immolation that Soviet Marxist-Leninism had created for itself: “Have we formed some kind of inert, bureaucratic, ossified force of hopeless indifference…a force that will swallow anyone who tries to do anything new? If we have any people left who are capable of doing that.”

In poetic justice, as the events of the next decade would show, Chernyaev would in fact end up being precisely one of those people who was, “capable of doing that.”

\[229\] Ibid.
CHAPTER 2: GEORGI ARBATOV

As forlorn as Anatoly Chernyaev might have felt in the early 1970s, he was certainly not alone in recognizing the sorry state of the Soviet Union and the desperate need for a change of course. Indeed, other future Gorbachev-era reformers echoed many of the themes and sentiments recorded by Chernyaev in the 1970s. One of such persons was Georgi Arbatov. From 1967 until 1995, Arbatov was the founding director of the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada, the Soviet think-tank dedicated to analysis of the United States and Soviet foreign policy towards its Cold War adversary across the Atlantic.1 There, Arbatov capitalized on the opportunity afforded him by less stringent intellectual controls and greater academic freedom, “to engage in cautiously critical inquiry and to nudge the U.S.S.R.’s leadership toward more constructive policies,” in relation to the United States and the world at large.2 As with Chernyaev’s unforeseen rise to importance following the election of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985, Arbatov also became a key advisor to Gorbachev, especially on the subject of nuclear arms-control, due to his expertise on U.S.-Soviet relations and reputation for promoting sound policymaking.3 However, the groundwork and stage-setting for Arbatov’s influence and successes later on with Gorbachev were laid in the late 1960s and into the 1970s with Soviet socio-economic stagnation. In the autobiography which he wrote in 1991, Arbatov reflected upon a startling number of observations and memories that directly mirrored many of the unpleasant topics which Chernyaev himself talked about in his diaries from the 1970s, including the decay of Soviet society, the inefficiency of the communist system, and the USSR losing control over the International Communist Movement. In not a few ways similar to Chernyaev’s experience,

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3 Ibid., xiii.
Arbatov was painfully aware of the deep trouble the Soviet Union was in during the 1970s, and these difficult realizations were the indispensable factors which enabled Arbatov to become a notable actor in Gorbachev’s reform-minded administration and the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union.

Intriguingly, Arbatov’s formative years bore a significant similarity to those of Chernyaev. Born in 1923, two years Chernyaev’s junior, Arbatov joined the Soviet military as fate would have it on June 21, 1941, exactly one day before the Nazis opened Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union in World War II. Indicative of the unspeakable desperation with which the Soviets fought off the Nazi invasion, Arbatov was named the commander of an artillery squad at the unlikely age of eighteen-years-old. After the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War, Arbatov, much like Chernyaev, sought out higher education, graduating from the Institute of International Relations in Moscow in 1949. After ten years as an editor of various Soviet publications, Arbatov ironically joined Chernyaev in Prague, where they both worked on Problems of Peace and Socialism, a Marxist publication distributed by the Soviets. In his memoirs, Arbatov mentioned that Chernyaev also worked for the journal and that he would go on to advise Gorbachev on weighty matters in the future, but did not elaborate further on their relationship or interactions in Prague, if there even were any. After a brief tenure with a Soviet institute of international affairs, Arbatov served as a foreign policy advisor for Yuri Andropov, who at that time was the director of the Central Committee’s Department for Relations with the Communist and Workers’ Parties of the Socialist Countries. After Andropov moved on to

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7 Ibid.
become top-man within the KGB in 1967, Arbatov was named the first director of the Institute for the Study of USA and Canada, where he, “became one of the most influential voices on policy towards the United States and trained a generation of specialists on North America.”  

According to former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, Arbatov’s Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada served a variety of crucial and historically momentous functions for the Soviet Union. The first was the level-headed and unhackneyed research and guidance which the institute provided to the Soviet government, unlike the demagoguery-filled “studies” of Communist Party organs. Secondly, given Arbatov’s regular trips to the United States and the Institute’s accessibility to Western scholars visiting Moscow, Arbatov’s office, “kept open a channel to the West that was especially useful when government-to-government relations were strained….” Thirdly, and potentially most importantly, Arbatov used the Institute as a refuge for scholars who had suffered the unenviable mishap of garnering the displeasure of Soviet watchdogs, for one reason or another. Flowing naturally from the ironies of history, many of these “refugees” would go on to become active participants in perestroika, glasnost, and the post-Soviet government of Russia.  As director, Arbatov worked to turn the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada into a safe-haven of respectable intellectual thought, where scholars could operate somewhat outside of the imposed Marxist restrictions with a modicum of security and confidence. With an astute eye for the course of human events, Arbatov perceptively explained that the institutional shakeups of the 1980s for the Soviet Union had their origins much earlier in the 1970s: “They were incubated in the depths of our life

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10 Ibid.
11 Talbott, introduction to The System, xvi.
12 Ibid., xiii, xvi.
13 Ibid., xvi.
14 Ibid., xv-xvi.
15 Talbott, introduction to The System, xi.
experience, its problems and misfortunes, its disappointments and mistakes. Many of these ideas were born in the discussions of the teams of specialists,” working at the Institute and the few other sanctuaries of free thought in the Soviet Union.16

Therefore, when the time was right, Arbatov joined the more open-minded Soviet government that came to power in 1985 and became an integral component of Gorbachev’s new approach to foreign policy and Soviet dealings with the United States. Every year from 1985 through 1989, Arbatov was personally involved and present during Gorbachev’s historic foreign policy events. In 1985, Arbatov was with Gorbachev in Geneva when he met U.S. President Ronald Reagan for the first time. In 1986, Arbatov served on the Soviet disarmament negotiation team during the storied summit meeting between Gorbachev and Reagan at Reykjavík. Again, during the 1987 Gorbachev-Reagan conference in Washington, D.C., which culminated in the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty between the two Cold War adversaries, Arbatov was tasked with ensuring that Soviet foreign policy was seen in as positive a light as possible by the international community. Likewise, Arbatov accompanied Gorbachev to his famous speech at the United Nations in 1988 where he announced a *de facto* repudiation of the long-standing Brezhnev Doctrine of intervention within the internal affairs of the members of the Warsaw Pact and the initial beginnings of the so-called Sinatra Doctrine of new domestic autonomy with the pledge to unilaterally withdraw Soviet troops from Eastern Europe. Lastly, Arbatov was at Gorbachev’s side in 1989 when the Secretary General met with U.S. President George H. W. Bush at the much ballyhooed Malta Summit to welcome the coming end of the Cold War between the two nations. In each instance, Gorbachev relied on

briefings from Arbatov prior to what all would come to be seen as momentous events in the long-awaited end of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{17}

Even without his adventures with Gorbachev, Arbatov enjoyed a wildly successful career within the Soviet apparatus. In addition to the aforementioned Andropov and Gorbachev, Arbatov was also an advisor to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, and to a lesser extent Soviet leaders Nikita Khrushchev and Konstantin Chernenko.\textsuperscript{18} In each case, these redoubtable figures were attracted to Arbatov’s intelligence and wanted it in their service. In reference to his impressive list of bosses, Arbatov remarked simply, “I didn’t choose them, they chose me.”\textsuperscript{19}

On top of his association with Soviet bigwigs, Arbatov was also privileged to welcome a veritable host of prominent foreigners to his Institute. At one time or another during the Cold War, Richard Nixon, Walter Mondale, Pierre Trudeau, Cyrus Vance, Robert McNamara, Henry Kissinger, Brent Scowcroft, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Tom Watson, Edward Kennedy, John Tower, John Kenneth Galbraith, Paul Kennedy, Robert S. Tucker, Marshall Shulman, Alan Wolfe, Samuel Huntington, Ted Turner, and Armand Hammer were just a few of the VIPs who lectured and participated at events held by the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada.\textsuperscript{20} In terms of upward mobility within the Soviet system, Arbatov belonged to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R, and the Academy of Sciences, all in addition to being the director of what essentially amounted to his own personal think-tank.\textsuperscript{21}

Understandably, Arbatov’s successful career within the Soviet governing apparatus begs the question as to why someone who had obviously benefited so greatly from the Soviet system

\textsuperscript{17} Talbott, introduction to \textit{The System}, xiii.
\textsuperscript{18} Arbatov, \textit{The System}, vi.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Arbatov, \textit{The System}, 313.
\textsuperscript{21} Talbott, introduction to \textit{The System}, x.
would end up working for the change and eventual downfall of that system. To a degree, Arbatov offered his own answer to this question when he wrote that his story, “belongs not to a dissident or to an enemy of the system, but to someone who has lived and willingly worked within it, however critical of its many tenets he may have been.”22 When a society becomes corrupt or otherwise in need of a dramatic overhaul, the group of citizens who are disturbed enough to proactively seek meaningful and not token change are generally left with two basic courses of action: Open schism with the society or patient transformation from within the social order. Naturally, in the story of the attempted reform and consequent downfall of the Soviet Union, both types of actors were present and indispensable.23 Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sakharov, Lech Wałęsa, and Václav Havel were some of the more recognizable figures out of the vast number of dissidents who openly broke with Soviet hegemony in their quest for improved societies. Equally important, however, to the cause of amelioration were the individuals who Marshall Shulman, a scholar of the Soviet Union and an acquaintance of Arbatov, characterized as, “‘the within-system modernizers who made the Second Russian Revolution possible.’”24 Most assuredly, Arbatov, Chernyaev, and Gorbachev himself fell into this second category. As Shulman so rightly pointed out, New Thinking was made possible by the external pressures being exerted upon the Soviet ruling class from the outside by dissidents who voiced their displeasure and from within by functionaries, “like Arbatov, who, when it was not popular to do so, advocated a more rational foreign policy and a more enlightened society.”25 Arbatov also received a vote of confidence from former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance who said highly of Arbatov: “‘I know from my own experience…that Dr. Arbatov was one of

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23 Talbott, introduction to *The System*, xvii.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
those who, in the depths of the Cold War, was always looking for ways to diminish the danger of a military confrontation.” Very evidently, Shulman and Vance appreciated and recognized the contributions Arbatov made in the true best interests of his nation. As for the ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union, it must be remembered that this seemingly improbable occurrence was a wholly unintended consequence of conscious efforts taken to strengthen the Soviet state and that Arbatov, and for that matter, Gorbachev, Chernyaev, and the other reformers did not hate the USSR or conspire in dark places for its demise. Speaking from his own encounters with Arbatov, Strobe Talbott explained quite to the contrary that, “Arbatov wanted to help the Soviet Union enter the twenty-first century as a strong, prosperous country as well as a ‘civil society.’” This desire of Arbatov was forged in his recognition of the critical state of affairs facing the Soviet Union in the 1970s, more than a decade prior to the arrival of Gorbachev and a more generalized acknowledgement of the need to modify the operational principles of the USSR.

During his time at the International Department, Chernyaev had multiple encounters with Arbatov, and they even worked together on several occasions. In confirmation of the high esteem in which the aforementioned commentators held Arbatov, Chernyaev acknowledged Arbatov’s worth as a scholar, writing, “Considering the general depravity of our ranks, Arbatov is much better than most.” While perhaps not an unqualified endorsement of Arbatov, on other occasions Chernyaev called Arbatov, “smart and well-informed,” and referred to him as, “the wise Arbatov.” In other passages throughout his diaries, Chernyaev mentioned Arbatov as a

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26 Ibid., xii.
27 Ibid., xvii-xviii.
28 Ibid., xvi-xvii.
close advisor to Leonid Brezhnev, including helping to write Central Committee Plenum
Speeches for the Soviet leader and urging him to cut back on appearing on television so often, in
order to better conceal his increasing physical and mental deterioration from the domestic and
international public.\footnote{31 Chernyaev, \textit{The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1972}, December 31, 1972; Chernyaev, \textit{The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1974}, May 17, 1974; June 15, 1974; December 16, 1974.}
In the context of Arbatov being an advisor to Brezhnev, Chernyaev was
significantly more laudatory of Arbatov, calling him an, “intellectual[] of the ‘highest Soviet
standard,’” who used his intellectual gifts of realism and composition, “to correct our policies
where it was possible within the system.”\footnote{32 Chernyaev, \textit{The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1972}, Afterword to 1972.}
On two occasions that Chernyaev spoke of, he and
Arbatov joined forces as part of team tasked with writing speeches which Brezhnev was to
deliver for the 15th Congress of Trade Unions and for an upcoming election.\footnote{33 Ibid., March 5 1972; March 9, 1972; March 20, 1972; Chernyaev, \textit{The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1974}, May 12, 1972.}
Apparently, the
two Soviet analysts trusted each other enough that Arbatov felt comfortable dropping by
Chernyaev’s office to share delicate stories about impropriety and drama among members of the
governing apparatus.\footnote{34 Chernyaev, \textit{The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, 1973}, May 22, 1973.}
More intriguingly, Arbatov intimated to Chernyaev his trepidation at
possible reprisals from the KGB because one of his colleagues unscrupulously took to telling
jokes about Brezhnev at Arbatov’s birthday party. Chernyaev described Arbatov’s agitation in
this incident as, “His KGB fears,” thus seeming to hint that Arbatov had other reasons to worry
about his actions and with whom he associated. In truth, Arbatov had every reason to be
concerned. As the director of an institute that was accused of being “pro-American” by hardline
detractors of the work produced by him and his team, Arbatov was keenly aware of the
paramount need for him to avoid giving his enemies any additional ammunition to lump together
with his supposed “pro-American tendencies” in building a case against him.\footnote{35 Arbatov, \textit{The System}, 313.}
Arbatov needed was to be in the presence of wise-cracking knuckleheads who would impart to him guilt by association. Incidentally, Arbatov and Chernyaev were close enough acquaintances that Arbatov had in fact invited Chernyaev to the birthday celebration in question. However, Arbatov miffed Chernyaev by only inviting him and not his wife, so in order to avoid what he feared as the potential for his wife to hold a grudge against Arbatov, Chernyaev simply declined the invitation, perhaps for the best in retrospection, given the indiscretion of at least one of Arbatov’s guests. This slightly unpleasant incident notwithstanding, the most fascinating of Chernyaev’s diary entries about Arbatov is where Chernyaev mentioned that he noticed Arbatov and his wife at the premier of “Under the Skin of the Statue of Liberty,” the wildly incongruous play which Chernyaev described as being a thinly disguised lampooning of the Soviet Union. While Arbatov’s attendance at this play might have been purely coincidental, perhaps Arbatov had heard of the play’s subversive undertones and was eager to assuage his own discontentment with the broken Soviet world in which he found himself. Because indeed, Arbatov shared more than an interest in foreign policy with Chernyaev.

From both a personal and societal standpoint, Arbatov clearly recognized the demise of communist ideology in contours which speak directly to Chernyaev’s own observations in the 1970s. For Arbatov, the allure of Soviet ideology did not long last with him beyond his military career. As a young professional, Arbatov revealed that he came to comprehend the Soviet government as consisting of, “lies, stupidities, and perversions….“ By the time Arbatov had reached the upper echelons of the Soviet ranks, his realization as to the baseness of Marxist-

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37 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
Leninist machinations had turned to outright revulsion with physical side-effects: “[O]ne had a particularly sickening feeling inside because of the intolerable propaganda.”41 Surely, Arbatov’s emotional discontentment with the state of communism harkened back to Chernyaev’s own feelings of malaise and hopelessness at the world he saw about him. As with Chernyaev, the cat was out of the bag for Arbatov regarding the Soviet Union’s ability to deliver a communist paradise for its citizens: “Yes, I did see the deterioration clearly. I felt it and I was troubled by it…I was very pessimistic about what the future might bring….“42 In the middle of the stagnation and monotony that had come to characterize the Soviet Union for so long, neither Arbatov nor Chernyaev foresaw the coming change that was on the distant horizon or the role they would play in making it possible. In the meanwhile, Arbatov coped with depressing circumstances as he was able, without any real sense of hope or promise: “[W]herever I could, I, like many others, tried to the best of my abilities to resist this deterioration. This calmed my conscience but it did not bring me any greater confidence about the future.”43 Whereas Chernyaev felt himself doomed to play out the rest of his days within the antiquated International Department, Arbatov had consigned himself to pursuing token gestures of intervention that were essentially irrelevant in the grand scheme. Arbatov did not paint a pretty picture of the lives that he and his colleagues were left to lead in the Soviet Union when he stated soberly that, “The overwhelming majority of our specialists (and to some degree I include myself) as well as all of our social scientists, were spoiled, overwhelmed, and deformed by the pervasive ideology and the dominance of propaganda, by the fear that has become an integral part of our national psyche, by timidity of thought, and by conformism.”44 Such were the seemingly embedded

41 Ibid. 235.
42 Ibid., 241.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 300.
obstacles facing Arbatov in the early years of his Institute: Pathological control, institutionalized fear, and a self-preserving disinclination to take risks. As a person who was aware of what was going on behind the Iron Curtain, Arbatov was dismayed at how these factors were anathema to honest scholarship and policy-crafting, and he resolved to combat these malignant forces in his own little way.\textsuperscript{45} While never losing faith in the viability of a retooled implementation of communism, Arbatov steeled his professional activities with the goal of proving that truly useful and pragmatic Soviet foreign policy needed to exist without the suffocating trappings of uncreative communist dogma.\textsuperscript{46} So unlike Chernyaev, who too saw the growing obsolescence of 1930s communist thinking in an entirely different and uncertain 1970s world, Arbatov was able to plan out a means of working to improve the situation, however slightly, due in no small part to his higher position within the system and the institute he oversaw.

However, Arbatov was not blindly introspective in his dissatisfaction with Soviet propaganda, but also perceived the growing disbelief among the public at large. According to Arbatov, the efforts of the conservative resurgence with the Brezhnev oligarchy to rehabilitate Stalinism and the grievous injustices of that era, “led to a serious decline in the public’s trust in socialist ideals,” as having the best interests of the people at their core.\textsuperscript{47} In addition to the ideology itself, Arbatov detected an unmistakable and more generalized mistrust of those who preached, promulgated, and led by that mode of thought: “Gone was the previous belief, or perhaps hope, that the leadership was always right, or that if it did not always see things right, then it must simply have been hoodwinked for a moment. Many people were beginning to lose hope.”\textsuperscript{48} In effect, Arbatov was seeming to suggest that the Soviet people had been duped once,

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 145.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 235. 
but had learned from the traumatic experiences of the past and were disinclined to be charmed once again by the grandiose promises of Marxist-Leninism. Therefore, the void in the spiritual life of the Soviet Union that so preoccupied the thoughts of Chernyaev was a direct result of, “The public’s distrust of the government and… the apathy and cynicism that were already eating away at people’s souls.”49 While Chernyaev was concerned about this loss of spiritual vigor on the part of the Soviet citizenry for metaphysical reasons, Arbatov found the, “strengthening skepticism and cynicism,” troubling for a more practical reason, namely, that the Gorbachev-era reforms, “faced the negative consequences of their passivity during perestroika.”50 In other words, the pessimistic disbelief into which the Soviet people had retreated as a coping mechanism from repeated disappointment became similarly dubious of the government’s sincerity with perestroika and glasnost, thereby curtailing the otherwise promising potential these ideas had for real reform. The people of the Soviet Union had been guaranteed improvement over and over again for such a long period of time that when the possibility for that change did come along, they had been conditioned to be incredulous and did not dare to hope. Sadly, the citizens were suffering from a malady that might be called the “Boy Who Cried Wolf” syndrome. Of course, Arbatov confirmed that no section of Soviet society was exempt from this crippling pessimism: “There was a sour mood, combined with cynicism, among the intelligentsia.”51 Chernyaev, speaking from his own life and experience, undoubtedly would have agreed.

Elaborating further on the communist world around him, Arbatov identified a truly repressed and suffering society. Remarkably, Arbatov’s own commentary on the spiritual

49 Ibid., 254.
50 Ibid., 145.
51 Ibid., 235.
deficiency and psychological enfeeblement of the Soviet Union was nearly indistinguishable from Chernyaev’s words on the same subject: “[T]he real mental and spiritual state of society was worse than any symbols. Its inner impoverishment, a dangerous undermining of its intellectual potential, manifested itself quite vividly in the deterioration of sociopolitical thought.”

Although Arbatov did not express the same yearning for the artistic fulfillment that seemed to consume Chernyaev at times, he did evince a hunger for the underlying inspiration for both art and scholarship: Creativity. While Chernyaev quelled his spiritual craving for creativity by taking advantage of every opportunity that came his way to consume art in its various forms—painting, theater, literature—, Arbatov met his own human need for creativity through scholarship, whether his own work or that of his Institute. As Arbatov himself readily admitted: “I was simply unhappy with what was being written and thought in our country about foreign policy and foreign countries. I wanted to demonstrate that foreign policy could be conducted in another way.…”

Similarly, Arbatov described the long-overdue elation with the advent of perestroika, “when, at last, taboos were lifted and many of us had the opportunity to speak the truth however bitter, as we really saw it, and to deal with subjects that were previously forbidden.” In fact, Arbatov admitted that part of the motivation for writing his memoirs stemmed from, a “long-standing urge” to recount and analyze the events of his life, an action he had been prohibited from pursuing due to the implicit danger involved should the diary be discovered and found to contain remarks not in keeping with the official line.

Evidently, Arbatov shared his hesitancy to commit to writing his true feelings and thoughts with larger swaths of society, because he explained that, “whatever letters, diaries, and journals (priceless

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52 Ibid., 8.
53 Ibid., 300.
54 Ibid., 5.
55 Ibid., 5.
 Ubiquitous fear was the greatest obstacle to the keeping of such records....” Arbatov’s use of the word “ubiquitous” betrayed the universality of the terror that held sway over the minds and actions of citizens everywhere across the Soviet empire. Moreover, this quote from Arbatov speaks to the singularity and consequent value of the diaries that Chernyaev himself dared to pen in the 1970s when others, including Arbatov, were deterred from similar endeavors out of consideration for self-preservation. Therefore, Arbatov unintentionally pointed to the special historical significance of diaries and journals, such as Chernyaev’s, which predated the moment in time when such reflective writing ceased to be considered a subversive activity. Somewhat humorously, Arbatov explained that communist abridgement of freedom of the press did have a silver lining in that it, “forced you to become finely tuned, to write cleverly, to express important thoughts between the lines—through innuendo, through omissions, and through irony. To a certain extent I tried to do this, as did the majority of my colleagues at the institute.”

Marvelously, this technique of ironic writing to circumvent censorship was also noticed by Chernyaev in his discussion of the plays “Pushkin” and “Under the Skin of the Statue of Liberty.” Hence, Arbatov and Chernyaev both describe how scholars and playwrights alike adopted new, subversive compositional styles to sneak truth into their creative endeavors and by the noses of the Soviet political and cultural watchdogs. Unfortunately, the fact that Arbatov and other people who refused to have their imaginations stifled had to resort to such extreme tactics paints in stark colors the desperate condition of Soviet society in the 1970s.

Although Arbatov and Chernyaev shared many observations on the state of Soviet society in the 1970s, one realization not mentioned by Chernyaev but of particular concern to Arbatov

56 Ibid., 145.
was the explosive growth of the Soviet bureaucracy and resultant obstinacy to responsibility and change. While Arbatov’s comments on the burgeoning Soviet apparatus are meritorious in their own right for their historical value, the fact that Arbatov saw these events as problematic differentiated him from the majority of his contemporaries and colleagues, thus setting him on the Reform Road that was destined to intersect with the Gorbachev Way. With obvious dismay, Arbatov related the runaway expansion of the Soviet bureaucracy: “The number of ministries and agencies and their staffs grew constantly. You could tell just by counting the rapidly growing number and size of ministerial buildings…During the 1970s and 1980s, dozens of old prerevolutionary structures, homes, and offices were converted to ministerial use, and new ones were built…No money was spared.”

Of course, Arbatov noted that just because more offices came into being did not necessarily mean an increase in the efficiency of the Soviet government. On the contrary, up to a hundred or more officials at times had to sign off on proposals before they could go into effect. Moreover, Arbatov understood that these paper-pushers never, “bore any real responsibility for anything,” and exclaimed that, “Not once in my memory was anyone called to account for a wrong decision.” Without a doubt, Arbatov was describing the sociological phenomenon that dispersed responsibility amounts to no responsibility at all, “absolutely irresponsibility,” as Arbatov termed it in his own words.

With so many people ostensibly involved in the decision-making process, a bureaucrat always had another colleague to point a finger at in the event of a botched decision or failed policy.

As a specific example of bureaucratic obesity, Arbatov exploded in exasperation that, “In agriculture alone the number of bureaucrats hit the three million mark—more than all the farmers

57 Ibid., 222.
58 Ibid., 217.
59 Ibid., 218, 224.
60 Ibid., 224.
in America put together!” In what must have been a demoralizing realization for a believer in the possibilities of Marxism, Arbatov came to grips with the fact that communism in the USSR was not progressing as promised by Marxist-Leninism, but according to Parkinson’s Law, which Arbatov himself defined as when, “social goals and social goods are lost in big bureaucratic structures, which start working more and more for themselves, for their own self-aggrandizement.” Failing to see any semblance of a communist utopia around himself, Arbatov lamented what Chernyaev also saw as degeneration of communism into a mechanism of societal control, rather than an effective form of government: “[T]he political mechanisms we had created were better adapted to seizing and holding on to power than to governing the state for the common good and solving problems as they arose.” To call the ruling body of the Soviet Union a government was a contradiction in terms; it had long since given up governing in favor of self-perpetuation: “[T]he dominant task of the policymakers was increasingly reduced to mounting an impenetrable defense against change, to preserve the status quo at any cost. This task completely overshadowed any other.” True governance involved problem solving, but Arbatov explained that the Soviet bureaucracy took up the practice of slapping the forbidding designation, “classified,” on all troublesome issues which it not feel like addressing, as if ignoring the problem would somehow magically fix it. For example, Arbatov discovered that discussions on ecology became “classified” after reports brought attention to Lake Baikal’s increased pollution. Dumbfounded, Arbatov railed against this imbecilic practice, saying, “It was as if social and national problems, the ecological threat, the deterioration of education and

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61 Ibid., 218.
62 Ibid., 218, 224.
63 Ibid., 219.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
health care, the poverty of a considerable part of the population simply did not exist.” In truth, the Soviet government was operating in a delusional version of edited reality. According to Arbatov, this refusal of the Soviet bureaucracy to deal with reality actually furthered the cause of societal control with the development of self-censorship, as, “editors, editorial boards, artists’ and writers’ unions, ministries, and other agencies took the role of censors for the sake of their own peace and quiet,” rather than raise issues that they knew would never be addressed and would only serve to annoy those with the power to “classify” them.

While Arbatov himself might have been appalled by these egregious lapses in judgment, he came to the conclusion that these practices were able to endure thanks in great part to the type of people who ended up in the Soviet bureaucracy. Based upon Arbatov’s understanding, people were selected to work for “the System,” as it called it, not because of their skills but because they, “were obedient, ambitious, and unscrupulous—people who were not greatly encumbered by abstract notions of conscience and morality…It was hardly your best student, your best young agronomist or engineer, journalist or scientist.” In confirmation of Arbatov’s assertion about the nature of Soviet officials, Chernyaev made more than one snide comment in his diaries about the lackluster and shiftless crowd he was forced to work with at the International Department. Moreover, Arbatov was quick to point out the disturbing fact that Soviet functionaries were not above the unethical practice of quite regularly trumping up accusations against proponents of efficiency and scribing the Soviet watchdogs on them. Unlike in the United States with its English common law legal system, Arbatov laid out how easily a disgruntled Soviet bureaucrat

67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid., 223.
71 Arbatov, The System, 234.
could silence even a harmless concerned citizen in this manner: “With our contradictory laws, our obedient investigators and courts, it was not all that difficult to make those charges stick. But the motivation was almost always political—to preserve the status quo, to defend the system.”

This “system” of government, if it could be called that, made such an impression upon Arbatov that he made it the title word of his autobiography, *The System*. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, Arbatov was very unique individual who was able to take a step back from the apparatus which provided him with his livelihood, recognize just how out of control it was, and successfully resist becoming merely just another obsequious member of the faceless Soviet bureaucratic system.

Another theme of the Soviet decline touched only tangentially by Chernyaev which Arbatov expanded upon was the institutionalization of a Brahmin caste in the Soviet Union during the late 1960s and into the 1970s. In this case, the Brahmins were the political elites, the *nomenklatura*, who were calling the shots and presiding over the Soviet government and its deterioration. Arbatov described this exclusive group of elites as almost feudal in its composition: “Theirs was something akin to an aristocracy—a life peerage associated with honors, with a high standard of living…and a good assortment of privileges (from cradle to grave).” Like a true Hindu caste, the *nomenklatura* class was a separate entity from the rest of Soviet society, largely indifferent to whatever lay below it: “The gap between this caste and the rest of society was widened. The caste was isolated from the rest of society. It had its own health care. It had its own resorts. It formed its own clannish ties. Its children spent time together, got to know each other, and often intermarried.”

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72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., 225.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
powerful was certainly nothing new under the sun, it theoretically should not have occurred in a society specifically constructed on an ideology that allegedly prided itself on egalitarianism and hostility towards classes. What is more, Arbatov observed that the obviousness of the nomenklatura class became even more pronounced in the conservative resurgence of the 1970s: “The apparat tried to set up a system of inherited power, or at least privileges, through an exclusive system of education and then through a system of appointments and promotions. The leaders set the example: Brezhnev’s son became the deputy minister for foreign trade, and his son-in-law became the first deputy minister of the interior.” Moreover, Arbatov confirmed that as the bureaucracies continued to expand, so did the extent of the conspicuous consumption, supposedly an excess exclusive to capitalist countries. From Arbatov’s accounts, the absence of a classless society was embarrassingly obvious and the nomenklatura did not even make an effort to fake its existence: “People abused these privileges shamelessly, even flaunted them. Quite often they built houses for themselves, to say nothing of their access to constantly expanding guest houses, “official” hotels, sanatoriums, and resorts. They lived with an incredible extravagance and a luxury that bordered on the absurd.” This state of affairs was not without consequences either, as it helped to create bad blood between the haves and have-nots. Arbatov illuminated this growing divide and ill-feeling in a story about the children of political elites who owned Mercedeses and Volvos and flaunted their superiority by, “driving around town, inspiring resentment and hard feelings among those who were unable to afford such luxuries.” Coincidentally, Chernyaev mentioned Mercedez cars in his example of the materialism riddling the Soviet apparatus; Mercedes-Benz automobiles were apparently a status

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76 Ibid., 225-226.
77 Ibid., 228-229.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid., 257.
symbol that transcended economic systems, even if Soviets were supposed be above such capitalistic superfluity. Clearly, Arbatov’s memories of the past stand in solidarity with and further elaborate upon Chernyaev’s observations on the debased and unsustainable condition of Soviet society in the 1970s.

Yet, the recollection from Arbatov with the most astounding synergy with Chernyaev’s appraisal of the 1970s was Arbatov’s stunning affirmation that the Soviet masses looked to World War II and the Revolutionary Period for spiritual relief from the depressing stagnation and propaganda of the 1970s. However, Arbatov revealed that the Soviet people’s captivation with the Great Patriot War, while real and sincere, was not entirely organic, but rather was preyed upon by the Soviet government and military to bolster their prestige and manipulate the masses:

“Frankly, we embarked on an unprecedented propaganda campaign in those years, trying to militarize the mentality of our people. Especially shameless were the attempts to play upon the themes of the Great Patriotic War, which was sacred for the Soviet people. The country was flooded with memoirs and fiction (more often than not this was simply hack work), feature film series, television programs, large monuments built at incredible cost; all sorts of ceremonies became part of life (including honor guards of schoolchildren, dressed in military uniforms and armed with submachine guns, at memorials and military cemeteries). For years all this overwhelmed the spiritual life of the country.”

Therefore, Chernyaev’s assessment of the high visibility of World War II in Soviet society was accurate, but Arbatov argued that the government was artificially pushing glorification and memory of the war upon the people. Moreover, whereas Chernyaev saw the proliferation of World War II materials as society’s attempt to escape the present by losing itself in the glory days of the past, Arbatov maintained that this preoccupation did more harm than good by furthering the spiritual bankruptcy of society, rather than providing new inspiration to the men and women of the Soviet Union. By focusing on World War II, they were stuck looking

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80 Ibid., 202.
backwards into the past rather than analyzing problems of the present or trying to improve the future. Either way, both commentators agree on the reliance of the Soviet public on the Great Patriotic War to keep them going, but Arbatov was able expand upon this observation and illuminate its highly problematic implications.

Similarly, Arbatov thoroughly recognized what he termed the “revolutionary inferiority complex,” the debilitating belief, especially among Soviet bureaucrats and intelligentsia, that the Revolutionary Period was the pinnacle of communist thought, and that all subsequent or new ideas were somehow lacking or at least perversions of revolutionary ideology.81 As a result, and as noticed by Chernyaev, citizen and apparatchik alike harkened back to the Revolutionary Era as a golden age of communist history, before the Cold War, Stalin’s purges, and stagnation of the Soviet socioeconomic system. However, the problem was that the ideas of the revolution simply, “no longer had any relation to reality,” and only served to strangle progress because everyone was convinced that solutions for present-day problems must originate from that mythicized past.82 So yes, the Soviets were looking to the Russian Revolution for inspiration, but in the process, they were pigeonholing themselves into an antiquated framework that could only generate a succession of concepts that could only but fail the modern world and its problems. Indeed, World War II and the Russian Revolution exerted a preponderance of influence on Soviet society, and unfortunately due to governmental manipulation and unrealistic expectations, became part of the systematic assault against creativity and independent thought in 1970s-era USSR.

Another significant point of comparison between Chernyaev and Arbatov was that both men realized very early on the futility of the Soviet Union’s role in the International Communist

81 Ibid., 189, 169-170.
82 Ibid., 169-170.
Movement and the detrimental effect it was having on Soviet foreign policy. Specifically, Arbatov took issue with Soviet involvement in Third World liberation movements, an unsound course of action which Arbatov described as, “loaded with revolutionary jargon and closely intertwined with imperial ambitions.” Not only was Arbatov putting down communist ideals here, he also employed the term “imperial,” a word that is anathema to communism. Yet, Arbatov unapologetically equated Soviet involvement in supposedly spreading communism as essentially no different than the imperialism practiced by the United States and the former European powers. Of course, the parallel which Arbatov drew was a direct smack in the face of communism, which was supposed to revile the imperialism of “the West” in promising liberation to all oppressed peoples. Commenting on Soviet foreign relations in the Middle East, Chernyaev seconded Arbatov’s assessment that Soviet dealings around the world had degenerated into base imperialism when he declared, “in this region we have been operating precisely like that: an imperialist strategy under the guise of ideology.” Arbatov was well aware in the 1970s of this incongruity and corruption of communism, and even brought it to the attention of Soviet foreign policy-makers. Not only did Arbatov perceive that Soviet support of international communism had gone off the rails, he also saw it as dangerously injurious to the détente of the 1970s. On one occasion, Arbatov even confronted Brezhnev himself over the question of Soviet involvement in Angola: “I told Brezhnev that, in my opinion, the involvement of Cuban troops in Angola and our support of the operation there could cost us very dearly and undermine the very foundations of détente.” Apparently, Arbatov was not so confined by the strictures of the Soviet system of control to occasionally express his true feelings to the supreme Soviet leader. Moreover,

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83 Ibid., 193.
86 Ibid., 194.
Arbatov recognized the immense benefits of the lessening of tensions between the two nuclear powerhouses and was beside himself as to how his own colleagues could so willingly jeopardize détente to support some tin-horn communists in southwestern Africa. Perceptive analyst that he was, Arbatov understood that Soviet intervention in Angola was wrapped up in blind devotion to the Soviet Union’s supposed, “internationalist duty,” as the motherland of international communism. Moreover, this unquestioning dedication to politically disadvantageous causes stemmed from the aforementioned, “revolutionary inferiority complex,” which, according to Arbatov, relentlessly hounded the Soviet leadership to live up to the “glorious” precedents of the “good ol’ days” and to continue applying the outdated practices of the past to modern contingencies. Commenting on the Soviet preoccupation with making sure that the USSR was living up to the fabricated rights and responsibilities of the first communist nation and heir to the ideas of Marx and Lenin, Arbatov lamented that the Soviet Union was no longer even helping to spread communism, but was, “simply intervening in the internal affairs of other countries and not aiding national-liberation movements. We became enmeshed in various political forces’ struggles for power and in their territorial and tribal disputes.” According to Arbatov, this ignorant policy would lead to Soviet meddling in various African nations of no real strategic importance to the Soviet Union, and in time, to the invasion of Afghanistan. Of course, the “Soviet Union’s Vietnam” would become the stumbling block of its military, the bane of its domestic economy, and death knell of Soviet intervention abroad, all of which factored into the rise of Gorbachev and the eventual contraction of the Soviet system. On a wryly positive note, Arbatov asserted that at least the Soviet Union’s self-destructive loyalty to international

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87 Ibid., 195.
88 194.
89 Ibid., 196.
90 Ibid.
communism led to the disaster in Afghanistan, thereby helping to preclude intervention in Poland that would inevitably have occurred under normal circumstances.\(^91\) Ironically, Arbatov came to the conclusion that Soviet obsession with the international communist movement and its “internationalist duty” played a key role in enabling the erosion and downfall of the communist system in the Soviet Union itself.

Similar to Chernyaev, Arbatov perceived dissention among the communist ranks and the obliteration of any myth of an international communist brotherhood, especially in the case of China. Arbatov clearly echoed the alarmist tones of Chernyaev’s colleague when he declared, “During the late 1960s and the early 1970s our relations with China deteriorated, beyond theoretical differences and debates to increasing threats of a conflict.”\(^92\) While not predicting nuclear war between the two communist behemoths, Arbatov explained that he and others within the Soviet apparatus were deeply disturbed by Chinese militancy and militarization: “[I]t worried us!”\(^93\) Likewise, Arbatov was astutely cognizant of the dynamic interplay of China, international communism, and détente in forcing the Soviet Union’s hand in foreign policy. According to Arbatov, China’s main beef with the USSR was the latter’s alleged abandonment of belligerent communism in order to obtain more peaceful relations with the U.S. through détente\(^94\) Consequently, Arbatov explained that this pressure from China compelled the Soviets to risk obliterating détente by staying active in support of international communism in order to refute the Chinese accusations and maintain the USSR’s position as the big brother of communists everywhere.\(^95\)

\(^91\) Ibid., 200.
\(^92\) Ibid., 175.
\(^93\) Ibid., 176.
\(^94\) Ibid., 170.
\(^95\) Ibid.
expert of foreign policy, Arbatov discovered that the Soviet Union had unwittingly worked itself into the proverbial dilemma of being caught between a rock and a hard place with regards to balancing the pragmatic need of détente with the ideologically bankrupt concept of overseeing the development of communism around the globe.

Closely tied to this conflict between détente with the U.S. and support of communism abroad was Arbatov’s recognition of how a Soviet military-industrial-complex was a driving force behind the incoherency of the foreign policy pursued by the Soviet Union. During the 1970s, Arbatov was aware of just how deranged Soviet foreign policy activities had become: “[W]e managed to conduct two different, even mutually exclusive, policies at once. One of them was détente and the creation of a reliable cooperative security system…The other one was a feverish arms buildup that was beyond our capacity and transcended all reasonable limits.”

Arbatov was referring to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) which culminated with the signing of the Helsinki Accords in Finland in 1975. The Soviets were in favor of the CSCE and the Helsinki Accords because they settled many territorial disputes and security concerns for the Soviets that had been outstanding ever since World War II. Yet, the United States and dissidents within the Eastern bloc would ultimately utilize provisions within the Accords to take the Soviet Union to task over violations of human rights. In the end, the Helsinki Accords would become an integral piece leading to the destruction of the Soviet empire. Nevertheless, the Soviets originally pursued the realization of the Accords due to the strategic advantages which they did indeed contain for the USSR in putting to rest some long-standing points of contention. Despite the importance of the CSCE to the Soviets, they continued unabated with their arms buildup, an action contrary to the spirit of the conference and

96 Ibid., 204.
potentially ruinous to its deliberations. In the same vein, Arbatov was appalled when the Soviet Union began arraying its SS-20 medium-range missiles in Europe during the 1970s, and voiced his opinion that this move was a mistake to Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs and his old boss, Yuri Andropov, to whom he said, “‘We have to explain to the West, somehow, what we’re doing, what our aims are, and roughly how many missiles we are going to deploy. We simply cannot behave as we did before, now that we are in a period of détente and negotiation with the West.’”97 From Gromyko, Arbatov received no answer, and Andropov rebuked Arbatov for catering to NATO.98 Yet, the fact remains that Arbatov realized how increased militarization of Europe was out of step with the spirit of the times and the efforts of Soviet policy in other sectors, while the old Soviet leadership was clueless as to the mixed signals it was sending to the West. Then, Arbatov discovered the reason behind the incomprehensible irrationality which the Soviet Union employed in its interactions with the rest of the world: “[T]he military-industrial-complex had grown to such proportions that it escaped political control. It had gathered strength and influence and had skillfully put Brezhnev’s patronage and weaknesses to its own good use.”99 Although U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower had warned America about the dangers of the military-industrial-complex upon leaving office in 1961, the United States has struggled with this powerful phenomenon ever since. Yet, Arbatov observed what should have been limited to a democratic-capitalist system clearly present inside the Soviet Union and working to undermine important, peace-preserving foreign policy objectives of the Soviet Union. As evidence, Arbatov provided two personal experiences which demonstrated how the Soviet military-industrial-complex was running amuck

97 Ibid., 205.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid., 201.
in the 1970s. Arbatov described Soviet war-industries from his point of view: “During those years we were arming ourselves like addicts, without any apparent political need. We did this not because we expected war or were afraid of aggression from the West in any way.” To test his observation, Arbatov queried a Soviet arms manufacturer about all the bombs they were building and if the military was preparing for war. The answer he received was telltale: “‘No… If anything, the military leaders are convinced there won’t be a nuclear war. And that’s exactly the reason why they go on happily building the most dangerous new weapons systems available.’” In other words, the munitions were completely unnecessary, but the weapons industry had taken on such a life of its own that the Soviet military establishment was content to soothe its conscience in the knowledge that the weapons would never be used anyway, in utter disregard for the debilitating drain that said arms program was on the Soviet economy. On another occasion, after Chief of the General Staff Marshal Kulikov expressed his sincere conviction that neither the Soviet Union nor the United States would ever dare to unleash the destructive power of nuclear weapons again, Arbatov asked the military man why then, was the Soviet Union still expanding its nuclear arsenal at breakneck speed. In affirmation of what Arbatov already believed about the autonomy of the Soviet war industries, the marshal was unable to give a straightforward or convincing response to his query. Thus, Arbatov hit upon the military-industrial-complex as an explanation for the contradictory foreign policy decisions of the Soviet Union. Not only was the military-industrial-complex an automatic and unnecessary burden on the already-taxed Soviet economy, it also needlessly jeopardized the reprieve of

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100 Ibid., 206.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
détente and the avoidance of nuclear confrontation by sending belligerent messages to outside observers, and in the case of Arbatov, an insider who waspuzzled by the inability of the USSR to put together a coherent foreign policy. Coupled with the Soviet’s dogged and expanding support of international communism, the military-industrial-complex of the Soviet Union eventually led to the rise of a renewed hardline stance in the U.S. against communism personified by Ronald Reagan, whose own diplomatic negotiations with the Soviets would be directed towards undoing the Gordion Knot of the Soviet military-industrial-complex.

Although not in the same detail as Chernyaev, Arbatov also revealed some insights on the backwardness of the Soviet economy, especially with regards to how the Soviets managed their petroleum industry. For example, Arbatov highlighted the fact that even though the USSR pumped more oil out of the ground than any other country on earth, the nation year after year suffered shortages of jet fuel, gasoline for cars, and diesel for farming and trucking.\textsuperscript{105} Oftentimes, the unavailability of fuel led to the loss of grain crops, since there was no fuel to power the combines or the tractor-trailers needed to harvest and transport the produce of the field.\textsuperscript{106} In perfect illustration of the incongruities of the Soviet economic system, Arbatov explained that the loss of these grain crops caused the Soviet government to export larger quantities of oil in order to obtain the currency necessary to then purchase grain from the United States and elsewhere to replace what was originally lost due to the domestic oil shortages, thus creating a most vicious cycle of completely avoidable economic chaos.\textsuperscript{107} Far more problematic and with consequences still affecting modern-day Russia, however, was the Soviet Union’s hyper-reliance on oil exports to compensate for lack of production and technological decline in

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 216-217.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
other areas of the Soviet economy. As related by Chernyaev, the USSR counted heavily upon
the export of its natural resources to obtain foreign currency and manage its balance of trade
ledger sheet. Although he readily admitted that he did not realize the consequences at the time,
Arbatov in autobiographical retrospection maintained that the high oil prices of the 1970s
actually did the Soviet Union more harm than good, because it lulled the Soviet government into
a false sense of security. With oil-money pouring into the government coffers, the Soviet
Union had no driving impetus to modernize its factories, shore up its farming practices and
logistics, or address shortfalls in production when it could simply use its oil revenues to import
whatever it needed from the West, whether it be technology, food-stuffs, or manufactured
goods. Instead of developing and diversifying its economy, the Soviet Union was content to
continue exploiting its oil reserves in an unhealthy practice of exporting raw materials in order to
fund the import of finished products. Considering how the present-day dip in oil prices is in
danger of crippling the Russian economy, the current governing body of Russia apparently failed
to heed Arbatov’s admonition and perpetuated a Soviet legacy of overreliance on oil exports
instead of a more sustainable economy policy at home, one less susceptible to the capriciousness
of globalization. Undoubtedly, Arbatov illuminated the oftentimes painful continuities of history
and how poor economic attitudes of the Soviets 1970s have had far-reaching implications for the
Russian economy of today.

Finally, the six goals which Arbatov laid out for his Institute for the Study of the USA
and Canada disclosed his disillusionment with the current state of Soviet governmental affairs
and his dedication to doing everything in his power to remedy what he saw the as the ills

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108 Ibid., 215.
109 Ibid., 215-216.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
plaguing the Soviet system prior to the formal restructuring efforts of the Gorbachev years.

Granted, these goals were not the officially sanctioned charter of the Institute, but rather Arbatov’s personal vision for the Institute, which would often pursue scholarship outside of the communist worldview. Firstly, Arbatov, “wanted the institute to lay the groundwork for serious research on current foreign-policy problems,” by taking an interdisciplinary approach and not one steeped in communist propaganda to the policy-making process.\(^{112}\) Clearly, Arbatov was painfully aware of the non-scholarship being produced at other communist institutes and saw the value of bringing the multiplicity of academic disciplines to bear on the problems facing the Soviet Union, instead of relying on Marxist-Leninism to point the way. For his second goal, Arbatov, “wanted the institute to initiate serious research on military policy in order to help liquidate the military’s monopoly on such questions, on the political aspects of strategy, and on arms-control problems…On many questions our position was simply not thought through.”\(^{113}\) In this case, Arbatov sought to moderate Soviet militarism by introducing an academic voice into the conversation and beginning the arms-control analysis that would make him so valuable to Gorbachev in the coming years. Thirdly, Arbatov envisioned the Institute as striving, “to challenge our established methods of economic and public management, as well as some social, political, and cultural matters.”\(^{114}\) Evidently, Arbatov was eager to throw his Institute into the fray of attempting to rehabilitate the stagnating economy, society, and culture of the Soviet Union in the 1970s. Fourthly, Arbatov desired a new approach to analyzing the United States: “I wanted the institute to separate science from propaganda and to study the United States not through the distorted prism of dogma but in its reality.”\(^{115}\) This goal bore directly upon the

\(^{112}\) Ibid., 303.
\(^{113}\) Ibid.
\(^{114}\) Ibid., 304.
\(^{115}\) Ibid.
official reason for the establishment of the Institute—to study the U.S.—, but Arbatov had his own ideas how this research would be conducted and that meant without the intellectual blinders of Soviet propaganda or preconceived notions of what America was. Arbatov’s fifth goal was to have the Institute, “communicate with the American and the Western community in a way they would understand. I wanted to talk about the Soviet Union, about its policy, about Soviet-American relations, and also about what we liked and didn’t like about the United States and its policy.”116 In the true spirit of détente, Arbatov realized the supreme importance of dialogue in normalizing relations between the two nations and helping to minimize the possibility of nuclear war. Indeed, the experience and familiarity which Arbatov gained through the activities of his Institute would prove to be an invaluable resource to Gorbachev when the time came to arms reductions talks in the 1980s with Reagan and the Americans. Lastly, Arbatov pictured the Institute as a regenerative bastion for years to come: “I wanted the institute to become the alma mater of a new type of contemporary Soviet Americanist and political scientist. I wanted it to gather together creative people to provide scope for their abilities. I wanted it to foster specialists capable of rendering assistance to their nation.”117 As a man with a historical consciousness, Arbatov realized that reform and its proponents would not appear out of thin air but must have their origins in preceding events and institutions, and sought to make his Institute the home of such people and ideas.

As a direct result of these lofty and counter-cultural ideals, Arbatov and his Institute were under constant persecution from hardliners within the government: “[T]he institute encountered hostility from conservative officials in the Party apparat, the military command, and the government…it was through their efforts that the institute acquired the reputation of being ‘pro-

116 Ibid., 305.
117 Ibid., 306.
American’ and ideologically and politically unreliable. We felt the pressure, but we never doubted that we were doing the right thing.”118 Apparently, Arbatov saw himself as fighting the good fight, and hostility from seats of power and the “KGB fears” which he expressed to Chernyaev were the rewards for pushing the envelope with the daring work of the Institute. To his credit, having set upon a feasible path of resisting the communist degeneration around him, Arbatov never deviated, despite obvious political pressures and enticements to do so. In each of his six specific goals for the Institute, Arbatov displayed not only a clear perception of what was wrong with the Soviet system, but also well-defined solutions for the societal ills and an apparent and firm desire to play a role in putting his ideas into effect for the betterment of his country.

Therefore, Arbatov was so much more than the simple director of a Soviet think-tank on U.S.-Soviet relations. Rather, Arbatov is an integral figure in the history of the late Cold War who was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the reform efforts of Gorbachev and the cessation of hostilities between the United States and Soviet Union. Arbatov’s recorded memories not only illuminate a period of normally opaque Soviet internal history, but also help to show how the stagnation of the 1970s was laying the groundwork for Gorbachev’s valiant but too-little, too-late attempts to save the Soviet Union after 1985. Moreover, Arbatov corroborated many of the same sentiments and observations made by Chernyaev in the 1970s, thus furthering knowledge of how both men were set on a collision course with Gorbachev due to their disenchchantment with the current Soviet system and their desire to see meaningful change come to fruition.

118 Ibid., 313.
Ironically, the story of Chernyaev and Arbatov as Soviet reformers who yearned for spiritual and intellectual fulfillment while surrounded by Soviet tedium and drudgery has a direct link to a work of philosophy written in the eighteenth century. In 1795, the great German thinker Friedrich Schiller wrote his “Aesthetic Letters,” musing and commenting on the transcendental nature of beauty and its place within the experience of mankind. Despite its seemingly innocuous subject-matter, Schiller’s work has been an object of some debate. American historian Leonard Krieger cited the disjointed nature of German society as causing German thinkers, “to celebrate freedom as the highest spiritual value, and to avoid any consideration of its social and political applications….“1 For Krieger, German philosophers in the latter decades of the eighteenth century employed the politically expedient tendency of couching their ideas in terms of ethics and aesthetics to avoid controversy.2 Similarly, German sociologist Jürgen Habermas was quick to point how a sphere of public opinion was not welcome in the Germany of King Frederick II.3 Although these critiques have been laid against Schiller and the era in which he wrote, his work has much to recommend itself in terms of moral theorizing. According to the introduction written by translator J. Weiss for the English-version of the “Aesthetic Letters,” published in the United States in 1845, Schiller’s, “special mission was to legislate for man’s Aesthetic Culture, and to plant art upon the principle of morality.”4 In his reflections, Schiller indeed elevated “Beauty” and the artistic manifestations of “Beauty” beyond basic

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2 Ibid., 42.
pleasure to a spiritual level with profound implications for mankind as individuals and as a body politic. Writing in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution’s Reign of Terror, Schiller was shaken by the barbarity of that event and sought to locate where the remaining vestiges of civility were to be found: “Humanity has lost its dignity, but art has rescued and preserved it in significant marbles; truth survives in the midst of deception…And as noble art survives noble nature, so she precedes it, animating and creating in her inspiration.”

Having identified the redemptive quality of art, Schiller condensed his discovery into the phrase, “it is Beauty that leads to Freedom.” Armed with this premise, Schiller hastened to the connection between art and freedom so evident in the lives of Chernyaev and Arbatov: “[A]rt is a daughter of freedom, and must receive her commission from the needs of the spirit, not from the exigencies of matter.” Engulfed in the secular materialism of communism, Chernyaev and Arbatov subconsciously sought freedom in precisely what Schiller identified as the embodiment of freedom, namely, art. According to Schiller, these higher implications of art reside within its ability to transcend human experience: “Art, like knowledge, is independent of everything that is positive or established by human conventions, and both enjoy an absolute immunity from the caprice of men…He [the political lawgiver] can outlaw the friend of truth, but truth remains; he can humble the artist, but cannot debase the art.”

Astonishingly, Schiller would argue that Chernyaev and Arbatov were singularly qualified to serve as political reformers in the midst of a repressive societal system because of their avid and meaningful consumption of art:

“All political improvements should result from nobility of character — but how can the character ennoble itself under the influence of a barbarous civil polity? We must find then an instrument for this design, which the state does not afford,

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6 Ibid., 6.
7 Ibid., 5.
8 Ibid.,
and lay open sources, which preserve themselves pure and undefiled in every political depravation. I have now reached the point, to which all my previous meditation have tended. This instrument is the fine arts….”

For Schiller, true political change for the better must be initiated by people of noble character, and the fine arts can serve a role in improving the ethical dispositions of one’s soul.

Compellingly, Chernyaev and Arbatov were both eager patrons of the fine arts themselves: Literature, poetry, painting, theater, and scholarship. Moreover, Schiller would assert that absent this presence of higher intellectuality stimulated by art all efforts at political reform are doomed to fail:

“The present age, far from exhibiting to us such a form of humanity, as is known to be the necessary condition for a moral reform of the state, shows us rather the direct opposite…it is evident that every experiment in such a reform is so long premature, and every hope founded thereon chimerical, till the divisions of the inner man are again abolished, and his nature is so far developed, that she herself may be the artist, and warrant the reality of the reason’s political creation.”

Although Schiller was writing about the excesses of the French Revolution, this quotation applies equally as well to the Great Terror of Stalinist Soviet Union, or the stagnation era of Chernyaev and Arbatov’s own 1970s. In each case, spiritual refinement was lacking, the consequences were catastrophic, and level-headed reformation was not a welcome suitor. The noticeable difference is that Chernyaev and Arbatov were able to “learn” the path of “reason’s political creation,” through art, and thus became conditioned for reformatory political activity in the succeeding decade. Schiller was prophetic in his identification of the people who would be most predisposed to enact fruitful change in adverse circumstances, as Chernyaev and Arbatov fit his description perfectly of artistically conscious political reformers.

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9 Ibid., 35.
10 Ibid., 29.
Schiller’s inadvertently visionary treatise notwithstanding, the historical scholarship on the lives of the Soviet reformers of the 1980s remains somewhat thin. Understandably, this underdevelopment is undoubtedly due in no small part to the previously mentioned issue regarding the inaccessibility of primary sources from Russia, as well as the customary “thirty years rule” timetable for the release of government documents for public use and historical research. This year, 2015, marks thirty years since 1985, with the appearance of Gorbachev and his attempts to address some of the ills strangling the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, a few books do exist which touch upon some of the themes brought up by Chernyaev and Arbatov and the lives of the 1980s cadre before their fame and association with Gorbachev.

One such work is *Soviet Intellectuals and Political Power: The Post-Stalin Era* by Vladimir Shlapentokh. Written in 1990, *Soviet Intellectuals and Political Power* is unique in that it provides a rare peek inside the Soviet Union (like Chernyaev’s diaries and Arbatov’s autobiography) because it too was written by a Soviet insider. Shlapentokh was a top Soviet sociologist until he immigrated to the United States in 1979.11 Much of what he has to share about the state of the Soviet intelligentsia comes from his first-hand experiences as a member of Soviet academia and his personal contacts with others in that arena. Far from being the nostalgic reminisces of an accomplished scholar strolling down memory lane, Shlapentokh elucidates a highly critical thesis in the opening pages of his book: “I will advance the premise that the intellectuals and the political elite, as two political actors in a socialist society based on political power, exhibit dual and deeply contradictory attitudes towards each other.”12 To this end,

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12 Shlapentokh, *Soviet Intellectuals*, xii.
Shlapentokh argues that discord between intellectuals and rulers is a mainstay of autocratic states.¹³

However, Shlapentokh is quick to distinguish between what he terms “bogus” and “genuine” Soviet intellectuals.¹⁴ Shlapentokh defines the genuine intelligentsia as, “truly highly educated people engaged in genuinely creative activity,” versus the bogus impostors who, “survive as parasites, demanding public reward for work that has little or nothing to do with true creative activity.”¹⁵ According to Shlapentokh, the 1970s saw a proliferation of the latter, both within academia and government.¹⁶ By way of corroboration, Chernyaev complained on several occasions about the shoddy work and impudent behavior of his fellow co-workers within the International Department.¹⁷ Because the Soviet oligarchs and bureaucratic apparatus were quick to recognize any “scholar” whose work supported the position favored by the government, Shlapentokh’s genuine intellectuals were rarely found within the Soviet government.¹⁸ Therefore, Soviet communism created its own cohort of hackneyed experts who served the system, leaving the genuine intellectuals out in the cold without political influence and without a receptive audience.¹⁹ Perhaps not surprisingly, the apparatchiks of the Soviet bureaucracy held the true intelligentsia in great contempt because they represented a cultural threat to the status quo.²⁰

Nevertheless, Shlapentokh’s description of the lives led by the genuine intelligentsia directly parallels what Chernyaev and Arbatov revealed about their own cultural pursuits. Like

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¹³ Ibid., 16.
¹⁴ Ibid., x.
¹⁵ Ibid., x-xi.
¹⁶ Ibid.
¹⁹ Ibid., 21.
²⁰ Ibid., 22.
Chernyaev and Arbatov, the genuine intellectuals too were intensely, “interested in the humanities, particularly classic literature, history, philosophy, and the arts (i.e., classical music, painting, and sculpture). Soviet intellectuals are virtually obsessed with originality and innovation in literature and the arts….”

More intriguingly, Shlapentokh reveals that in order to circumvent censorship, Soviet novelists, playwrights, and directors in the 1960s and 1970s filled, “their work with various allusions, associations, and hints,” which would only be noticed, “decoded,” and enjoyed by other members of the intelligentsia. Drawing upon his obvious participation in such subversive activity, Shlapentokh lists a host of artists who inserted hidden messages into their work, not the least of whom was Yuri Lyubimov, the director the Taganka Theater. Not only was Lyubimov known to be particularly skilled at working clever social commentary into his productions, the Taganka Theater was the play house frequented by Chernyaev and Lyubimov was a personal acquaintance of Chernyaev. In fact, Lyubimov was the director of the bitterly ironic play “Under the Skin of the Statue of Liberty” to which Chernyaev referred on multiple occasions. Not surprisingly, given Chernyaev’s subconscious elaboration on the importance which theater held in his life, Shlapentokh explains that, “Attendance there [at a theater] became a symbol of belonging to the intellectual community.”

Of direct importance to the lives which both Chernyaev and Arbatov chose to lead is Shlapentokh’s discussion of the double lives led by many members of the Soviet genuine intelligentsia. While Shlapentokh lays out an extremely intricate explanation for how the intelligentsia who opposed elements of the communist system were able to live seemingly

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21 Ibid., 63.
22 Ibid., 64-65.
23 Ibid., 65.
26 Shlapentokh, Soviet Intellectuals, 69.
incongruous lives, the essence of Shlapentokh’s argument is that, “Two important features of Soviet society helped them to do this: (1) the gross distinction between private and public life in Soviet society, and (2) the mythology that allows Soviet people to pursue behavior in direct contradiction to their professed values.”  Ultimately, what Shlapentokh’s elaborate analysis boils down to is that out of necessity intellectuals had to embrace cognitive dissonance and a disjoint between their public and private lives in order to survive the intolerance and conformity imposed by the Soviet system. At the same time however, Soviet intellectuals had to find some type of covert avenue for releasing their true feelings and beliefs about the state of their nation and Soviet communism. Some intellectuals read or contributed to *samizdat* literature; Chernyaev wrote his diary and Arbatov had his scholarship.

Another manner in which genuine Soviet intellectuals dealt with their frustration was to embrace Russophilism, and although Chernyaev never used this word, his diaries unknowingly described some of the symptoms of Russophilism. Shlapentokh supplied his own definition of Russophilism: “Russophilism, the dominant ideology of Russian intellectuals in the 1970s and early 1980s, was very aggressive toward the West and the Jews, contending that Russia has its own specific history, culture, and traditions that are deeply alien to Western democratic institutions.” By way of illustration, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was a Russophile, whereas Andrei Sakharov was more of a Westernizer. More importantly, Shlapentokh explains that Russophilism had two main camps, one that emphasized patriotism, and another that embraced traditionalism and a return to the Russian Orthodox religion. Interestingly, Chernyaev astutely

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27 Ibid., 83.
28 Ibid., 75.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., 223.
31 Ibid.
picked up on the renewed patriotism and quest for spirituality of Russophilism in the 1970s. Although Arbatov revealed that the communist government was artificially pushing patriotism in the 1970s, Shlapentokh’s explanation of the rise of Russophilism also helps to contextualize this patriotic fervor recorded by Chernyaev and Arbatov as part of a larger movement by intellectuals to find meaning in their lives.

Despite Shlapentokh’s thorough understanding of how intellectuals lived double lives and invented any number of techniques for surviving the excesses of communism, Shlapentokh is quick to label Arbatov a “typical conformist” and someone who went with the prevailing wind. However, this accusation is made without compelling evidence, seems a bit hasty, and fails to acknowledge the value of genuine intellectuals who were compelled to swallow some of their principles in order to work from within the Soviet system to bring about meaningful change. Also, for someone who decried the lack of “true” intellectuals serving the communist party, one would think that Shlapentokh would be happy to see Arbatov in a position of some authority and influence in the Soviet apparatus. Expecting Arbatov to trumpet liberal reform from the rooftops is an unreasonable expectation, and seems to smack of Shlapentokh holding Arbatov to a higher standard, because a large portion of his book is specifically devoted to explaining how Soviet thinkers devised many methods of surviving Soviet repression, including rationalizations for why it was permissible for them to live two-faced lives. If staunch, public adherence to private beliefs is what Shlapentokh expected from his “genuine” intellectuals, it is doubtful that there ever were very many living members of that group.

Shortly after Shlapentokh’s work, Archie Brown published *The Gorbachev Factor* in 1996. Drawing upon his time in the Soviet Union, the materials he collected while there,

32 Ibid., 47, 118.
conversations he had with professional associates of Gorbachev, and the memories of Soviet reformers, Brown seeks, “to examine how important Gorbachev was as a mover or facilitator in the Soviet Union’s transition from orthodox Communism to a different kind of political system.”33 In particular, Brown mentions that he talked directly with Chernyaev about Gorbachev before writing his book, and specifically noted Chernyaev’s close relationship with Gorbachev.34 Although Brown’s work is largely exploratory, he writes under the asserted premise that, “Without the promotion of a genuine reformer and highly skilled politician to the top Communist Party post in 1985, fundamental change in the Soviet Union would certainly have been delayed and could well have been bloodier as well as slower than the relatively speedy political evolution which occurred while Gorbachev was at the helm.”35 So, Brown is firmly within the historiographical school which maintains that the rise of Gorbachev as the leader of the Soviet Union was the most important factor in the end of the Cold War.

However, rather than running the danger of overemphasizing the role of Gorbachev to the exclusion of others, Brown is quick to recognize that many other factors figure prominently into the discussion of the end of the Cold War: “I am, accordingly, far from wishing to suggest that there are no other major themes to be explored or quite different books to be written about the demise of Communism in the Soviet Union in addition to work which examines the role of Mikhail Gorbachev.”36 Specifically, Brown points out that much work remains to be done in researching the socio-political circumstances which enabled reformation in the Soviet Union during the 1980s, a task this present work seeks to accomplish.37 Hence, Brown does not leave

34 Ibid., xii.
36 Ibid., 12.
37 Ibid.
himself open to accusations that he belittles other explanations or is ignorant of multilayered analysis. Furthermore, seeming to anticipate criticism of his focus on Gorbachev, Brown firmly asserts that, “A study in the politics of leadership cannot simultaneously be a study of everything else,” thereby silencing those critics who might have insinuated that he should have broadened his approach.\(^{38}\)

Moreover, despite his intention to home in on Gorbachev, Brown is more than willing to expand his narrative to include brief affirmations of how Gorbachev’s political allies were ready for dramatic political change in the 1970s. In fact, Brown argues that professionals who disagreed with the state of Soviet government but chose to work for the ruling apparatus anyway were indeed dissidents: “[T]he views of a good many reformers who had decided that discretion was better part of valour, and who did not offer an open challenge to the authorities until such time as Gorbachev had made the Soviet Union safe for dissent, were little different from those of the dissidents.”\(^{39}\) Brown calls these individuals (among whom Chernyaev and Arbatov rightly number) “within-system reformers,” and maintains that over time they were slowing helping to alter the socio-political thinking of the Soviet governing structure.\(^{40}\) Furthermore, Brown echoes Arbatov in confirming that various think-tanks within the Soviet Union served as vital centers for the cultivation of thinking and scholarship that was not suffocated by ideological parameters.\(^{41}\) Not surprisingly, Brown singles out Chernyaev’s International Department as an important origin center of “New Thinking” and indicates that Chernyaev was the “most important” thinker to emerge from that department, listing Chernyaev as one of Gorbachev’s four chief advisors.\(^{42}\) In

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\(^{38}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., 8.
\(^{40}\) Ibid.
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 19.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 20, 316.
addition to the International Department, Brown mentions the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist, Arbatov’s Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada, and the Institute of World Economy and International Relations as the three other trailblazers of uncircumscribed thought in the Soviet Union. For Brown, the contact which the members of these institutes had with the West, whether in the form of language, people, or ideas, was paramount in explaining why these centers developed sound policy recommendations that were not steeped in Marxism.

Lastly, Brown describes the journal which both Chernyaev and Arbatov worked for, Problems of Peace and Socialism, as another Soviet organization from whence the thinkers of perestroika and glasnost would emerge years later.

As part of his investigation, Brown analyzes Gorbachev’s life prior to becoming General Secretary and how it prepared him to be political innovator that he was. Although Gorbachev’s early life followed a different trajectory than the lives of Chernyaev and Arbatov because of a ten year age difference, Brown is astute to illustrate how Gorbachev’s life experiences formed in him the realization that a change of course was necessary for the Soviet Union. Firstly, Brown reveals that both of Gorbachev’s grandfathers were falsely arrested and punished during Stalin’s Great Purge of the 1930s. Not only were these events traumatic at the time, they continued to impact Gorbachev later in life whenever forms required him to disclose if any of his family had ever been imprisoned. In addition to experiencing the Great Purge, Gorbachev lived under Nazi occupation of the region where he lived during World War II, and most of his childhood was spent doing hard agricultural work by hand. Although laborious, this farm work earned

43 Ibid., 20.
44 Ibid., 19-20.
46 Ibid., 25.
48 Ibid., 26-27.
Gorbachev official recognition as an industrious worker, permission to attend Moscow State University, and undoubtedly influenced his thinking in a career of agricultural administration.\(^49\)

Just as education played a huge role in the lives and career advancement of Chernyaev and Arbatov, Brown explains that Gorbachev’s time at Moscow State University provided him with a far superior education than many of his eventual *nomenklatura* colleagues in the upper echelons of the Communist Party.\(^50\) Moreover, undoubtedly drawing upon his first-hand experience with the bane of agricultural quotas, Gorbachev quickly learned to discern the inherent difference between theory and reality, and although embracing Marxism, Gorbachev refused to be blinded by it.\(^51\) Similarly, Brown explains that Stalin died during Gorbachev’s time in college, which enabled him to finish school during the slight lessening of fear and increased freedom that followed in the wake of the tyrant’s demise.\(^52\) Although not to the same degree as Chernyaev and Arbatov, Gorbachev did enjoy poetry and theater, and had even been an actor in plays as a youth, a means of artistic expression he apparently shared with his fellow Cold War leaders Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II.\(^53\) Also, Brown reveals that Gorbachev had many opportunities to travel abroad as part of the various positions that he held within the Soviet government, thereby being exposed to the same foreign and Western influences which Brown cited as so vital to the development of New Thinking among the members of the Soviet political institutes, including Chernyaev and Arbatov who traveled regularly in the service of communism.\(^54\) Hence, Brown’s investigation of Gorbachev’s pre-General Secretary years bears an astounding resemblance to those of Chernyaev and Arbatov, in that the magical combination

\(^{49}\) Ibid., 27.
\(^{50}\) Ibid., 29.
\(^{51}\) Ibid., 32.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., 35.
\(^{53}\) Ibid., 35.
\(^{54}\) Ibid., 41-43.
of education, appreciation of the arts, foreign travel, and acknowledgement of the fallibility of Marxism were present in all three men prior to their extraordinary efforts at reforming the communist system of the Soviet Union.

Beginning the 2000s, there was a slight increase in scholarship dealing more directly with the Soviet reformers of the 1980s and how their journeys eventually generated the ideas of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. In 2000, Robert D. English wrote *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* to fill in historical understanding of the “New Thinking” commonly attributed to Gorbachev and his reform movement after 1985. Of course, as English proves throughout his book, New Thinking was not solely Gorbachev’s idea, but rather had its origins as far back as the mid-1950s during the post-Stalin “thaw.”

Furthermore, English is keenly aware of Chernyaev and Arbatov’s place within the narrative of Soviet reform. English thanks both of them for their assistance in writing his book and he cites material from both men throughout his work. Although English seems to be responding to and utilizing different theories unnecessarily throughout his book, he does present an overarching argument that is straightforward and cognizant of the supreme importance of ideas to the Cold War’s end: “So while crisis and leadership transition were vital preconditions, so was an earlier intellectual change—the rise of a global, “Westernizing” identity among a liberal policy-academic elite—a sine qua non of the cold war’s sudden and peaceful end.”

Unlike Brown, whose work centered on the figure of Gorbachev, English presents a thesis which fittingly draws attention to the role of ideas in bringing to an end a conflict that was at its core ideological.

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56 Ibid., 3.
For English, the Soviet intelligentsia had to undergo a fundamental change in how they saw the world before true change could take place in Soviet society. According to English, Soviet thought was dominated by what he termed a “hostile-isolationist identity.”57 This mindset had three component parts: “One was through ignorance of the West and belief in its abiding threat to the USSR. Another was enduring faith in the expansion and ultimate triumph of socialism. And a third…was an ideological insecurity or ‘complex of revolutionary inadequacy’ that drove expansion abroad in an effort bolster legitimacy at home….“58 For their part, Chernyaev and Arbatov were painfully aware how these aspects listed by English worked to the great detriment of the Soviet Union, especially in relations with other nations. Moreover, the hostile-isolationist identity was engendered by traditional Russian paranoia of invasion, Leninist anti-capitalist rhetoric, and the fear that all the hardships endured in the name of building communism might come to naught.59 However, English argues that by the late 1960s and early 1970s, Soviet academia was, “distinguished by a growing anti-isolationist, Western-oriented current.”60 This intellectual shift had its origins in Nikita Khrushchev’s lessening of Stalinist controls following his Secret Speech at the 20th Party Congress.61 In addition to the oft-cited liberal think-tanks, English also points to the Sino-Soviet schism and détente as two additional factors which were instrumental in leading Soviet thinkers to an anti-isolationist, Western-oriented mental framework.62 The excesses of China provided Soviet thinkers with a communist state which they could critique and analyze with openness because of the national security threat which China represented.63 Less surprisingly, détente facilitated exchange of ideas and

57 Ibid., 120.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., 9, 120.
60 Ibid., 119.
61 Ibid., 126.
62 Ibid., 125.
63 Ibid.
personnel with the West, thereby helping to undercut xenophobic tendencies which inhibited acceptance of Western thought.\textsuperscript{64} Of course, the stagnation of the 1970s also pushed many Soviet intellectuals to consider closer association with the social and economic systems of the West as an answer to the ills of Soviet communism.\textsuperscript{65} As has been seen, the depressing monotony of stagnation, contact with the West, and concerns about the volatility of China all caused Chernyaev and Arbatov to second-guess their nation’s policies and the feasibility of enacting reform before it was too late.

Aside from his enlightening examination of how this indispensable “change of heart” came about, English presents some unique insights on the careers of Chernyaev and Arbatov. Even before Gorbachev was named General Secretary, he consulted Arbatov on questions of international diplomacy. After being assigned to the international affairs committee of the Supreme Soviet in 1983, Gorbachev sought out the advice of Arbatov to help him with his new duties as a member of that committee.\textsuperscript{66} Furthermore, less than one month after Gorbachev’s election, Arbatov presented Gorbachev with a full review of Soviet foreign policy which advocated a less threatening stance towards the world and a revision of traditionally overstated threats to the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{67} Similarly, English explains that Arbatov personally lobbied Gorbachev to appoint Chernyaev as the latter’s aide on foreign policy.\textsuperscript{68} Thus, Arbatov was apparently the link that ended up connecting Chernyaev to Gorbachev in what would become one of the vital relationships in the history of Cold War diplomacy. Lastly, English reveals why many employees of \textit{Problems of Peace and Socialism}, such as Chernyaev and Arbatov, later

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 127.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 184.
\item \textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 202.
\item \textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 209.
\end{itemize}
went on to promote reform in the Soviet Union. According to English, the editor of the journal, Alexei Rumyantsev, was a proponent of free thinking who allowed his writers to explore unorthodox ideas, while simultaneously protecting them from the encroachments of party censorship. Moreover, the multicultural atmosphere of Prague, as well as access to information that had not by sanitized by Soviet-controlled news outlets, further abetted creativity and broadmindedness on the part of the journalists’ intellectual work. Overall, English’s book goes a long way towards facilitating an understanding of the origins of New Thinking and how a complete transformation of outlook among a critical mass of Soviet intellectuals was necessary for the generation of actualized reform after 1985.

Ironically, the only full-length biography of one of Gorbachev’s advisors written in English is by a Canadian. In 2008, Christopher Shulgan published The Soviet Ambassador: The Making of the Radical Behind Perestroika, the story of Gorbachev’s chief guru on ideology and the architect of perestroika, Aleksandr Yakovlev. Shulgan is a Canadian journalist and his well-researched book draws upon archival evidence, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation materials, and Chernyaev’s autobiography. Although Shulgan does not necessarily have a specific thesis, the overarching goal of his work is to illustrate how Yakovlev’s time as the Soviet ambassador to Canada directly influenced his formulation of the ideas behind perestroika and reformation of Soviet communism.

Of first significance is that fact that Shulgan’s discussion of Yakovlev’s formative years exposes undeniable parallels and connections with the lives of Chernyaev and Arbatov. As a teenager, Yakovlev avidly read Russian literary classics and even wrote poetry, thus establishing the all-important link with Chernyaev, Arbatov, and Schiller’s concept of the intellectually

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69 Ibid., 72.
liberating quality of the arts. Like Chernyaev and Arbatov, Yakovlev was a military veteran of the Great Patriotic War, serving as a neophyte platoon commander at the defense of Leningrad. According to Shulgan, the horrors of war and the communist government’s postwar interrogation and detention of returning Soviet prisoners of war due to paranoia about spies sowed the seeds of dissention and loss of faith in the Stalinist system in Yakovlev. After the war, Yakovlev was selected for special education at a Communist Party prep school for future bureaucrats. However, the contents of Khrushchev’s Secret Speech profoundly troubled Yakovlev, and he wanted to reeducate himself in the tenets of Marxism, without the corruptions of Stalinism. To this end, Yakovlev entered the Academy of Social Sciences just when a student exchange program was established with Columbia University. As fate would have it, Yakovlev was selected as one of the students to participate in the inaugural student exchange, and Yakovlev spent his time in the United States traveling and studying President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal reforms. Removed from the propaganda of the Soviet Union, Yakovlev interacted with Americans on his own terms, learned to think critically for himself, and had the breakthrough realization in studying FDR’s New Deal that institution of reform was not tantamount to treason.

Despite this initial contact with the United States, Shulgan provides a compelling argument that Yakovlev’s tenure in Canada as the Soviet ambassador was even more influential to his development of ideas for reform that would eventually manifest themselves in the Soviet

71 Ibid., 27-28.
72 Ibid., 34-35.
73 Ibid., 40.
74 Ibid., 51.
75 Ibid., 53.
76 Ibid., 62, 60.
77 Ibid., 68-69.
Union as *perestroika* and *glasnost*. In 1973, Yakovlev was essentially banished to Canada for writing an article which criticized resurgent Stalinism and radical Russian nationalism. Unlike Chernyaev and Arbatov, Yakovlev took the risk of openly voicing some of his reservations with what he saw as the poor state of Soviet society and paid the price for transgressing the Soviet mores of conformity by calling attention to problems with the Soviet system.

On the other hand, Shulgan maintains that Yakovlev’s *de facto* exile to the Cold War backwater of Canada provided him with the unforeseen opportunity to experience and observe a palatable version of Western democratic-capitalism up close in action. Bad blood between the Soviet Union and Canada was minimal, and Yakovlev also arrived in Ottawa during the liberal and innovative administration of the flamboyant Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau. According to Shulgan, Trudeau served an important purpose for Yakovlev’s intellectual development: “What matters is that, in Trudeau, Yakovlev found an atypical juxtaposition, a figure wary of any government’s totalitarian tendencies and simultaneously sympathetic to the Marxist cause of social justice.”

Trudeau represented an important middle ground for Yakovlev. On the one hand, Trudeau was the leader of a nation closely allied with the United States and metaphorically represented “the West,” but on the other, Trudeau was a very liberal politician who did not see the communist system as entirely without its own merits, unlike his American counterparts. Moreover, Canada’s socio-economic orientation was somewhat of a midpoint between the communism of the Soviet Union and the democratic-capitalism of the United States. Canada was significantly more open to the implementation of socialist ideas in Canadian government and society, while at the same time, remaining very much a democratic nation with a capitalist

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78 Ibid., 133.
79 Ibid., 176.
80 Ibid., 165.
Hence, Shulgan contends that Canada’s unique position as a middle power with a liberal, yet “Western” government and economy greatly facilitated Yakovlev openness and willingness to discover and embrace Western ideas for future reform efforts in the Soviet Union. Thus intrigued, Yakovlev spent his Canadian exile forming friendships with Trudeau and Ivan Head, Trudeau’s progressive foreign policy advisor, observing Canadian elections, studying Canadian history and agriculture, and keeping tabs on the new U.S. President, Ronald Reagan. Needless to say, Yakovlev’s exposure to Reagan from 1980 to 1983 would reap untold rewards when Yakovlev began personally advising General Secretary Gorbachev after 1985. Intriguingly, Shulgan further reveals that Yakovlev discussed his true feelings about the state of the Soviet Union with none other than Anatoly Chernyaev, during the latter’s trip to Canada at an unspecified date.

Most significant to the realization of reform in the Soviet Union, however, was the event which ended Yakovlev de facto banishment. In 1983, Yakovlev was responsible for arranging Gorbachev’s trip to Canada for the purpose of observing Canadian agricultural production in an effort to boost the Soviet Union’s own agricultural sector. While Gorbachev’s visit to Canada was diplomatically noteworthy in its own right and important to furthering Gorbachev’s reformist sentiments, the climax of the visit was a private conversation between Gorbachev and Yakovlev in which they both confessed their awareness of the fact that the Soviet Union was falling apart and their desire to see real reforms instituted to save their nation.

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81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., 182-183.
83 Ibid., 177, 185, 189, 190, 242.
84 Ibid., 242.
85 Ibid., 265.
86 Ibid., 245.
87 Ibid., 265-267.
was mentioned,” during this breakthrough meeting of the minds in Canada.88 Tellingly, less than two months later, Yakovlev was recalled to Moscow to serve as the new director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, one of the progressive Soviet think-tanks mentioned by Archie Brown as a vital bastion of original thought in the Soviet Union.89 Of course, when Gorbachev rose to power in 1985, Yakovlev rose alongside him, becoming Gorbachev’s chief advisor on ideology, which, in Yakovlev’s case, meant perestroika and glasnost. Clearly, Shulgan elucidates a powerful narrative that not only inserts Canada into the discussion of the Cold War’s end, but also one that illuminates the crucial historical story of Yakovlev’s development into arguably the most influential force behind the institution of worthwhile reform in the Soviet Union.

A final work which is historiographically connected to the experiences of Chernyaev and Arbatov is Zhivago’s Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia by Vladislav M. Zubok. In this 2009 publication, Zubok traces the history of the Soviet intelligentsia from the end of World War II until the elevation of Gorbachev to power in 1985. Zubok operates under a somewhat ambiguous and unique understanding of “the intelligentsia.” For Zubok, the Soviet intelligentsia rightly were those well-educated and cultured individuals who shared an intellectual commonality with the original Russian intelligentsia who opposed the tyrannical regime of the tsars and, “believed that the emancipation of society from the authoritarian state would usher in an era of unparalleled creativity.”90 Therefore, Zubok’s argument revolves around the concept that the Soviet intelligentsia were the “spiritual children” of Doctor Zhivago, the protagonist of Boris Pasternak’s novel of the same name that was published in 1957 outside of the Soviet Union.

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88 Ibid., 267.
89 Ibid., 272-273.
as, “the first defiant challenge to the postwar cultural silence,” and in protest against the, “tragic demise of the Russian intelligentsia in an era of revolutionary violence.”91 Even though the intellectuals born after the Bolshevik revolution were supposed to be trained for unquestioning service to the communist state, many of them actually constituted the, “struggle of intellectuals and artists to regain autonomy from an autocratic regime seeking to control society and culture.”92 For Zubok, this new generation of thinkers represented continuity rather than a break from the past because their, “view of the uses of the mind and spirit rekindled the intelligentsia’s dream of a just and humane Russian society.”93

In terms of relating to Chernyaev and Arbatov, Zubok is insightful in explaining and corroborating many of their observations on how intellectuals coped with living under a repressive system badly in need of an overhaul. In fact, Zubok singles out Chernyaev as an outstanding example of a Soviet functionary who recognized the excesses and shortcomings of Soviet communism.94 Furthermore, Zubok explains that one common technique employed by intellectuals for surviving the tedium and stagnation of the 1970s was, “to live on without revolutionary ideals or big dreams, making small compromises, and carving out a niche for daily creative and spiritual activities….”95 Ironically, this is an apt description of Chernyaev’s time at the International Department; he kept his mouth shut, labored in the service of spreading international communism despite the futility of that exercise, and wrote his diary to vent his true feelings on Soviet society and his uninspiring life within it. According to Zubok, the era of stagnation was also marked by the rise and dissemination of jokes and satires that poked fun at

91 Ibid., 20, 16.
92 Ibid., 21, 356.
93 Ibid., 22.
94 Ibid., 158.
95 Ibid., 299.
the absurdities and incompetence of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{96} For Zubok, the problem with this coping mechanism was that intellectuals were engaged in escapism, a phenomenon duly noted by Chernyaev in the course of his observations.\textsuperscript{97} Additionally, Zubok explains that this escapism morphed into a detachment from society and a withdrawal from aspirations of reforming that society, a cynicism which Arbatov noted was particularly problematic when reforms were eventually proposed and put into place.\textsuperscript{98} For those intellectuals who wanted to remain a part of society but without abandoning their principles, Zubok reveals that during the 1970s Moscow became somewhat of a refuge for these people due to the pressures of détente to have the capital serve as an example of communism’s more refined side.\textsuperscript{99} Aside from the research institutes (such as Arbatov’s) mentioned by other authors, Zubok relates that, “Such oases could be found in various branches of the state propaganda and information services, including state television and radio, newspapers, and literary journals.”\textsuperscript{100} Furthermore, Zubok underscores the fact that, “The educational and cultural institutions, including big universities, the Sovremennik and Taganka theaters, literary journals and major newspapers, scientific institutes and labs, some museums and big libraries, also afforded Zhivago’s children a haven.”\textsuperscript{101} Commenting on the option of living a double life, Zubok again mentions Chernyaev as a sterling example of a government official who, while never losing his love of country and dutifully serving it every day, held onto beliefs and cultural pursuits that, “were remarkably close to those of artists and intellectuals in left-wing circles.”\textsuperscript{102} Even though they were apparatchiks of the Soviet government, both Chernyaev and Arbatov rightly belonged to the intelligentsia communities

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 319.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 320-321.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 321.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 322-323.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 323.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 325.
defined by Zubok and Shlapentokh, by dint of their educational background, love of the arts, critical appraisal of the Soviet Union, pursuit of free thought, and eventual efforts to remake the Soviet Union into a just and humane society.

A final point of note is that Zubok also places Gorbachev firmly within his conception of the Soviet intelligentsia. Expanding on Brown’s brief acknowledgement of Gorbachev’s interest in the arts, Zubok lays out Gorbachev’s extensive intellectual and cultural interests. Gorbachev’s reading list evinced a high intellect and an appreciation for scholarship from all parts of Europe. Gorbachev read the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre and François Mitterrand from France, Martin Heidegger, Herbert Marcuse, and Willy Brandt of Germany, and the Italians Antonio Gramsci and Giuseppe Boffa. Furthermore, Gorbachev and his wife mimicked Chernyaev in their consumption of the fine arts available to them in Moscow: “The couple spent every Sunday in museums, methodically explored the city’s historical monuments, attended exhibitions and theaters.” Although ultimately lamenting the demise of the Soviet intelligentsia with the downfall of the Soviet Union and the ensuing turmoil, Zubok credits Chernyaev and Arbatov’s intellectual fraternity with successfully transforming the USSR from a place where Stalin reigned through mass terror to a nation where the reforms of Gorbachev could be introduced in peace.

103 Ibid., 336.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid., 361.
CONCLUSION

Thus, the lives of Anatoly Chernyaev and Georgi Arbatov are integral chapters in the history of the Cold War. Both men have much to offer in terms of expanding, nuancing, and enhancing comprehension of the Cold War’s final two decades. Although Chernyaev and Arbatov’s exploits with Mikhail Gorbachev from 1985 onward in matters of foreign policy, arms control negotiations, and the end of the Cold War have been acknowledged, their contributions to a larger period of Cold War history are just beginning to be unlocked. In particular, the lives of Chernyaev and Arbatov demonstrate how willing reformers were already established within the Soviet government prior to the breakthrough arrival of Gorbachev on the Soviet political scene.

All events have their antecedents and origins one way or another in preceding events which condition, shape, and in many cases, cause what happens later. The apparent “miracle” of Gorbachev’s rise to power and subsequent attempts to improve and strengthen the Soviet Union through perestroika, glasnost, and a less belligerent attitude to the outside world was not a fluke occurrence. As revealed by the writings of Chernyaev and Arbatov, they recognized fifteen years before the world had ever heard of Gorbachev that the Soviet Union was spinning out of control in a downward spiral of self-destruction. In addition to their efforts that caused the downfall of the Soviet Union to be greeted with thunderous applause instead of the thunder of nuclear holocaust, Chernyaev and Arbatov provided a lens into the Soviet world of the 1970s with their writings. More importantly, both men keenly recognized the sorry state of the Soviet Union and documented their observations in a diary and autobiography that would become invaluable sources to understanding the failings of communism, the bankruptcy of the Soviet state, and the conditions that would in time enable Gorbachev and his team of earnest reformers
to attempt to save the Soviet Union, only to have it quietly crumble beneath their feet in a cloud of non-radioactive dust.

As a private citizen, Chernyaev was discontent and depressed by the life that communism had provided him. He lived in a veritable police-state defined by contradiction, inefficiency, and incompetence. Chernyaev perceived a deep spiritual crisis on the part of the Soviet people, who turned to escapism, the Russian Revolution, and the Great Patriotic War to find a modicum of relief and inspiration. From his position within the International Department, Chernyaev witnessed the stagnation and bankruptcy of communist ideology firsthand. Tasked with facilitating the spread of communism throughout the world, Chernyaev was dismayed at every turn how everyone from the communists of Western Europe to the revolutionaries of the Third World were rejecting Soviet leadership of international communism and demanding their own version and interpretation of Marxism. Not only had Marxist-Leninism lost its sheen and international appeal, communist countries such as the People’s Republic of China accused the Soviet Union of betraying the radical nature of communism by not remaining revolutionary enough and were openly belligerent towards the Soviet Union. These developments, coupled with the idiocy and feeblemindedness of those ostensibly in charge of leading the Soviet Union and the rampant waste and inefficiency of the Soviet economy, drove Chernyaev to despair and second-guess the Soviet interpretation and implantation of Marxist-Leninism. Surrounded by these demoralizing environs and doomed to toil in futility for the rest of his life in the service of a system that was clearly broken, Chernyaev could only immerse himself in the arts at every opportunity, his one avenue of enjoyment and sole means inspiration during the stagnation of the 1970s.
In many respects, Arbatov’s appraisal of the 1970s not only mirrored Chernyaev’s observations, but also expanded upon them and offered different critiques of the Soviet system. Like Chernyaev, Arbatov had become painfully aware of the fact that Soviet ideology was deeply flawed and had lost credibility across all sections of Soviet society. Moreover, that ideology and the Communist Party had led to the socio-economic stratification of a supposedly classless Soviet state with the rise of a political elite and an ever-expanding and irresponsible bureaucracy. Drawing upon his experience in foreign relations, Arbatov was in agreement with Chernyaev in acknowledging Soviet devotion to the cause of international communism as a serious impediment to Soviet foreign policy, including the preservation of détente with the United States. Even more disturbingly, Arbatov explained that this inordinate obsession with spreading communism abroad only helped to fuel and preserve the Soviet Union’s own version of a military-industrial-complex that was a great detriment to Soviet foreign policy, wasted irreplaceable resources on unnecessary weapons, and was in danger of provoking armed confrontation with the United States. Working within his Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada, Arbatov attempted stave off disaster and meet his own inner yearning for creativity through the promotion of scholarship which sought ever so subtly to subvert narrow-minded communist dogma with the introduction of rationality and an openness to dialogue as new components of Soviet foreign policy, thus laying the groundwork for future, earth-changing arms reduction summits with the United States.

Although both Chernyaev and Arbatov were Soviet functionaries who belonged to the communist system of stagnation and oppression, they rightly deserve to be included among the intellectual dissidents such as Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, Havel, and all the writers, actors, artists, and students of the Eastern bloc because Chernyaev and Arbatov also were creative people who,
because of their perceptive observations on the deplorable condition of the Soviet Union and in their search for spiritual renewal and creative fulfillment, worked within the Soviet system to make dissention from the streets of Eastern Europe ultimately possible and successful in laying low the Soviet goliath. Moreover, they collaborated with the artistic dissidents in constructing a surrogate sphere of public discourse through the fine arts that allowed for the transmission of ideas about the state of Soviet society and the need for reform. While very much indeed remains yet to be written on the inner workings of the Soviet Union in the 1970s, the records and legacy left by Chernyaev and Arbatov represent an initial first step towards a greater understanding of the evolutionary factors which culminated with the appearance of Gorbachev, his cohort of sensible reformers, and one of the most surprising and unexpected events in history, the peaceful end to the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union.
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