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CDP 17/3.

15 March, 1987

Dear Prime Minister,

I enclose a paper on 'Gorbachev and Reform of the Soviet System' which I completed after the Chequers meeting and which will not be published until late April in a quarterly journal. Normally, I would not expect it to be of any interest to you, but in the special circumstances of your impending important visit to the Soviet Union, you may find parts of it to be of some use. It assesses Soviet domestic political developments and Gorbachev's position within the system.

Yours sincerely,

Antonie Brown

Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London SW1A 2AA.



FILE
JA

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From the Private Secretary

17 March 1987

Thank you for your letter of 15 March enclosing the note for the Prime Minister and the copy of your paper. I am sure that she will read it and find it a very useful part of her preparations for the visit.

The Prime Minister certainly found the Seminar at Chequers very useful: indeed my impression was that all those taking part did so. Thank you very much for your helpful contribution.

(Charles Powell)

Archie Brown, Esq.

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15 March, 1987

R17/3

Dear Mr Powell,

I enclose a note for the Prime Minister and a copy of a paper I have written more recently than the one I sent you before the Chequers meeting and which will not be published in a quarterly journal until late April.

Ordinarily, I would assume that the Prime Minister would have neither the time nor the inclination to read it, but knowing how seriously she is taking the preparation for her Moscow visit, I think it possible that she may be interested in glancing through it.

I was glad to see you again at Chequers and I hope that that meeting was found to be of some value by the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary.

Yours sincerely,

Archie (Brown)

ARCHIE BROWN

Charles Powell, Esq.
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London SW1A 2AA.

GORBACHEV AND REFORM OF THE SOVIET SYSTEM

Archie Brown

Western publics were not very well prepared by their mass media for the changes which began to take place in the Soviet Union under the General Secretaryship of Yuri Andropov and which - following the Chernenko interregnum - are being carried much further under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev. Disproportionate attention was focused on the health and person of the top leader. While the subject of the succession to Leonid Brezhnev was a very important one, Brezhnev merely had to disappear from public view for a week or more (as he often did in his later years) for massive attention to be concentrated on his life expectancy and the possible identity of the next General Secretary.

That even under the conservative Brezhnev there were different political tendencies within the Soviet Communist Party - in broad terms (though many further distinctions can be made) reformist, conservative and neo-Stalinist - was a discovery which went largely unnoticed outside the ranks of a narrow circle of Western Sovietologists. A vast amount of attention was, of course, paid in the mass media to overt dissent, and the average Western newspaper reader or television viewer could have been forgiven for picking up an exaggerated idea of the dissidents' salience within Soviet political life and for coming to the conclusion that apart from them the Soviet Union consisted entirely of like-minded conformists.

Yet those Brezhnev years also saw debate, much of it esoteric, conducted in Soviet specialist journals and books. Many of the people who stayed within the boundaries of the system were far from satisfied with the status quo. Some criticised it from a neo-Stalinist or a Russian nationalist standpoint; others (and it is they who are coming

to the fore today) as advocates of economic and political reform.

Those who wished to exercise influence and avoid the marginalisation which became the fate of most Soviet dissidents (for the political context in the Soviet Union was very different from that of Poland where a great part of the nation were 'dissidents') abided by certain rules of the game.

Thus, for many economic reformers this meant praising the Hungarian economic reform rather than directly advocating a significant role for markets within the Soviet economy (especially after Kosygin's attempted reform, which was launched in 1965 and which made some nods in the direction of the market, petered out in the face of conservative opposition, of which Brezhnev was a part). Similarly, the rules of the game involved (and still involve) emphasising the need for development of the 'democratic' component of 'democratic centralism' rather than making a frontal attack on that latter concept. They likewise entailed - and accommodated - advocating the recognition of the existence of different interests in Soviet society and the idea of 'diversity within monism' rather than embracing the notion of political pluralism which (especially following the 'Prague Spring') remained firmly taboo.

Such activity seemed neither newsworthy nor heroic. If the authors of these writings were heroes, they certainly remained unsung - apart from the occasional faltering solo of a British or American specialist on Soviet politics, usually delivered to a small audience. Yet, without such within-system reformers, people who tried to push further the limits of the possible and broaden the political space within them (rather than attempt to destroy such boundaries totally and destroy themselves politically in the process), there would be no changes of the kind which are underway in the Soviet Union today. The reform-

minded / ^{wings} of the party apparatus and of the party intelligentsia were an important part of the coalition which supported Gorbachev when he overcame considerable conservative opposition to attain the General Secretaryship. Today they are the most enthusiastic element in the coalition which bolsters his power.

There were, also, of course, 'objective factors' which led to the policy innovation which we are now seeing. These included a secular decline in the rate of economic growth from the 1950s to the early 1980s, a growing technological gap in many sectors of the economy between the Soviet Union and the most successful capitalist countries and growing international tension (with the associated burden and insecurity imposed by the spiralling military competition between the Soviet Union and the United States). But though Gorbachev appeared to some Western observers to be both a reformer and a very likely future General Secretary some years already before he got that job, it would be a mistake to think that there was an inevitability about his coming to office and to the acceptance of the policies which are now being pursued.¹ When I asked a Soviet jurist in Moscow in October 1984 whether the very seriousness of the economic and political problems would not lead to the adoption of ^{many of} the policies which we see now (and with Gorbachev implementing them as the most likely successor to the already physically failing Chernenko), he replied: 'Yes, either that or the complete opposite!'

It was clear that something new had to be tried. The quasi-corporatism of the Brezhnev era - a style of rule which produced a lowest common denominator of agreement within the elite - would no longer work. The Soviet Union could not afford to try to 'muddle through' the remaining years of the 1980s and the 1990s in the way in which it had, in domestic affairs, muddled through the 1970s, for it was becoming increasingly evident that this would mean, as Bialer put

it, 'a process of "muddling down"'.² There remained, however, reactionary as well as reformist alternatives. The person within the top leadership team who could well have personified the former tendency was Grigori Romanov, the former Leningrad regional party leader who by this time supervised the military and military industry within the Central Committee Secretariat. Like Gorbachev, he was a senior secretary (that is to say, a full member of the Politburo and a secretary of the Central Committee) at the time of Chernenko's death. Romanov did not control nearly as much of the apparatus or have as many friends as Gorbachev, and so he supported instead the elevation of another 'interim leader', the distinctly conservative and complacent 70-year-old Moscow party chief, Viktor Grishin, under whom the balance of power within the Secretariat could have been tilted in favour of Romanov and against Gorbachev.³

That Gorbachev was a far more skilful as well as a more appealing politician than Romanov and Grishin put together was a fact of no small importance. For if it be true that the changes of the last two years could not have occurred without an influential group of party members who not only support but are pushing for reform, it is equally clear that the Soviet system is one in which great power is vested in the office of General Secretary. Contrary to Western misconceptions and old-style Soviet propaganda, the party is not monolithically united. It contains people of very different ideas and personality types and embraces very distinctive opinion groupings and institutional interests. It is of prime importance that a new General Secretary can change the correlation of forces - or balance of influence - among the competing tendencies and various informal groups. This is precisely what has happened under Gorbachev. It is partly a matter of the Soviet leader himself encouraging people with fresh ideas and partly a matter of

reformers, emboldened by their perception that they have got a General Secretary who is highly intelligent, well-educated and open-minded, casting aside old taboos and saying in print (or on radio, television and the theatre stage) what they felt constrained to say mainly in private conversation, or in greatly diluted form in public, during the Brezhnev years.

The New Men (and a few women)

Gorbachev has achieved more personnel change in high places in his first two years than ^{was achieved so soon by} any other General Secretary in the Soviet Union's seventy-year history. This was facilitated by the fact that Brezhnev had allowed the entire political elite to grow old together, and though a start to rejuvenation was made under Andropov (and slowed down under Chernenko), the process still had a long way to go. It would be an oversimplification to see all of the new senior appointees as people whose ties are closer to Gorbachev than to any of his colleagues. Other senior members of the Politburo, such as the de facto second secretary of the party, Egor Ligachev, and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Nikolai Ryzhkov, have been successful in co-opting a number of their former colleagues and subordinates. But Ligachev and Ryzhkov are themselves part of the new top leadership team, men who were first brought into it under Andropov and who have risen still higher in the Gorbachev era. They are neither opponents nor clients of Gorbachev, but, rather, conditional allies.

Taken as a whole, the changes have been sufficiently sweeping as to greatly facilitate policy innovation. In some ways Gorbachev was fortunate in that a Party Congress (held every five years) was due within a year of Chernenko's death. This provided both a particularly authorita-

tive platform for the enunciation of new policies and an opportunity to change the composition of the Central Committee (for it is only at Congresses that new members can be elected). Against that, it is worth noting that Gorbachev has continued to strengthen his position in the meantime and a number of the new appointments to party and state offices in his second year are those which, when a Party Congress comes along, carry Central Committee membership virtually automatically. Thus a Central Committee elected now would mean the departure of more survivors of the Brezhnev era than actually left the political scene at the Party Congress in early 1986. Even so, the Central Committee membership turnover was greater at that 27th Congress than at any Congress since Khrushchev's last - the 22nd Congress of 1961. Whereas 87 per cent of surviving full members of the Central Committee elected at the 25th Congress in 1976 were re-elected in 1981, only 59 per cent of those elected at the 26th Congress in that year and still alive five years later were re-elected in 1986.⁴

It is within the inner bodies of the Central Committee - the top leadership team who compose the full and candidate membership of the Politburo or belong to the Secretariat of the Central Committee - that the personnel change has been greatest. Gorbachev's main power base lies within the Secretariat, a body which in practice wields only slightly less power than the Politburo itself. Here the change has been dramatic. Of twelve Secretaries of the Central Committee, nine have been appointed to their posts since Gorbachev took over. They include several key people who are particularly close to Gorbachev - among them, Aleksandr Yakovlev who oversees culture and propaganda within the Secretariat, who has been a strong proponent of the policy of greater openness (glasnost) and who in January 1987 added candidate membership of the Politburo to his Secretaryship; Georgi Razumovsky who has a background in agriculture,

career links to Gorbachev and is in charge of the extremely important Central Committee department responsible for placement of party cadres; and most recently (in January of this year) Anatoli Luk'yanov who overlapped with Gorbachev in the Law Faculty of Moscow University in the early 1950s and who has been heading the General Department of the Central Committee through which papers pass to the Politburo and who is the nearest functional equivalent in the Soviet system of the Secretary of the Cabinet in Britain. [There is only one woman in the top leadership team, but that is one more than was there throughout the Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko periods. Aleksandra Biryukova was promoted in March 1986 from the secretariat of the Soviet trade unions to the vastly more important position of a Secretary of the Central Committee. Gorbachev has criticised the slow promotion of women within the party ranks and there is no reason to doubt that he was responsible for this particular appointment. [Neither quantitatively nor 'qualitatively' is Gorbachev's position quite so strong in the Politburo as it is in the Secretariat. Whereas in the latter body, not only are three-quarters of the members new, a majority of them would appear ^{also} to be people of similar outlook to his own. Among full members of the Politburo, the turnover has been substantial - of the eleven, five have received this promotion under Gorbachev - but less sweeping than the turnover in the Secretariat. What is more, among them all, only the Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze looks as if he would willingly go as far down the road of reform as Gorbachev himself is prepared to contemplate. Among the candidate members of the Politburo, Gorbachev's position is stronger. Here, as in the Secretariat, the turnover has been of the order of 75 per cent. Of the eight candidate members at present (February 1987) only two were in that position when Gorbachev took over from Chernenko.

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Only full members of the Politburo may vote but, as in the British Cabinet, votes are the exception rather than the rule. The candidate members of the Politburo and the Secretaries of the Central Committee attend Politburo meetings as of right and may speak. Hence, these twenty-five people constitute in a very real sense the top leadership team whose collective support the General Secretary needs, even though his political resources exceed those of any other individual among them and though his 'power to persuade' them is, on several counts, impressive.⁵ The reform wing of that top leadership team, on which Gorbachev himself should certainly be placed, will, however, be significantly strengthened when two or three more people from the ranks of the Secretariat or from the candidate membership of the Politburo who share Gorbachev's political orientation can be promoted to full Politburo membership. Though the Central Committee nominally elects these members, the process is, in essence, one of collective co-optation by the Politburo itself. Within it, the General Secretary's voice counts for more than anyone else's but his colleagues (with historical precedents in mind) are usually anxious to maintain checks upon his power. Though such sentiments can be understood, the cause of reform would undoubtedly be furthered by the elevation from candidate to full membership of Aleksandr Yakovlev (who does indeed seem to be on course to become such a senior secretary) and of the outspoken First Secretary of the Moscow party organisation, Boris El'tsin.

The choice of Gorbachev as General Secretary (and the further changes in the composition of vital party and state institutions which have followed it) has also, as I noted earlier, changed the correlation of forces among party influentials. Thus, people who already were known reformers and party members of some significance in Brezhnev's time, have come to enjoy substantially higher standing and to advocate more directly the economic reform and 'democratisation' of the Soviet system which

they proposed in more coded language in the 1970s or early 1980s.

Numerous examples of people in this category could be cited, but for the sake of brevity four may suffice: Abel Aganbegyan, Tat'yana Zaslavskaya, Georgi Shakhnazarov and Fedor Burlatsky.

Aganbegyan, an economic reformer of long standing, spent almost twenty years as Director of the Institute of Economics and Organization of Industrial Production of the Siberian Section of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, but was brought to Moscow to play a more central role in the elaboration of economic reform soon after Gorbachev became General Secretary. His colleague in Novosibirsk, Zaslavskaya, produced for a high-level Moscow seminar in 1983 an analysis of economic and social problems - and of the obstacles to reform - too devastating to be published in full in the Soviet Union at that time, though it subsequently appeared abroad.⁶ Now, however, one can see strong echoes of her analysis in the speeches of Gorbachev and she herself has achieved a greater prominence than ever before for her views as one of the boldest reformers.⁷ She has had access not only to the party's main theoretical journal, Kommunist⁸, but also more recently to the pages of Pravda where she made a swingeing attack on the concealment of information from social scientists (including statistics on crime, suicide rates, and levels of drug and alcohol abuse) and compared the level of Soviet sociology unfavourably with that of Poland and Hungary, 'not to mention the developed capitalist countries'.⁹

Shakhnazarov, an innovative Soviet theorist both on international relations and on 'socialist democracy' who combines his academic role (given formal recognition by his Presidency of the Soviet Association of Political Sciences and Vice-Presidency of the International Political Science Association) with a responsible post in the Central Committee apparatus, has been promoted from being one of a number of deputy heads

of the Socialist Countries department of the Central Committee to the important post of First Deputy Head.¹⁰ Burlatsky, a bold reformer and man of broad-ranging talents who already in Khrushchev's time advocated competitive elections for deputies to soviets¹¹ and within months of Khrushchev's fall became the first advocate of a separate discipline of political science in the Soviet Union¹², has achieved a greater prominence than he enjoyed even under Khrushchev¹³ with plays on the Soviet stage and on television, a regular political column in the Writers' Union weekly newspaper (which he was first granted during Andropov's General Secretaryship) and a place in the Soviet entourage which accompanied Gorbachev to the Geneva and Reykjavik 'summits'.

Both within the higher ranks of the party apparatus and outside it, the people who have now come to the fore include far more with a commitment to reform than there were in positions of great power and influence under Brezhnev or even under Gorbachev's two immediate predecessors. It is worth emphasising that the changes which are now underway can hardly be considered a response to the activity of dissidents, for the dissident movement was already very weak by the time Gorbachev became General Secretary. It had, to all intents and purposes, been crushed. Thus, though it remains far less radical, the process of change within the Soviet Union is more akin to that in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s when the impetus for reform came from within the party itself than to that in Poland in 1980-81 when the Kania leadership retreated in the face of the 'extra-systemic' pressures of a spontaneous mass movement. The Soviet context must, of course, be distinguished from that of Czechoslovakia, too. The political cultures of the two countries remain very different and the strength of indigenous conservative forces in the Soviet Union is much greater than that of their counterparts in Czechoslovakia. There are, moreover, complicating factors which even Soviet reformers must bear closely in mind. If in Czechoslovakia there

was (and is) a relatively mild nationalities problem in the shape of strained relations between Czechs and Slovaks, there is in the Soviet Union - with over one hundred different ethnic groups, many of whom have administrative responsibility for their own national territories - a much greater potential problem of fissure. Hitherto, this has not been allowed to get out of hand, but some devolution of political and economic powers could whet local (and thus, in many cases, national) appetites for greater autonomy.

The Reform Process and Reform Agenda

For many reasons, therefore, the present time in the Soviet Union is a period of political struggle. How far the reform process will go the reformers themselves do not know. Since it is in part their relative open-mindedness and political realism which marks them off from their opponents, this is hardly surprising. For many of them, including Gorbachev, 'democratisation' is not just a slogan, but neither is it yet pluralist democracy. That is to say, we should not expect to see in the near future the institutionalisation of autonomous groups (still less rival parties) capable of challenging the policies advocated by the top leadership of the Communist Party. At the same time the 'diversity within monism' which is becoming ever more of a reality permits a substantial amount of informal group activity and some increasingly effective criticism. Soviet political commentators themselves point to the role of Russian creative writers in getting the party and government leadership to reverse a decision already taken to start work on a massive diversion of Siberian rivers for the irrigation of Central Asia.¹⁴ The 'lobby' against this scheme was active over several years with the attacks on its ecological dangers reaching a climax at the Writers' Union Congress in June 1986; two months later this costly and dubious project (which had influential proponents as well as opponents) was dropped.

To the extent that a conscious broadening of the limits of the possible within the system is taking place - so that, to take a few examples, criticism of the Stalin era is once again appearing¹⁵, Doctor Zhivago is scheduled for its first-ever Soviet publication in the widely-read literary journal, Novy mir, in 1988, and demonstrations in Kazakhstan in December 1986 with strong overtones of ethnic animosity were promptly reported by the Soviet mass media - this may be interpreted as no more than progress towards a more enlightened authoritarian regime. Such a change - far removed from the totalitarianism of the Stalin era and the unenlightened authoritarianism of the Brezhnev years - should not be dismissed as negligible. But in the period since the 27th Party Congress and especially at the very important plenary session of the Central Committee in January 1987, there have been signs of something more.

Gorbachev himself (and certainly the reform wing of the party intelligentsia) seems to regard a measure of political reform as desirable both in itself and as a necessary complement to economic reform.¹⁶ Some elements of 'democratisation' have now been proposed by Gorbachev - in his January plenum speech - which, if fully implemented, would be quite a remarkable change from established Soviet practice. This is particularly true of his proposal that there be more than one candidate for party secretaryships (including first secretaryships) at all levels from the district up to the union republican and that the elections be by secret ballot at meetings of the respective party committees. Rather more vaguely, he added: 'The Politburo's opinion is that further democratisation should also apply to the formation of the central leading bodies of the party. I think this is wholly logical.'¹⁷

It remains to be seen how such proposals will be implemented. Two cautionary notes are worth sounding. The first is that Gorbachev stated

that the competitive election of secretaries would not alter 'the statutory principle, under which the decisions of higher bodies, including those on cadre issues, are binding on all lower party committees'.¹⁸ This may look like an attempt to square the circle. The second is that though the Central Committee resolution adopted at the end of the January plenum repeated Gorbachev's demand for more 'control from below' within the party, it did not follow the General Secretary in making specific mention of ^{competitive elections for party secretaryships.} ~~electing party secretaries in a less formal way than hitherto~~. It may well be that on this, as on other matters, Gorbachev is more of a reformer than a majority of his colleagues.

Some may view it, rather cynically, as an attempt by Gorbachev to speed up the personnel change throughout the party and to get more of his supporters into key positions. In that context, his insistence that the party leadership retains its powers to select cadres could be seen as a safeguard against local party committees choosing opponents of reform. But it is hard to see why he should raise the issue at all unless he meant it to be taken seriously. One of the contributory factors to Khrushchev's downfall was his fixing compulsory percentage turnovers for the membership of all party committees from top to bottom - a move which induced feelings of insecurity among the very party apparatus on which his power rested. Many party secretaries may feel similarly insecure in the light of Gorbachev's recent proposals. A willingness to incur the costs of generating such dangerous emotion would appear to betoken a determination to implement a reform which would indeed enhance control 'from below' while not, of course, going so far as to abrogate control 'from above'.

In general, Gorbachev's speech to the January 1987 plenum was even more innovative and important than his Political Report to the 27th Party Congress in 1986. It was, perhaps, the most / ^{significant} speech by a Soviet leader since Khrushchev's speeches demythologising Stalin delivered

to the 20th Congress in 1956 and the 22nd Congress in 1961. Among the other important points Gorbachev made were that Central Committee plenums had for years been brief and formal and that they must ^{from now on} be so conducted that 'there can be no persons beyond criticism or people with no right to criticise'; that the promotion of non-party members to leading positions was an 'important aspect of the democratisation of public life'; that the authority of the soviets needs to be further enhanced (and this seems likely to involve the introduction of competitive elections for deputies to soviets, at least at the local level, though, needless to say, none of the candidates would be challenging the 'leading role' of the Communist Party);

the assertion that Soviet socialist theory had remained largely fixed 'at the level of the 1930s-1940s' when 'vigorous debates and creative ideas disappeared... while authoritarian evaluations and opinions became unquestionable truths'; and the proposal that a party conference be held in 1988 to monitor the course of economic reform and 'to discuss matters of further democratising the life of the party and society as a whole'.

This last proposal was an important one. Party conferences - second only to Congresses in terms of party authority - are rare occurrences; the last one was held in 1941. The significance of holding one in 1988 is that it keeps up the pressure for economic and political reform. The matters Gorbachev has put on the political agenda cannot now be conveniently forgotten. On the contrary, the prospect of a party conference to consider taking them further gives a green light to party reformers to produce their own elaboration of the issues raised and to give more concrete substance to some of the ideas which Gorbachev - and the Central Committee resolution - discussed in general terms.

On economic reform, Gorbachev has emphasised that only the first steps have so far been taken. One important step was the publication this February of the draft law on the enterprise which sets out the considerably

enhanced rights and greater autonomy of Soviet industrial enterprises and associations. It embodies also the recently legitimated principle of 'socialist self-management' (which for long was regarded as a revisionist Yugoslav notion) whereby leading personnel in factories are to be elected by a general meeting of the work collective either by secret or open ballot, the latter decision being left to the discretion of the meeting. Again it remains to be seen how this draft legislation will be eventually amended and, more important, implemented, but already it may be seen as a mark of progress on the part of Soviet reformers.

So far the goals of the more radical Soviet economic reformers - explicit recognition of a role for the market as well as for central strategic economic decision-making - have been recognised only at the level of legalising small-scale private enterprise (which means, inter alia, that the Soviet Union is beginning to see its first private restaurants). But of greater importance for the economy as a whole will be the extension of the market principle into areas of the socialised economy. Gorbachev clearly recognises that the attempt to fix all prices administratively is a nonsense, but so far his support for a market element within the Soviet economy has been in the coded language of advocating a greater role for 'commodity-money relations'. That is doubtless because there is fierce opposition from within the ministries and from many party organs to a reform which attempts to combine real concessions to the market with central planning (and serious doubts, too, on the part of a number of his Politburo colleagues). If, however, as seems likely, Gorbachev goes on to consolidate his power still further, the chances of quite far-reaching economic reform will be better under the present leadership than they have been at any time since the fall of Khrushchev - and Khrushchev's reforms are no model, for they were hasty, inconsistent and ultimately ineffective.

In some ways Gorbachev's strategy is a high-risk one. It threatens

more vested interests and arouses more immediate hostility than Brezhnev's consensus style of rule. But Gorbachev's answer (which he often expresses in a phrase familiar also in Britain) is: 'There is no alternative'.

There are many in the West who dismiss the changes taking place in the Soviet Union as no more than cosmetic; if that is so, it is difficult to understand why they are encountering such fierce resistance and why pushing through what Gorbachev calls the 'reconstruction' of the Soviet system is such an uphill task.¹⁹

There is also a tendency to say that because there are still dissidents in prison and restrictions on emigration, nothing has really altered. It is right to be aware of what has not changed. The release of Andrei Sakharov from exile and of a number of other dissidents from prison does not mean that dissent has been institutionalised. It is, rather, an attempt to bring them - and this applies in particular/ back 'within the system', to a man of Sakharov's great distinction and moral authority, given that the boundaries of permitted criticism have been extended and there are articles now being published in the Soviet press which only a few years ago would have landed their authors in serious trouble. Similarly, travel abroad - whether in the form of emigration or for a short trip - remains a privilege rather than a right. In conditions of relaxation of East-West tension, it is a privilege which under the present Soviet leadership is likely to be much more widely extended, but we are some way off the day when Soviet citizens ^{are free to leave the country at will.} To go on from this, however, to say in effect that unless everything has changed, nothing has changed is an abdication of responsible judgement.²⁰

(The exception where in principle this should now, according to recent Soviet legislation, be a right, is for the reunification of families.)

Gorbachev himself describes the process of reform and restructuring as 'irreversible'. As a politician, it doubtless makes a great deal of sense for him to do so; he has no need to give encouragement to his domestic foes. The outside observer must be more cautious and allow for the possibility that the current trend could be reversed. And doubtless many in the West - including some in the Reagan administration - would

welcome a return to the old simplicities as well as to the days when they could rely on Soviet propaganda being more ham-fisted than their own.

The reversal of the current trends and the defeat of Gorbachev would, however, be in the long-term interest neither of the people of the Soviet Union nor of the West. If (as, on the whole, still seems likely) Gorbachev does remain in office for years to come and, as previous long-tenure General Secretaries have done, strengthens his power and authority over time, this will open up new prospects within and outside the Soviet Union. By the end of the century Gorbachev will, at sixty-eight, still be younger than any previous General Secretary was when - for political or biological reasons - he demitted office. There is reason at least for hope that by that time the ^{reform} ~~reconstruction~~ of the Soviet system will have made it qualitatively better than it has been hitherto and that opportunities will have arisen (which should not be passed by) for a more constructive relationship with the West.

Notes

1. Thus, the American Sovietologist, Jerry Hough, and I independently came to the conclusion while Brezhnev was still alive that Gorbachev was a future General Secretary and that he wished to undertake reform. See Jerry F. Hough's chapter in Seweryn Bialer and Thane Gustafson (eds.), Russia at the Crossroads: The 26th Congress of the CPSU (Allen & Unwin, London, 1982), esp. pp. 43-44; and Brown in Archie Brown and Michael Kaser (eds.), Soviet Policy for the 1980s (Macmillan, London, 1982), esp. pp. 240-242, 244-245 and 269-270.
2. Seweryn Bialer, Stalin's Successors; Leadership, Stability and Change in the Soviet Union (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980), p. 305.
3. Rather remarkably, an article by the Soviet author, Mikhail Shatrov, in the journal, Ogonek (No. 4, 1987) recently confirmed that there had indeed been an attempt to secure the General Secretaryship for Grishin and put a stop to the rise of Gorbachev.
4. See Thane Gustafson and Dawn Mann, 'Gorbachev's First Year: Building Power and Authority' in Problems of Communism, Vol. XXXV, No. 3, May-June 1986, esp. p. 4. Following the 'anti-party group' crisis of 1957, only 49 per cent of surviving 1956 Central Committee members were re-elected in 1961.
5. Eleven full Politburo members, eight candidate members and twelve Secretaries of the Central Committee do add up to twenty-five people because six of them hold full or candidate membership of the Politburo jointly with a Secretaryship.
6. See 'The Novosibirsk Report' in Survey, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1984.
7. Indeed, as I noted two years ago, these echoes were already there in a speech Gorbachev delivered in December 1984 - three months before he

- became General Secretary. See Archie Brown, 'Gorbachev: New Man in the Kremlin' in Problems of Communism, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3, May-June 1985, esp. pp. 18-19.
8. Kommunist, No. 13, September 1986.
 9. Pravda, 6 February 1987.
 10. I have discussed Shakhnazarov's views and role at greater length in my article, 'Soviet Political Developments and Prospects' in World Policy Journal (New York), Vol. IV, No. 1, Winter 1986-87, esp. pp. 72-74.
In general the personnel change in the foreign policy establishment has been particularly great. For further details, see the above article, esp. pp. 68-74, and F. Stephen Larrabee and Allen Lynch, 'Gorbachev: The Road to Reykjavik', in Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C.), No. 65, Winter 1986-87, esp. pp. 10-13.
 11. On this, see an interesting interview (by Monty Johnstone) of Burlatsky in Marxism Today, February 1987, esp. p. 15.
 12. See Archie Brown, 'Political Science in the USSR' in International Political Science Review, Vol. 7, No. 4, October 1986, esp. pp. 445-448.
 13. Burlatsky was at one time a speech-writer for Khrushchev and in the early 1960s he was a prominent member, and for a time the leader, of a group of consultants to Yuri Andropov who at that time headed the Socialist Countries Department of the Central Committee.
 14. For example, Burlatsky in his Marxism Today interview, p. 14.
 15. On this, see, for example, Stephen F. Cohen, 'An Anti-Stalinist Tide is Flowing Again', in International Herald Tribune, 3 February 1987.
 16. For more detailed argument of this case before the January plenum took place, see Brown, 'Soviet Political Developments and Prospects', op.cit., esp. pp. 57-67 and 75-85.

17. This major speech of Gorbachev to the January plenum is published in Pravda, 28 January 1987, and in English in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, SU/8478/C1/1-37, 29 January 1987.
18. Ibid.
19. For a recent account of some of the psychological and institutional resistance to the Gorbachev / ^{reforms,} see the text of an interview given by Academician Tat'yana Zaslavskaya to a Hungarian newspaper, translated and published in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, SU/8480/C1-6, 31 January 1987.
20. For one example, among all too many others, of such an oversimple response, see A.M. Rosenthal, 'How to Make This Glasnost More Interesting Than Ever' in International Herald Tribune, 3 February 1987.