1996-06

The puzzles of 'patriotic' communism: Gennadi Zyuganov, the Russian Milosevíc?

Yanov, Alexander

Boston University Center for the Study of Conflict, Ideology, and Policy

http://hdl.handle.net/2144/22590

Boston University
The Puzzles of Patriotic Communism: Gennadi Zyuganov, the Russian Milosevic?

By Alexander Yanov

Recently, the editors of The Economist posed a question which is asked now with increasing frequency in anticipation of Russia's crucial presidential elections. Will the Yeltsin reforms "be reversed or merely muddled and slowed?" (1) Their reasoning is pragmatic and seems persuasive. Economic changes in Russia, they conclude, are "fundamentally irreversible" because "powerful economic interests are unwilling to lose their current advantage to raging inflation and price control...." No wonder they sound optimistic: "If Russia's key reforms are merely slowed and tinkered with, rather than reversed, the country could still hope for a reasonably stable, outward looking market economy, rather like Poland's." The Economist, therefore, counsels that "the only policy [for the West] is patience." (2)

The fatal flaw in this analysis is that the alternatives which constitute its foundation by no means exhaust Russia's options. In fact, the major alternatives dividing the ideologues of Moscow's opposition (which calls itself "irreconcilable") have less in common with Poland's than with those faced by Franjo Tudjman in Zagreb and Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade when the Serbian mini-empire known as Yugoslavia crumbled. They choose not between market and non-market economies, but between ethnic and imperial nationalism. Both Vladimir Zhirinovsky's triumph in 1993 and the "patriotic" communists' victory in 1995 indicate that the Milosevic alternative, i.e., imperial nationalism, is winning.
Further, the many Western observers who subscribe to the thinking which dictates *The Economist*'s conclusion miss the *political dimension* of Russia’s upheaval: The battered post-August 1991 regime, the disheveled but still pro-Western proto-democracy, is nearing the end of its rope.

To be sure, the future does not look threatening if we agree with some analysts that Russia is "irrelevant" or if all we want from Russia is that it join the club of market economies rather than the community of democratic nations. But shouldn't we keep in mind that both pre-war Japan and Weimar Germany had market economies which proved insufficient to prevent Pearl Harbor and the Holocaust?

If we follow *The Economist*'s recommendations, the chances that Russia would proceed along the "Polish path" are, in fact, negligible whether or not its masters muddle through with economic reform. After all, Russia is not Poland. For many decades, it has been a powerful contender for world domination, a superpower, the center of an enormous empire of which Poland itself was just a minuscule and distant periphery.

"Patience" can hardly help us fight the imperial mentality of Russia's irreconcilable opposition. Before we start asking "who lost Russia?," we should take a closer look at one of the factions of the opposition, the "patriotic" communists, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) led by Gennadi Zyuganov, Yel'tsin's most formidable rival for the presidency.

Certainly, the return of communists to power is no longer big news in the former Soviet empire. Even so, the Zyuganov phenomenon seems different for at least three reasons. The first is obvious: It represents the "Reds" attempt to dominate not just the periphery of the former empire but the imperial center itself (which happens to be a nuclear superpower). Second, unlike, say, Aleksander Kwasniewski in Poland, Zyuganov is not just a former communist; his party is not
even trying to hide its true "patriotic" colors, nor is it claiming that it has reformed itself. Third, unlike all other returning communists, Zyuganov's party belongs not to the liberal pro-Western wing of its alma mater but to its nationalist, openly anti-Western extreme.

The End of the United Right Front
We can identify the point when the idea of the communists coming back to power started to trouble the minds of the Moscow public: The "Reds" spent all of 1992 in the ranks of the "patriotic" opposition fighting the post-August 1991 regime alongside the nationalist "Whites" and the fascist "Browns." (3) The communists started to desert the "patriotic" fraternity only after the unexpected defeat of this opposition in the April 1993 referendum.

A string of victories in local elections during the Summer of that year, and the formation of the so-called "red belt" to the South and West of Moscow, must have convinced them for the first time that going it alone had its benefits. Still, it was the rout of the "patriotic" armed rebellion in October 1993 that caused the communists finally to cut the umbilical cord tying them to the original "Red-White" womb. The guns of October must have sounded to them like the funeral knell of the joint "patriotic" enterprise.

It was at this point that Zyuganov and Aleksandr Sterligov, the two "patriotic" leaders whom the collapse of the empire and the Party had suddenly made stars of the first magnitude, split irrevocably. It did not, however, happen overnight. In February 1992 Zyuganov, then just one of many retired Party bureaucrats, considered himself lucky to be invited by Sterligov, the former KGB general, to serve as co-chair of his ultra-"patriotic" Russian National Assembly-Sobor (RNS) which claimed "a major national achievement: the strategic union of the Reds and the Whites." (4) Moreover, while their honeymoon lasted, Zyuganov fully shared Sterligov's vision of this alleged "national achievement." As he wrote at
the time, "Our united opposition is the only way for both the Reds and the Whites to prevent a final Russian tragedy fraught with a universal apocalypse." (5)

By the Fall of 1992, however, Sterligov's dictatorial ambitions had visibly alienated Zyuganov although even then he did not break with the "patriots." Instead, he simply crossed the street, as it were, to join the competing "patriotic" crowd of the National Salvation Front (FNS). It took the October debacle of the following year to force him to abandon the idea of a united Right front. Coinciding as it did with Vladimir Zhirinovsky's triumph in the parliamentary elections (which scared the moderate electorate out of its wits), Zyuganov's split with the "patriots" has, for the first time, put the communists back into the forefront of Russian politics--as a seemingly moderate alternative to the wounded post-August 1991 regime.

Why should the most distinguished leader of the Russian Left stubbornly cling to the Right fraternity for so long? We will come to that later. For now let's only note that his move to the Left proved immensely beneficial for Zyuganov while Sterligov's "patriotic" star continued to decline. By the time of the Third Congress of Zyuganov's communists in January 1995, many Moscow liberals were more afraid of him than of Sterligov and Zhirinovsky taken together.

"Is fascism the No. 1 enemy today?" asked the liberal Kuranty in January 1995. The answer was, of course, no. "Fascism is a ghost that might or might not materialize while the communists are really on the offensive." Two months later, Vladlen Liulechnik, a Russian analyst, confirmed the verdict: "A communist victory not just in the parliamentary, but in the presidential elections as well, is no longer a utopia, it's real." (6) To put it differently, if two winters ago Sterligov and Zyuganov were perceived in Russia as ideological twins, nowadays analysts tend to consider them polar opposites. However, is it correct to assume that by quitting as comrades-in-arms they also cease to be comrades-in-thought? Unfortunately, this crucial question has never been asked in Moscow.
Two Points of View

As might have been expected, the prospect of communist restoration has divided Russia. Yet, the lines of the divide are exceedingly peculiar. The politicians who rode the crest of the 1989-1991 anti-communist wave are shouting bloody murder. Yegor Gaidar acknowledges in Izvestia that Russian capitalism has come out "disgusting and terrifying, light-fingered and socially unjust." Still, the return of the communists would, in his view, makes things immeasurably worse. "As can be assumed, coming back to power, they would start to nationalize property acquired, from their standpoint, illegally.... Violent redistribution of property is always a revolution. A revolution is always blood." (7)

On the other hand, many voters are so tired of the antics of the "light-fingered" capitalists that they may well be ready to repent their 1989-1991 anti-communist "wildness." Moreover, a good part of the intelligentsia tries to justify this new tide of anti-anti-communism by looking at their neighbors. Nothing terrible happened, they proclaim, either in Lithuania or in Poland where reformed communists returned to the helm--no redistribution of property, no blood, no revolution. The chaos and disorder still plaguing Russia seems to have ebbed there. So, why not try it in Moscow as well?

This mood is becoming so pervasive that even the skeptical Izvestia intones, "Zyuganov's communists are drifting irretrievably toward a peculiar kind of social democracy, albeit of an imperial orientation." (8) The response of Yelena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov's widow and herself an old hand in Russian politics, to the question of an alternative to Yel'tsin is even more stunning: "Sure there is an alternative," she said, "From my point of view, it is Zyuganov." (9) Of course, she names others as well. Yet, the fact that he was the first on her list speaks for itself.
All this may look less startling if we take into account the virtuosity of Zyuganov's handlers. They work hard, attempting to bury not just their client's recent connection to "patriots" like Sterligov, but his own "patriotic" past. They sell him as a devout parliamentarian and a responsible statesman, a bit on the Left, to be sure, but still respectably within the mainstream of the post-August 1991 reality.

Naturally their spin is enhanced by the mockery of bewildered liberal papers like Moskovskii Komsomolets which poked fun at Zyuganov's "deviations from Leninist orthodoxy." The furious anti-Zyuganov rhetoric of communist diehards also contributes to his moderate image. More surprisingly, Western policy makers seem to have embraced the spin as well. A meeting that took place on May 9, 1995 constitutes a powerful example: During his visit to Moscow, President Bill Clinton invited Zyuganov for a chat--along with Russian reformers. To be sure, no "patriots" were present--neither Zhirinovsky nor Sterligov, not even Yuri Skokov or Aleksandr Lebed'.

The bait intended originally for internal consumption has been swallowed, one may say, globally. Zyuganov's image makers succeeded in selling their client as a moderate. His "patriotic" past seems to be buried safely, anointed with an aura of political respectability by no less a principal in international affairs than the US president.

Of course, what was buried can be exhumed. There is such a thing as history that specializes in unraveling "spin" no matter how popular it might be or by whose authority it is blessed. It seems that a touch of history is in order here. Without it, there would be little use in asserting in Moscow (or in Washington for that matter) that Zyuganov, his communist credentials notwithstanding, never had anything to do with Leninist orthodoxy. Or that he is much closer in his views to Sterligov or, for that matter, to Slobodan Milosevic than, say, to Leonid Brezhnev, let alone Karl Marx.
Zyuganov's party's article of faith, its motto, reads: "Russia, Labor, Power to the People, Socialism!" In open defiance of internationalist Leninist orthodoxy, Russia occupies the place of honor, while socialism obviously, one may say demonstratively, takes a back seat. Yet, it is only on this, the last of the four points of the new communist party's slogan, that Sterligov or Milosevic will disagree with Zyuganov. On all the others they are in full agreement.

**The Limits of Political Metamorphoses**

Naturally, the image makers will tell you that history has nothing to do with their client's current convictions. People change. In revolutionary times, they often change beyond recognition. Today nobody in Moscow, where political metamorphoses are the rule rather than an exception, would dare to question that. Take the same Mikhail Gorbachev or Aleksandr Yakovlev or Nikolai Ryzhkov, all of them former members of the ruling Politburo. Take Viktor Chernomyrdin or Arkady Volsky, former members of the Central Committee. I won't even start on Yel'tsin. None of these gentlemen is even a communist anymore. So why couldn't Zyuganov change as well?

There are, however, limits to such change. Someone for whom, say, slavery had always been a part of the natural order would find it daunting to become an abolitionist. Nor can a man for whom democracy is sacred turn into a dictator. It's for this simple reason that Jefferson Davis could not under any circumstances, however revolutionary, turn into an Abraham Lincoln or Aleksandr Kerensky into a Lenin. For that matter, even within one and the same party, a Bob Dole will never transform himself into a Patrick Buchanan. To envision the magnitude of change that a politician can possibly undergo, we must first take these limits into account.

I have some experience with this exercise. Mikhail Gorbachev has been in my field of interest since 1976. Then a regional Party secretary, he boldly went against the current by introducing radical agricultural reform at a time when
similar attempts had been crushed elsewhere. When he was made a member of the Politburo in 1980, I concluded one of my books by asking if it was possible that this fellow was destined to be the new Russian Reformer? (10)

In the Summer of 1990, I was asked by the Moscow daily Sobesednik whether president Gorbachev could, for the sake of saving a great empire, become a dictator. My answer was "no way." (11) I refer to these guesses, which happened to be right on the money, not to boast of some special gift for prognostication but to demonstrate how certain we can be that even the most dramatic changes in political careers are circumscribed by the past. It is to clarify the limits of Zyuganov's possible change that we now turn to the years of imperial twilight, when his convictions were molded--if only to provide some historical perspective to what might otherwise seem a merely psychological analysis.

Under the Same Roof
The now deceased Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) had called itself proudly an organization of co-thinkers. By now it is common knowledge that at least since Stalin's death in 1953 it was anything but that. In reality, it was comprised of a number of proto-parties based not merely on different but antagonistic political orientations and historical traditions.

There was among them, for example, the party of socialism with a human face, the alma mater of both Gorbachev and Yakovlev. Socialism's roots extended not only to the 1956 de-Stalinization and the Prague Spring but much deeper in the Russian political psyche--descending, in fact, to the very dawn of the Muscovite statehood, the times of reform and liberalization under Ivan III. Belonging to the party of socialism did not mean, of course, that its members would not change. However, the range, the paradigm of the change, was circumscribed by their past. Gorbachev found himself eventually a social-democrat of the old Marxist mold; while Yakovlev's transformation went much deeper, he emerged a modern, i.e., a non-Marxist social-democrat.
Chernomyrdin and Ryzhkov graduated from the technocratic party of the CPSU. They also wanted to reform the decaying empire. What troubled them, however, was not so much the absence of freedom as the country's constantly growing backwardness. For this reason, the technocrats preferred a perestroika based not so much on liberalizing the system as on borrowing from the West the fruits of its microchip revolution. The spirit of this party first manifested itself during the reign of Peter I. Among the technocrats there is also a range of political metamorphoses; from Chernomyrdin who fully accepted the post-August 1991 reality to Ryzhkov who is ready even for an alliance with the "patriots" to turn perestroika back to its pre-August technological beginnings.

Naturally, both of these parties were working for reform. The perestroika each envisaged was pro-Western, oriented toward Russia entering the global market. To their misfortune, both confronted the dominant and thoroughly corrupted Brezhnevist "Marsh" (12) whose power base lay outside Moscow. Power resided with the regional bosses, the real overlords of the land, who were concerned not so much with the world market or the microchip revolution, as with the preservation of their own status and authority.

The "Marsh" was the only one of the post-Stalin proto-parties whose perestroika had already been accomplished in 1964 when, under the guise of ousting the troublemaker Nikita Khrushchev, they outwitted the technocrats and seized controlling interest in the company called the Central Committee of the CPSU. The platform of their coup included a return to the Leninist principles of "party democracy," which seemed the only way to prevent the emergence of another murderous despot like Stalin while preserving the Party's political monopoly. Their "Leninism" was thus reduced to a single formula: The ultimate power in the Party must belong to its "parliament," i.e., the Central Committee. As long as regional bosses constituted the voting majority in that quasi-parliament, their dominance in the big Party was undisputed.
Although the "Marsh" was not above borrowing technology from abroad (that's the real reason they engineered a detente with the West), they nevertheless saw a threat in any radical reform, let alone a pro-Western one. They wanted instead to somehow adapt these permanently changing technologies to an ossified imperial body. That was why, in the last analysis, detente was dead on arrival: By the time they adapted to today's technologies they were yesterday's news.

Like the pro-Western parties, the "Marsh" was deeply rooted in Russia's political tradition. One may say that the first Brezhnev in its history was Peter I's father, the tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich. They do not have a conservative political vision, they just stand pat. Of course their continuing dominance would have doomed Russia to permanent backwardness.

Thus the split within the CPSU went exactly along the tectonic lines that divided Russian elites throughout the centuries.

Still the inventory cannot be complete without mentioning the party which dominated Russia's political landscape so often, the party of imperial anti-Westernism, the "patriotic" fundamentalists as it were (or, as some of them call themselves now, conservative revolutionaries). After Stalin's death they remained in a state of deep shock. The blow they suffered at Khrushchev's hands was so powerful that it took them over a decade to start planning a comeback. It was only by the end of the 1960s that they were able to present the world with an elaborate program of a conservative restoration (or "patriotic" perestroika, if you will).

By then, however, the world did not feel like sorting out such nuances in Russian politics. In the midst of the cold war all communists looked the same color. It was only to those rare observers who had a vision of Russia beyond communism that these shades of red mattered. Those observers insisted that distinctions within
the CPSU were not only significant and may one day be of overwhelming importance, but also that the most essential of them was precisely the line distinguishing the "patriots" from all others. The historical tradition behind the "patriots" was more potent and by far more dangerous than the one behind the Kremlin policy makers of the time.

According to this "patriotic" tradition, Russia is not just one of the great European nations but a separate civilization, the "Third Rome," the sole guardian of the true, unspoiled, orthodox faith in the world. The mission it inherited from its Eastern Roman ancestors is to stand up to Western heretics and impostors. Ivan the Terrible was the first tsar to attempt an implementation of this "Russian idea" in his imperial policy. Nicholas I with his "Official Nationality" and Stalin with his "Socialism in One Country" were the most distinguished modern exponents of this ancient myth.

In other words, we were dealing here with the most irreconcilably anti-Western faction of all those within the CPSU. Given that by the 1970s Russia was a nuclear superpower, the potential damage that a "patriotic" perestroika in Moscow could have caused the world seemed immeasurably greater than anything of which the decrepit ruling "Marsh" was capable. For this was the party determined to turn Russia into a nation of West-haters. Zyuganov's and Sterligov's character and convictions were shaped in this "patriotic" milieu.

**What the "Patriots" Stand For**

Each of the proto-parties within the CPSU sought to identify the primary evil eating away at the foundations of the empire. For the technocrats, it was the empire's technological incapacity; for potential social-democrats, its inherent hostility to a human face. Even the "Marsh" had its favored evil--corruption. But when the "patriots" joined in the search for original sin they, as befits revolutionaries, however conservative, pointed to Leninist orthodoxy itself--the very core of the "Marsh's" power--or more precisely, to what they considered its
anti-Russian "internationalism" borrowed from the West and rooted in Marx's Jewish philosophy.

From the "patriots" perspective, the materialism and spiritual destitution of the Brezhnevist "Marsh" had indeed driven Russia into a dead end, but Leninist "internationalism" was killing the nation. It had forced the rulers to abandon the traditional Russia-first policy in favor of pursuing a phantom "internationalist" cause around the world. It imposed on Russia a false obligation to fight Western capitalism while completely overlooking the mortal danger of the "Americanization of the spirit." (13) This was the real evil invading the nation, the minds of its rulers included, turning it into a poor relation, not to say an unfortunate clone of the West, instead of standing up to it as an equal and determined rival.

In fact, the historical predestination of Russia, the "patriots" believe, is to serve as a great spiritual alternative to this soulless cosmopolitan "Americanization." No wonder the latter dominates the world: The real alternative which could come only from Russia is missing. "We have to, we must!, create our own international community. We will unite in it with Asia which is inseparably linked to us both historically and geographically and with the countries of the Third World." Let Russia be Russia!--such was the motto proclaimed by the "patriots" in the late 1960s. This motif still permeates the program of Zyuganov's communists. "We must live as one can live only in Russia, disregarding the utopian recipes [of Leninism] and foreign ways of life." (14)

If the real disease ruining the empire is Leninist internationalism, the cure is obvious. It is a "patriotic" perestroika capable of freeing the country from the twofold plague: "Western cosmopolitanism and communist internationalism." (15)

Two Perestroikas?
In other words, the real controversy in post-Soviet countries is not at all about communists coming back to power. It is about which communists are coming back to power.

In Warsaw, for instance, these communists were the Polish counterparts of Gorbachev and Yakovlev, i.e., the former champions of socialism with a human face. In Belgrade, they were the graduates of the "patriotic" school, i.e., the Serbian counterparts of Zyuganov and Sterligov. Consequently, these differences between communist schools of thought yield highly dissimilar political outcomes. In one case we see the usual political squabbles characteristic of an emerging democracy, in the other, ethnic cleansing and war.

In fact, there is very little in President Milosevic's "Greater Serbia" scenario which Zyuganov would dispute: the same renunciation of Leninist orthodoxy, sacrificed in favor of a similar "National Idea"; the same imperial dream as a result. To be sure, the Russian "patriotic" communists would add to this mix a good deal of ferocious anti-Westernism. After all, unlike their Serbian counterparts, they represent a superpower that for decades contended for world leadership with the West. But that's about all they would add.

There can hardly be any doubt that what Mr. Milosevic managed to accomplish in Belgrade since 1987 was an authentic "patriotic" perestroika. It did not just materialize out of thin air; the idea of a conservative revolution must have been present in the Serbian "patriotic" milieu for years during the twilight of Tito's Yugoslavia, just as it was in Moscow during the twilight of the Brezhnevist empire. They are different only in that the Serbian "patriots" have succeeded in turning their imperial dream into political reality while their Russian brethren have not.

It seems sufficiently clear that there were in the works in Moscow not one, liberal, perestroika, as we have grown accustomed to thinking, but two. In which case,
the presence of the second option, a "patriotic" revolution analogous to the Serbian, suggests that we were balancing at the edge of a precipice without ever suspecting it.

**The Strange Death of the Soviet Empire**

A book under this title was published in 1995 by David Price-Jones, a British journalist who was intrigued by the bloodless collapse of the Soviet empire. (16) Why indeed was it so different from the demise of the tsarist empire in 1917 which was accompanied by a brutal civil war? The author interviewed a number of officials of the former Soviet Union but did not, it seems, come up with any definite answer. Small wonder; he did not even suspect the crucial split within the CPSU and thus made no distinction among its constituent parties.

It seems as if most of his interlocutors belonged to the party of socialism with a human face. They were naturally leaning toward a correct, albeit trivial answer that there just were not many people in the country ready to die for the communist idea--so hopelessly and so irretrievably compromised in the eyes of the masses. The answer of the "patriotic" communists would have been very different. In the first place, they would point out that if communism had indeed been so hopelessly compromised, one would be hard pressed to explain why the same masses are returning to it once again only a few years later. And not just in Lithuania, Hungary or Poland, but in Russia as well. Most importantly, though, they would enlighten Mr. Price-Jones: What was really compromised was not communism but its anti-Russian internationalist incarnation.

The true picture, according to them, would be that in 1917, patriotic Russia resisted a foreign internationalist creed being imposed on it, hence the civil war. In contrast, in 1991, the unanimous outburst of anti-communist passions was in reality a national rebellion against this alien creed, hence the bloodless collapse of Soviet communism. There is nothing strange about that; it died in Russia in 1991 from the same Leninist evil it imposed on the nation in 1917, they claim.
Still, even if we accept this "patriotic" logic, it begs more questions than it answers. Where, for instance, were the "patriotic" communists at the time of this national rebellion? Why did they allow the liberals to turn a popular revolt against alien orthodoxy into an anti-communist storm that swept them away along with the Leninists? How is it possible that the "patriots" happened to be the victims of this allegedly "patriotic" uprising?

In fact, new puzzles spring to mind the moment we accept their logic. On the other hand, we cannot simply dismiss it either. After all, it explains what the liberals cannot, namely, why so many Russians are turning to the "patriotic" communists so soon after an anti-communist storm of such magnitude.

**Political Leapfrog**

It seems appropriate to start with the first manifestation of the "patriotic" creed which appeared as early as April 1968 in a series of thundering essays in one of the most popular journals, *Molodaya gvardia* (The Young Guard) and openly challenged the entire political and ideological course of the Brezhnevist "Marsh."

I lived in Moscow at the time and I can testify to the breathtaking effect of this "patriotic" outburst. Its most enigmatic aspect was the fact that the regime appeared so obviously unable to put an end to such an effrontery—for years.

Twenty-seven months passed before the journal *Kommunist*, the mouthpiece of the ruling Politburo, found the courage to stand up to "Young Guardism," as this phenomenon of openly anti-Leninist propaganda had been dubbed in a land where Leninism was the official ideology. (17) Yet, even the verdict of the seemingly omnipotent Kommunist did not put an end to the spread of "Young Guardism." Instead, it started a kind of a political leapfrog previously unheard of in Moscow. The "patriots" retreated for a while but only to go on the offensive again. Moreover, a number of other publications joined the fray on the side of the rebels. (18) The regime's puzzling indecision was all the more striking because at stake was its holy of holies—the political monopoly of the Politburo as well as its
sacred Leninism. Somebody was obviously tying its hands; but who could that somebody possibly have been?

In defiance of all logic, the regime’s indecision evaporated as soon as the liberal opponents of the "patriots" raised their voices in defense of Leninism. All such attempts were punished immediately and mercilessly. The first victims of this paradox were members of the editorial board of the journal Novyi mir, for years the flagship of the party of socialism with a human face. In April 1969, it published a lengthy piece against Young Guardism based on impregnably Leninist principles. (19) Before the end of the year, the editor-in-chief of Novyi mir was fired and the editorial board dismissed.

An even more bizarre occurrence shocked the Moscow public 37 months later. The acting chief of propaganda of the Central Committee, Aleksandr N. Yakovlev, published an uncompromising diatribe in Literaturnaya gazeta against these "patriotic" antics. (20) Once again the anti-"patriotic" message was based on thoroughly Leninist principles and once again the messenger was punished.

By no means should this be construed to indicate that the regime had grown soft. If it gave the establishment liberals short-shrift, its reprisals against the dissidents were as savage as ever—even though the only thing the dissidents demanded was for the regime to respect its own constitution, and all that the establishment liberals did was defend the regime's own ideology.

I could have only guessed in the 1970s about the nature and logistics of these mysterious events. It so happened that those guesses were documented at the time. Here are the most important of them:

- The leapfrog of 1968-1973 was a "declaration of war between canonical Marxism and the establishment Right [as I called the "patriotic" party
within the CPSU at the time]--a fight to the death whose finale is still far from clear." (21)

- The focus of this war was the West with which the regime wanted detente and which the "patriots" hated. The rulers, they said, are "engaged in flirtation with America. They think that their ICBMs will defend them from the mortal threat radiating from that country. They will not for the real threat is not American missiles, but 'American spirit.'" In reality, "the Americanization of the spirit can be combated only by its Russification." (22)

- The Young Guards' "struggle against liberal 'cosmopolitanism' was inherently related to its struggle against the official Brezhnevist 'internationalism.'" (23)

- "Young Guardism essentially proposed a replacement of the pseudo-Soviet, in its view, Brezhnevist regime by a genuinely Russian one via a revolution from above," i.e., through what we would call now a perestroika. (24)

- "Clearly, very powerful forces on high were concerned not to let the editorial board of Molodaya gvardia go under (the way the editorial board of Novyi mir did) and to assure that the establishment Right retained its forces intact for better times.... What for? Only the future can answer that." (25)

**Beyond Guesses?**
The future did provide answers. If we read Sterligov's writings today or talk to Zyuganov, we'll see how distressingly accurate those guesses were. Yes, the "patriotic" party within the CPSU existed at least since the late 1960s and it indeed despised the ruling "Marsh." These days Zyuganov calls his former
bosses "Brezhnev and Co." (26) and describes them as "enfeebled." (27) Sterligov, the KGB general, even complains how unjustly the "patriots" were treated by those decrepit rulers. (28) What the Young Guards were spelling out a quarter-century ago is being fully confirmed today in the speeches of their former sponsors. Yes, they hated everything "Brezhnev and Co." stood for--their "flaccidity and torpor," (29) their materialistic "gastric pleasures," (30) and above all, their treasonous flirting with the West.

We can still hear the Young Guards' fervor in Zyuganov's voice when he speaks of the West which cannot, in his view, live on the same planet with Russia, a "great and unified power, the pivot of geopolitical Eurasian expanse." (31) That's why "the struggle against Russia has become the priority of Western policy." (32) For this reason, as he assures his voters, the West set out "to destroy Russia's statehood and culture and to impose upon it a lifestyle alien to it." (33)

Everything seems to fall in place, except for one thing. It is impossible to imagine that mid-level apparatchiki like Zyuganov or Sterligov, however influential they might have been, were able by themselves to shield the abusers of Leninism in an officially Leninist empire. Even in the highly improbable case that they were willing to risk their careers and, in fact, their entire livelihood, who would ever authorize them to make political decisions of such magnitude? Someone much more important was needed for this, someone "so powerful that even Brezhnev himself did not find it worthwhile to quarrel with him," as I wrote at the time. (34) In other words, the sponsors of the Young Guards needed a sponsor themselves. That supreme protector must have been in a position to punish all their opponents, even those as high-ranking as Aleksandr Yakovlev.

But why would this mysterious protector of the "patriots" nurse such an anti-Leninist crowd? What would he want to achieve by that? Supreme power? No doubt. It is easy to guess that he aimed at replacing Brezhnev. Still, this could not
have been the reason for nurturing a party of conservative revolutionaries irreconcilably hostile to the ruling regime and its ideology.

What then? The only reason for such extraordinary behavior one can think of seems to be his extreme anxiety about the fate of the decaying empire.

Certainly this was a man who was much better informed about the sorry state of his nation than his colleagues and was worried sick about its future. This must have been a first-rate strategist untouched by Brezhnevist corruption, a man who saw in the "patriotic" alternative to the exhausted Leninist orthodoxy the only way to revitalize the empire. In other words, we are talking about a Russian Milosevic.

Yet, what do we know even today about this man who for a quarter-century held the keys to Russia's, if not the world's, future? If we still have no idea of who he might have been, then we are not beyond guesses. On the contrary, the time for guessing is upon us.

**The Main Question**
Who on the Soviet Olympus could have possibly been in a position to challenge Brezhnev? Judging from everything we now know of the balance of power in the fading Soviet empire, there seem to be only three figures of such caliber: Mikhail Suslov, Dmitry Ustinov and Yuri Andropov.

The first, however, was a Marxist dogmatist, the ideologue of the "Marsh," and was apparently quite satisfied with being the regime's grey eminence. Ustinov, on the other hand, was a military technocrat without much political ambition and far from any ideological intricacies. To see him in the role of radical revisionist of Leninism is rather beyond the imagination. This leaves us with the man who indeed replaced Brezhnev after his death, the most mysterious of the Kremlin Olympians, a Soviet Talleyrand as it were, a man whose real intentions nobody knew. Even Gorbachev, apparently the closest to him, confesses now: "I can't
say that he was fully open with me or shared what was on his mind. Into some corners of his soul I wasn't allowed." (35) Could it be then that the mysterious sponsor of "patriotic" communism was Andropov?

At first glance it does not fit the myths that abound about this man, and we have, in fact, nothing to rely on except myths. Moreover, the few known facts seem to contradict this suggestion. Andropov's assistants in the Central Committee were mainly technocrats like Arkady Volsky. He promoted Gorbachev who eventually became the demiurge of the liberal perestroika. He liked jazz and was uncharacteristically well-read. Finally, although Soviet dissidents saw him as a butcher, in the West Andropov enjoyed a rather liberal reputation.

Of course, some wrote about him as a "gendarme in a dinner jacket, wearing white gloves, with a Jesuitic smile on his face." (36) And Eastern Europeans, especially the Hungarians and the Czechs whose yearning for socialism with a human face he personally crushed, still call him "a Gauleiter" and for them "terror is bound to his name forever." (37) Yet, to anyone in Russia who cares for the dear departed empire his name is still sacred. Being utterly contemptuous of the rest of "Brezhnev and Co.," both Zyuganov and Sterligov nevertheless adore Andropov. The latter even goes as far as to proclaim publicly that "under Andropov, we in the KGB were protecting the people." (38)

For all this, however, nobody, as far as I know, has ever related Andropov either to the Young Guard attack on Leninism in the 1970s or even to the Zyuganov-style "patriots." Nor has it been suggested that his unexpected death in the Orwellian year of 1984 saved the world from a "patriotic" perestroika in Russia and thus from another, still more perilous coil of superpower confrontation.

It is sufficient, however, to analyze briefly the political alternatives Andropov encountered in May 1982 when he finally made it to the Kremlin to see that a nationalist perestroika must have appeared to him (and quite correctly at that) as
the only means to save the empire, to the preservation of which he had devoted his life.

**The Alternatives**

One way to give the empire a second wind was to do what the Czech reformers and later Gorbachev were trying to accomplish, i.e., to turn the machine around--into socialism with a human face. Yet, even apart from the fact that this "human face" looked repulsive to Andropov (after all, he built his entire career on its suppression), it would have been simply counterproductive. The Hungarians in 1956, the Czechs in 1968, and the Poles in 1980 proved beyond doubt that any liberalization of socialism threatened destruction of the empire rather than its revitalization. Moreover, Moscow's seal of approval on any such debauchery would lead only to a domino effect throughout the Soviet Union--from the Baltics to Ukraine.

So liberalization was not an option. Like Winston Churchill, Andropov did not become the leader of the empire "to preside over its liquidation." Then maybe a swift technological breakthrough in the spirit of Peter I? This must have been a tempting dream, and Andropov perhaps did not part with it completely until the end of his days. That's why he kept promoting technocratic managers. Only unlike them, he was a pragmatist, not a dreamer. He could not help but see that their wish was doomed: The microchip revolution had left the empire too far behind the modern technological world to try to overtake it once again.

There was, of course, always a possibility to borrow (or steal) advanced technology from the West. But the lamentable experience of Brezhnev's detente had already proved that it was a dead end. So the Petrine example was not a real option either. What was possible at the stagnant dawn of the 18th century, long before the industrial revolution, did not have a chance at the impetuous end of the 20th.
Apart from these theoretical considerations, Andropov’s disillusionment with this option was clearly reflected in his foreign policy. He did not even try to win the trust of the Mecca on which the access to modern technology depended. The renewal of detente was out of the question, as was Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. On the contrary, he quite consistently antagonized the West. After all, it was during his brief reign that the Korean airliner was downed by Soviet fighters and SS-20s were deployed, putting Western Europe in the immediate range of a nuclear strike. It was then that President Ronald Reagan called the USSR "the evil empire."

What options remained if one indeed wanted to stop the inexorable imperial decline? To be sure, any alternative required that the imperial machine be cleaned thoroughly of the Brezhnevist rust that had accumulated for decades. A purge of the "Marsh" was in order. A new generation of efficient and uncorrupted mechanics had to be promoted. New managers were to be installed at all the key sectors of administration--from machine-building (Nikolai Ryzhkov) to agriculture (Mikhail Gorbachev). One could not find such mechanics either among the "patriots" or among the liberals. The only available source of efficient management was the Soviet technocratic elite. These were precisely the men whom Andropov consistently promoted. Some of them (like Yegor Ligachev) were rather conservative, others (like Grigory Romanov) had close ties to the "patriots," still others (like Geidar Aliev) were ideologically neutral expert technocrats. None was a prodigy or of special intellectual brilliance. Gorbachev was a star expert on agriculture, not a closet liberal. Still, they were the best the Party could offer in their respective fields.

The real trouble with the imperial machine, however, was not so much in the Brezhnevist rust Andropov's crew was supposed to clean, but rather that it ran out of gas. To get it moving again it needed more than just a few new mechanics, but ideological fuel which its empty Leninist tank no longer could provide. This resource had already been exhausted by Khrushchev in the 1960s. The only new
ideas able to inspire the Russians without destroying the empire were those of imperial nationalism (exactly the same as those which were used in the late 1980s by Slobodan Milosevic). But these resources were in the hands of the "patriots."

Their logic was simple and irresistible: A military empire cannot survive without an enemy--and a permanent confrontation. It just was not designed for peace. The sleepy Brezhnevist detente was killing it. Not only did the "patriots" have the right answer to imperial malaise: It was the only right answer.

After all, the only surviving Nazi geopolitical, Jean Tiriar, was addressing Andropov in the early 1980s in his treatise The Euro-Soviet Empire from Dublin to Vladivostok, destined to become the geopolitical textbook of modern Russian "patriots." These were Tiriar's central theses:

- "It is not war--it is peace that wears out the Soviet Union. In fact, it cannot exist under conditions of peace";

- "The Russian empire has inherited the determinism, the concerns, the risks and responsibility of the Third Reich, the destiny of Germany. From the geopolitical point of view, it is an heir to the Third Reich";

- Therefore, "there is nothing left for it but to achieve by moving from East to West what the Third Reich failed to accomplish by moving from West to East";

- "The masters of the Kremlin are faced with a historical choice. Geopolitics and geostrategy will force the USSR either to create a Soviet Europe or cease to exist as a great power." (39)
But if the "patriots" understood this, how could it be that Andropov, a natural born strategist, did not? And if he did understand it, then his choices were reduced to two: either to take the risk of a European war with a nationalist perestroika or to accept a slow, agonizing death for his beloved empire. Could there be any doubt as to what he had chosen?

If this analysis is correct, the main puzzle of "patriotic" communism seems to be solved. The nationalist perestroika, victorious a few years later in Serbia, had been defeated in Russia because in February 1984 the Russian "patriots" lost their Milosevic. Devastated by this loss, incapacitated and demoralized, they retreated to the margins of Soviet politics, clearing the way for a liberal perestroika.

**The Hypothesis**

As Alexander Herzen once put it, the place hypotheses occupy in history is miserable. Yet, he also rejected "the fatalism which sees in events their absolute inevitability; this is an abstract idea, a cloudy theory introduced from speculative philosophy into history and natural science. What has occurred, of course, had reason to occur, but this by no means signifies that all other combinations were impossible." (40) It is one of those possible "combinations" that concerns us here.

This exercise in reconstruction is particularly enlightening and humbling when we consider the question of why this particular murderous "combination" of an ultranationalist perestroika failed to materialize. Was it because of the vigilance of Western politicians? Because of "star wars," as conventional wisdom tells us? Because of the doubling of our military budget (with the consequences of which we shall struggle well into the next millennium)? No, the "combination" in question did not come about in 1984 because of dumb luck. Every Russian who saw the situation from within would testify that at the time a "patriotic" perestroika
looked much more likely to occur than a liberal one, which struck literally out of the blue. Suffice it to mention the massive Jewish exodus.

In fact, all the ingredients needed for a new confrontation with the West were in place. There was within the Central Committee and the KGB a strong "patriotic" party of which Zyuganov and Sterligov are living witnesses. There was the Young Guard ideological agenda for a nationalist perestroika (while there was none for a liberal version). Finally, there was a powerful leader capable of translating this agenda into action. These three essential ingredients made possible a "patriotic" perestroika in Serbia. Why would they not work in Russia?

Obviously the ingredients found each other as early as the late 1960s. If we compare the dates, Andropov obtained the key position of the KGB Chairman in May 1967. The Young Guard's ideological onslaught on Leninism started less than a year later.

What "combination" then awaited Russia--and the world--had Andropov not been struck down by a mortal disease less than a year after his coronation in the Kremlin? If fate, in other words, had granted him at least as many years as it granted Stalin, let alone Mao?

It is only in the light of this somber hypothesis that we begin to comprehend Aleksandr Yakovlev's insight comparing Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika to Martin Luther's Reformation of the 16th century. As the latter made democracy possible, the former did not allow it to cease in midstream. "Without the Reformation in the Soviet Union," said Yakovlev in his open letter to me, "mankind was doomed either to a nuclear war or to a complete exhaustion of democratic resources and values.... It was this Reformation that saved the world for democracy." (41) Let us not forget then that it became possible only due to Andropov's sudden exit from the world scene.
A Historical Experiment

While Mr. Yakovlev's paradigm manages to squeeze the entire history of democracy between the brackets of two great Reformations spread over four centuries, the more immediate result of the decade between 1985 and 1995 might be understood better if considered as a kind of historical experiment.

For generations, the states of the socialist universe lingered in their primitive orbits. In 1985 it was unclear how they could possibly get out of it, especially those with a deeply ingrained imperial mentality, the imperial nations as it were. For them, it inevitably would be a double gambit. For Russia, Serbia and China, the way to modernity, i.e., the surrender of total state control and a single-party monopoly, was bound to be accompanied not only with the invasion of unfamiliar private property, humiliating social inequality, inflation and government instability, but also with agonizing imperial nostalgia.

To be sure, we still do not know all the answers to the problems related to this dangerous historical experiment. China has not even joined the fray yet and the future of Russia remains clouded. Still, by the end of its first decade the main contours of the scenarios seem sufficiently clear. To begin with, we now know that there are two principal ways by which imperial nations of the former socialist universe part with their past.

Both can be called "perestroika." Still at the heart of the first of these ways, the liberal route, is the surrender of the military empire while the second, the "patriotic" road, is oriented toward its preservation (or regeneration). Although Russia, as it now appears, was within a hairbreadth of the latter, it has still chosen the former. Serbia followed the "patriotic" path.

The sufferings brought by each of these transition are heartbreaking. But the first case involves mainly economic deprivation and social disruption, the explosion of crime, corruption and chaos. The second one involves war.
Andropov Reborn?

Notably, China still has not made its choice between these two routes to modernity. While trying to insinuate itself into the mainstream of the microchip revolution, it still retains all the trappings of a medieval military empire: the single-party monopoly and the preponderance of the military-industrial complex, total state control and a powerful "patriotic" faction oriented toward imperial preservation within the ruling party. In the twilight of Deng's reforms, China seems to be in search of its own Andropov. And the chances that it would prefer a "patriotic" way are as great as they were in Russia during the Brezhnevist twilight.

In Russia the irreconcilable opposition does not yet believe that the liberal choice is final. It dreams of imperial revanche. It is split, as we know, and a number of contenders vie for the position of its Fuehrer. It is anybody's guess which of them is better equipped to fill the shoes of Andropov de nos jours. Still, at this point it seems to be the most experienced politician of them all, the leader of "patriotic" communists, Gennadi Zyuganov.

After the debacle of 1984 he was naturally disillusioned and bitter. He even told me that at some point he was expelled from the Party, albeit temporarily. Yet, by the early 1990s he not only won the chairmanship of the reconstituted Communist Party, but became one of the strongest presidential contenders. Certainly, he owes part of his success to the traditional discipline of the communists and organizational skills acquired under the old regime. This is not to diminish his refined political instinct and the quality of his leadership in holding together the two main factions of his party: the "patriots" and the communist diehards.

On the one hand, he managed to create an image of a party "drifting toward social democracy," the image embraced even by some of our Russian experts.
On the other hand, he attracts his old "patriotic" cohorts by thoroughly preserving the party's "imperial orientation." He assures the public that his party would act only in accord with the constitution and at the same time installs into the party program the militant clause about revolution as the locomotive of history (which negates any constitution whatsoever).

Most interesting, however, as with Andropov, all this seemingly transparent maneuvering does no damage at all to his reputation. On the contrary, it seems to provide him additional credit, almost as though once again we are facing Andropov, reborn and fully adapted to the post-August 1991 reality. In other words, a Russian Milosevic.

**How Milosevic Did It**

If the scenarios outlined here are valid, the best way to predict what Zyuganov would do in case he succeeds in filling Andropov's shoes in Moscow is to look at how Milosevic used his presidential power in Belgrade. Would Zyuganov indeed nationalize what is already in private hands, as Yegor Gaidar fears? Milosevic did nothing of the sort. Instead he managed to nationalize the intellectual elite of his nation. With the aid of a thoroughly orchestrated and powerful propaganda effort, he resurrected its medieval fears of Catholic Croats and Muslim Bosnians, thus igniting imperial fever. And his timing was perfect. On the day of the 600th anniversary of the great Serbian defeat of 1389 he arrived on the historic Kosovo field where, in the presence of a million compatriots from all the corners of Yugoslavia, he vowed that one day they shall live in a Greater Serbia. And if the price for this is war--so be it. We Serbs shall overcome, he promised.

He never sought a restoration of Leninism, his communist credentials notwithstanding; he wanted imperial revanche. Unfortunately, he succeeded; he won the psychological war for the soul of the Serbian intelligentsia and thus its unanimous support for a "patriotic" perestroika. This allowed him to send the Yugoslav tanks against Vukovar, Dubrovnik and Sarajevo.
Is Anything Like That Possible in Russia?
Judging from its history, it is. Moreover, in the last century and a half it has already happened twice. The first time during the triumph of Nicholas I’s "Official Nationality" policy in the 1830s and then a century later in the midst of Stalin’s dictatorship. In both cases, the Russian intelligentsia just as unanimously as the Serbian under Milosevic supported its ruler’s confrontation with the West. Both times it faithfully followed the exhortations that Russia is not just one of the great European powers but a unique (in one case Orthodox, in the other socialist) civilization whose manifest destiny is to stand up to the West and to lead a general uprising of all anti-Western forces in the world.

But then a strange thing occurred. In both cases, these conversions of the Russian intellectual elite joining forces with dictators appeared fleeting, transient, unreliable. In a few years it was deeply ashamed of this collaboration and returned to its traditional pro-Western ways. So strong was this repentance that in a matter of two decades after the first “patriotic” perestroika a de-Nicholaization of the system was in full swing and a great liberal reform was underway.

This experience was repeated a century later, when Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization of the 1950s made a mockery of the "patriotic" unanimity of two decades earlier. Once again it showed the world that there was nothing uniquely Russian under the mask of the allegedly glorious "unique civilization," just a trivial bloody dictatorship. What the mask was really designed to cover was an equally trivial imperial expansion. And in both cases within a few decades of this extensive metamorphoses the military empire itself had suddenly collapsed. Why this sequence?

Any Russian "patriot" has a ready answer to this question. As Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who specializes in the first imperial collapse in 1917, explains in a
number of volumes, the "black whirlwind" of Western Marxism conquered Russia and ruined the nation due to the shameful pro-Western attitude of Russian intelligentsia. As to the second collapse in 1991, there is Zyuganov telling us exactly the same tale. This time the "black whirlwind" is, according to him, embodied in "Western special services" with their "concept of destruction." (42) And who is to blame for the success of this villainy? Of course, the same pro-Western intellectual elite and the Western "mercenaries" at the top headed by the "president-resident," as he dubbed Gorbachev. (43)

If the diagnosis is the same in both cases--the perfidious West conspiring with the Russian intelligentsia against its own motherland--the treatment seems obvious. Only a fundamental reorientation of the intellectual elite, its irreversible "nationalization," can make Russia invulnerable now and for all time to any such Western "whirlwinds" and "concepts of destruction."

In other words, to resurrect Russia means to make it a nation of West-haters. This is perhaps the most important conclusion that the "patriots"--from Solzhenitsyn to Zyuganov--have learned from the bitter experience of both great imperial collapses.

The problem is only that this is easier said than done. If even powerful dictators proved unable to irretrievably "nationalize" the Russian intelligentsia, would a Zyuganov (let alone a Solzhenitsyn) be able to do it?

The Time of Troubles
Indeed, tectonic change seems to be underway in the Russian intellectual elite amidst the current collapse. At first glance, it may look rather paradoxical: It appears that the necessary precondition for its radical anti-Western reorientation, so much wanted by the "patriots," is exactly the liberal perestroika they loathe.
In both previous cases, the "patriotic" unanimity was imposed on the Russian intellectual elite by brutal dictatorships that practically cut off the nation from the world. The more harshly the rulers condemned the West, the more obstinately the intelligentsia romanticized the forbidden fruit. The liberal perestroika with its freedom of travel let the Russians take a closer look at their former idol in its dishabille as it were. In the first place, they feel betrayed by the West that has lost interest in Russia the moment it ceased to be a threat. After all, it was they who delivered the West from the trials of the cold war and the wastefulness of the arms race, and the threat of nuclear annihilation. A little more compassion to their own trials was, they believe, in order. Searching for the reasons for this betrayal, what do they see? Intellectual parochialism, lack of political imagination, a wasteland of commercialized mass culture and, most damagingly, the West's treatment of its own intelligentsia. They see it as stripped of intellectual leadership, confused and powerless to influence the course of history.

This massive disillusionment with the former hero naturally translates into a contempt that even the most brutal dictators were unable to force down the throat of the Russian intelligentsia. It suddenly appeared to them that in at least one respect the "patriots" were right all along: Russian civilization, where the intellectual elite, however persecuted, remains the undisputed mentor of the nation, is indeed unique.

No doubt, there is a long way from this new contempt to the hatred required for the "patriotic" perestroika. But the current time of troubles has been exceedingly cruel to the Russian intelligentsia. Not only did it find itself one of the first victims of the shock therapy, it also has to live through the crisis of all traditional values. Perhaps it has never been so perplexed, vulnerable and embarrassed, so unsure of itself and its liberal values. The inexperienced youth for whom not just Stalin but even Andropov is ancient history is especially vulnerable.
Add to this the 25 million countrymen, in many cases relatives, who became aliens overnight, who were perceived as defenseless and persecuted in their own former lands. And suddenly it appears that, if there is a close analogy to the present state of mind of the Russian intelligentsia, it is the state of mind of its Serbian counterpart--at the moment of Yugoslavia's collapse. All in all, if there has ever been a time to break its traditional allegiance to Western values, that time is now.

There is no doubt that a Russian Milosevic, if he is indeed destined to come to the helm of the nation, will perform on the Russian intelligentsia the very same operation as his Serbian prototype. And who can guarantee that this time he will not succeed in making Russia a nation of West-haters?

**Imperial Passions**
The following quotations vividly describe the state of mind I mentioned:

What is this so called Kazakhstan if not a legitimate territory of two former Cossack regions? Restore them, and there is no independent republic of Kazakhstan anymore. This is what our rulers would do immediately if they have indeed been guided by Russia's interest. (44)

This is not even Zyuganov speaking. Nor is it Zhirinovsky. It is an intellectual, a writer, the most popular historical novelist in Russia for that matter. And it is only the beginning of what he has to say. "We must fight for Russia," Dmitry Balashov continues, "unless we fight we will be exterminated like roaches and rats.... I have six sons, four of them already of age when a man can take up arms. And although I am an old man, I can still hold a rifle as well. I vow on these pages: When it starts, I'll go to fight and my boys will go with me.... We will restore Russia, our Holy Rus'--yes, the same one, from the Baltics to the Black Sea, from Kuril islands to Carpathian Mountains. United and indivisible." (45)
Of course, Balashov is far from a typical Russian intellectual. He has flirted with the idea of "Holy Rus" for years. Still, it is one thing to toy with it in his writings and quite another to call millions of his readers to the barricades. Two million copies of Balashov's novels were sold in 1994.

More importantly, though, it is impossible to find any difference between the imperial passions that overwhelm this Russian intellectual today and those that in the early 1990s led the Serbs to bombard Dubrovnik and Sarajevo. I heard exactly the same passionate speeches from respected intellectuals in Belgrade in 1990 and 1991.

For six long years we proved powerless to stop first the fires of Serbian imperial nationalism stoked by Slobodan Milosevic and then the war and ethnic cleansing that resulted from it. And this was in tiny Yugoslavia, which does not possess even a single nuclear warhead. What position will we be in when it starts in Moscow with its arsenal of warheads in the hands of a Russian Milosevic?

Notes:

1 The Economist, October 28, 1995, p. 15.
2 Ibid., p. 16.
3 The author is referring to the failed August 1991 coup by reactionary communists, the defeat of which ensconced Yeltsin in power--Ed.
7 Izvestia, June 28, 1995.
12 The reference is to a group of unprincipled deputies in the French revolutionary convention, whose posture contrasted with the "Mountain" (the radical Jacobins)--Ed.
13 Molodaya gvardia, 1968, No. 4, p. 304.
15 Ibid.
18 I am referring to the new "patriotic" journals (like Moskva or Nash sovremennik), "patriotic" newspapers (like Literaturnaya Rossiya) and entire publishing houses (like Moskovskii rabochii).
19 Novyi mir, 1969, No. 4.
20 Literaturnaya gazeta, November 15, 1972.
22 Ibid., p. 146.
23 Ibid., p. 157.
24 Ibid., p. 162.
25 Ibid., p. 166.
26 Zyuganov, Gennady Zyuganov, p. 7.
27 Ibid.
29 Molodaya gvardia, 1968, No. 9, p. 271.
30 Ibid., No. 4, p. 305.
31 Zyuganov, Gennady Zyuganov, p. 5.
32 Gennady Zyuganov, Za horizontom (Beyond the Horizon) (Orel, 1995), p. 18.
33 Zyuganov, Gennady Zyuganov, p. 27.
35 As quoted in Kurier, August 22, 1995.
37 Ibid., p. 65.
38 Sterligov, Alexander Sterligov, p. 5.
41 Kultura, August 26, 1995.
42 Zyuganov, Gennady Zyuganov, p. 5.
43 Ibid., p. 9. Here is the full text of Zyuganov's diatribe explaining the origins of the liberal perestroika: "When the Party leadership began to get old and enfeebled, many a tagalong emerged around Brezhnev and Co. Arbatov, for instance, or Yakovlev, obsequious mercenaries who, in fact, having partaken from the Western table, betrayed their state's national interests."
44 Zavtra, No. 34 (90), 1995.
45 Ibid.