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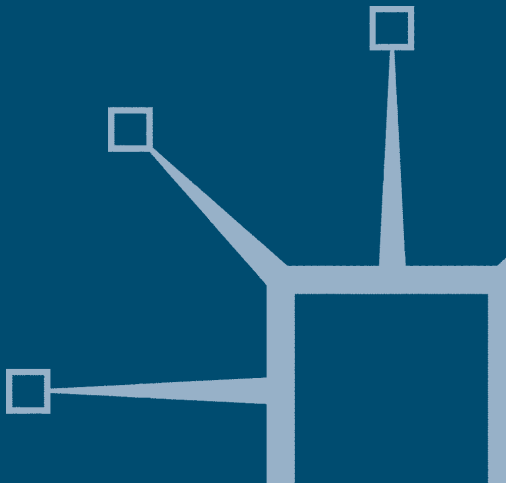
# Russian Nationalism and the Politics of Soviet Literature

## The Case of *Nash sovremennik* 1981–91

Simon Cosgrove



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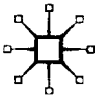



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*For Katya*

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# Preface

This monograph is a study of the political ideas articulated in the Moscow-based, Russian-language 'thick' journal, *Nash sovremennik* (*Our Contemporary*) in the last decade of the Soviet Union (1981–91). The monograph follows the story of the journal's Russian nationalists from 1981 through the period of leadership transition (1982–85), that ended with the coming to power of the 54-year-old Mikhail Gorbachev, and through the subsequent period of reform (1985–91) that saw, in kaleidoscopic fashion, a major transformation, followed by the collapse, of the Soviet polity. 1981 was a year of great symbolic importance for the Russian nationalists as the year of the 160th anniversary of Dostoevskii's birth, and the centenary of his death. It was also a year in which Brezhnev's last days were evidently imminent and thoughts turned to the future of the Soviet state and society. 1991, the final year of what Eric Hobsbawm has called the 'short twentieth century', marked the conclusion of an epoch.[1] It saw the end of a communist regime born out of the chaos and bloodshed of the First World War and, out of the rubble of the USSR, the emergence of 15 new successor states, including the Russian Federation.[2] As a result, new perspectives were opened up and fresh debates arose concerning change and continuity in Soviet and Russian history, the relationship between Russia and the West, the relationship between state and society in Russia, and, not the least, on the role of Russian nationalism as a political ideology.

Unlike the journal *Novyi mir*, *Nash sovremennik* attracted relatively little academic attention until the 1980s. The growing interest in Russian nationalism since then has resulted in the publication of a number of important works that have discussed *Nash sovremennik* in some depth, notably those by John Dunlop and, more recently, Yitzhak Brudny.[3] Other authors whose writings made reference to *Nash sovremennik* have included Walter Laqueur and Alexander Yanov.[4] Some memoir material has also been published in the 1990s, notably by Sergei Vikulov (chief editor 1968–89), Stanislav Kunyaev (chief editor since 1989), Aleksandr Kazintsev (deputy chief editor since 1987), Vladislav Matusevich (staff editor 1978–81) and Yurii Nagibin (member of the editorial board 1965–81).[5]

This study is largely based on a reading of *Nash sovremennik* 1981–91 and interviews with participants in the publication process (writers,

editors, members of the editorial board, literary officials and politicians). Twenty-four individuals have been selected for special attention. These include two chief editors (Sergei Vikulov and Stanislav Kunyaev), nine deputy chief editors (Yurii Seleznev, Valentin Ustinov, Vladimir Krivtsov, Vladimir Vasil'ev, Vladimir Korobov, Vladimir Mussalitin, Valentin Svininnikov, Aleksandr Kazintsev and Dmitrii Il'in), two editors appointed in the period 1990–91 as 'third' deputy chief editors (Aleksandr Pozdnyakov and Yurii Maksimov) and eleven leading contributors (defined as writers who contributed at least seven publications over the decade, these include five prose writers – Vasilii Belov, Valentin Pikul', Valentin Rasputin, Georgii Semenov and Vladimir Soloukhin; two literary critics – Vadim Kozhinov and Anatolii Lanshchikov; and four writers of *publitsistika*, or journalistic writing on social and political matters – Mikhail Antonov, Apollon Kuz'min, Ivan Sinitsyn and Ivan Vasil'ev). It should be noted that chief editors Stanislav Kunyaev and Sergei Vikulov and deputy chief editors Aleksandr Kazintsev and Vladimir Vasil'ev were also leading contributors to the journal during 1981–91. Interviews were conducted with 21 of the selected individuals: the exceptions are Valentin Pikul', Georgii Semenov and Yurii Seleznev, all of whom died before the study was undertaken. I have been grateful to the widow of Georgii Semenov, Elena Semenova, for the opportunity to conduct an interview with her. Where material from interviews has been used in the text, this fact is noted.

This study has paid particular attention to the role of the deputy chief editors in the work of the journal. Six sub-periods, the subjects of individual chapters, are defined on this basis:

1. *February 1981–April 1982: the late Brezhnev period* (chief editor S. Vikulov; deputy chief editors Yu. Seleznev and V. Ustinov)
2. *May 1982–February 1984: Andropov as 'Second' and General Secretary* (chief editor S. Vikulov; deputy chief editors V. Krivtsov and V. Vasil'ev)
3. *February 1984–April 1986: Chernenko in power and Gorbachev's first year* (chief editor S. Vikulov, deputy chief editors V. Korobov and V. Mussalitin)
4. *July 1986–May 1987: Yakovlev and the 'cultural offensive'* (chief editor S. Vikulov; deputy chief editors V. Svininnikov and V. Mussalitin)
5. *June 1987–September 1989: Ligachev and the conservative reaction* (chief editor S. Vikulov; deputy chief editors V. Svininnikov and A. Kazintsev)
6. *January 1990–November 1991: from Gorbachev to El'tsin* (chief editor S. Kunyaev; deputy chief editors D. Il'in and A. Kazintsev).

The text is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1 outlines a theoretical approach to nationalism. Chapter 2 considers Russian nationalist ideology as exemplified by *Nash sovremennik*. Chapters 3–8 review the political relations between the journal and the Soviet authorities (on the basis of the periodization above). Chapter 9, by way of conclusion, offers some thoughts about the role of political ideas, articulated by *Nash sovremennik* in 1981–91, in the post-Soviet period. Appendix 1 provides a summary outline of the operation of *Nash sovremennik* as a Soviet 'thick' journal. Appendix 2 provides brief autobiographical information on the 24 selected writers and editors connected with the journal.

An earlier version of this study was written for a PhD at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies of the University of London. I would like to thank the staff at the School and its library for their assistance. I would also like to thank the British Council for provision of a grant to study for one academic year in Moscow, and the Literary Institute (then 'of the Soviet Union of Writers') for hosting me at that time. I would like to express my thanks to all those who gave generously of their time to be interviewed for the purposes of this study. In this regard I am particularly indebted to the late Vadim Kozhinov and to Valentin Oskotskii. Among supervisors and examiners who have helped me at various stages of my work on this monograph, I would like to thank Peter Duncan, Christopher Binns and Marietta Chudakova. I owe special debts of gratitude to Geoffrey Hosking and Martin Dewhirst. I would also like to thank Luciana O'Flaherty and Daniel Bunyard of Palgrave Macmillan, Ray Addicott of Chase Publishing Services, Tracey Day and Oliver Howard. Needless to say, the shortcomings of this study are mine alone. In recent years I have had the pleasure of working on the human rights programmes of the European Commission and the MacArthur Foundation in the Russian Federation. However, the opinions expressed in this study are personal and should in no way be considered to represent the views of these organizations.

*July 2003*

# A Note on the Text

The system of transliteration is modified Library of Congress, using 'ya' (not 'ia') for 'я', and 'yu' (not 'iu') for 'ю', as in the journal *Europe-Asia Studies*. All personal names are also transliterated according to this system. All translations are the author's, unless otherwise indicated. In references to journals, the model used is 'M. Antonov, "Sluzhenie zemle", *NS*, No. 1, 1983, pp. 125–38'. In the notes, where for convenience reference is made to 'Vasil'ev' this refers to I. Vasil'ev. Reference to V. Vasil'ev always includes the initial V.

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| CPRF | Communist Party of the Russian Federation |
| CPSU | Communist Party of the Soviet Union |
| GKChP | Gosudarstvennyi komitet po chrezvychainomu polozheniyu (State Committee for the State of Emergency) |
| IMEMO | Institut mirovoi ekonomiki i mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii (Institute of World Economy and International Relations [of the USSR Academy of Sciences]) |
| IMLI | Institut mirovoi literatury imeni Gor'kogo (Gor'kii Institute of World Literature) |
| KGB | Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti (Committee of State Security) |
| LDPR | Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia |
| MVD | Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del (Ministry of Internal Affairs) |
| NEP | New Economic Policy |
| NKVD | Narodnyi komissariat vnutrennikh del (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) |
| *NS* | *Nash sovremennik* (*Our Contemporary*) |
| RSFSR | Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic |
| TASS | Telegrafnoe agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza (Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union) |
| TsDL | Tsentral'nyi dom literatorov (Central House of Writers) |
| TsKhSD | Tsentr khraneniya sovremennoi dokumentatsii (Centre for the Preservation of Contemporary Documentation) |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| VOOPIK | Vserossiiskoe obshchestvo okhraneniya pamyatnikov istorii i kul'tury (All-Russian Society for the Protection of Monuments of History and Culture) |
| VSKhSON | Vserossiiskii Sotsial-Khristianskii Soyuz Osvobozhdeniya Naroda (All-Russian Social Christian Union for the Freedom of the People) |
| ZhZL | *Zhizn' zamechatel'nykh lyudei* (The Lives of Remarkable People) A series of biographical works published by the Molodaya gvardiya publishing house |

# 1
# Background to the Study

## Nationalism

Nationalism, as a form of political discourse concerned with the legitimacy of government, originated in Western Europe and is based on the claim that there should be congruence between concepts of 'nation' and 'state'.[1] In nationalist discourse, the *nation* is defined, typically on the basis of territorial, cultural and ethnic criteria, as a population group that ought to have 'a state of its own'.[2] The *state*, that sovereign political power and lawful coercive authority in society, is viewed as legitimate when it is 'the state of a particular nation'. Rogers Brubaker has usefully distinguished between *polity-seeking* and *nation-shaping* types of nationalism. The proponents of *polity-seeking* (or *polity-upgrading*) nationalism 'aim to establish or upgrade an autonomous national polity'.[3] *Nation-shaping* (or *nationalizing*) nationalisms aim to 'nationalize an existing polity': they represent the desire of a 'core nation' within a polity to use state power to promote its interests.[4]

The nation, the key concept in nationalist discourse is, as Brubaker has noted, a 'political fiction'.[5] These fictions, the definitions of putative nations, are not based on real typical features of a particular population group.[6] Rather they are the complex product of processes of competition between nationalist claims that, Brubaker suggests, can be considered in terms of a 'political field'.[7] Nationalism in this view is a '*field of differentiated and competitive positions or stances* adopted by different organizations, parties, movements or individual political entrepreneurs'.[8] At any one time in a society these definitions tend to exist in many versions and are in a process of constant flux (Anthony Smith has referred to the 'protean' nature of nationalism).[9] The 'fiction' of the nation is nonetheless a powerful one. As the 'imagined community', in Benedict

Anderson's phrase, nationalism has come to permeate the common sense of everyday politics in much of the world, and at the same time, as a kind of modern secular religion, has given sense to many people's lives, and indeed motivated them to kill, or sacrifice their lives, in the name of the nation.[10]

## Nationalism in Russia – popular and statist tendencies

Nationalism in Russia, as elsewhere, has been profoundly influenced by local political, social, economic and cultural conditions. Located in a radically non-Western society where the state – at once imperial, authoritarian and politically repressive – enjoyed a great degree of autonomy, civil society was weakly developed, and modernity fragmented and partial, Russian nationalism has displayed a bifurcation between two tendencies that can be denoted as *popular* and *statist*. Russian *popular* nationalism, oriented first and foremost towards the nation as the supreme object of loyalty and reverence, best illustrates the influence of the Western ideology of nationalism on Russian social thought. Historically, nationalism as it arose in Western Europe (England, France and later Germany) was essentially *popular* and *polity-seeking* in character. In these societies, civil society was relatively strong and influential in relation to the state. Nationalist discourse developed as a means by which elites outside the state sought to claim and justify an increase in influence over state policy, practices and institutions by referring to the rights of a 'nation' ('the people'). Variants of this popular nationalism reflected the societies in which they developed. Liberal nationalisms – 'individualistic' in England,[11] 'civic' and 'collectivistic' in France[12] – were closely related to the development of a democratic polity, linked to notions of individual rights and the rule of law. In Germany, where no 'national state' existed, an ethnic conception of the nation based largely on language developed.[13] Crucially for the future development of nationalism, ethnic popular nationalism did not have at its foundation a democratic view of politics and was therefore more widely open to manipulation in an authoritarian political context.

Nationalist discourse reached Russia, primarily in its ethnic variant via Germany, in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Since then, the dominant forms of the popular tendency in Russian nationalism have rejected liberal, civic versions in favour of a nationalism that absorbed many aspects of traditional Russian political culture (authoritarianism, collectivism, egalitarianism) and was based on notions of the solidarity, mutual commitment and collective identity of a Russian nation (*narod*)

defined in restrictive ethnic terms.[14] Popular ethnic nationalism, exemplified by the Slavophile thinkers of the mid-nineteenth century, created an ideal image of the Russian community, embodied in a mythic Golden Age of the communal life of Russian Orthodox peasants.[15] The construction of this myth can be seen as the result of an 'identity crisis' provoked by the impact of social changes that were perceived as Western in origin.[16] This preponderance of *ethnic* popular nationalism vis-à-vis other variants was strengthened in conditions in which Russian authoritarian political culture was hostile to the development of liberal ideas. Consequently, liberal forms of popular nationalism in most historical periods had little influence and proved attractive to only a small minority of Westernized political opposition, although on occasion these groups could have a significant impact on developments in Russia, as for example in the Decembrists' attempted coup of 1825 or the 'democratic revolution' of 1988–91.[17]

The Russian popular nationalist tendency faced a dilemma that may be described as a deeply rooted 'existential' uncertainty, in terms of the basic orientations of the ideology and its adherents. Like any popular nationalism, the Russian variety was fundamentally and instinctively polity-seeking since, in the nationalist view, a national state is the chief of the 'attributes of nationhood' that a nation needs in order to survive.[18] Yet, since the beginnings of the Russian Empire in the 1550s, there had been no clear territorial distinction between a Russian homeland and imperial colonies.[19] From the predominant perspective within Russian popular nationalism, therefore, the only state with which the Russian people could realistically identify was an imperial polity populated by many ethnic groups other than the Russians. Russia's popular nationalists, moreover, tended to regard this state – imperial and on occasion ruthlessly Westernizing, as exemplified by Russia under Peter the Great – with hostility. Consequently, they were attracted to countervailing, anti-imperial and polity-seeking myths related to the ideas of 'Rus'' (Russia) or 'Svyataya Rus'' (Holy Russia) as a pre-imperial, ethnically homogeneous realm.[20] Yet in the mind-set of the popular nationalists, this uncertainty regarding the fundamental nature of the Russian state remained unresolved.

Statist Russian nationalism, on the other hand, illustrates best the influence of Russian conditions on Western political discourse. In this tendency, the state – imperial, powerful and authoritarian, unhindered by democratic institutions – is viewed as the quasi-sacred embodiment and fulfilment of the nation. In this quintessentially *Russian* type of nationalism – state-ist rather than nation-alist – the state has hypertrophied to become the senior partner in the nation/state dialogue, largely

supplanting the nation as the primary object of loyalty and reverence. The legitimacy of the imperial state is axiomatic, as is its nation-shaping role: the 'nation' needs to become worthy of the state through processes of cultural homogenization. Drawing on the popular-nationalist ethnic definition of the Russian people, the traditionally high value placed on state power in Russian political culture and the strong influence of Orthodoxy, that emphasized the uniqueness of the Russian state in its role as the embodiment of God's will, the state has become for Russia's statist nationalists – intellectuals, officials and citizens alike – that 'modern faith' that nationalism has been in much of the West for the last two centuries.[21]

Yet like popular Russian nationalism, statist nationalism, for all its bravado, had an element of what might be called a fundamental, 'existential' uncertainty. Russian nation-shaping, statist nationalism historically existed in an imperial polity where ethnic Russians were but the largest single ethnic group among many, and lacked nationalist consciousness; state powerholders were generally loath to act and think as Russian nationalists; and furthermore there was no open politics through which to achieve nationalist goals. Statist nationalists sought the explanation for their political weakness variously in enemies, internal or external, real or imaginary.[22] Anti-Western, xenophobic, anti-Semitic and racist tendencies became embedded in statist nationalism, interwoven with an endemic proclivity to conspiracy theory. This tendency, that pretended to look 'outwards' towards groups and organizations beyond the Russian ethnic group, was in reality an inward-looking movement that bred in the imaginations of Russia's statist nationalists, in the peculiar closed conditions of Russian politics, as in a hothouse, strange visions of evil.

These two Russian nationalist tendencies, popular and statist, shared many common features, including those typical of Russian political culture that both had absorbed: authoritarianism, collectivism and egalitarianism, and a rejection of Western notions of civic rights and democratic politics. There also existed what may be described as a symbiotic relationship between the two, deriving from the weaknesses of each tendency. For popular nationalists, the statists offered a certainty about the true nature of Russian statehood (that it was imperial), which could assuage, to some extent, what has been described as their 'existential' uncertainty. Statists also offered a plethora of theory and examples of the 'Other' – a range of enemies and scapegoats – that proved attractive to some popular nationalists in explaining the ills of

the Russian people. For the statists, on the other hand, popular nationalists offered a convincing and often artistically rich portrait of Russian ethnicity upon which to found their own vision of the Russian nationalist polity.

The two tendencies also shared one common weakness which lay at the heart of their self-definitions. A 'Russian nationalist' could be said to be someone who, by adopting the Western discourse of nationalism, had taken a step towards being 'Western', being 'like people in the West', and to have begun to look at Russia through Western eyes. The development of nationalist discourse in Russia from the nineteenth century was itself evidence that Russian elites were increasingly educated and attracted by contemporary Western models of society. The education of Russian elites was strongly influenced by Western culture, and imbued with nationalist ideas.[23] Yet Russian nationalists used this Western ideology as a means to establish, and subsequently defend 'from Western influence', an identity that they perceived as distinctly non-Western and under threat from the kind of modernity originating in the West (a modernity itself closely identified with nationalism, as for example in the economically successful and politically powerful 'national' states of Britain and France).[24] Indeed, nationalists in Russia, popular and statist, tended to be strongly anti-Western, an attitude larded with feelings of envy and hatred towards the West, despite a frequent lack of accurate knowledge about that region of the world, tending even to define their own identity in terms of a negation of the West.[25]

A further feature these two nationalist tendencies shared was that they both developed as parts of a common, bounded cultural world. Writers such as Miroslav Hroch and Anthony Smith have pointed out the key role that scholarly, literary and artistic elites can play in an early stage of the development of nationalism.[26] In Russia, the standardization of the printed Russian language in the eighteenth century, and the subsequent growth of reading publics in the nineteenth, created the conditions for the development of the nationalist 'imagined community', with a leading role played by imaginative literature.[27] As a result of the tsarist repression of participative politics, literature became a major vehicle for the indirect expression of political ideas.[28] Russian writers acquired a special sense of 'mission', and literary journals such as *Sovremennik*, *Otechestvennye zapiski*, *Moskovskii vestnik* and *Polyarnaya zvezda* became centres of intellectual life.[29] In the case of Russian nationalism, literature came to be regarded as the preeminent cultural artefact expressing the national entity.

**The imperial tsarist state**

The interests of the Russian imperial state lay in maintaining the empire and in keeping up with its rivals – during the nineteenth century primarily the Western states and empires of Britain, France, Germany and Austro-Hungary. For the Russian imperial elites strong in their imperial consciousness, the ideas of nationalism were for smaller peoples, not for the Russian empire-builders. Legitimacy of the empire was not based on a concept of *nation*, but on autocratic traditions, the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church, military success, territorial expansion and coercion.[30] For these elites, the rise of nationalist ideology represented primarily a threat as potential separatism.[31] Nation-shaping types of Russian nationalism that could potentially be supportive of state legitimacy were also viewed with suspicion. *Russian* ethnic nationalism could potentially also disrupt interethnic relations in the Empire and make governance more difficult. After all, not only was the imperial population multiethnic (albeit with a numerically dominant Russian ethnic group) but this ethnic heterogeneity was reflected in the make-up of the Russian imperial administration.[32] Moreover, for many members of Russian elites, the predominant anti-Westernism of Russia's nationalists was a hindrance in the way of effective policy. Russia's rulers had an ambivalent attitude to the West, which was at times a threat, but also a source of innovative, modernizing ideas, institutions and technologies that could be adapted to increase the state's economic strength and security.

Nonetheless, when traditional sources of power were perceived as failing, as they increasingly were in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian nationalism did offer a resource to strengthen regime legitimacy. The policy of russification, promoting ethnic homogenization on the basis of the language, culture and ethnic interests of Russians as a 'core nation', was seen as a useful instrument to preserve and strengthen the empire and enhance its ability to mobilize human resources. As a result, despite ambivalence on this question, in the course of the nineteenth century the Russian state moved to adopt an 'official nationalism' based on a statist, nation-forming and ethnic Russian nationalism.[33] In its more extreme forms, and in particular in the final revolutionary years of the tsarist regime from 1905, this 'official nationalism' took the form of support from official sources – often including the patronage of Tsar Nicholas II, his court and government – for anti-Semitism and radical nationalist groups such as the Union of the Russian People.[34]

State moves to co-opt ethnic nationalism by promoting 'official' nationalism generated a polarization among the Russian nationalist intelligentsia. Popular nationalist intellectuals did not always relish the prospect of having to choose between what Smith has referred to as a 'popular base' and the 'organs of the state' (a choice between opposition and collaboration); statist nationalists tended to welcome this development.[35] As a result of this process, while representatives of the minority *liberal* popular nationalism tended to move further towards opposition, and therefore often beyond nationalism either towards liberalism per se or to socialist ideologies, *ethnic* nationalists (popular and statist) tended to converge towards versions of statist nationalism, closer to 'official nationalism'.[36] As the Russian state made allies amongst the Russian nationalists, Russian nationalism became progressively more ethnic and statist.[37]

**The imperial Soviet state**[38]

Tsarist experiments with 'official nationalism' were swept aside in 1917 by a new and cruder form of statist ideology, Bolshevik communism. The Bolsheviks ruthlessly set about restoring central authority in the imperial territories, at the same time claiming they were adherents of a doctrine – Marxism-Leninism – that was neither imperialist nor nationalist.[39] The new Soviet Union was to be neither empire nor nation but a community of equals in which all ethnic groups, living in harmony as they moved towards the communist future, would be Sovietized but not russified. However, Russian nationalism was to return to haunt this new Soviet imperial polity during its brief historical life in many guises.

Marxism-Leninism as a ruling ideology presented a number of difficulties for the Soviet elite, in particular in terms of its capacity to mobilize public support.[40] Proclaimed as a modernizing doctrine, in fact Soviet Marxism-Leninism, as Tim McDaniel has pointed out, was installed as the 'Truth', on which the rulers alone had a monopoly, and drew heavily on traditional Russian political culture.[41] Unfortunately for the Bolsheviks, their ideology included quite specific claims relating to the goals of modernization, such as the provision of consumer goods, the promise of future economic abundance or the creation of a just and equitable society. Consequently, Marxism-Leninism was vulnerable to disproof. The experience of everyday life in the USSR, and the rapid economic and technological development in the post-war West, progressively demonstrated the regime to be failing in terms of its declared goals.

As Marxism-Leninism failed to provide sufficient legitimization for the regime, Soviet leaders drew on tsarist traditions of Russian nationalism to engage the loyalty of the Russian ethnic population.[42] This process, closely linked with the name of Iosif Dzhugashvili (Stalin), began as early as the 1920s when the Bolshevik leaders turned their backs on world revolution in favour of the notion of 'socialism in one country' (a circumstance paralleled by the recognition extended to the new Bolshevik empire as the embodiment of Russian imperial aspirations by elements within the émigré community, the so-called *smenovekhovtsy* or Eurasians).[43] A more far-reaching modification of Bolshevik mythology in the direction of Russian nationalism was evident in the 'Great Retreat' of the 1930s, when tsarist motifs and practices were adopted on a greater scale under Stalin.[44] During the Great Patriotic War, Stalin's introduction of Russian political myths into Soviet political life took on a mass character.[45] Despite occasional retreats, this process of infiltration of Marxist-Leninist doctrine by Russian nationalism was continuous and by the post-war period had gone so far that a paradigm of official Soviet thinking developed that included elements of Russian ethnic and statist nationalism, anti-Westernism and anti-Semitism, that one scholar has called 'hostile isolationism'.[46]

Despite the anti-nationalist tenets of Bolshevism, the Soviet authorities paradoxically showed themselves keen in practice to institutionalize notions of nation and nationality. From 1932 with the introduction of internal passports, each Soviet citizen had their nominal ethnicity fixed in 'entry no. 5'. Formal recognition of territorial 'nations' was built in to the system of federalism and the authorities encouraged the development of local elites in these territorial units, resulting in the creation of proto-nations in 'national' republics.[47] The authorities also sought to promote what in practice was a nation-shaping policy at the federal level in order to generate a Soviet identity, a policy made plain in the Khrushchev period with the declaration of the USSR as a 'state of the whole people'.[48] These two aspects of Soviet policy fostered the creation of 'multiple identities' among Soviet citizens.[49]

In the case of the ethnic Russians, however, this 'multiple identity' was weak on three counts. Firstly, it was hindered by the Russians' predominantly imperial mentality, a mentality strengthened by the fact that Soviet identity, based largely on Russian language and culture, tended to be more Russian than anything else. Secondly, allegiance to the 'Russian' republic remained weak.[50] The RSFSR as a territorial or institutional entity was a poor embodiment of Russian nationalist sentiment and its boundaries had no symbolic significance for ethnic

Russians.[51] Thirdly, Soviet nation-shaping policy, which may be described as a 'wager on the ethnic Russians', in practice encouraged Russians to identify with the Union rather than with the RSFSR. The Russians, the largest ethnic group, with a presence throughout the Soviet Union's territories, served as an important unifying factor for the imperial state. Such a policy was a natural counterpart to the russification inherent in empire-wide Soviet policies, and one that would counterbalance nationalist tendencies among non-Russian minorities.[52] When in the last decades of Soviet rule there was evidence that Russian imperial consciousness was weakening, and identification with the RSFSR was increasing, this was a major failure of Soviet policy. By 1975 the traditional net outflows of population from the RSFSR to the non-Russian republics had been reversed; during 1976–80 the net inflow to the RSFSR was 725,000. At the same time, resentment among ethnic Russians grew with regard to what they perceived to be the professional and educational privileges of ethnic minorities.[53]

### The Khrushchev period

Khrushchev's term as General Secretary was the germinal stage in the development of post-war Russian nationalism. The reduction in the use of coercion by the regime, symbolized by the Twentieth Party Congress of 1956 and Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin, combined with Khrushchev's liberalizing policies in culture, opened up Soviet intellectual life and resulted in an identity crisis among young Russian intellectuals.[54] One attractive resolution of this identity crisis was nationalism, enabling the individual to find a new identity in the collective of the 'nation'.[55] Under Khrushchev, intellectuals were able to reassess in relative freedom, if not always in public fora, their attitudes on many issues, including Russian and Soviet history, the Orthodox Church, the legitimacy of the Soviet regime, Stalin, and the tremendous social changes wrought by Soviet power – the transformation from 'community' [*Gemeinschaft*] to 'society' [*Gesellschaft*] as a result of rapid and forced state-led processes of modernization (urbanization, collectivization and the destruction of traditional beliefs and ways of life).[56]

This new intellectual life was poured into traditional Russian bottles: the Russian 'thick' journals. These journals, like Anderson's novels and newspapers, were to provide the 'technical means' for generating the 'imagined community that is the nation'.[57] The monthly journals, bearers of pre-revolutionary cultural tradition, also bore the marks of a nascent civil society. In the process of publishing imaginative fiction,

critical and historical literature and journalism, the journals gathered around them informal 'family circles' of fellow thinkers, providing stimulation and a degree of autonomy to intellectuals.[58] Even in the Stalin period, in the absence of open political debate in the Soviet Union, literature and literary criticism had remained *relatively* free, despite the tight censorship and control of publications, if only by means of an obligatory 'Aesopian' language.[59] Not only the writers and editors, but also the Soviet authorities consciously embraced Russian cultural traditions that accorded the artist of the word a special mission as a purveyor of cognitive, moral and spiritual truth.[60] Writers in the more liberal post-Stalin conditions were, as a consequence, able to express a wider range of visions of life and society than could be found in official pronouncements, including views of Russia that drew on her pre-Soviet past, religion and ethnicity.[61]

The authorities displayed a multilevelled approach towards the journals. They were fora for vicarious political debate within the leadership.[62] They enabled intellectuals to act as mediators of ideas among political elites.[63] The journals to varying degrees were allowed to express the views of the intelligentsia, thereby providing a reflection of opinions in society at large. At the same time, the authorities never ceased to see the journals as a means to *manage* opinion within the intelligentsia.[64]

*Novyi mir* played all these roles, as studies of the journal in the 1960s have demonstrated.[65] Under the oversight of the Central Committee and the censorship, chief editor Aleksandr Tvardovskii gathered around the journal a cluster of authors who constituted 'a distinct political interest and opinion group', aggregating opinion and mediating relations among social groups.[66] In the conditions of the Khrushchev 'thaw', Tvardovskii's *Novyi mir* became the home for the two main postwar intellectual currents: a Soviet reformism and a Russian ethnic popular nationalism. The former existed very much within the shell of Marxism-Leninism and was couched largely as a 'return to Leninism' after the 'distortions' of the Stalin years. The latter embodied a view of Soviet society that took a much wider cultural and historical view of the Soviet experiment. The popular nationalist element in *Novyi mir* grew out of a group of writers, known as the 'essayists' (*ocherkisty*), among whom the central figure was Valentin Ovechkin, who, in the 1950s, with Khrushchev's approval, had combined writing on rural themes with campaigning for reform in the countryside.[67] During the 1960s this kind of writing flourished and deepened into a literary school in its own right, known as 'village prose' (its writers known as the 'village writers' – *derevenshchiki*), and boasted some of the best

contemporary Russian writers, such as Aleksandr Yashin, Fedor Abramov, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Vladimir Soloukhin, Sergei Zalygin and Vasilii Belov.[68]

The popularity of 'village prose' reflected the fact that most Soviet urban dwellers (their chief readers) were ethnically Russian and had recent roots in the Russian villages.[69] Implicit in the works of the 'village prose' writers was a nostalgia for a vanished rural, ethnically Russian Golden Age.[70] The appearance of this myth in literature, and the powerful resonance it evoked among Soviet readers, indicated that the modernizing Marxist-Leninist mythology, based on an idea of progress, was failing to legitimize the political system. The popularity of these writers also indicated a growth in ethnic identification as Russian, and therefore in an introspection concerned not with empire, but with nation. During the 1960s 'village prose' became just one of a number of manifestations of a revival in nationalist sentiment among ethnic Russians (other important examples included a revival of interest in Russian Orthodoxy, a concern for the preservation of historical buildings, a commitment to protect the environment and a negative reaction to influences which were perceived as not Russian, be they 'Soviet', 'Western' or from other sources).[71] Western observers noted the politically important role of the *derevenshchiki* as 'a "mouthpiece" for the ethnic awareness growing among larger segments of the Russian population of the Soviet Union'.[72] Commentators referred to a 'Russian ethnic movement'.[73] Moreover, the high profile of village prose in Soviet conditions suggested that it enjoyed powerful political support.[74]

These developments were given an additional impulse because of the manner in which the 'liberalizing' Khrushchev, in pursuit of his reformist goals, sought to revive Marxism-Leninism as the official ideology, while reducing the direct patronage of Russian nationalism that had become traditional in the Stalin era. In some areas of policy, Khrushchev, indeed, evinced a strong antagonism towards Russian nationalist sentiments, notably in his campaign against the Orthodox Church.[75] It was in reaction to these 'anti-Russian' policies that a conservative statist Russian nationalism germinated and spread among the intelligentsia, to be given voice in particular by a young generation of Moscow-based literary critics and historians that included Vadim Kozhinov, Anatolii Lanshchikov, Mikhail Lobanov, Oleg Mikhailov, Petr Palievskii and Sergei Semanov.[76] From this period, the bifurcation between nationalist tendencies, popular and statist, was reflected in a professional distinction whereby representatives of popular nationalism tended to be writers of imaginative literature, while statist nationalists

tended to be literary critics and historians. There were also further, associated, differences that pertained throughout the Soviet post-war period. Popular nationalists were usually born and lived in the provinces, at one remove from the Moscow world of literary and political intrigue. Statist nationalists, on the contrary, were mostly based in the capital and were much more interested in, and adept at, politics. Having a wider range of contacts among the Soviet elite, cultural and political, their writings consequently reflected this environment.

## The Brezhnev compromise

Under Brezhnev, the Soviet regime promoted what can be termed a 'compromise' with Russian nationalism. According to this compromise, Russian nationalist ideology was cultivated, in a strategic manner, as a 'shadow ideology' such that Russian nationalist sentiments were given support on a largely informal basis, but Marxism-Leninism, which rejected Russian nationalism, remained the official ideology. This compromise saw Brezhnev, as a 'realistic' and innately conservative political leader, taking recognition of the facts of Soviet political and social life. The policy was designed to support a conservative politics, maintaining the status quo of the Stalin era, without the terror, and rejecting large-scale reforms (attempts at which had characterized the Khrushchev period). This policy was therefore based on the support of those officials who had risen to power under Stalin (not for nothing did the watchword of the Brezhnev era become 'stability of cadres') and the degree to which Russian nationalism had penetrated Stalinist ideology. Indeed, these Stalin-era officials, in particular in the higher reaches of the party, had become preponderantly Russian (and to some extent Slavic) in ethnic composition.[77] In particular, Brezhnev's 'compromise with Russian nationalism' was designed to meet the demands of the influential group of RSFSR regional party committee (*obkom*) First Secretaries who sought a greater share of resources for the RSFSR and, under Brezhnev, became the most powerful group of Central Committee officials (and the cohort from which the very top echelons of Soviet power, including the Politburo, co-opted new members).[78] A number of key state policies under Brezhnev were targeted precisely to meet the demands of this powerful section of the party elite, for example the significant increase in budgetary funding provided to agriculture in the RSFSR (especially in the so-called non-black earth regions of European Russia) and the funding of military industry, located largely in the RSFSR.[79]

This policy of a 'wager on the Russians' had a number of other advantages. A conservative ideology of this kind could draw on the reserve of legitimacy derived from the regime's victory in the Great Patriotic War when Russian nationalism had a particularly high profile in official policy.[80] It could also draw on nationalism as a source of legitimacy in the post-Stalin circumstances of a reduction in the level of coercion, when Marxism-Leninism was plainly losing its efficacy as a legitimating ideology. The policy also recognized that, since Soviet communism was not going to bring about worldwide revolution, but on the contrary would probably face renewed crises of its hegemony in Eastern Europe, the regime would need to rely in the future on domestic, particularly ethnically Russian, sources of support. The policy would in addition enable the regime to counterbalance the influence of liberal, Westernizing elements within the Soviet intelligentsia. The Brezhnev leadership was well aware that Russian nationalism was in general compatible with anti-Westernism and anti-Semitism, attitudes which could be manipulated with relative ease by the authorities.[81] Unlike Westernizing ideas among the intelligentsia, the conservative Brezhnev leadership considered Russian nationalism a 'safe' ideology in the sense that it was strongly statist and nation-shaping. Liberal, democratic and polity-seeking forms of nationalism were, in their view, weak, and in any case could be suppressed by the censorship and the organs of coercion.

Brezhnev's realism, however, ensured that this policy was distinctly a compromise, and not a wholesale adoption of Russian nationalism. Russian nationalism under Brezhnev remained a 'shadow' ideology, with Marxism-Leninism the overt legitimating world view of the Soviet regime. This represented a consensus among Soviet elites that no Soviet ruler could wholly adopt Russian nationalist ideology since, in a multiethnic polity, it would alienate non-Russian republics and minorities and generate conflicts within the ethnically heterogeneous central Soviet elites.[82] Russian nationalism would also destroy the ability of the Soviet Union to maintain its legitimacy as the world's leading communist state.[83] Nor would it serve to legitimize the Soviet Union in the eyes of the non-communist international community, since it would increase perceptions of the Soviet Union as an empire. The compromise also recognized that the legitimacy of the ruling Soviet elite was ineluctably invested in Marxism-Leninism, an ideology formally hostile to nationalism, and that the regime's legitimacy rested on historical facts such as the overthrow of the 'Russian' imperial regime that had gone before it. A number of key regime policies were also contested by Russian nationalists, for example in relation to the Orthodox Church, social policy and the environment.[84]

The permissiveness that allowed Russian nationalism to develop as a 'shadow ideology' also allowed nationalist discourse to be used in intra-elite conflicts.[85] For the Brezhnev leadership, this was undoubtedly a negative aspect of the policy, yet it was also a recognition of the realities of intraparty debates. Throughout his period in office, Brezhnev was committed to a middle way between two groupings, both of which had their origins in reactions to the Khrushchev period. One, that may be denoted as 'radical conservative' (or neo-Stalinist), fostered an authoritarian statist Russian nationalism, steeped in anti-Western and anti-Semitic sentiments, and pushed for the 'shadow ideology' to become 'real'. Their views were expressed in the statist Russian nationalist line followed by *Molodaya gvardiya*, the journal of the Komsomol (Communist Youth League), in the 1960s.[86] The high-level support behind these publications seems to have originated in the group around Aleksandr Shelepin that was challenging Brezhnev's authority and enjoyed the sympathies of a wide range of lower-level party functionaries, especially in the Komsomol and the KGB.[87]

A second group, opposed to the radical conservatives, may be denoted as 'reformist'. This group pressed for a return to putative 'original values' of Leninism.[88] Its representatives were against the further employment of Russian nationalist ideology, were committed to a moderate reform of the system and to the maintenance of the internationalist Marxist-Leninist ideology. This reform group can be conceptualized as both 'anti-Russian nationalist' and 'anti-Stalinist', viewing Russian nationalism unfavourably as a force for conservatism and one intrinsically linked with Stalinism.[89] The chief proponent of this reformism – albeit in a moderate version – and leading opponent of Russian nationalism in the political leadership was Yurii Andropov, head of the KGB.[90] The quintessential representative in the party of this ideological tendency was Aleksandr Yakovlev, who made his early career in the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee.

After the defeat of the Shelepin group, the political leader who identified most with Russian nationalist tendencies in the latter part of the Brezhnev era was Andrei Kirilenko, senior Central Committee Secretary and Politburo member and an informal leader of RSFSR top party officials, who had been Khrushchev's deputy in the RSFSR Bureau of the Party. Kirilenko made his early career in the Sverdlovsk region and from the mid-1970s oversaw the work of the powerful Central Committee Department of Administrative Organs, responsible for the work of the KGB, the army, the Procuracy, the courts, the Ministry of Justice and the MVD.[91] Kirilenko developed a reputation as a political leader who sympathized with nationalist views and supported their advocates

(under his overlordship, the Department of Administrative Organs promoted Russian nationalist personnel, including for example the statist nationalist Sergei Semanov, who became chief editor of *Chelovek i zakon* in 1976).[92] However, in comparison with Shelepin, Kirilenko was very much a Brezhnev loyalist and an ideological moderate whose sympathies towards the nationalists enabled the regime to control and manipulate Russian nationalism within the boundaries of its role as a 'shadow ideology'.

**The 'politics of inclusion'**

The primary arena in which the Brezhnev compromise with nationalism was played out was the world of culture, and in particular literature in a broad sense, in what has been described by Yitzhak Brudny as the 'politics of inclusion'.[93] Brudny argues that the aim of this 'inclusionary politics', inaugurated by the Brezhnev leadership in early 1966, was to give Russian nationalists an impression of influence over party policy and a 'material stake in the system', while making no systematic concessions to their 'concrete social, political and cultural demands'.[94]

The Soviet leader directly responsible for implementing policy in this area was Mikhail Suslov, 'Second Secretary' in charge of ideology policy. Suslov's chief goal would seem to have been to maintain a balance between literary and ideological groupings – the reformists and the radical conservatives – having as his maxim 'Don't rock the boat' (*ne raskachivat' lodku*).[95] Such a position, it might be said, would be bound to please no one, and indeed, by the late Brezhnev period, this policy of 'balance' was perceived by some reformists as adherence to Russian nationalist positions, and by nationalists as adherence to reformism.[96] Both the reformists and the Russian nationalists tended to exaggerate the degree of patronage enjoyed by their opponents. Nonetheless, the patronage of Russian nationalism that Suslov, in fulfilling what Gorbachev has called the Second Secretary's 'stabilizing role', did mean that a string of officials occupying key positions in his ideological administration came to have reputations as Russian nationalist sympathizers, including, for example, Evgenii Tyazhel'nikov, head of the Propaganda Department since 1977, Vasilii Shauro, Suslov's long-serving head of the Central Committee Department of Culture (since 1965) and Suslov's aide Vladimir Vorontsov.[97]

Evidence for patronage of Russian nationalism and nationalists as practised by the Brezhnev administration includes the creation of VOOPIK (Vserossiiskoe obshchestvo okhraneniya pamyatnikov istorii i

kul'tury – the All-Russian Society for the Protection of Monuments of History and Culture), founded by decree of the RSFSR Council of Ministers in 1965, membership of which reached 7 million members (albeit many purely formal) by 1972, the growing influence of the RSFSR Writers' Union, and patronage of Russian nationalist sentiment in the legal press, for example the statist Russian nationalism in the Komsomol journal *Molodaya gvardiya* in the mid-1960s under the chief editorship of Anatolii Nikonov, and the publication of a series of biographies of Russian cultural and historical figures by leading nationalist writers, 'The Lives of Remarkable People'.[98] The chief role in this cultural policy was allotted to the popular nationalist *derevenshchiki*, or village prose writers, who received powerful official patronage under Brezhnev.[99]

### *Nash sovremennik*

During the Brezhnev period, *Nash sovremennik* was not only the chief vehicle for the publication of the *derevenshchiki*, but also a major instrument in the hands of the political leadership used to mould intelligentsia ideological tendencies, promoting a Russian nationalism that was at once ethnic, popular and nation-shaping and seeking to separate it from Westernizing, liberal and polity-seeking tendencies.

*Nash sovremennik* was initially created as a quarterly almanac with a rural orientation in 1956, as such reflecting both the new post-Stalin cultural ferment and the agricultural concerns of the Khrushchev leadership.[100] In 1957, in the aftermath of the events in Hungary the previous year, the journal was placed under the control of the conservative RSFSR Writers' Union, a newly created body intended by the authorities to act as a counterweight to the large and liberal Moscow Writers' Organization.[101] By the mid-1960s, *Nash sovremennik* had become a monthly 'thick' journal, attracting attention as the chief place of publication of the *derevenshchiki*.[102]

In June 1968, during the Czechoslovakian crisis, and as a response to the increasing danger of liberalizing ideas penetrating from the West, Mikhail Suslov gave support to Russian nationalists, conceding to the wish of the RSFSR Writers' Union to substantially upgrade *Nash sovremennik* – by increasing the journal's size and print run (against the opinion of the Department of Propaganda, where the reformist Aleksandr Yakovlev was then deputy head).[103] As part of this reorganization Sergei Vikulov, a minor poet and literary editor from the Vologda region who had recently come to Moscow to join the Komsomol journal *Molodaya gvardiya* as deputy chief editor, was appointed chief editor at *Nash sovremennik*.

From the time of his appointment, Vikulov, in close association with the influential deputy chairman of the RSFSR Writers' Union, Yurii Bondarev, proceeded to gather around the journal a group of Russian nationalist-minded writers, literary critics, historians and journalists. The chief intention of the authorities was to split the writers formerly gathered around Tvardovskii's *Novyi mir*, so that the popular nationalist *derevenshchiki* and the reformists henceforth published in different journals, the former being encouraged to publish in *Nash sovremennik* where liberals were not welcome. At the same time, *Nash sovremennik*'s openness to statist nationalist or neo-Stalinist sentiment was strictly limited in order to avoid a repetition of the situation that arose around *Molodaya gvardiya* in the 1960s when elite political conflicts had been exacerbated by the emergence of a statist neo-Stalinism as the overt ideology of that journal.

The following year, as the political fallout of the Czechoslovakian crisis continued, an alliance between Russian nationalist literary authorities and conservative party forces became clear when eleven writers and editors – including the newly appointed chief editor of *Nash sovremennik* – signed an open letter in *Ogonek* criticizing a liberal article in *Novyi mir* by Andrei Dement'ev.[104] The fact that this alliance had official backing was shown by the events of February 1970 when the editorial board of *Novyi mir* was purged and Tvardovskii resigned. Moreover, in December 1969 the print run of *Nash sovremennik* had risen to 130,000 (for the first time in its history higher than that of *Novyi mir* at 127,250).

However, once the danger of the Prague Spring was passed, Suslov demonstrated that his aim was a balance of ideological forces, and not a victory for the Russian nationalists.[105] In March 1970 Vladimir Stepakov, an official of Russian nationalist sympathies, was dismissed as head of the Propaganda Department and his reformist deputy, Aleksandr Yakovlev, took his place. The same year, Anatolii Nikonov, chief editor of *Molodaya gvardiya*, and Yurii Melent'ev, deputy head of the Department of Culture, both sympathizers of the Russian nationalists, were dismissed. Melent'ev was replaced by Al'bert Belyaev, an official closer to Yakovlev.

The Brezhnev leadership continued to seek for ideological balance following the start of détente. In 1972, the year of President Nixon's visit to Moscow, Brezhnev and Suslov seem to have judged it politic to strengthen relations with the Russian nationalists.[106] Conservative statist nationalists, in the person of new chief editor Anatolii Ivanov, were given back control over *Molodaya gvardiya*. During the period January

1971 until October 1972 six issues of a Russian nationalist *samizdat* ('self-publishing' or the informal circulation of typescripts that had not been published through official channels) publication, *Veche*, were published and circulated without official hindrance. In the course of 1972, as a prophylactic measure against the threat of non-Russian nationalists, examples were made of key leaders in the non-Russian republics: in May Petr Shelest was removed as First Secretary in the Ukraine, and in September Vasilii Mzhavanadze was sacked as First Secretary in Georgia. In this situation, the publication by Aleksandr Yakovlev, acting head of the Propaganda Department, of a major article attacking Russian nationalists, and also nationalism in the non-Russian republics, proved to be a serious political miscalculation that led to his 'exile' to Canada as ambassador in the following year (1973).[107] Yet even while Yakovlev was sent 'west' to Canada (possibly a symbolic move), the party leadership emphasized its even-handedness by demoting Dmitrii Polyanskii, a reputed supporter of the Russian nationalists and First Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers (1965–73), to become USSR Minister of Agriculture (he was subsequently sent 'east' to become ambassador to Japan).

The second half of the 1970s saw a continued strengthening in official support for Russian nationalism as a 'shadow ideology' as the Soviet Union encountered a series of international dilemmas and crises. In 1976, following the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, a symbolic 'opening to the West', *Nash sovremennik*'s print run was raised by two-thirds from 136,000 to over 200,000 (thereby exceeding [at 205,000] for the second time in its history the print run of *Novyi mir* [at 185,000], the latter journal having once again overtaken *Nash sovremennik* in the period that followed the Czechoslovakian crisis). By this time *Nash sovremennik* was described by the leading Western expert on Russian nationalism as 'perhaps the most significant officially permitted literary journal in the Soviet Union'.[108] In 1980, following the invasion of Afghanistan, the print run of *Nash sovremennik* was increased by 50 per cent to 330,000 (and, for the third time in its history, exceeded that of *Novyi mir* [320,000]). The rise of Solidarity in Poland in 1980 intimated that official support for Russian nationalists would continue. Indeed, the 1980 celebrations of the 600th anniversary of the victory of Russian forces over the Mongols at Kulikovo Field in 1380 saw the nationalists enjoying what one historian of the period has called a 'virtually unrestricted freedom of expression during the year-long anniversary celebrations'.[109]

Within the Russian nationalist community during the 1970s, meanwhile, anti-Western moods intensified as a result of the policy of détente

and the increasing influence of Western culture in the Soviet Union.[110] On the domestic front there was also increasing dissatisfaction among nationalists with official policies as cultural patronage by the leadership raised nationalists' expectations, but there was little to show in terms of concrete results.[111] Domestic problems, social and economic, continued to mount, including the failure of Brezhnev's agricultural investments to bring about improvements in the collective farms, the destruction of the environment, the decline in the family and the problem of alcoholism.

Yet the fact that Brezhnev's policy towards Russian nationalism was a 'compromise' and nothing more was brought home to the nationalists on a regular basis by the major difficulties with the censor that even *Nash sovremennik*'s leading writers, the recipients of such outstanding official patronage in terms of book runs, prizes and awards, continued to have. These battles with the censorship concerned even the most popular and prize-winning works by the *derevenshchiki*, for example Viktor Astaf'ev's *King Fish* and Valentin Rasputin's *Live and Remember* and *Farewell to Matera*.[112]

The weakness of the nationalists was further illustrated by the affair surrounding publication in *Nash sovremennik* in 1979 of Valentin Pikul''s anti-Semitic novel *At the Final Boundary* that challenged the official interpretation of the 1917 revolution and hinted at parallels between corruption and moral decay at the court of Nicholas II and at the heart of the Brezhnev regime.[113] Vikulov's decision to publish the novel nearly cost him his position as chief editor and resulted in strong official condemnation.[114] Given the complexities of Soviet behind-the-scenes politics, it is not inconceivable that the publication was orchestrated by influential opponents of both Brezhnev and Russian nationalism around Yurii Andropov designed to bring the two into confrontation while at the same time provoking public discussion of corruption at the court of Brezhnev. The affair bore witness to the existence of strong opposition to the Russian nationalists within the party hierarchy, and the increase in intraparty conflict in the period preceding the death of Leonid Brezhnev.

These signs of weakness of the Russian nationalist lobby were missed by those who interpreted the Brezhnev leadership's policy of selective patronage of Russian nationalism (within the terms of a 'shadow ideology') as evidence of a predominance of Russian nationalism in political circles.[115] John Dunlop, in the 1980s, predicted that Russian nationalism 'could become the ruling ideology of state once the various stages of the Brezhnev succession have come to an end'.[116] Aleksandr Yanov argued that the formation of a 'Russian New Right' was

'as important as the formation of the Bolsheviks in 1903',[117] and foretold that these exponents of an 'ideology for a modern counter-reform' would come to power in the foreseeable future.[118]

There were three reasons why Russian nationalism was in fact weaker than it seemed and would be unlikely to take the political centre stage in a post-Brezhnev Soviet polity: the consensus among Soviet politicians that Russian nationalism was not an appropriate ideology to rule a multinational empire; the corresponding, restricted role of Russian nationalism as a 'shadow ideology' for intra-elite opposition; and the fact that the pro-reform grouping within the Soviet leadership, represented first by Andropov and then by Gorbachev, was in reality to prove far stronger than its conservative opponents.[119]

# 2
# Russian Nationalism in *Nash sovremennik*

## Popular Russian nationalism: imagining the nation

### A conservative world view

If the essence of popular nationalism was the idealized vision of an ethnic 'Golden Age', a nostalgic vision of a rural past expressed, primarily in 'village prose', as an imaginative representation of the quintessence of a putative 'Russianness', this vision was not an idealization in the sense that the writers imagined traditional peasant life to be something other than it was.[1] On the contrary, they were themselves largely from peasant stock and were well acquainted with what peasant life was like in Soviet times. The idealization was a literary expression of a duality inherent in the popular nationalist's view of the Russian nation: the loss-laden, nostalgic evocation of an irrecoverable past, and an intense awareness of the harsh realities of the present.

This world view of the popular nationalists was a typical conservative reaction to the impact of modernization.[2] It was also a specific reaction to the circumstances of Soviet 'top-down' modernization: collectivization, forced industrialization and rapid urbanization. This Golden Age vision was conservative too in the sense that it absorbed many of the cultural and moral values of traditional Russian rural life: collectivism, patriarchalism, Orthodoxy, an emotional attachment to the land (predominantly regions located in the Russian heartland of the non-black-earth zone of European Russia and Siberia). The popular nationalist looked with the critical eyes of a traditionalist at the present, and with pessimism towards the future. The leading representatives of popular nationalism in *Nash sovremennik* 1981–91 were the three 'village writers' (*derevenshchiki*) Vasilii Belov, Valentin Rasputin and Vladimir Soloukhin.

*Vasilii Belov*

Vasilii Belov's major work of non-fiction, *Harmony*, described in meticulous detail the rural traditions and customs of his native Vologda region in north-west European Russia.[3] His tone was nostalgic: the peasant traditional way of life was dying out, or had already disappeared. For Belov, this way of life was distinguished by its quality of wholeness, the depth of human relations and the closeness of the human community to the natural world. It was, he believed, superior to contemporary urban civilization. Among other things, *Harmony* emphasized the role of religion in the annual round of rural ceremonies and customs associated with birth, baptism, marriage, seasonal field labour and death.[4]

In Belov's autobiographical *Reflections in the Motherland* (the writer's native collective farm was called 'Motherland' ['Rodina']), a harsh realism took the place of nostalgia as Belov described the experiences of his early years.[5] The impact of collectivization on Timonikha, his native village, had been brutal: 'It seems all was very simple: anyone who didn't join the *kolkhoz* [collective farm] was declared a *kulak* [in Bolshevik ideology, a term denoting a wealthy peasant who exploited the labour of poorer peasants] or a boss, they were dekulakized and sent into exile' and 'only cats remained in private hands.'[6] Like many others, his father left the village to make a living. The consequences of the Great Patriotic War (1941–45) were yet more disastrous. Of the men from Timonikha who fought at the front, including Belov's father, none returned alive. Of those who remained in the village, mostly women and children, many died of hunger (both during the war and after). Belov also described the post-war disintegration of the countryside under the impact of migration to the cities (Timonikha survived as a rump of six homes with a population of ten adults).[7]

Belov's third major work, published by *Nash sovremennik* in this period, the novel *Everything Lies Ahead*, was the author's first fictional treatment of city life and on the surface remarkably different.[8] Yet in a sense the novel remained firmly in the tradition of village prose, not as an exercise in idealization of the village, but as a demonization of the city.[9] The novel was strongly anti-Semitic, placing the blame for Russian social ills not only on urban conditions of life, but also on the 'pernicious' influence of Jews, and as such was an illustration of what Greenfeld has termed *ressentiment*, or existential envy, of other ethnic groups.[10] The novel was also an example of the long Russian tradition of conspiracy theories with its hints of a Jewish-Masonic plot.[11] The novel examined the lives of a small circle of members of the Moscow intelligentsia, related by ties of schooling, friendship and marriage, who are depicted

as suffering from a range of 'social ills', a list of which includes alcoholism, pornography, divorce, sexual permissiveness, women's emancipation, aerobics, foreign travel and foreign fashion. Belov's hero, the Russian Medvedev, having spent some years in a prison camp after a disaster at the scientific laboratory where he worked, proclaims on release, 'I am a conservative. I am an inveterate reactionary.' With his long beard, he is not only a conservative, but a Russian nationalist. He soon discovers that his wife has married Brish, an unsympathetically portrayed Jew, who wants to adopt Medvedev's children and take them away to America.[12]

*Valentin Rasputin*

*The Fire* was Valentin Rasputin's first major work of fiction since his 1976 novella *Farewell to Matera* and was in many ways a commentary on the earlier work.[13] *Farewell to Matera* had shown a community destroyed by outside forces – the 300-year-old Siberian village Matera was flooded in order to build a hydroelectric dam in the course of Soviet modernization. *The Fire* depicted a society destroyed from within. Sosnovka, a timber enterprise settlement (*lespromkhoz*) to which some of the inhabitants of Matera had been removed, is a soulless community with no roots in the past nor a sense of future purpose. It is a settlement of a temporary character (after the surrounding forest has been destroyed, the *lespromkhoz* will move to another area, and many of the 'inhabitants', including a semi-criminal element, are in fact just stopping at the settlement for a short time before moving on). The hero of the story, Ivan Egorov, resettled from Matera, struggles to maintain standards of traditional morality in the new settlement. When a fire breaks out in the settlement's stores it exposes the weakness of the community's moral basis. Ivan overcomes his exhaustion to help save the settlement, but most inhabitants show little interest in saving any of the goods (except vodka); some take to pillage. One of Ivan's fellow firefighters is murdered in the confusion. All this while, Matera, lying beneath the waters of the nearby reservoir, represents a vanished Golden Age, a point of reference by which to gauge the extent of present-day decline.

Rasputin's short stories were explorations of intense private experience of individuals which often implied that his characters had a religious faith, although Rasputin refrained from making this explicit. Like *The Fire*, the stories often evoke a sense of conflict between how life is and what it ought to be. Life in these stories has often been 'spoiled'. In *Love as Long as You Live*, a boy experiences the natural world with an

intensity akin to a mystical religiosity and is shocked by the crude behaviour of adults.[14] At the start of the story the boy's grandmother tells him, when he begins explaining to her what he knows about the origins of Man: 'He didn't come from monkeys, but from the devil … If he was from the monkeys, he would hold his tongue and not disgrace himself. But you see, for him, the worse the better. It's all from that one, the Unclean One.'[15]

Rasputin was one of the journal's leading writers to express concern about the state of the environment, in particular Lake Baikal, located in his native region, threatened by industrial pollution. This was one of the key themes of his non-fiction.[16] Rasputin's views can be illustrated by a round table on ecological issues hosted by *Nash sovremennik* at which he stressed the failure to improve the situation at Lake Baikal and, in strongly reformist tones, called for the 'consolidation' of ecologically-minded writers with 'patriotically-minded scientists'.[17] He expressed indignation that the cellulose plant on Lake Baikal had hidden from him – 'a full citizen of his country' – all the relevant statistics concerning the ecological state of the lake.[18] However, he evinced some hopes for the new era of 'openness' then beginning, telling the scientists that the future of *glasnost'* would 'depend, to a significant degree, on our alliance with you'.[19] In later writing, Rasputin was to blame not Soviet functionaries and bureaucratization for Russia's twentieth-century spiritual and ecological ills, but Western capitalism and the imported spirit of commercialism.[20]

### *Vladimir Soloukhin*

Vladimir Soloukhin in his writing looked back not only to the village life of his childhood but also to pre-revolutionary Russian cultural traditions. For Soloukhin, the second half of the Russian nineteenth century was a 'bright and powerful explosion of Russian national consciousness [*russkogo natsional'nogo samosoznaniya*], of the rebirth of national [*natsional'nogo*] art'.[21] He lamented the destruction in the Soviet period of many of Moscow's architectural monuments, which he considered important as symbols of Russian identity.[22] For Soloukhin, not only Soviet power but also Western mass culture were threats to Russian culture.[23]

Soloukhin stressed the importance of christianity for Russia, with examples ranging from the works of the religious painter Pavel Korin to the village Orthodox church.[24] He was also *Nash sovremennik*'s most outspoken believer, arguing directly for the existence of God on the

journal's pages. Three particular examples are noteworthy. In 1981 Soloukhin wrote, 'In the twentieth century no right-thinking person can have any doubt but that in the world, in the Universe, … there exists a higher principle of intelligence [*vysshee razumnoe nachalo*].'[25] On another occasion (in 1982) he declared that, 'If we consider any of the mechanisms of nature … we cannot but come to one very simple conclusion: it has been thought out in advance [*produmano*].'[26] In 1984 he wrote that every person is 'attached by all one's roots, by all existence, to the earth, but with the soul [*dushoi*] continually striving somewhere or other to the heavens [*v nebo*]'.[27]

Soloukhin's popular nationalist views also underlay his controversial decision not to sign a letter in support of a project by the human rights organization Memorial to build a monument to Stalin's victims. For Soloukhin, the millions of Russian villagers who had been killed or brutalized by the Soviet regime during the Civil War and collectivization deserved commemoration before the far smaller number of officials of various kinds who were murdered as a result of Stalin's purges of the bureaucracy:

> I refused to sign the Memorial letter then, not because I consider the victims of the Stalinist repressions unworthy of commemoration, but because, having commemorated them, at the same time we throw into the shadows of forgetfulness all the other victims, and they are hundreds and thousands of times more numerous and bloody.[28]

## Popular Russian nationalism and reform

In addition to its innate conservatism, Russian popular nationalism had a significant reformist element that was pragmatic in its approach to the issues of the economy and society and exhibited a co-operative attitude to party and state authorities. Reformist views were widespread among popular nationalists and derived from their critical attitude to Soviet realities and their concern for the lives of ordinary Russian people. The two chief exponents of reformist popular nationalism writing for *Nash sovremennik* were Ivan Vasil'ev and Mikhail Antonov.

### *Ivan Vasil'ev*

Ivan Vasil'ev was the journal's leading writer on rural affairs. His reformist views were founded on a sense of nostalgia, and reverence, for the pre-collectivization traditional Russian village [*sel'skii mir, obshchina*] that he shared with his fellow popular nationalists. For Vasil'ev, Russia's

independent and self-reliant rural communities, based on the essentially democratic village assemblies (*skhody*) and work units (*arteli*) were an ideal form of social organization.[29] Vasil'ev argued that rural reforms should use these traditions as a basis for social innovation, harnessing what he called the peasant's 'private property' psychology to combat the ill effects of bureaucratic management.[30] Reforms should focus on individuals and their needs, rather than on the production process.[31] He argued that collective farms should become economically self-reliant, giving their workers a material interest in their work.[32] Vasil'ev wanted to see every agricultural worker become what he called a *khozyain*, someone who had the psychology, benefits and responsibilities of ownership, though not necessarily having ownership in a legal sense.[33] He supported the encouragement of a greater degree of social differentiation in the countryside, condemning what he called the ideology of social 'levelling' (*uravnilovka*).[34]

As early as 1981 Ivan Vasil'ev was openly critical of party policy under Brezhnev for giving insufficient resources to the non-black-earth region and failing to come to grips with the region's post-war problems.[35] He criticized the inefficiency of the agricultural bureaucratic administration that suppressed individual initiative and destroyed craftsmanship and a sense of responsibility.[36] He complained about the poor provision of services, including cultural services, to the rural areas and the creation of excessively large farms, where workers lived in dull, urban-style blocks of flats and took to alcohol.[37] He pointed out that the abandonment of small-scale family cottages offended national traditions.[38]

Vasil'ev's views were closely in line with the approaches advocated by Gorbachev's reformist leadership, and when the latter came to power, the writer took pains to put his arguments in the context of current party policy.[39] He argued that agricultural production should be freed from party tutelage.[40] He advocated the introduction of co-operative associations (*arteli*) and, for field work, 'independent teams' (*beznaryadnye khozyaistvennye zven'ya*), in particular the family 'work-team', where 'father and son' worked together, as the most appropriate form of agricultural organization.[41] These 'teams', he argued, were effective because they were closest to traditional forms of work organization in Russia.[42] He was, in effect, advocating a revival of the family farm.

*Mikhail Antonov*

Mikhail Antonov wrote widely on economic affairs. In the first half of the 1980s he made a name for himself as a fierce critic of the bureaucratic Soviet economy, arguing in his articles that the economic plan worked

in favour of bureaucratic departmental interests and against the interests of the national economy.[43] Soviet planning, including the reformist 'intensification', merely served to aggravate imbalances and create distortions, inhibiting innovation and generating a bad moral attitude among workforce and management. He traced the consequences of this to the decline in morality and family life, the spread of what he considered a selfish consumer mentality and an increase in crime and alcoholism.

In the second half of the 1980s Antonov's writings expressed the ardent conviction that Russian Orthodox ideals were relevant to economic and social life. Orthodox ideals, particularly that of *sobornost'*, or spiritual community, had been embodied, he claimed, in the traditional Russian village.[44] In the Soviet period Orthodoxy, he argued, had again profoundly penetrated socialism. The future economic development of the country, he was convinced, also lay in the deepening of the influence of Orthodoxy on society and social thought.[45] Russia had rejected capitalism, he believed, in the name of the higher ideals of a distinctive Russian spirituality, which accorded material wealth a relatively low place in its hierarchy of values. He advocated a 'national idea' that would be founded on a synthesis of socialism with the traditions of Russian thought, religious and secular, adding to the canonical texts of Marxism-Leninism the works of Russian thinkers (from Ilarion and Vladimir Monomakh, through Tolstoi, Dostoevskii, Sergei Bulgakov and Dmitrii Mendeleev to Abramov and Rasputin).[46] This 'national idea' would enable Russia to reject the ideas of Western thinkers destructive of Russian national traditions.[47] Antonov also believed that technology was 'nation-specific', in that it 'carries within itself the imprint of the [national] cast of mind and [national] character of its creator', citing Russian tanks of the Second World War as an example of 'one of the embodiments of a specifically Russian genius' (he also expressed admiration for Japan as an example of the kind of successful 'nationalization' of economic modernization that Russia could emulate).[48]

Antonov's thought also showed strong Manichaean and messianic tendencies. The economy, he suggested (in the period of *perestroika*), was 'one of the manifestations of the universal struggle … of Christ and Antichrist'.[49] Only the Orthodox Church, the vital guardian of moral and spiritual values, he contended, could enable the Russian intelligentsia to regain its sense of responsibility and patriotism.[50] He predicted that the lower orders of the Church would provide the future leaders of the country, who would be morally pure, 'such as the world has not seen, perhaps, since the times of the Apostles'.[51] 'Russia's

calling', he wrote, 'is again to become the spiritual leader of the world.'[52] Somewhat paradoxically, Antonov argued that the USSR could achieve its rightful leading position in the world (thereby winning the admiration of other countries and becoming a model for them to emulate) only if it proved able to reform its economy and at the same time isolate itself from the rest of the world.[53]

In practical terms, Antonov's ideas were an attempt to combine a strong, centralized state, preserving key features of the administrative-command system, with a system of greater rights to individual enterprises and, at the local level, communal self-government with a revival of the traditional Russian village communes.[54] At this local level, Antonov argued, the future of the Soviet economy would be decided by individual initiative and the work of devoted individuals (*podvizhniki*), in whom he saw evidence of a growth of conscious citizenship, of spiritual and moral searchings, and concern for national economic problems.[55]

By the end of the Gorbachev period Antonov was denouncing *perestroika* as a programme of reform lacking a national idea.[56] He became increasingly statist in his outlook. This took him full circle, turning him in the end into a supporter of the Soviet bureaucratic command economy that he had begun by criticizing. Russia, he claimed, had been taken over by a cosmopolitan bourgeoisie serving the interests of foreign capital who had their ideological roots in the views of Bukharin and his supporters in the 1920s, and had their immediate origins in the black market of the Brezhnev period.[57] The aim of this bourgeoisie was the Americanization of the USSR and its transformation into a colony of transnational corporations.[58] The only hope of opposing this group, he argued, was represented by those Soviet bureaucrats and bosses whose self-interest had been best served in the pre-reform era.[59] For all their faults, Antonov believed, managers of this type had demonstrated by their industrial achievements in the Stalinist era that they had an effective *social idea*. Possession of 'a more or less clear social ideal' had meant that Stalin and Khrushchev had embodied the principle of statehood (*gosudarstvennost'*), and had given them a 'right to power' (in Stalin's case, 'socialism in one country'; in Khrushchev's, 'building communism in a generation').[60]

Antonov also became progressively more outspokenly anti-Western. He argued that any kind of influence from the West – whether it was in the form of a 'consumer psychosis', or a 'trading mentality' – could only be harmful.[61] Westerners, he alleged, lived not as humans but as 'super-occupied workers enslaved to primitive amusements' in a society

imbued with a spirit of 'cash and individualism', and hence were morally and spiritually bankrupt.[62] On the other hand, 'the temptations of the flourishing West' might hinder Russia from achieving its 'high historical calling', which was 'to overcome all difficulties and crises and find her own path of development'.[63]

## Statist Russian nationalism: legitimizing the state

Statist Russian nationalists were agreed that the state was the supreme embodiment of the nation. Yet among statist nationalists there was disagreement as to the nature of the *legitimate* Russian state. One group, the 'Red' statist nationalists, accepted the communist regime as legitimate and compatible with the interests of ethnic Russians. Such views were typical of literary officials with Russian nationalist sympathies who worked closely with the Central Committee and the censorship. They were also typical of the generation who fought in the Second World War (*frontoviki*), for whom the legitimacy of the state derived primarily from that victory. A second group, the 'White' statist nationalists, argued that the communist regime had destroyed legitimate state power in 1917 and had installed an ideology of Western origin, Marxism-Leninism, inimical to Russian national interests. White statist nationalists were typically of a younger generation of disaffected nationalist intellectuals, 'children' of Khrushchev's Twentieth Party Congress (*shestidesyatniki*). They had a sense of themselves as outsiders in the Soviet literary-political world. They believed that it was they, rather than the pro-Western dissidents, who, as exponents of the Russian Idea, were the real opposition to the Soviet regime.[64] Aleksandr Kazintsev, for example, called *Nash sovremennik* under Vikulov and Seleznev at the beginning of the 1980s the 'single legally existing opposition journal'.

### A 'White' legitimization of the Russian state

White statist nationalists were at once the most intellectually able and polemically gifted of the non-fiction writers gathered around *Nash sovremennik*. They provided the sharp intellectual edge to the journal, and the predominance of their ideas on its pages during the 1980s indicates the extent to which the nationalist community had outgrown communist ideology and the impotence of the party authorities to change this.

Russia as a Great Power (*velikoderzhavnost'*) was the key value for the White statist nationalists.[65] Vadim Kozhinov, the single most influential White statist contributor to *Nash sovremennik*, described the Russian state as the 'multinational Russian state' (*mnogonatsional'noe russkoe gosudarstvo*), 'continental' in scope and nature.[66] The Russian state was the embodiment of a powerful historical culture, originating in the last centuries of the first millennium, and for this reason writers rejected the official view of Soviet communism as a society of a new social form, and without a past.[67] As Kazintsev argued, 'the past is not the past [but] is alive both in our memory and in the world that surrounds us, and in our character, formed by the thousand-year experience of the people'.[68] The ancient lineage of the Russian state meant that it had no need to harbour a sense of inferiority vis-à-vis Western states. The Rus' ruled by Yaroslav at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries, in terms of military might and social, cultural, religious and legal development, was superior, Kozhinov claimed, to every other contemporary state in Europe or elsewhere, with the exception of Byzantium.[69]

White statist nationalists sought to legitimize the imperial state on the basis not of Marxism-Leninism but of the special characteristics of the Russian people. Kozhinov provided a forthright statement of this position at the beginning of the decade in his 1981 article '"And Every Tongue Will Name Me…"' (a quotation from Pushkin engraved on the monument to the poet in Pushkin Square, Moscow).[70] He argued that the political hegemony of the Russian people over other ethnic groups was justified on the grounds that Russians were endowed with a quality of 'universality' (*vsechelovechnost'*), identified by Dostoevskii in his 1880 speech at the opening ceremony of the Moscow Pushkin monument as the distinctive essence of the Russian nation, enabling the Russians to treat other nationalities as truly equal and, when necessary, recognize their own inferiority.[71] This and other national characteristics of the Russian people had to be preserved. If they were lost in the Soviet attempt to create a 'cosmopolitan "Soviet nation"', this could result only in the weakening of the ability of the Russian state to withstand the West, and ultimately in its destruction.[72] Igor' Shafarevich, one of the journal's most outspoken opponents of Marxism-Leninism, writing at the end of the 1980s noted the argument that socialism in the USSR, China, Vietnam, Cambodia and Eastern Europe had been a distortion of real socialism.[73] 'But', he asked rhetorically, 'if the ideal is unsuccessfully put into practice so systematically, then what is the probability that the next realization will be more successful?'[74]

*Anti-Semitism*

White statists believed that conflict between Russians and Jews pervaded Russian history. Kozhinov, basing his arguments largely on the views of historian Lev Gumilev, described the historical state of the Khazars (c. AD 630–970), which adopted Judaism, as the chief enemy of ancient Rus'.[75] Under the influence of the Jewish Khazars, who hated Christianity, he claimed, the Russian princes Oleg and Igor' had been drawn to fight against Orthodox Byzantium. Princess Ol'ga is portrayed as a good and strong-willed princess who opposed the Khazars, sought alliances with Byzantium and herself became a Christian. From the earliest years of the formation of the Russian state, then, Orthodoxy had given identity and purpose to the young Russian state as it 'gathered together' other peoples into a political unit.[76] Equally so, from the earliest years, the Jews had been the enemies of the Russian state. The so-called 'Mongol forces' under the command of Mamai opposed to Dmitrii Donskoi's Russians (who were inspired by the Orthodox leader Sergii of Radonezh) at the battle of Kulikovo 400 years later in 1380 were in fact an 'aggressive, cosmopolitan armada' under the control of Genoese Jews – 'international speculators' in the slave trade.[77]

Igor' Shafarevich provided a 'theoretical' foundation for this anti-Semitic view. He claimed that since a people (*narod*) is instinctively guided by its own self-interest and, since all social forces are based on nationality, forces harmful to the Russian people must be foreign (*inorodnyi*) in origin.[78] Throughout history the Jewish minority (the *Malyi narod*), he argued, had nursed a hatred (*rusofobiya*) of the Russian majority (the *Bol'shoi narod*), and was the originating force behind so many ills, including communist ideology and the 1917 Revolution.[79] This idea of a Jewish conspiracy was widely held. Stanislav Kunyaev, for example, described *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as 'the fruit of the work of an anti-human mind and almost supernatural, truly satanic will'.[80] They were, he argued, 'iron instructions' and recommendations for the seizure of power which, he darkly noted, Lenin had studied.

This fixation on the Jews as an enemy betrayed a sense of vulnerability. Kunyaev argued that the very feature of the national character – its 'universality' – which statists claimed gave the Russian people its 'right to rule' and enabled them to assimilate other ethnic groups, also made them excessively 'open' to other peoples and lacking in a necessary instinct for self-preservation.[81] The Jews, Kunyaev suggested, by nature self-complacent and secretive, were pre-eminently the people to take advantage of this natural 'openness' of the Russians.

Jews exerted a negative influence on Russian life, it was claimed, through their occupation of high social positions and closeness to Soviet leaders.[82] In this view, there existed an anti-national, 'cosmopolitan' elite (the statists adopted with relish the Zhdanovite-Stalinist term 'cosmopolitans' as a synonym for Jews) concentrated in Moscow opposed to the interests of the Russian people.[83] In conditions of creeping Westernization, Jews were seen as a 'fifth column' within Soviet-Russian society.[84] Evidence for this was alleged to lie in the activity of Jewish dissidents and the important role played by the Soviet treatment of the Jews in relations with the West. Jews, Shafarevich claimed, thrust their concerns to the forefront of the world's attention, influencing 'arms control negotiations, trade and the international links of scientists, calling forth demonstrations and sit-down strikes and surfacing in almost every conversation', while the concerns of the Russians were forgotten.[85]

The resolution of this conflict between Russians and Jews, White statists argued, was for the Jewish community to be assimilated by its Russian host.[86] Following this line, some writers elaborated a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' Jews. Kazintsev argued that Jews who had enthusiastically adopted Bolshevism were harmful to Russia, while others, the 'good' Jews, had been hostile to both Zionism and Bolshevism and, like Pasternak and Mandel'shtam, had 'identified themselves with Russia'.[87] However, this line of argument was rather too simplistic for Kozhinov, who claimed that Jews who had lost their own culture represented the *greatest* danger.[88] Kozhinov distinguished between a 'Jewish nationalism', of which apparently he approved, based on the Judaic religion and concerned with the development of a specifically national culture, and 'International Zionism' which was not based on any religious or cultural identity but was a secularized international political movement, motivated by 'the idea of domination of the world' and deriving its strength from the control of 'immense economic might' operating on a world scale.[89]

### *Interpretation of culture*

In Kozhinov's view, Western civilization with its aggressive, exploitative attitude to the rest of the world, was based on the Jewish Old Testament.[90] The West was depicted as an intrinsically predatory and aggressive form of social structure which treated other societies as 'merely objects for the application of force … and as having no world-historical role'.[91] Yurii Seleznev argued that the West intended 'the destruction of our state,

social, civic and patriotic convictions, of our ideological, moral and spiritual underpinnings and the fundamentals of our consciousness'.[92] He believed that it was imperative for anti-Western Russian ideological trends to unite in the face of this threat. To this end, he harnessed the Russian literary tradition, and in particular Dostoevskii, who, he claimed, had called in his own day for 'a fundamentally new view of the historical mission of Russian literature' to ensure both the 'intellectual and the moral independence [*samostoyatel'nost'*]' of Russia from Europe. In the struggle against foreign imperialists, Seleznev urged, 'our classical inheritance' was 'an ideological weapon of strategic significance'.[93]

Kazintsev in similar vein argued that Russian literature should be guided by a patriotism based on the 'Russian Idea' and focused on the needs of the people.[94] In his view the chief criterion for judging a work of literature was the attitude it displayed towards the 'people'.[95] Criticism of the 'national organism', he claimed, was inadmissible, and writers should have 'a conscious reverence for the national community'.[96] Bad writers, therefore, one could conclude, were simply not patriotic enough. Kazintsev drew an analogy between culture and ecology, and his call for a 'cleansing of the cultural soil' provided a metaphor that became popular among nationalists.[97] In Kazintsev's view, liberal, Westernizing intellectuals were alien to the Russian cultural soil.[98]

Kazintsev's conservative view of culture was typical of statist nationalists, whose critical writings sought to establish a national canon of literary and philosophical works.[99] At the head of this pantheon stood Dostoevskii – a writer who nonetheless had to be defended from the official Soviet view of him as a 'reactionary'.[100] Other literary and philosophical classics included Pushkin, Tolstoi, Chekhov, Nikolai Berdyaev, Sergei Bulgakov, Georgii Fedotov, Semen Frank, Vasilii Rozanov, Lev Shestov and Vladimir Solov'ev.[101] The contemporary writers that White statist nationalists valued were primarily the popular nationalist authors of 'village prose' (*derevenshchiki*) – Fedor Abramov, Aleksandr Yashin, Viktor Astaf'ev, Vasilii Belov, Evgenii Nosov, Valentin Rasputin, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn – and poets of the countryside, such as Sergei Esenin and Nikolai Rubtsov.[102] White statist critics were always vigilant with regard to what they saw as the inimical influence of Western mass culture – 'a force inimical to our ideals'.[103] This attitude led to the controversial dismissal (by Kunyaev) of the popular singer and songwriter Vladimir Vysotskii as a Russian equivalent of Western mass culture, and to attacks on sometimes popular contemporary films, cinematic interpretations of the classics that the nationalists claimed were distortions.[104]

*Interpretation of the Stalin period*

White statist nationalists were ambivalent with regard to the Stalin period. This became clearer in the conditions of *glasnost'* of the second half of the 1980s. On the one hand, White statists were opposed to the destruction of Russian traditions that had taken place during the Stalin era. Yet Stalin had also built a great state, and this earned their admiration. In response, these writers tended to locate the causes of the ills of the Stalin period in the 1920s, without blaming Stalin himself. While for reformist writers the 1920s provided, in the NEP, a model for successful and peaceful economic development, White statists condemned these years as the most destructive in Soviet history. For Kozhinov, the 1920s was the decade of a rapid, revolutionary, and therefore destructive, *lomka* or break with the past (including the persecution of the Orthodox Church).[105] The blame for this destruction was placed on political leaders other than Stalin (Bukharin and Trotskii) and on the destructive influence of the Jews.[106] Kozhinov himself identified the chief exponent of the *lomka* in the newly fashionable figure of Bukharin.[107] For others, the key, demonic figure was Trotskii.[108] The excesses of the Cheka (Soviet 'Extraordinary Commission (against counter-revolution)' [1917–22]) and the NKVD were also blamed on the Jews.[109]

In this light, the purges of 1937 were described as a 'wheel of vengeance' which had visited Jews for their actions in the Revolution and Civil War.[110] Jews were also blamed for the ills experienced by the Russian nation in the 1930s. Thus the 'main responsibility' for the famine of 1933 lay with Yakov Yakovlev (formerly Epshtein), chairman of the People's Commissar of Agriculture, and other Jewish officials.[111] Lazar Kaganovich, of Jewish origin, not Stalin, was the initiator of the reconstruction of Moscow, which destroyed so much of the historic city.

*Gorbachev's reforms*

White statist nationalists fiercely opposed Gorbachev's reforms. Some argued, like Kozhinov, that the proponents of reform were in fact advocating a total break with the past, a *lomka* as had occurred in the 1920s.[112] Kunyaev believed the new tolerance of diverse points of view could only lead to a 'Time of Troubles': if internal dissension was allowed the USSR as a state would collapse and fall a prey to foreign enemies.[113] White statists were contemptuous of attempts to introduce Western-type 'democratic norms' into Soviet life. Western democracy (in any case, 'a departing social form') was, they argued, alien to and unsuitable for Russia.[114] Any attempt to impose such a system could

only result in a bloody period of transition.[115] Western democracy was, in essence, nothing more than a struggle for power which destroyed the fabric of society.[116] The introduction of elections into the Soviet system was merely a symptom of the gradual break-up of the Soviet state.[117] Towards the end of *perestroika*, White statists argued that any kind of social order was better than the chaos (*smuta*) which they believed was threatening.[118]

*Perestroika* was frequently interpreted as a Jewish-inspired conspiracy. The Jews, it was argued, provided the ideology of the emerging market economy, the 'Rothschild Idea' that money and personal enrichment were ends in themselves, an idea alien to Orthodoxy.[119] Crucially, in the view of the White statists, the Jews controlled the mass media, both domestic and Western (particularly American).[120] This explained, they believed, why Soviet media – the so-called 'pluralist' press – was hostile to the Russian nation, used Western methods of propaganda to suppress Russian national consciousness, and in general misled the public about the political and economic situation in the country.[121] They argued that under Gorbachev the pro-reform media had developed new myths to mislead the population: for example, the KGB had fabricated the idea of a Russian fascism and the 'threat' of anti-Jewish pogroms, while in fact *Pamyat'* was an organization that needed to be defended from its detractors.[122] In this 'New Mythology', liberals and ex-dissidents were portrayed as leaders in the struggle against communism, whereas in reality these 'court dissidents', such as Evgenii Evtushenko, Andrei Voznesenskii, Mikhail Shatrov and Yurii Lyubimov, were isolated from the Russian people, under Jewish and Western influence and little better than enemies within.[123] The *perestroika* media, they claimed, also created myths about literature, vastly exaggerating the merits of certain works, in the main by Jewish writers, when they were in fact unimpressive as literature and frequently anti-Russian in content, such as Daniil Granin's novel *The Bison* and Anatolii Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat*.[124]

The alternative to Gorbachev's radical reform, Kozhinov claimed, had been advocated by the journal *Molodaya gvardiya* in the 1960s.[125] This alternative was based on the idea of the continuity of the Russian state and people – 'the idea of the rebirth of the native environment, of the thousand-year history, of the natural, folk [*narodnogo*] way of life, of spiritual values'.[126] White statist nationalists, like Antonov, also looked to the traditions of the Orthodox Church which in their view provided a code for political, social and economic behaviour and represented a 'Third Way', distinct from both the Protestant traditions of Western capitalism and

from Soviet socialism.[127] In economic life, this code meant that material self-interest should be subordinated to moral interests.[128] Indeed, according to traditional Orthodox belief, wealth itself was a sin.[129] Some took the view that Orthodoxy was therefore compatible with the ideas of social equality and social justice claimed for communism.[130] Others argued for the revival of the pre-revolutionary traditions of Russian capitalism and philanthropy, which, they believed, had been based on Orthodoxy.[131]

### A 'Red' legitimization of the Russian state

Red statist nationalists considered themselves loyal Soviet citizens who merely wished to see Marxism-Leninism modified in the direction of Russian nationalism. In this sense they were the true children of Brezhnev's 'compromise'. Red statists shared with their White colleagues a view of the importance of the Russian state and of the role of the Russian people in its creation. The Russian people were a 'people with a strong state-consciousness' (*narod-gosudarstvennik*) who, at great sacrifice, had created a Great Power over more than 1000 years.[132] The legitimacy of the state derived from the manner in which the Russians had gathered around themselves other peoples to form the present multiethnic state.[133] They also subscribed wholeheartedly to the 'single stream' view of history, the conception that the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 did not mark the beginning of a new, non-national era of communism, but was an important moment in the continuous development of Russian state and society.[134]

Red statist nationalists were committed to 'socialism' – the communist command economy and state ownership of the means of production. The Russian people, they argued, were faithful to a 'popular-socialist' (*narodno-sotsialisticheskii*) choice.[135] Socialism was a 'great achievement' which strengthened statehood (*gosudarstvennost'*) and the economic might of the country via 'a scientific regulation of social relations' (social planning). Socialism had also established a principle of social justice, based on collectivist and egalitarian Russian national traditions, that provided social guarantees and equality to all.[136] Anti-communism (anti-Sovietism) and anti-Russian feeling (or 'russophobia' [*rusofobiya*]), they liked to argue, were one and the same.[137] However, they believed that socialist ideology alone was insufficient. What was needed was a 'national-patriotism', such as had replaced 'non-national' Marxism-Leninism during the Great Patriotic War.[138]

Red statist nationalists lacked the ambivalence about Stalin that characterized the White statists. However, they were equally dismissive

of the 'non-Leninist' and 'non-Stalinist' elements in the 1920s. They claimed Lenin and Stalin had recognized the potential for patriotism to engender socialist consciousness, in particular among the peasant masses. This 'patriotic' position of Lenin and Stalin, identified with the slogan 'Socialism in One Country', was contrasted with the position of the 'Cosmopolitans', or 'Bolshevik Westernizers' – the Mensheviks, Trotskyites, Zinov'evites, Bukharinites and Bogdanovites – who were hostile to patriotism, enthusiastic proponents of world revolution, committed to class-based views of culture (the *Proletkul't*), indifferent to the peasantry and, in general, 'deeply alien to the idea of Russian statehood'.[139]

Gorbachev's reforms stretched the innate loyalty of the Red statists to breaking point and beyond. Under *perestroika*, they argued, state planning had more or less ended and the introduction of the market would put an end to social justice and morality and promised only anarchy leading to the establishment of a fascist regime.[140] Gorbachevian 'universal values' were an ideological screen for a bourgeoisie, serving the interests of international capital, to come to power.[141] They warned the party leadership not to dismantle mechanisms of control since 'social classes which have been overthrown always try to get revenge'.[142] The future, they feared, threatened a Stalinist-type repression of nationalist thought, a 'liberal terror', if the communists' opponents – the democrats – came to power.[143]

Like their White statist counterparts, Red statist nationalists located the causes of these dangers emanating from *perestroika* in forces outside the Russian nation: the West, the Jews and Freemasons. The West, in particular the US, was the permanent enemy of the Soviet Union.[144] When difficulties in the non-Russian republics arose, this was the result of malign American influence.[145] Gorbachev's 'New Thinking' was itself an attempt to impose on the Russian people 'an alien understanding of the world', originating in the US.[146] Western mass culture, in particular rock music, was a frequent object of attack.[147]

Jews were also one of the main targets of Red statist nationalists (although they never ceased to deny that they were anti-Semitic).[148] Apollon Kuz'min, for example, denied altogether the existence of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, while at the same time he accused the Central Committee paper *Sovetskaya kul'tura* of being pro-Jewish and anti-Russian.[149] Red statists made a point of defending anti-Semites.[150] They attacked 'cosmopolitanism', defined by Vladimir Vasil'ev as a 'reactionary bourgeois ideology propagating indifference to the motherland, to one's own people and the national culture'.[151] In terms of literary

criticism, Red statist nationalists tended to take the lead from the White statists.[152] However, they were distinguished by a particularly virulent anti-Semitism, exemplified by Leningrad theatre critic Mark Lyubomudrov (head of the Sector on Theatre at the Leningrad State Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinematography). In one article, Lyubomudrov complained that the term 'Russia' ('Rossiya') rarely occurred in the works of dramatists of probable Jewish background, and accused these writers of viewing Russian national culture and life 'from the side', even with a 'cold sneer'.[153] According to Lyubomudrov, this contrasted with the plays of contemporary 'Russian' dramatists, whose works were 'permeated with a sharp feeling for the Motherland'.[154] Lyubomudrov complained that his views were suppressed in the media.[155] He also rejected accusations that his views were of 'an openly Great Power and chauvinistic character' and accused a leading Jewish liberal (Vladimir Arro) of wanting 'to set those who have Russian national roots against those who do not have them'.[156]

Russians' excessive drinking of vodka was also blamed on the Jews. Fedor Uglov, a committed campaigner for prohibition who had been 'a lonely campaigner for a total ban on alcohol' under Khrushchev and Brezhnev,[157] claimed that 'our people and our future are in danger!': 'The degradation of the people is too high a price for the use of alcohol, too great a concession to our enemies who dream of our destruction with the help of the narcotic poison.'[158]

Freemasonry was a favoured enemy. An early reference came from the pen of Kuz'min who, in 1985, quoted Marx to the effect that 'capitalists, who display so little brotherly feeling when in mutual competition with one another, constitute at the same time a real (*poistine*) Masonic brotherhood in the struggle against the working class as a whole'.[159] What for Marx was a literary metaphor was, for Kuz'min, apparently a matter of belief. Later Kuz'min argued that proof of the perfidious part played by Freemasonry in Russia was the important role they played in the Provisional Government of 1917.[160] Kuz'min believed that all the Bolsheviks' political opponents were tarred with the brush of Freemasonry: 'Parties from Mensheviks to Oktyabrists were oriented towards organizations of a Masonic type.'[161] Valentin Pikul' argued that his 1979 novel, *At the Final Boundary*, had exposed the 'devil's Sabbath on the Russian land' and the 'secret forces' which surrounded the Tsar. It was an illusion to think, he added, that 'Russia has no enemies' today, since chief among these were the Freemasons, striving to achieve world domination.[162] A novel by Viktor Ivanov told the tale of the crisis of conscience of the son of a Russian émigré, who

grew up in the US and was recruited to return to the USSR as a spy by a White Masonic organization with roots in Judaism and links with the CIA.[163]

## Polity-seeking nationalism

In conclusion, a few words about the attitudes of *Nash sovremennik*'s nationalists to polity-seeking nationalism are apposite. In the last two years of the Soviet Union, a new public debate over the status and role of the RSFSR raised the question of the possible creation of a national Russian state. *Nash sovremennik*'s Russian nationalists in general reacted coolly to this idea, not least because it had been seized upon by the democrats led by Boris El'tsin. Nonetheless, the journal published what amounted to a popular nationalist polity-seeking manifesto by Galina Litvinova, arguing that the RSFSR, relative to other republics and peoples in the USSR, was denied a fair share of resources.[164] Major popular Russian nationalists such as Belov and Rasputin expressed their support for these polity-seeking sentiments in speeches at the Congress of People's Deputies subsequently published in *Nash sovremennik*.[165] Both writers denounced the 'unequal position' of the RSFSR within the Union. Belov highlighted the importance of the Russian republic as an embodiment of Russian ethnic aspirations and spoke of the need to defend ethnic identities, stressed the lack of RSFSR institutions, the demographic and financial weakness of the Russian republic (and hinted darkly at power lying in 'hidden hands'). Rasputin asked rhetorically whether Russia might not be better off out of the Union. The implication of such views was that, if Russians were not benefiting as they should from the USSR, then the RSFSR could provide an alternative object of political loyalty.

Statist nationalists, Red and White, were generally more dismissive of the idea of RSFSR 'sovereignty' as just one symptom of the break-up of the Soviet Union and no substitute for USSR statehood.[166] Nonetheless, at times they did display a readiness to lend their support to the idea of strengthening the RSFSR. Kazintsev, for example, argued that Russians were subject to discrimination, not only in the non-Russian republics, but also in their own republic – lacking in comparison with the non-Russian republics, for example, a republican Communist Party, Academy of Science, various state committees and a television channel.[167] Not only did the RSFSR not get a fair share of resources, but it was subsidizing other republics.[168] As a political tactic, statist nationalists placed considerable hope in the idea of creating a Russian Communist Party.[169]

Although apparently designed to strengthen the position of the RSFSR within the Soviet Union, the statist nationalists hoped this new institution would act as a 'powerful centre for the consolidation of patriotic forces'.[170] Some hoped that appeals to Russian sovereignty might finally awake the Russian national spirit. Kazintsev expressed dismay at the fact that the Russian nation, with a population of 150 million, in his view failed to exercise the power of which it was potentially capable.[171] But he was not attracted to the polity-seeking idea that the 150 million might have done better to have a 'state of their own'.

## Conclusions

This survey of texts of selected Russian nationalist contributors to *Nash sovremennik* shows a fundamental distinction between popular and statist nationalist tendencies. In the writings of the popular nationalists, there were two sub-tendencies: 'conservative' and 'reformist'. These sub-tendencies in many regards served to supplement one another, both being founded on a critical evaluation of the present. However, while the conservative element was oriented towards expression, often of high artistic quality, of a sense of loss and nostalgia, the reformist was focused on practical social improvement. Among statist nationalists there was a division between Red and White views, based primarily on attitudes to the communist regime. The determining characteristics of popular nationalist and White statist nationalist views indicated how deep, among the nationalist community, was the rejection of communist ideology and associated values by the beginning of the 1980s. These characteristics also show the prevalence of anti-Semitism and xenophobic attitudes among Russian nationalists. Ultimately, the impact of *perestroika* showed how these distinctions within the Russian nationalist community tended to be subsumed, without disappearing altogether, by shared views concerning the need to preserve key features of Russian state and society in a time of dramatic change. The story of how these Russian nationalist tendencies evolved and developed in reaction to social and political developments during the last decade of the Soviet Union, and the relations between them, will be traced in the following chapters.

# 3
# The Brezhnev Succession Crisis and the Russian Challenge

In 1981–82, amid expectation of the imminent death of General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, a leadership struggle took place against a background of crisis in Soviet economic performance, renewed confrontation with the US, war in Afghanistan, upheaval in Poland and the ever-diminishing appeal of a moribund official ideology. The leading contender for the leadership was Yurii Andropov, head of the KGB and the chief opponent of Russian nationalism in the political leadership, who had the backing of key Politburo members Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and Minister of Defence Dmitrii Ustinov for the introduction of limited reforms. Andropov's main rival was Konstantin Chernenko, who had the backing of conservatives. The situation was fraught with dangers for the Russian nationalists, since, while their chief enemy was the reformist Andropov, in the course of the political struggle any candidate for the post of General Secretary would need to demonstrate his Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy.

The previous autumn, the ailing Kirilenko had come under pressure from Chernenko and his supporters, who had begun a campaign to take over from Kirilenko control of the Administrative Organs portfolio.[1] Soon afterwards, in December 1980, Valerii Ganichev, a literary official of a Red statist nationalist orientation and a probable Kirilenko client, had been removed from the post of chief editor of *Komsomol'skaya pravda* which he had occupied since 1978. In February 1981, Sergei Semanov, another probable Kirilenko client, was sacked as chief editor of the journal *Chelovek i zakon*. Sergei Vikulov, in a move designed to put pressure on the Russian nationalists, also that February received a warning when *Nash sovremennik* was severely criticized by the chief censor Pavel Romanov in a report to the Central Committee Propaganda Department. Vikulov, the censor indicted, 'crudely broke the demands

of the decree of the Central Committee of 7th January 1969' (a decree that had increased the personal responsibility of chief editors for works printed)[2] by informing an author (a writer on rural affairs, Yurii Chernichenko) that 'observations on their writings come from Glavlit' (Main Administration for the Protection of State Secrets of the Council of Ministers of the USSR), an action which led to 'undesirable relations between Glavlit and the creative intelligentsia'.[3] Romanov asked the Central Committee to examine the 'incorrect actions' of chief editor Vikulov. Nevertheless, unlike Ganichev, Vikulov kept his post. In May he was duly summoned to the Propaganda Department where he was informed of 'the necessity for the leadership of the journal to rigorously implement the [1969] decree of the Central Committee of the CPSU'.[4]

The struggle for the Brezhnev succession was clearly having negative consequences for the Russian nationalists. These developments also contrasted with their recent successes. During the celebrations of the 600th anniversary of Kulikovo Field in 1980, against the background of international tensions related to Afghanistan and Poland, the nationalists had been granted 'virtually unrestricted freedom of expression'.[5] Moreover, Russian nationalists had been looking forward eagerly to 1981 as the 160th anniversary of the birth, and centenary of the death, of their iconic figure, Fedor Dostoevskii. Yet the nationalists could still draw on some sources of support within the Soviet leadership to express their ideas, and even if this meant being used as pawns in the political struggle, some relished the opportunity. It seems likely that at the end of 1980 *Nash sovremennik* received the backing of Mikhail Suslov and Andrei Kirilenko to become more outspoken in voicing opposition to the Andropov faction in the leadership.

## A new team of deputy editors

Changes in the editorial team at *Nash sovremennik* agreed at the end of 1980 had been organized with these planned Dostoevskii celebrations in mind. The month (February 1981) that chief censor Romanov had issued his criticism of the journal, the staff changes came into effect. A new team of deputy chief editors, consisting of first deputy chief editor Yurii Seleznev and deputy chief editor Valentin Ustinov, brought out their first issue of *Nash sovremennik* to mark the centenary of the death of Dostoevskii.[6] Of the two new deputy chief editors, Seleznev (b. 1939) was the key figure.[7] The young critic and Dostoevskii specialist (that year his second major work on Dostoevskii was published) had links with statist nationalists, in particular Sergei Semanov, historian and

chief editor of *Chelovek i zakon* (whom Seleznev had succeeded in 1976 as chief editor of the Zhizn' zamechatel'nykh lyudei [ZhZL] series at the Molodaya gvardiya publishing house, then headed by Valerii Ganichev), and with the critic Vadim Kozhinov (who had supervised Seleznev as a graduate student).[8] Through Kozhinov, Seleznev was connected to a group of influential statist nationalist critics (all associates from the days of an informal 'Russian Club' in the early 1960s) that also included Petr Palievskii, Stanislav Kunyaev, Sergei Semanov and Anatolii Lanshchikov.[9] Seleznev had already made a reputation for himself as a White statist nationalist of outspoken anti-Western views (for example, in his speech at a unique, officially sponsored debate on the state of Soviet literature entitled 'The Classics and Us. Artistic Values of the Past in Contemporary Science and Culture' [Klassika i my. Khudozhestvennye tsennosti proshlogo v Sovremennoi nauke i kulture] that took place on the 98th anniversary of Stalin's birth on December 21st, 1977, and his article contributing to the debate on Olzhas Suleimenov's *Asia*).[10] He may possibly have enjoyed the patronage of Foreign Minister and Politburo member Andrei Gromyko.[11]

Seleznev's associations with these statist nationalist critics, his outspoken views and his reputation as a Dostoevskii scholar provided the rationale to appoint him as first deputy chief editor in this Dostoevskii anniversary year. The initiative apparently came from Yurii Bondarev, deputy chair of the RSFSR Writers' Union and a leader of the 'Russian party' reportedly close to Kirilenko, whose advice chief editor Sergei Vikulov heeded.[12] The appointment of the poet Ustinov (b. 1938) as the second deputy chief editor was made on the advice of Vikulov's colleague, the poet and 'working' secretary of the RSFSR Writers' Union responsible for the Russian regions, Sergei Orlov, with whom Ustinov had worked earlier in his career.[13] Support for the radicalization may also have been forthcoming from Mikhail Suslov via the heads of the Central Committee Propaganda and Culture Departments, Tyazhel'nikov and Shauro respectively.[14]

## *Nash sovremennik* on the offensive: February–October 1981

In an article in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* that February, Seleznev described Dostoevskii as 'a great unifying, centripetal force, bringing people, nationalities, nations together', 'an uncompromising antagonist of the bourgeois world', who promised a far-reaching social transformation by providing a 'higher, unifying, elevating idea'.[15] This interpretation of

Dostoevskii, whose views Seleznev pretended to find compatible with those of Marx, was to be a focal point of the journal's publications over the months that followed. *Nash sovremennik* now became a progressively more radical and White statist nationalist publication. This new direction in editorial policy before long resulted in the departure from the journal of two members of the editorial board, the liberal Yurii Nagibin (who had joined the board in June 1965 and had been the only surviving member from the pre-Vikulov period) and popular nationalist Viktor Astaf'ev (a member of the original team brought by Vikulov to the journal in 1968) and a member of the editorial office, Vladislav Matusevich (an editor in the prose department since 1978).[16]

A first and striking indication of the new publication line was the printing in the March issue of Soloukhin's justification for the existence of God, a remarkable event for the Soviet press, and Seleznev's first 'achievement' at *Nash sovremennik*.[17] Possibly this publication reflected a view that a change in attitudes towards the Orthodox Church was maturing among the Soviet political elite, including within the KGB (Filipp Bobkov, head of the KGB's Fifth Directorate, which dealt with the intelligentsia, recalls in his memoirs that in a speech at an all-Union conference of KGB leaders that year he called for 'fundamental change' in the official attitude to the Orthodox Church and believers).[18] However, Soloukhin's expectations that he would suffer few ill consequences were to be dashed, and as he noted with some understatement in a concluding paragraph to a book version of the publication that went to press in December 1981: 'After the periodical publication I was told that some of my judgements were not incontrovertible. But I am not obliged to utter incontrovertible truths.'[19] In April, an article in the journal *Nauka i religiya* attacked Soloukhin for religious views concerning the Orthodox tradition of 'elders' that he had expressed, not in *Nash sovremennik*, but in the journal *Moskva*.[20] Despite probable support from Suslov and Kirilenko, Mikhail Alekseev, the chief editor of *Moskva*, was summoned to see the junior Central Committee Ideology Secretary, Mikhail Zimyanin, who, in Soloukhin's account, told Alekseev: 'It's 110 years after the birth of Lenin and you publish something like this.' Alekseev, Soloukhin recalled, 'just shrugged it off'.[21]

Meanwhile, *Nash sovremennik* was enjoying official approval from another direction. At the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress, the trend in agricultural policy to devote more resources to the development of the Russian non-black-earth zone had been confirmed.[22] The official columnist Literator on the pages of *Literaturnaya gazeta* described

*Nash sovremennik*'s leading writer on rural affairs, popular nationalist Ivan Vasil'ev, as 'one of the outstanding representatives of the Ovechkin line in contemporary *publitsistika*'.[23] Literator not only praised Vasil'ev's latest article in *Nash sovremennik* but also lauded the journal for its 'discussion of the Russian non-black-earth zone'.[24] In a further mark of official approval, Vasil'ev became a major contributor to the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* at this time.[25] Unfortunately for the Soviet economy, however, official praise for a writer on rural issues could not improve the real situation in agriculture. In breach of common practice, no figures for the disastrous harvest that year were published. In stark contrast with reality, then, *Nash sovremennik*'s October edition carried on its inside front cover the picture of a happy young farmer in a field at harvest time. The slogan beneath, 'master of the land' (*khozyain zemli*), was Vasil'ev's, but it reflected hopes for the future rather than current realities.

In June *Nash sovremennik* displayed for the first time on its inside front cover what was to become the journal's motto, 'Russia is my Motherland' ('*Rossiya – rodina moya*'). The motto, the words of a popular song, was a concise evocation of the ambiguities of Russian nationalist sentiment. As a journal of the RSFSR Writers' Union, *Nash sovremennik* was entitled to use the word 'Rossiya' to mean precisely the RSFSR – a federal, administrative sub-unit of the USSR. The emotional resonance of the term for many Russian readers, however, implied, in popular nationalist terms, the ethnic Russian *nation*, as opposed to the USSR *state*. Yet again, for Russian statist nationalists, the term implied the historical Russian *empire-state* of which the USSR was the contemporary embodiment. In this and subsequent issues, the editors invited readers to interpret the motto as they wished. Each month the motto was accompanied by photographs evoking Russian patriotic feeling, popular or statist, such as birch trees, a peasant hut (*izba*), the Kremlin or the Moscow Pushkin monument.

In the July issue, statist nationalist Sergei Semanov, sacked as chief editor of *Chelovek i zakon* that February, took up the gauntlet on the theme of religion, at the same time issuing covert criticism of the Soviet military campaign in Afghanistan.[26] Semanov argued that, in the 1920s, Trotskyites had developed a wrong-headed plan to launch an invasion of India in the name of communist internationalism. 'The Leninist party', Semanov wrote, 'of course repudiated this adventure.' These comments were widely interpreted as criticism of the invasion of Afghanistan.[27] Semanov was using the derogative term 'Trotskyite' as a codeword for 'Andropovite', to attack the Andropov leadership faction

and its policies. For Semanov, John Dunlop wrote,

> the Andropovites constitute an amalgam of Jews and denationalized Russians who advocate a path that is suicidal for Russia, a country that has already paid a terrible price for the fanaticism of the 1920s and 1930s. The invasion of Afghanistan is seen as the first step in a process of Russian national self-destruction.[28]

In criticizing the intolerant policy of former Afghan leader Amin towards religion in Afghanistan, Semanov developed arguments on religion put forward by Kirilenko in the Politburo in 1979, further evidence that support for the religious publications in *Nash sovremennik* came from that quarter.[29]

Spring, summer and early autumn saw the publication of two important popular nationalist works: another instalment of Vasilii Belov's *Harmony* and Mikhail Alekseev's *The Brawlers*.[30] It was the latter, with its description of the devastating results of collectivization, that caused the greater stir. *The Brawlers* told the story of the famine caused by collectivization in 1933 among the peasantry of the Saratov region along the Volga (the writer's native region), breaking new ground for Soviet official media in descriptions of the horrors of this period and in attributing responsibility directly to the party authorities. Alekseev had no doubt the famine was caused by collectivization: 'The harvest in 1932 was, if not the very best, in any case not a bad one.'[31] By the time the publication of Stalin's article, 'Dizzy with Success', halted the initial collectivization campaign and the drive against the kulaks, 'a third of the village, numbering more than six hundred households, had simply disappeared'.[32]

Official permission to print Alekseev's novel was a strong indication of a new permissiveness for Russian nationalist views in official Soviet literary policy.[33] It was rumoured that Alekseev, chief editor of the journal *Moskva* and a pillar of the literary establishment (secretary of the board of the USSR Writers' Union, deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, Hero of Socialist Labour and laureate of both USSR and RSFSR State Prizes for Literature) had personally agreed publication of the novel (first announced as 'forthcoming' in 1978) with Suslov.[34]

Despite this, *The Brawlers* encountered serious difficulties in getting past the censor.[35] At the very last moment there was a month's delay in the appearance of the final instalment, which included details of the 1933 famine. All parties to the publication (the author, the journal, the censors, the Central Committee) needed to reach a compromise on

the matter, while at the same time avoiding undue delay in the printing of the issue. Alekseev was called back to Moscow from holiday in his native village in Saratov oblast to iron out final disagreements at a meeting with chief censor Romanov and deputy chief censor Vladimir Solodin, in the company of Seleznev. As a result, some more passages, including one listing areas affected by the famine and another with descriptions of cannibalism, were cut.[36] The calculated risk which *Nash sovremennik* and Alekseev himself took in printing *The Brawlers* nonetheless paid off.[37] The work received a generally favourable critical reception and extracts were widely republished.[38] This was especially important when, on a topic such as collectivization, the regime could be more sensitive with regard to reviews than to the work itself.[39] In a move to ward off official criticism, *Nash sovremennik* published a review of *The Brawlers* by the nationalist critic Oleg Mikhailov (in the 1970s a former head of the department of criticism at the journal) which quoted Alekseev's own words on the necessity for collectivization:

> we know and are ready to repeat as often as necessary that without the *kolkhozy* we would not have built up our industry and would not have been able to withstand the difficult experiences which fell to the lot of our people in the years of the Great Patriotic War.[40]

As a result of the delay in publication of the third instalment of *The Brawlers*, Mikhail Antonov's article 'The Morality of Economics' appeared in the August issue in its place.[41] With this first full-length article, Antonov, former political prisoner and contributor to the *samizdat* journal *Veche*, began his career as a leading writer on economics at *Nash sovremennik*.[42] The original version of the article had been brought by Antonov in 1978 to the journal on the advice of his friend Boris Sporov, an editor in the department of *publitsistika*, but only now did an extensively edited version of the article appear.[43] Despite the cuts, the article retained its quality as an unusually forthright attack on bureaucratic mismanagement and an innovative synthesis of communist ideology and the pre-revolutionary Russian nationalist tradition (the following month Sporov himself contributed an important article to the journal on the family, arguing against the emancipation of women and for restrictions on divorce).[44]

## The November 1981 issue

At the end of July, Vikulov, recently honoured by appointment to the board of the USSR Writers' Union, departed on his annual month-long

holiday, extended on this occasion by a further month's 'creative leave'.[45] Seleznev, from that month appointed *first* deputy chief editor of the journal, was left in charge, his main task to prepare the November 1981 issue of *Nash sovremennik* which was to celebrate both the 160th anniversary of the birth of Dostoevskii and the 64th anniversary of the Great October Revolution.

Seleznev threw caution to the wind in deciding to publish not *one* daring contribution in a single issue, as an important convention for Soviet editors tended to allow, but *four*.[46] These were Vadim Kozhinov's '"And Every Tongue Will Name Me …"', Vladimir Krupin's 'The Fortieth Day', Anatolii Lanshchikov's 'Great Contemporaries: Dostoevskii and Chernyshevskii' and Sergei Semanov's 'History and Slander'.[47] All these were daring, each in its own way, but the most outstanding was Kozhinov's exposition of White statist nationalist ideology, drawing strongly on popular nationalist sources while proposing a radical reorientation in official ideology away from Marxism-Leninism. Kozhinov's article was also highly politicized, since its 'barbs' were directed at the Andropov faction.[48] Deputy chief censor Vladimir Solodin has recalled that he personally summoned Seleznev to see him and, in a three-hour conversation, warned him not to go ahead with the publications planned for November.[49] But Seleznev was not to comply. Vikulov later claimed he did not know about Seleznev's plans. However, as a politically experienced chief editor, it is probable Vikulov knew of Seleznev's intentions, but wished his absence to serve as an alibi if the issue ran into trouble. He could in that case place full responsibility on his new, inexperienced, first deputy chief editor. Some evidence that Vikulov did know is provided by Krupin's novella, 'The Fortieth Day'. On his departure, Vikulov had left Seleznev to complete the editing of Krupin's new work, which included daring criticism of rural life, collectivization and the Soviet media. Among the passages in the novel that were to cause official offence were the declaration by one of the characters that 'We never had *serfdom* here, but we had *collectivization!*', and a description of the state broadcasting system as 'pouring banalities and second-rate ballet onto the airwaves out of its enormous Ostankino syringe – and more often just information no one needs'.[50] Belov and Rasputin urged Seleznev to publish the story uncut, and it is unlikely that all three would have gone against the chief editor's wishes in the matter.[51] In any case, *Nash sovremennik*'s writers and editors were hopeful of a positive outcome, an optimism possibly reinforced by the award in November of the USSR State Prize for Literature to Belov.[52]

Confirmation that Seleznev continued to enjoy Vikulov's support, even after the November issue, came with the January number that was prepared after Vikulov's return from holiday and went to press after the official negative reaction to the November issue was known. The issue showed *Nash sovremennik* still confident and determined to pursue its radical line carrying, on its inside cover beneath the motto 'Russia is my motherland', a picture of the Pushkin monument and, in a quotation from Pushkin, a defiant summary of the journal's position: 'Respect for the past is the feature that distinguishes the educated person from the savage.' The back cover announced the journal's own prize winners for the year 1981, which included Alekseev's *The Brawlers*, Belov's *Harmony*, I. Vasil'ev's *The Russian Land* and Antonov's 'The Morality of Economics' (no doubt Vikulov was, by this time, aware that prizes to such as Kozhinov, Krupin or Lanshchikov would have been out of the question). Outspoken texts included Vladimir Shubkin's powerful nationalist diatribe against Marxism-Leninism, 'The Burning Bush', in which Shubkin drew a parallel between the 'deep moral tradition of our literature', which embodied the national consciousness of the people, and the 'mythical burning bush which burns with a miraculous heat, without, however, being consumed' (the title of the work itself, 'The Burning Bush' [*Neopalimaya kupina*], was a reference not only to the Bible, but also to a work by one of Russia's great religious thinkers of the twentieth century, S. Bulgakov).[53] Despite the tragedies of the Soviet era, Shubkin argued, the Russian moral tradition had persisted. The issue also included a bold call for the preservation of architectural monuments, including those of religious significance, in Soloukhin's 'The Continuation of Time'.[54] Vikulov himself supplied an essay praising the poetry of Nikolai Rubtsov (1936–71), the Russian nationalist poet from the Vologda region whose lyrical and patriotic verse was highly esteemed by Kozhinov, but largely shunned by the official literary establishment. Vikulov's essay included references to the place of religion in the national culture: 'All the spiritual and moral culture of the people [*naroda*] is embodied in the customs of working days and holidays, and in songs, and in tales, and in the architecture of temples and churches.'[55] Rubtsov, Vikulov wrote, 'understood that the poet must be able to listen not only to his own soul, but to the soul of the people as well'.[56] Evidence that the journal continued to enjoy official support was meanwhile provided by the fact that the journal's print run remained high (at above 330,000 copies per month, approximately equal to that of *Novyi mir*).

A new development, and possibly a reaction to the dangers the journal faced as a result of the November 1981 issue, showed *Nash*

*sovremennik* seeking to widen the basis for its support among the political leadership, through an article by Ivan Sinitsyn on education.[57] Sinitsyn was critical of the Ministry of Education, headed by Mikhail Prokof'ev, and supported the introduction of 'education with labour', an idea developed by Makarenko in the 1930s. Sinitsyn himself may have enjoyed the patronage of Gorbachev's aides: his views were strongly opposed both by the Central Committee Department of Science and Higher Educational Establishments, headed by Brezhnev's close associate Sergei Trapeznikov, an official intensely disliked by Gorbachev.[58] As a writer on agriculture, Sinitsyn had earlier enjoyed the patronage of Central Committee Secretary and Politburo member Fedor Kulakov.[59] Since Kulakov had patronized the young Gorbachev, it may be that Gorbachev, through intermediaries, now used Sinitsyn to attack conservative officials.

## *Nash sovremennik* struck down

Towards the end of 1981, Chernenko succeeded Kirilenko as the official responsible for supervision of the Administrative Organs Department.[60] The fall of Kirilenko resulted in the tables being turned on *Nash sovremennik* in dramatic fashion. A hostile official reaction to the November issue of *Nash sovremennik* came swiftly.[61] On December 18th *Literaturnaya Rossiya* quoted Brezhnev, ostensibly in connection with the leader's receipt of the Lenin Prize for Literature on his 75th birthday, to officially condemn nationalist ideology:

> Every national culture, enclosed within itself, inevitably suffers, loses the features of universality … . The most important questions about national traditions and distinctiveness [*samobytnosti*] must not be simplified, turned into ethnography and obsession with a particular way of life [*bytovism*].[62]

It was 'Ideological Secretary' Suslov's responsibility to initiate punitive action in the literary world when necessary, and the removal of Kirilenko seems to have brought additional pressure to bear on him to do so against *Nash sovremennik*. At the end of December, the secretariat of the RSFSR Writers' Union was called into session to discuss and condemn the November issue of *Nash sovremennik*.[63] Yurii Bondarev, first deputy chair of the RSFSR Writers' Union, chaired the meeting. Those present included leading writers and editors from *Nash sovremennik* and representatives from the Central Committee Department of Culture,

namely the deputy head of the Department, Al'bert Belyaev, and the new acting head of the Department's literature section, Sergei Potemkin (Potemkin's predecessor, Konstantin Dolgov, had been dismissed, it might be assumed, as a result of *Nash sovremennik*'s November 1981 publications). At the meeting, Seleznev defended his actions and refused to recant, while Vikulov denied responsibility for the publications, citing his absence on holiday. The secretariat solidly backed Vikulov and few voices were raised in defence of his young lieutenant.[64]

In the upshot, the secretariat accused the journal of 'insufficient editorial work with the authors' and condemned the four specific publications by Kozhinov, Krupin, Lanshchikov and Semanov.[65] Krupin was accused of 'a grumbling tone' and of lacking 'an active authorial position and deep penetration into the essence of the phenomena described'. Kozhinov was accused of a 'pseudoscientific approach to the study of the history of Russian literature'. In Lanshchikov's article on Dostoevskii, 'uncharacteristic details and contradictions were given disproportionate prominence'. Semanov was criticized for having shown 'a certain scornfulness … for the ethical norms of literary polemic'.[66] All these authors, together with Seleznev, were to be virtually denied publication for the next three years. Vladimir Shubkin, whose article 'The Burning Bush' was not mentioned in the official account of the meeting, was apparently called in to be read a lecture by Yurii Surovtsev, a secretary of the USSR Writers' Union and a well-known opponent of the nationalists.

In response to the secretariat's conclusions, Vikulov

> recognized the criticism of these materials of the eleventh issue as well-founded, thanked [the secretariat] for the timely, benevolent and principled discussion, and gave his assurances that the editorial collective would, with great attention and responsibility, take into account the reproofs and wishes [expressed][67]

The final recommendation of the secretariat was that the editor 'strengthen the literary personnel of the editorial board', a code to mean the sacking of the two deputy chief editors.

The December meeting of the RSFSR Writers' Union secretariat effectively destroyed the informal alliance nurtured at the journal by Yurii Bondarev and Sergei Vikulov between officials of the anti-Andropov grouping, sympathetic literary bureaucrats and Russian nationalists, popular and statist. Pressure from the official organs of control made the 'bureaucrats' hasten to appease their angered masters. Writers and

radicals alike were left to face the consequences. The alliance collapsed amid rancour and recrimination. Vikulov and his close associates tended to see events as a replay of the Pikul' affair of 1979: 'enemies' who had failed to remove him then had once again tried to do so, this time using Seleznev against the chief editor.[68] Seleznev and his supporters, on the contrary, interpreted events as a plot to get rid of *him*.[69] These antagonisms were part of a wider breach which now developed between the nationalist writers, critics and editors – popular and statist – who felt themselves betrayed, and the literary bureaucrats who, until the secretariat meeting, had supported them. On January 20th, in a coda to the recent events, Literator in *Literaturnaya gazeta* called on writers to emulate the 'glories' of socialist realism – the writers Fadeev, Tikhonov, Furmanov, Serafimovich, Vishnevskii, Sholokhov and Tvardovskii – and 'observe social and class criteria and the principles of historicism'.[70]

## Death of Suslov

The dismissal of the two newly appointed deputy chief editors was, in itself, not a 'decisive attack against the representatives of national and "village" literature', as some observers at that time claimed.[71] Indeed, had Suslov remained alive, the decisions of the December plenum of the RSFSR Writers' Union would probably have been the end of the matter. However, on January 20th, 1982, Suslov suffered a severe stroke and five days later he died (on the 25th). His death brought a sudden and intense struggle between the Chernenko and Andropov camps for the vacant post of 'Second Secretary' (a struggle which was resolved in Andropov's favour only that May).

An immediate result of the death of the 'main theorist of the party', as his *Pravda* obituary described him, was the appearance of a fierce attack on religious popular nationalist sentiment in the press.[72] In the issue of *Kommunist* signed for printing on the day of Suslov's death, its chief editor, Richard Kosolapov, a Chernenko associate, published a fierce attack on Soloukhin's *Pebbles in the Palm* that had appeared in *Nash sovremennik* almost a year before, in March 1981 (the delay in publication was evidence the material had been prepared earlier, in readiness for an opportune moment such as Suslov's death provided).[73] Soloukhin has attributed the renewal of attacks on him to the personal animosity of Mikhail Zimyanin, the junior Central Committee Ideological Secretary.[74] In that case, it would seem either that Suslov had hitherto prevented Zimyanin from criticizing Soloukhin, or that Zimyanin's new masters were pleased to give him free rein to do so.

The attack on Soloukhin consisted of two 'readers' letters' and an editorial comment focusing on Soloukhin's reference to 'a higher principle of intelligence' (*vysshee razumnoe nachalo*). The first letter, by Mikhail Rutkevich, head of the Institute for Concrete Social Research and an academic-official of orthodox Marxist-Leninist views, denounced the appearance of 'religious and mystical ideas and sentiments deeply alien to the world view of materialism' and what it called Soloukhin's 'flirting with goddikins' (*zaigryvanie s bozhen'koi* – a pejorative term, used to ridicule believers) on the pages of a Soviet journal.[75] Three additional 'correspondents', named as having written to *Kommunist* to express reservations about Soloukhin's recent publications, included one who had earlier attacked Soloukhin's religious views in *Nauka i religiya*.[76] A second correspondent expressed amazement that 'a Soviet journal and a member of the CPSU' could further the ends of the clergy by propagandizing religion.[77] The accompanying editorial supported these criticisms, observing, 'It is not the first time that god-building motifs and mystical subjects have made their appearance in the work of V. Soloukhin and it is obvious that this does not happen by chance.'[78] The editors cited an earlier publication of a selection of *Pebbles in the Palm* in which Soloukhin had argued that there existed a 'Designer' (*Konstruktor*) who had created human beings.[79] The editorial criticized the work of the party organization of *Nash sovremennik* for tolerating the publication of such views.

The same month Literator in *Literaturnaya gazeta* joined the attack on Soloukhin, this time criticizing the writer for comments on culture made in his January 1982 *Nash sovremennik* article, 'The Continuation of Time'.[80] Literator admitted to a 'feeling of genuine disappointment' and accused Soloukhin of not knowing what he was talking about when he 'takes it upon himself to judge, for example, contemporary operatic art'. *Nash sovremennik*'s editorial board was accused of being lax in its assessment of the opinions it published. This was followed by the reprinting of the attack on Soloukhin that had first been published the previous spring in *Nauka i religiya* as a pamphlet by the Znanie society.[81]

Five days after Suslov's death, a new phase in the campaign against *Nash sovremennik* began. On February 1st, 1982, an article in *Pravda* by Vasilii Kuleshov, head of the Russian literature department at Moscow State University, revived the discussion of the journal's November 1981 issue by accusing Kozhinov, in ' "And Every Tongue Will Name Me …" ', of 'deviations from the traditions of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics'.[82] The article was accompanied by an editorial referring portentously to 'blemishes of a very serious kind' in contemporary literary criticism. Kuleshov

denounced what he considered to be Kozhinov's misinterpretations of Dostoevskii, Kulikovo and Lenin's writings on Asia. The article also attacked Seleznev's *Sovetskaya Rossiya* article on Dostoevskii of the previous February, which had advocated a statist Russian nationalism.[83]

Andropov now proceeded to steal a march on Chernenko in the struggle for power. During the spring he deputized for the General Secretary in Moscow when Brezhnev fell ill on a visit to Uzbekistan. He also made the important speech on the anniversary of Lenin's birth (made the previous year by Chernenko), and used the opportunity to criticize corruption, thus intimating his discontent with the Brezhnev regime and his desire to see some reforms introduced. At the same time, while Kirilenko's final eclipse was indicated by his failure to appear on the podium for this speech,[84] his former allies and clients, mostly RSFSR representatives, began to transfer their allegiance to the head of the KGB, although in doing so demonstratively pressed their own interests.[85] Solomentsev, chair of the RSFSR Council of Ministers, was one of two Politburo members who attended the unveiling of a statue to General Suvorov in a Moscow square named in his honour. In the legal journal *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* an article attracted wide notice for breaking new ground with its open complaint that the RSFSR was not doing well out of the USSR.[86]

## Andropov ascendant

*Nash sovremennik*'s issues from February to April in 1982 saw the journal manoeuvring under the impact of the new dispensation. The February 1982 number had been sent to the typesetters before the December meeting of the secretariat of the RSFSR Writers' Union, but went to press only after the death of Suslov. All but bare of nationalist interest, on the inside of the front cover a picture of a border guard was published in which may be read a symbolic gesture of reconciliation towards Andropov's KGB (the border guards were a part of the KGB). The March issue, which went to press after the attacks in *Kommunist* and *Pravda* had appeared, was stripped of the motto 'Russia is my motherland'.[87] It was, however, perhaps significant that the picture, dedicated to Women's Day, showed a woman smiling beneath a gloved hand. Indeed, the journal itself in this issue could be seen to be surreptitiously smiling at its opponents. Extraordinarily, *Nash sovremennik* openly defied both *Kommunist* and *Pravda*, publishing a further selection of Soloukhin's

*Pebbles in the Palm*, which included another argument to the effect that the nature of the universe implied the existence of God.[88] John Dunlop commented: 'One wonders whether *Kommunist* had ever been previously so challenged.'[89]

However, with the April issue, *Nash sovremennik* abandoned its White statist – 'oppositionist' – stance and adopted a Red statist – 'collaborationist' – position. In two key contributions, Apollon Kuz'min, a historian, and Nikolai Shundik, a novelist and secretary of the RSFSR Writers' Union (also former chief editor of *Volga* and a co-signatory of the 1969 *Ogonek* 'Letter of the Eleven' against *Novyi mir*) suggested lines of compromise between *Nash sovremennik* and the authorities. Kuz'min, in 'The Writer and History', attacked Kozhinov's White statist variant of nationalism, while promoting his own Red brand.[90] Shundik, in his novel *The Ancient Sign*, similarly offered a blend of the nationalist with the politically acceptable, praising the simplicity of the way of life of rural islanders, while attacking US foreign policy.[91] Literator's approval of Shundik's novel symbolized the authorities' satisfaction with the latest changes at the journal. *The Ancient Sign*, wrote Literator, is a 'serious and large-scale discussion of the fates not only of the small nationalities of the capitalist North, but also of all humanity, defending its sacred right to live under peaceful skies'.[92] The following month both Kuz'min and Shundik joined the journal's editorial board.

As the Brezhnev period drew to a close, the 'shadow ideology' of Russian nationalism proved to be an unattractive resource for ambitious politicians. The two main contenders for the General Secretaryship, Andropov and Chernenko, both demonstrated their ideological orthodoxy by supporting attacks on Russian nationalists. Of these two, Andropov was much the more consistent, powerful and effective in this matter. It was significant that the only major political leader with a reputation as a sympathizer for Russian nationalism, Kirilenko, was in ill health and not a contender for the chief prize. In Soviet conditions, Russian nationalism could only be an ideology of opposition within the elite. There was a consensus among the leadership that in the Soviet Union Russian nationalism could not be an ideology of rule.

Andropov's campaign against the nationalists, including those gathered around *Nash sovremennik*, was directed at breaking links, and prevent them from being forged, between highly placed political leaders on the one hand and the Russian nationalist intellectual community on the other. This campaign had also been highly disruptive of relations – and informal alliances – among Russian nationalists themselves.[93] In the

aftermath, some Red statist nationalists, such as Kuz'min, increased their influence at *Nash sovremennik*. White statist nationalists, notably Kozhinov, lost out. Similarly, while some popular nationalists, such as Belov and Alekseev, were largely unaffected by events, others, such as Krupin and Shubkin, suffered badly. In this sense, the campaign against *Nash sovremennik* was guided, in Andropov's sure hands, by the principle of 'divide and rule'.

# 4
# Andropov and the Suppression of Statist Russian Nationalism

Andropov's assumption of the duties of Second – 'Ideological' – Secretary at the May 1982 party plenum was a major setback for the Chernenko faction and an important step towards the General Secretaryship. In his new position, Andropov proceeded to develop his two-strand strategy with regard to Russian nationalism. In the first place, he continued to permit the expression of popular Russian nationalism. This was a recognition that Russian nationalism was sufficiently deeply rooted in the Soviet polity that it would be politically dangerous, and unnecessary, to try to extirpate it altogether. Russian nationalism also had many sympathizers among former 'Kirilenko' cadres – officials linked with RSFSR institutions – whom Andropov was now seeking to co-opt in his drive for power (for example, that July he brought Vitalii Vorotnikov, a Kirilenko client who until 1979 had been a deputy chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers, back from an ambassadorship in Cuba to take up the post of First Secretary of Krasnodar region, replacing Brezhnev cadre Sergei Medunov who was now removed as part of the KGB's anti-corruption drive).[1]

In line with the second policy strand, Andropov sought to impose an ideological uniformity based on a Marxist-Leninist 'internationalism', oriented towards a degree of reformism, that involved the selective suppression of Russian statist nationalism. Andropov's purpose was to weaken statist Russian nationalism as an ideology, in his view, incompatible with the multiethnic nature of the Soviet polity. At the same time he sought to discredit nationalism of this sort as an ideological resource for possible intra-elite opposition to his leadership and policies.

An early indication of Andropov's line on Russian nationalism came on May 13th, before the plenum which formally appointed him as Suslov's successor, when the KGB moved against dissident Russian

nationalists.[2] Dissident nationalist Leonid Borodin, a former member of VSKhSON, was arrested and a number of his acquaintances were summoned to the KGB for questioning. Other well-known nationalist dissidents were arrested and 'establishment' statist nationalists, whom it was deemed inappropriate to arrest, were threatened.[3] Implementation of this policy was led by Andropov's successor at the KGB, Vitalii Fedorchuk, who, shortly after his appointment, was reported as saying: 'The main thing is Russian nationalism, the dissidents we'll deal with afterwards. We can take them in a single night.'[4] Fedorchuk (formerly head of the Ukrainian KGB) was a Brezhnev client now identified with the Chernenko faction and his appointment indicated a concern among Andropov's opponents to prevent the new Second Secretary from obtaining exclusive control over his former domain, the KGB.[5] In using Fedorchuk in this manner, Andropov showed his ability to use cadres identified with his chief political rival to implement his own policies.

A second indication of Andropov's policy towards Russian nationalism was the appearance in *Kommunist*, shortly before his official appointment as Central Committee Secretary for Ideology, of a public apology by chief editor Sergei Vikulov for religious sentiment expressed on the pages of *Nash sovremennik* by popular nationalist Vladimir Soloukhin.[6] The apology ran:

> The Communists of the editorial board have drawn serious conclusions as a result of the publication by V. Soloukhin … and are determined in the future not to give grounds to readers for responses such as the letters of Comrades Rutkevich and Filippova.[7]

The apology (the result of a meeting of the journal's party organization called by the Central Committee and attended by a representative of the Cultural Department), signed by Vikulov and the secretary of the journal's party organization, Aleksei Shitikov, was a humiliation for *Nash sovremennik*, despite its limited terms of reference.[8] In an accompanying letter, Viktor Kochetov, the secretary of the party committee of the Moscow Writers' Organization (also a poet and *Nash sovremennik* contributor), reported on a meeting of the party bureau of the Moscow poets' collective at which Soloukhin's views were condemned. According to this report:

> [Soloukhin] assured the members of the bureau that he has been and remains a convinced atheist, that he has never been involved in any kind of god-building and regrets that a careless phrase has given grounds for a justifiable reproof from a reader.[9]

Three factors served to ameliorate the force of *Nash sovremennik*'s apology, however. In the first place it appeared *four months* after *Kommunist* had published letters of complaint against the journal. Secondly, the apology was of a limited nature and was *not* an apology for the publication policy of *Nash sovremennik* as it had been pursued during Seleznev's deputy chief editorship.[10] Reference was made only to a single work by Soloukhin: there was no mention of the works of Kozhinov, Lanshchikov and Krupin, writers who had been effectively banned from publication as a result of the 1981 '*Nash sovremennik* affair'.[11] Thirdly, literary officials now acted to lessen the public impact of the measures taken, in the wake of those events, against one of the few popular nationalist writers to have suffered, novelist Vladimir Krupin. In May Krupin was called to the Central Committee by the junior Ideological Secretary, Mikhail Zimyanin, who was 'very mild and gentle' and suggested the writer visit some 'good farms' (the offending work had been critical of the state of Russian villages).[12] That same month, the young writer publicly 'recanted' in a round table in *Literaturnaya gazeta* that included Sergei Zalygin and Anatolii Lanshchikov, figures sympathetic to Krupin (Zalygin had written a preface to Krupin's first major publication in *Novyi mir*).[13] In fact, this round table had taken place on December 7th, 1981, in other words before the December meeting of the RSFSR Writers' Union secretariat and the 'recantation' had been added later (in Lanshchikov's words, 'a blatant falsification').[14]

A third indication of Andropov's policy came a few days after his appointment as Second Secretary when Pavel Romanov, head of Glavlit, denounced the publication policies of *Nash sovremennik* in a memorandum to Zimyanin. Romanov

> deliberately avoided criticizing Soloukhin and Kozhinov … and focused on other works [by M. Alekseev, V. Belov, Yu. Bondarev, V. Krupin and I. Vasil'ev] in order to show that most of the journal's publications were in complete contradiction with party policies, and this forced the incessant intervention by the censorship agency.[15]

Zimyanin passed the memo to Tyazhel'nikov and Shauro with the instruction to 'consider measures … to explain with all seriousness to the editorial board of *Nash sovremennik* the nature of its obligation to the party'.[16] The result was a formal admonition to Vikulov issued by Tyazhel'nikov and Shauro.[17]

## A new team of deputy editors: Vladimir Krivtsov and Vladimir Vasil'ev

The May 1982 issue of *Nash sovremennik* announced the appointment of Vladimir Krivtsov (b. 1928) and Vladimir Vasil'ev (b. 1944) as deputy chief editors, to replace Seleznev and Ustinov. This was the 'strengthening' of the editorial board called for by the December 1981 RSFSR Writers' Union meeting. The announcement showed Andropov's authorities manipulating, rather than suppressing, Russian nationalist ideology. The new appointments were far from constituting a 'rout' (*razgrom*) of *Nash sovremennik*, as Aleksandr Kazintsev was later to suggest.[18] Vikulov did not have outsiders forced upon him as new deputy chief editors, but instead turned to two long-standing members of the editorial staff (Krivtsov had been deputy chief editor from May 1978 until January 1981 and had actually been removed to make way for the Seleznev–Ustinov team; Vasil'ev had been responsible secretary from February 1981 until April 1982). Nonetheless, the new appointments did signify a retreat from the nationalist positions of 1981, since Seleznev's removal cut the close informal links between the journal and the White statist nationalist critics. The new appointments also indicated a shift in influence at the journal in favour of the chief editor, since neither Krivtsov nor Vasil'ev possessed the connections outside the journal which had given Seleznev a degree of independence. The issue of the journal for that month – May 1982 – was heavily laden with contributions by senior literary officials – secretaries of the RSFSR Writers' Union Bondarev and Shundik, and chief editor Vikulov – intended to reduce the risk of further unpleasantness.[19]

Nonetheless, Vikulov continued to feel his position at the journal was under threat, and apparently contemplated resignation.[20] Many prominent figures boycotted the celebration of Vikulov's 60th birthday at the end of June.[21] Shundik, who was master of ceremonies at the occasion, was warned by the authorities to praise Vikulov only as a poet, and not as the editor of *Nash sovremennik*.[22] Viktor Stepanov, the new head of the Literature Sector in the Department of Culture who was reputedly a former aide to Suslov and close to the Chernenko group,[23] possibly contemplated moving Vikulov to the Union of Writers, to be replaced as chief editor by a more moderate, popular nationalist, figure.[24]

According to Vikulov, Bondarev persuaded him not to resign. Bondarev also presumably succeeded in persuading officials at the Department of Culture, including Stepanov, to let Vikulov stay, a concession most likely obtained on condition of commitments on publication

policy.[25] However, these commitments seem to have been sufficiently broad to allow the printing (in the July issue) of collections of short stories by Rasputin and Semenov, the boldest publications by the journal in terms of popular nationalist sentiment since Soloukhin's *Pebbles on the Palm* of March that year and of the kind to cause further disquiet to the likes of Rutkevich and Filippova (two of Rasputin's stories had already been published previously, a fact which no doubt eased their appearance in *Nash sovremennik*).[26]

'The Ring Game', a story by Georgii Semenov, related the events of the last day in the life of a poor, elderly, rural, Russian woman, who lost her husband in the war and whose son was sent to prison for stealing a bag of rye and never returned.[27] When the old woman travelled by bus from her village to the district centre, she discovered the store was closed and had no choice but to spend the night on the shop doorstep. As she slept, the woman dreamt she was climbing a staircase with shining steps and saw smiling people, with one chief person among them, and she knew she could only stay there if he smiled at her: 'She so much wanted to stay here, so she looked at him entreatingly, in amazement, so that he took pity on her suddenly and, still shyly and severely smiling, raised his eyes [*ochi*] to her.'[28] The old woman died before morning.

Literator refrained from negative comment, calling the collection of Rasputin's and Semenov's short stories 'large but uneven'.[29] Further evidence that *Nash sovremennik* had not altogether lost its former spirit was the printing once again on the inside of the front cover of the slogan '*Rossiya – rodina moya*'. Rasputin, meanwhile, made his popular nationalist views known to an international audience in an interview with a Swedish newspaper. He dismissed the myth of national well-being in the happy Soviet family of nations, the theme Andropov and his ideologues were insisting upon, and intimated that Russians were worse off in the USSR than other nationalities.[30] Rasputin also argued, however, that the censorship was gradually being overcome and, as a result, 'wonderful works' were being published. Perhaps he had in mind the *Nash sovremennik* publications of the previous year.

## The attacks continue

Nonetheless, the authorities maintained their pressure on White statist Russian nationalists at *Nash sovremennik*. At the end of July a new Central Committee decree on literature, 'On the creative links of the literary-artistic journals with the practice of building communism', was aimed directly against statist nationalist publications in *Nash sovremennik*

during 1981–82, in particular Kozhinov's '"And Every Tongue Will Name Me"…', but also articles by Lanshchikov and Semanov.[31] The decree had been in preparation since at least May 1981,[32] but was apparently the work of the Department of Culture rather than the Department of Propaganda and, for this reason, had a somewhat reduced status.[33] The decree's language was virtually the same as that of the report of the December 1981 meeting of the RSFSR Writers' Union secretariat, and of Kuleshov's *Pravda* article of February 1982, condemning 'serious deviations' in the portrayal of history and 'prejudiced and superficial judgements of the contemporary world'.[34] 'The editors of journals', the decree complained, 'are not always as demanding as they need to be in their work with authors'. Works of literary criticism and history 'display ideological confusion and an inability to examine social phenomena historically from clear class positions'. Journals were called upon 'to promote the closest rapprochement (*sblizhenie*) and mutual enrichment of the cultures of the socialist nations, and the ideological and political unity (*splochenie*) of Soviet multinational society'. However, the decree stopped short of calling for the 'fusion' (*sliyanie*) of the Soviet peoples. Party organizations in literary journals were to have a new role in approving works for publication and hiring staff; regional party committees and the Moscow party organization were to monitor the content of journals more closely.[35]

Nationalist literary officials were obliged to praise the decree.[36] Nonetheless, a further series of attacks on statist nationalists, both White and Red, followed. On August 17th, writing in *Pravda*, Yurii Surovtsev insisted that Soviet society was 'moving towards social homogeneity', in other words, national differences were being progressively eliminated, although he conceded that 'No one especially pushes the artist onto the shop floor if his heart belongs to the village outskirts.'[37] Surovtsev indicted *Nash sovremennik*'s department of criticism for being 'more than once' guilty of 'direct attempts to single out the "national theme" from the general process of social history', and accused Kozhinov of using 'non-social and anti-social methodology' in his article '"And Every Tongue Will Name Me"…'.[38] Surovtsev complained that Kuz'min, for his part, in his article 'The Writer and History', had criticized Kozhinov on merely concrete historical grounds rather than for his mistaken methodology. Kuz'min's disagreements with Kozhinov in many respects, he noted, were less significant than their agreement on the need for a nationalist approach.

Eight days later, Literator in *Literaturnaya gazeta* also took aim at Kuz'min.[39] Kuz'min was now accused of 'methodological mistakes' and

of having 'overdone the polemics' with his ideological opponents (chief among these opponents was Valentin Oskotskii, author of 'The Novel and History'). Worse, Kuz'min had contradicted Lenin's teachings, denying the doctrine of the 'two cultures' (the idea according to which there was not a single *national* culture, but rather two *class* cultures – proletarian and bourgeois) and painting pan-Slavism as a 'progressive current of social thought' opposed to 'anti-Sovietism and hatred of things Russian [*rusofobiya*]'. To reinforce the case, Literator quoted Brezhnev from the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress: 'Individual appearances of nationalism and chauvinism, of a non-class approach in the evaluation of historical events, appearances of excessive localization of interests, and attempts to glorify the patriarchal way of life, are being eliminated.'[40]

These attacks on *Nash sovremennik* were paralleled by attacks on Russian nationalists elsewhere. In August Anatolii Ivanov-Skuratov, a former contributor to *Veche*, was arrested.[41] Sergei Semanov, sacked as chief editor of *Chelovek i zakon* in April 1981 and under attack in the press since his *Nash sovremennik* publication of November the same year, was summoned to the KGB in connection with the case.[42] Under threat of having his apartment searched, he gave up forbidden literature in his possession (including works by Leonid Borodin).[43] Semanov spent two days in Lefortovo prison, was expelled from the party and lost his job at the Academy of Sciences.[44] Vadim Kozhinov was apparently also threatened.[45]

## A second strand to Andropov's policy

However, the fact that there were two strands to Andropov's policy on Russian nationalism now revealed itself. Vikulov was given the opportunity to conform by printing reformist popular nationalist writing in the sphere of agriculture. The May plenum, which had appointed Andropov Second Secretary, had also passed the Food Production Programme, thereby also raising the profile of Mikhail Gorbachev, Central Committee Secretary for Agriculture and Andropov's protégé (Andropov's close relationship with the young Central Committee Secretary was a feature of the period).[46] A new rubric in the journal, 'The Food Production Programme is a Concern of All the People' (*Prodovol'stvennaya programma – zabota obshchenarodnaya*), betrayed the influence of Gorbachev's Central Committee Department of Agriculture. It was under this rubric that Ivan Vasil'ev was now published.[47] Gorbachev as First Secretary of Stavropol krai (1976–78) had

given his support to the 'link system' in agriculture (which gave a degree of autonomy to work teams, sometimes made up of family members, farming particular plots of land) and Literator now praised Vasil'ev's stress on the villager's plot.[48] Brown notes that 'Indeed, [the "link system"] was comparatively rarely advocated in print in the 1970s until Gorbachev himself became Secretary responsible for agriculture within the Central Committee.'[49] Vasil'ev was also one of the few writers lauded by Georgii Markov, chairman of the USSR Writers' Union, at a high-level meeting in November, attended by the heads of the Central Committee Departments of Propaganda (Tyazhel'nikov) and Culture (Shauro).[50] Possibly taking advantage of this atmosphere, Belov went so far in an outspoken record of a recent trip to Italy to write nostalgically about private landownership.[51]

At the beginning of September the authorities offered an olive branch to popular Russian nationalists when Literator suddenly applied a more liberal interpretation of the July decree in acknowledging 'the striving of editorial boards and the collectives of writers grouped around them to satisfy the various requirements of readers', and accepting that journals should develop the 'profile and traditions of the publication'.[52] It was also from this month that Krivtsov, a deputy chief editor of popular nationalist sympathies, became *first* deputy chief editor. About this time Valentin Oskotskii, a leading opponent of Russian nationalism, was summoned to the Central Committee to meet representatives of both Culture and Propaganda Departments and warned to halt his debate with Kuz'min.[53] Attending the meeting on behalf of the Department of Culture was Ivan Zhukov, newly appointed 'overseer' of *Nash sovremennik* in that department and, according to contemporary editors on the journal, an associate of Kuz'min.[54] Yet evidently there were conflicting elements at work within the Soviet literary-administrative system. On September 28th chief censor Romanov sent another memorandum to Zimyanin criticizing *Nash sovremennik* for its publication policy.[55] This included 'sharp criticism' (by Yurii Lukin, head of the Department of Socialist Culture at the Academy of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the CPSU) of Kuz'min's latest *Nash sovremennik* essay 'for his idealization of Slavophile and pan-Slavic thinkers and for his attacks on Valentin Oskotskii'.[56] As a result, through the mediation of Tyazhel'nikov and Shauro, Vikulov received another admonition, this time from Sergei Mikhalkov, head of the RSFSR Writers' Union.[57]

It would seem that Andropov's mollifying policy towards popular nationalism was closely linked with his need to win the support of Kirilenko's clients. In October, when Kirilenko was removed from the

Politburo, Andropov spoke warmly of his services to party and state.[58] Moreover, officials associated with a policy more sympathetic to Russian nationalism, including Tyazhel'nikov and Shauro, respective heads of the Propaganda and Culture Central Committee Departments, remained in key positions. On the occasion of Belov's 50th birthday, Feliks Kuznetsov, first secretary of the Moscow Writers' Organization and fellow Vologdan, praised Vasilii Belov in *Literaturnaya gazeta* for representing things of 'national value', an authoritative demonstration of support for the writer, and hence for his main publisher, *Nash sovremennik*.[59] On November 6th, four days before Brezhnev's death, Russian nationalist Vladimir Chivilikhin was awarded the USSR State Prize for his nationalist historical novel *Memory* (*Pamyat'*), published in *Nash sovremennik* in 1980 (publication of further instalments of this work resumed in *Nash sovremennik* from May the following year).[60]

Indeed, Andropov's signals on Russian nationalism may have been sufficiently sophisticated to confuse some literary workers. A scandal resulted. In October 1982 the Saratov-based 'thick' journal, *Volga*, published Mikhail Lobanov's 'Liberation', an outspoken Russian nationalist review of Alekseev's *The Brawlers* (published in *Nash sovremennik* in 1981) that amounted, in the words of one commentator, to 'the most open Russian nationalist denunciation of communist ideology and the entire Soviet historical experience to appear in the censored Soviet press'.[61] Lobanov hailed *The Brawlers* as the first accurate portrayal in literature of the famine of 1933 and heretically dismissed the rest of Soviet literature as historically false, including the work of Sholokhov.[62] The article defined the 'historicality' (*istorichnost'*) of literature as its ability to create a literary 'equivalent' of the life experience of the people. Lobanov argued that *The Brawlers* was the first major work of fiction to provide a literary 'equivalent' of collectivization – the most important of the sufferings of the Russian people in the twentieth century because it destroyed the peasantry and its traditional way of life. Vikulov has commented that at that time it would have been impossible to publish a favourable review of *The Brawlers* in a Moscow publication.[63] The article's appearance in *Volga* indicated the collusion of that journal's chief editor, Nikolai Pal'kin, with Alekseev himself and possibly with the Department of Culture official Ivan Zhukov, both of whom were closely associated with Saratov (Alekseev is from Saratov oblast, where the novel is set; Zhukov had attended Saratov university and made his early career in the Komsomol press in that city).[64] In an interview published in *Nash sovremennik* soon after the appearance of *The Brawlers*, Alekseev had gone out of his way to praise the 'bright critical talent' of Mikhail

Lobanov, a critic who 'has his own language, his own view of the world'.[65] Presumably, Alekseev had already known that Lobanov was preparing his controversial review.

An official reaction to Lobanov's article was not long in coming. That month Andropov held a meeting in the Department of Propaganda with Tyazhel'nikov and his deputies to express his dissatisfaction with their work.[66] At the beginning of November Georgii Markov censured editors and critics for continued 'artistic and ideological errors', in particular in the interpretation of history.[67] In the meantime, *Nash sovremennik* had been humiliated by being forced to reprint the apology that had appeared in May in *Kommunist*, the best the journal could do being to hide the piece away on its very last page.[68] However, before the authorities could take any further punitive measures, the death of Brezhnev intervened to temporarily distract their attention.

## Andropov in power

On Brezhnev's death, Andropov, despite his own ill-health, succeeded to the General Secretaryship and proceeded to lay down relatively clear lines of policy in numerous areas – increasing work discipline, combating corruption, improving economic performance, in short 'enough to demonstrate that the General Secretaryship was still the most important political office in the country, even if there were also quite clearly … political limits on those powers'.[69] In cadres policy Andropov continued his patronage of Kirilenko's former clients, while bringing in as aides a group of relatively young and liberal reformist officials he had cultivated during his period at the Central Committee before 1967 (including Georgii Arbatov, Fedor Burlatskii, Georgii Shakhnazarov and Aleksandr Bovin).[70] Nikolai Ryzhkov became a Central Committee Secretary (November 1982); Viktor Chebrikov replaced Fedorchuk as head of the KGB (December 1982); Nikolai Slyunkov became First Secretary of Belorussia (January 1983); and Egor Ligachev became Central Committee Secretary overseeing the Party Organs Department (April 183).[71] An associate of this group was Aleksandr Yakovlev, author of the 1972 *Literaturnaya gazeta* article condemning Russian nationalism and a well-known Westernizer much reviled in Russian nationalist circles. Recalled from Canada at Gorbachev's behest, Yakovlev became director of IMEMO (Institut mirovoi ekonomiki i mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii – Institute of World Economy and International Relations) of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

The Andropov leadership accorded only perfunctory notice to Brezhnev's death and, with the exception of *Nash sovremennik*, the December editions of the central literary journals followed this lead, devoting more attention to the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Soviet Union, which fell that December.[72] *Nash sovremennik*, however, showed an obdurate admiration for the late leader, publishing additional material on Brezhnev's death by leading members of the editorial board Yurii Bondarev, Aleksandr Khvatov and Nikolai Shundik, and by a Kazakh journalist (Brezhnev had formerly served as First Secretary in Kazakhstan).[73] Moreover, instead of an article celebrating the formation of the Soviet Union, *Nash sovremennik* again stressed its respect for Brezhnev by publishing a modest reflection on Russo-Kazakh relations.[74]

A strong note of dissent from Andropov's nationalities policy was sounded on the pages of *Pravda* at the beginning of December 1982. In a Red statist Russian nationalist article, published in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Soviet Union, the novelist Petr Proskurin wrote in the terms of a nationalist 'single stream' (*edinyi potok*) view of Russian history of the 'mystery, or rather the miracle of Russia', of 'her incomprehensible force' and of 'her historical destiny'.[75] Russia, he wrote, is the 'first among equals', the 'nucleus and buttress' of this 'single, indivisible family' ('single, indivisible' [*edinaya, nedelimaya*] had been a slogan of Imperial Russia). In its January issue, an article in *Nash sovremennik* by Vikulov's close associate Valentin Svininnikov echoed Proskurin's theme of the key role played by Russia in the creation of the Soviet Union (the issue also saw the return to the journal of Mikhail Antonov, who had not been published since the sacking of Seleznev and Ustinov, with a new article on agricultural economics, 'Serving the Land', notably shorn of his former nationalist rhetoric).[76]

Publication of the Proskurin article in *Pravda* would seem to have strengthened Andropov's resolve to remove Tyazhel'nikov as head of the Propaganda Department now that the latter's patron, Brezhnev, was no longer alive. However, the limitations on Andropov's power were indicated by the fact that Tyazhel'nikov's replacement was Boris Stukalin, a cadre more closely associated with Chernenko (and an associate of Zimyanin) than with Andropov.[77] However, Stukalin was not one to play an independent role and his appointment showed Andropov's consistent willingness to use clients of his chief rival to implement his own policies. On Stukalin's appointment, Andropov told him that 'the Russian party is a definite danger', and instructed him to keep intellectuals of this orientation under control.[78] Thereafter, at Andropov's

request, Stukalin held a series of individual meetings with leading Russian nationalists, including Anatolii Ivanov (chief editor of *Molodaya gvardiya*), Proskurin, Belov and Alekseev, a process Stukalin has described as one of 'polite discussion' and 'persuasion'.[79]

Ten days after Proskurin's *Pravda* article, Literator in *Literaturnaya gazeta* set out the general lines of Andropov's nationalities policy with regard to the 'thick' journals.[80] Although this was the first such article since Brezhnev's death, no reference was made to the late leader. The article pointed to the 'special responsibility' of the journals in preparing for the jubilee of the 'new historical community of people [*lyudei*], the Soviet people [*narod*]'. The rubric now being published in all the journals ('To Meet the 60th Anniversary of the USSR'), Literator announced, was to depict 'the present joyful life "in the family of equals" ' and to stress Lenin's role in the formation of this Union. 'The rapprochement [*sblizhenie*] of literatures', the article remarked, 'has become an important concern of the state [*obshchegosudarstvennym delom*], a subject of untiring care of the Communist Party.'[81]

On this occasion Literator also evinced a demonstrative complaisance with regard to the literary journals. The mutually beneficial cooperation of the peoples of the Union was exemplified, Literator argued, in the multinational make-up of the editorial boards of the journals 'in which representatives of the various brotherly literatures of our country are united'. Literator also referred approvingly to the 'profile of the journal, its traditions and concrete, specific nature'. If these remarks are applied to *Nash sovremennik*, they were remarkably benign, deliberately overlooking the lack of ethnic heterogeneity in *Nash sovremennik*'s editorial board, which had just lost its only non-Russian member, the Abkhaz philosopher Arsenii Gulyga (a board member since April 1980). Moreover, the article seemed to give its approval to *Nash sovremennik*'s own nationalist 'profile ... traditions and concrete nature'. Indeed, *Nash sovremennik* was praised, possibly with a degree of irony, as one of those journals seeking 'more artistic contact with writers from other republics', especially in the field of translation.

## No compromise

In his December 22nd speech on the 60th anniversary of the formation of the Soviet Union, Andropov formulated his nationalities policy to indicate a careful balance.[82] On the one hand, he broke with Brezhnevite practice by referring to the fusion (*sliyanie*) of all the various nationalities of the Union as the overt goal of Soviet nationalities policy.

At the same time, the new leader indicated a clear recognition of socio-political realities, declaring that 'the economic and cultural progress of all nations and peoples is accompanied by the growth of their national self-consciousness', and this, he noted, was a 'principled, objective process' that 'cannot be attributed exclusively to remnants from the past'.[83] The same month Chernenko showed his loyalty to the new General Secretary in an article in *World Marxist Review* on the same policy area.[84] There were clear limits, however, to Andropov's recognition of 'national self-consciousness'. In January, the authorities went onto the offensive against Russian nationalist tendencies in the literary world. In a severe reduction in the status of *Nash sovremennik*, the journal's print run was cut by one-third (from 335,000 to 225,000) and the editorial board was reduced in number from 25 to 21 members. Among other journals of the RSFSR Writers' Union, the print run of *Oktyabr'* was cut by 20 per cent; although *Moskva* was granted an increase of 23 per cent. Among print runs of the journals of the USSR Writers' Union, *Novyi mir*'s increased by 8.6 per cent; *Druzhba narodov*'s was cut by 34 per cent. *Nash sovremennik*'s print run was to recover somewhat (to 255,000 copies) during 1983, but in January 1984 it was again cut back (to 230,000), a figure at which it remained throughout 1984.

The authorities now made an example of the provincial journal *Sever*, the Russian nationalistic tendencies of the journal's publication policy being censured at a session of the secretariat of the USSR Writers' Union.[85] Formally, a discussion of this type should have been the task of the RSFSR Writers' Union, under whose jurisdiction the journal *Sever* came. Yet opposition within the RSFSR Writers' Union was apparently sufficient to make the interference of the USSR Writers' Union necessary. Even so, certain key Russian nationalists boycotted the session, including Petr Proskurin, Mikhail Alekseev and Anatolii Ivanov. An official in the Propaganda Department asked the liberal editor and critic Natalya Ivanova, appointed in 1981 to head the prose department at *Znamya*, to review the work of *Sever* for the meeting. Ivanova reconciled herself with this task, she has recalled, by writing 'as if for Radio Liberty'.[86] In Literator's account, the journal's offences included too great an interest in 'ethnography', 'unclear, abstract and moralizing formulations', an 'undifferentiated class attitude towards history' and 'extra-social' analyses of Dostoevskii.[87] *Sever* was instructed to promote 'the propaganda of the peace-loving policy of the CPSU' and to attack the ideological opponents of the Soviet Union in the West. With this, however, the attack on *Sever* ended, and its editor, Dmitrii Gusarov, was able to keep his post.

The authorities now returned to the case of Lobanov's article 'Liberation', published the previous October, and singled it out for exemplary punishment.[88] Pavel Nikolaev, in *Literaturnaya gazeta*, denounced Lobanov's article as 'unqualified critical nihilism'.[89] Valentin Oskotskii in *Literaturnaya Rossiya* accused Lobanov of 'revising both the history of Soviet literature and contemporary ideological-artistic experience from positions of total nihilism'.[90] The two articles clearly betrayed a similarity of tone and vocabulary, and were part of an orchestrated campaign. Lobanov was summoned to the Central Committee to be reprimanded. Literator joined in the condemnation of Lobanov, supporting the articles by Nikolaev and Oskotskii.[91] At the end of February the secretariat of the RSFSR Writers' Union, its resistance broken, condemned 'Liberation'.[92] Nikolai Pal'kin, chief editor of the journal *Volga*, was sacked.[93] The attention of the authorities also turned again to the original publisher of *The Brawlers* (of which 'Liberation' was ostensibly a review), *Nash sovremennik*. As *Literaturnaya Rossiya* reported: 'In conclusion S. Mikhalkov [chair of the RSFSR Writers' Union], reminded [his audience] of the ideological mistakes committed in its time by *Nash sovremennik* …'[94] Even Ivan Vasil'ev, *Nash sovremennik*'s exemplary reformist popular nationalist, as recently as November lauded by Georgii Markov, was called into the Central Committee and rebuked for praising the old Russian peasant commune (*obshchina*) and the traditional patriarchal peasant way of life (*patriarkhal'shchina*) in his recent *Nash sovremennik* article, 'Village Letters'.[95]

## Chernenko as Ideological Secretary

Chernenko's appointment as 'Ideological Secretary' in February 1983 brought a halt to this campaign.[96] The appointment was a sign of Andropov's increasing weakness: the General Secretary began dialysis treatment for a kidney complaint at this time, and such illnesses were always fraught, in Soviet politics, with the revival of intergroup rivalry. Andropov's opponents now had the opportunity to regroup around Chernenko.[97] For his part, Andropov may have sought to use the appointment to prevent his chief political rival playing the 'Russian Card' by seeking to make him the executor of the General Secretary's anti-nationalist policy. At the same time, in relation to the Russian nationalists Chernenko would himself act with the greatest caution. No Soviet leader with pretensions to the General Secretaryship, as Chernenko had, could afford to appear as a 'Russian nationalist'.

Under Andropov, Chernenko's freedom of movement was limited, and his appointment did not bring about any revision of the decisions of January and February. Chernenko himself issued contradictory signals. In May he seemed to be establishing his own line in ideological policy with the publication in *Kommunist* of a review of a three-volume issue of Suslov's selected speeches and articles, indicating a continuity with Suslovite-Brezhnevite policy of greater patronage of Russian nationalist ideology, to which Andropov was hostile.[98] At the June ideological plenum, however, Chernenko explicitly endorsed Andropov's anti-nationalist line, condemning, in particular, journals and publishing houses for nationalist 'deviations from historical truth … in the evaluation of collectivization, "god-seeking" themes and the idealization of the patriarchal way of life'.[99] The plenum was followed by calls in the press in similar language for ideological orthodoxy in the arts.[100]

June gave evidence of the continuing political importance of Kirilenko's former clients among top RSFSR officials. Kirilenko himself was shown on television walking with other Soviet leaders during a Supreme Soviet session.[101] Vitalii Vorotnikov was advanced to the post of chair of the RSFSR Council of Ministers. Mikhail Solomentsev, whom Vorotnikov replaced, became chair of the Party Control Commission and full Politburo member. As a result of these changes, a greater status was accorded the RSFSR, Kirilenko's traditional constituency, since whereas Solomentsev as chair of the RSFSR Council of Ministers had been a candidate member of the Politburo, his successor Vorotnikov became (in December 1983) a full Politburo member.

In July, in *Literaturnaya gazeta*, Sergei Vikulov stressed his readiness to comply with the authorities' demands by praising the 1982 Central Committee decree. As a consequence of the decree, he commented, *Nash sovremennik* had 'significantly reformed its work [*znachitel'no perestroil svoyu rabotu*]'; he also stressed the journal's new emphasis on *publitsistika* following the 1982 decree (which had, of course, above all criticized the journal's *literary criticism*).[102] *Nash sovremennik* had been praised in official publications at this time for its writing on the non-black-earth region.[103] Vikulov in particular lauded Ivan Vasil'ev's latest work, the novella *A Peasant Son*.[104]

The March edition of the journal had contained an example of a moderate, reformist popular nationalism compatible with Andropov's ideological aims. This was 'Serving Memory', a rare contribution by cultural historian Dmitrii Likhachev, a figure more closely associated with *Novyi mir*, that combined a disavowal of 'nationalism' as 'the desire to cut oneself off from other peoples and their cultural experience' with

a statement of commitment to popular nationalism plus reform of the Soviet system.[105] Likhachev stressed the importance of historical memory (*pamyat'*), both for the individual citizen and for the people: '*The historical memory of a people* [*naroda*]', he wrote, 'forms the moral climate in which a people [*narod*] lives.'[106] He argued with some optimism that a rebirth of historical memory was taking place in Russian society. Advocating the rehabilitation of pre-revolutionary cultural values, Likhachev predicted that the worst years of the Soviet era were coming to an end: 'Arrested development is primarily [a result of] an attachment to the recent past, a past which is vanishing before our eyes [*ukhodit iz-pod nog*].'[107] Here was a moderate, reformist popular nationalism compatible with Andropov's views. That Likhachev was in favour with leadership elements is clear from his publication in *Kommunist* later that year.[108]

With time, Chernenko's appointment as 'ideological secretary' provided *Nash sovremennik* with an opportunity to establish new relations with a political faction opposed to the Andropov–Gorbachev grouping, and thereby to find political support for a reinvigoration of the journal's nationalist publication policy. An example of direct political influence on *Nash sovremennik* from the conservative Chernenko camp was the April publication of a reply by Minister of Education Mikhail Prokof'ev to Ivan Sinitsyn's criticism of the school system.[109] Sinitsyn, Prokof'ev wrote, had distorted his position and used instances of bad practice to condemn the school system as a whole. He accused Sinitsyn of 'moving towards an a-political position'. On the insistence of the Ministry of Education a selection of readers' letters in support of Sinitsyn's views, which *Nash sovremennik* had been planning to print, were not published.[110]

In his *Literaturnaya gazeta* article of July, Vikulov had also noted that forthcoming issues of the journal would include *The Thunderers*, a novel by the head of the Literature Sector of the Central Committee Department of Culture and Chernenko associate, Viktor Stepanov.[111] The novel, Vikulov said, was 'on the most burning theme of contemporary life – on the struggle for peace, on the ideological confrontation of two systems'.[112] *The Thunderers* focused attention on the US as the chief enemy of the USSR, rather than on the West in general and depicted, as Shundik's recent *The Ancient Sign* had done, the threat posed to the USSR by American nuclear defence policy.[113] Publication of *The Thunderers* was but one example of how Andropov's propagandistic 'peace offensive', launched in response to the regime's isolation on the international arena, was seized upon by competing political factions to show their

loyalty to the leadership (in October leading Russian nationalist writers, including some who had boycotted the *Sever* discussion, published a letter in support of the General Secretary's foreign policy in *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, signatories including Alekseev, Bondarev, Belov, Vikulov, Zalygin, Mikhalkov, Nosov and Proskurin).[114]

There were obvious advantages for the journal to be gained from patronage by an influential official such as Stepanov. Publication of *The Thunderers* was a further sign of tentative approaches by Chernenko towards the 'Russian party', through a conservative faction in the Department of Culture headed by Shauro. Bondarev took the initiative in bringing Stepanov as an author to *Nash sovremennik*.[115] As a result, relations between the Department of Culture and the journal improved.[116] Opposition to this rapprochement was encountered in Glavlit, which delayed publication, without, however, making substantial changes to the text.[117] Links with the Chernenko factions also gained in strength from August, the month of *The Thunderers*' publication, when Andropov's health rapidly worsened. *Literaturnaya gazeta* announced the candidacy of Bondarev's anti-Western 1980 novel, *The Choice*, for the USSR State Prize that year (the novel describes how the life of a Russian, as a young man a soldier in the Second World War, was broken because he left the Soviet Union to live in the West).[118] The same issue of the paper praised *The Thunderers* as 'an undoubted success for the author', and noted that the novel witnessed 'the presence of many as yet unused possibilities which are hidden in this genre'.[119] The 'genre' in question may well have been that of an alliance between ruling circles, associated with Chernenko, and the 'Russian party'. At the end of the year, in an act symbolic of the new relationship, Bondarev received the USSR State Prize for Literature for *The Choice*, part of a widespread 'campaign' raising the profile of Bondarev at this time.[120] As 1983 ended and 1984 began, *Nash sovremennik* showed greater confidence in publishing nationalist sentiment than at any time since the beginning of the Andropov period. Anatolii Lanshchikov was rehabilitated, for the first time since 1981 publishing a critical article in the journal – a defence of village prose – that had been preceded by publication of a favourable review of Lanshchikov's controversial biography of Chernyshevskii (this review itself won one of the journal's annual prizes).[121] A new 'nationalist' rubric, 'Our National Property [*Nashe natsional'noe dostoyanie*]', was introduced, the first item under this rubric an article on Turgenev by Oleg Volkov, nationalist patriarch and veteran of the Solovetskii concentration camp.[122] Of particular note were contributions by Antonov on Andropov's programme of 'intensification' to

improve the Soviet economy, and Aleksandr Kazintsev on new poetry.[123] Kazintsev was a young staff member in the department of criticism who was an acquaintance of Kozhinov and had been initially brought to the journal by Yurii Seleznev. In *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, Kazintsev had recently praised Kozhinov for 'passionately seeking the truth' and for his 'uncompromising struggle with evil' (Kazintsev's first contribution to *Nash sovremennik* had, appropriately, been a laudatory review of an anthology of poetry compiled by his mentor Kozhinov).[124]

When, in the last months of Andropov's term in office, a theoretical work by the Armenian scholar Suren Kaltakhchyan, *The Marxist-Leninist Theory of the Nation and the Contemporary World*, appeared fiercely attacking Russian nationalism, there was a sense in which the book was already an anachronism: its chief sponsor was terminally ill.[125] The work summarized Andropov's objections to statist Russian nationalism, arguing that Marxist-Leninist criticism must be based on social class, rather than nationality, and the Leninist conception of 'two cultures'. Kaltakhchyan denounced champions of the 'single stream' approach to Russian history and culture for placing too much emphasis on 'national character' and 'national spirit'[126] and deplored 'neo-pochvennik motifs' and 'peasant patriarchalism'.[127] Kozhinov was rebuked for developing the idea that 'renunciation' and 'humility' were features of the Russian national character in his *Nash sovremennik* article of November 1981.[128] Lobanov was accused of 'antihistoricism' in 'Liberation' – a term with which Aleksandr Yakovlev, a leading opponent of the Russian nationalists, had attacked them in 1972. Under Brezhnev, this had led to Yakovlev's 'exile' to Canada, from where, as the Russian nationalists were only too well aware, Andropov had recently returned him.

# 5
# From Chernenko to Gorbachev

Despite promising to continue the lines of policy laid down by Andropov, the conservative Chernenko brought an end to a number of the late General Secretary's key policies.[1] Andropov's programme of renewing party and state cadres was halted (for the 13 months that Chernenko was in office no promotions to the Politburo at either full or candidate level were made). So too was Andropov's campaign against corruption. The internationalist stance in nationalities policy was also abandoned: reference to the future merger (*sliyanie*) of Soviet nations was dropped and replaced by the Brezhnevite 'rapprochement' (*sblizhenie*).[2] Chernenko, moreover, reverted to Brezhnev's policy in relation to Russian nationalism, renewing political patronage of Russian nationalists, both popular and statist.[3] There was also a revival, throughout 1984, of the newly vigorous Soviet Anti-Zionist Committee, particularly welcomed by anti-Semitic Russian nationalists for whom 'Zionism' was a codeword for 'Jewishness'.[4]

Immediately after Andropov's death, Literator's review of the January journals was marked by a lightness of tone and an absence of threatening undercurrents. The article praised the latest in the series of Soloukhin's *Pebbles in the Palm* published in *Nash sovremennik* as 'a work rich in content' which 'takes a successful place in the general composition of the issues of the journal and probably will be accepted with satisfaction by the most varied categories of readers'.[5] This official praise for Soloukhin, humiliated in the press at the beginning of the Andropov period, was indicative of a distinctly new literary and ideological line.

Following Yurii Bondarev's receipt of the USSR State Prize for Literature the previous year, the writer's 60th birthday in March 1984 saw the development of an officially sanctioned cult of the writer. On the eve of his birthday, Bondarev was made a Hero of Socialist Labour.[6]

Zimyanin, Stukalin and Shauro attended an evening in his honour.[7] All the major literary journals, with the exception of *Druzhba narodov* and *Yunost'*, carried articles to celebrate Bondarev's birthday. *Nash sovremennik* devoted an identical number of pages (17) to articles celebrating Bondarev's 60th birthday as it did to the death of Andropov and Chernenko's accession, reported in the same March issue.

In September 1984, in a speech to writers and literary officials at the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Union of Writers, Chernenko reversed many of the anti-nationalist positions of the June 1983 plenum on ideology.[8] He spoke of a 'renaissance of historical themes' in literature and art, approved the artist's striving 'to be guided by the many-centuries-old cultural traditions of his own people' and 'decisively rejected the petty tutelage of cultural workers'. The determination of Chernenko and his aides to foster a new ideological climate favourable to Russian nationalists was again evident in November when writers honoured with various awards included nationalists, popular and statist, associated with *Nash sovremennik*: Vikulov, Belov, Rasputin, Kunyaev, Krupin, Pikul' and Alekseev.[9] Zimyanin, Central Committee Secretary with responsibility for ideology, and Shauro, the head of the Department of Culture, played leading parts in this revisionism.[10]

However, as a result of the elderly Chernenko's poor health, his period of rule rapidly degenerated into an interregnum in which a lack of strong central leadership allowed a rival political faction to manoeuvre for position.[11] In this respect, the Chernenko period saw a reversion to the politics of 1981–82. Andropov's 'heir apparent', Gorbachev, secured responsibility for a large number of important areas of policy within the secretariat, including the economy, party organization, foreign policy and also ideology.[12] In ideological matters, in particular, Gorbachev played an increasingly prominent role. In December 1984, Gorbachev spoke at an important conference on ideology, which Chernenko failed to attend for health reasons, criticizing the 'monotony, featurelessness and superficiality' in press, TV and radio output.[13] As one observer noted, 'never before had Gorbachev introduced so many ideas which departed from the current orthodoxy and which were daring for the time'.[14] Indeed, the Chernenko faction was unable to impose its ideological line: 'Andropovite' – now 'Gorbachevite' – views continued to appear in the press.[15] As Proskurin had challenged the Andropov line in *Pravda* in January 1983, so Chernenko's tolerant policy towards Russian nationalism was challenged in the same paper in May 1984. The title of Valentin Oskotskii's Andropovite Marxist-Leninist attack on the Russian nationalists, 'In the Struggle Against Anti-Historicism', recalled both

Yakovlev's well-known publication of 1972 and Oskotskii's own more recent attack on Lobanov.[16] In August, during Chernenko's absence from Moscow on holiday, a *Literaturnaya gazeta* article quoted Lenin to argue that the fusion (*sliyanie*) of nations, though not an immediate prospect, remained the final goal of Soviet nationalities policy.[17]

An indication that Gorbachev already controlled the Propaganda Department came in January 1985 when *Nash sovremennik*'s print run was cut by a further 4.3 per cent (from 230,000 copies to 220,000). Those of *Nash sovremennik*'s sister nationalist publications, *Moskva* and *Molodaya gvardiya*, were more substantially cut (by 17 per cent and 11 per cent respectively). In the same month the print run of the traditionally liberal journal *Novyi mir* was increased by more than 50,000 (13 per cent) to 430,000; that of *Znamya* grew by 11 per cent.

## A new editorial team

Meanwhile, between June and September 1984 a new team of deputy editors was created at *Nash sovremennik*. The appointment of Vladimir Korobov (b. 1949), a young critic with nationalist sympathies and close ties to Yurii Bondarev, from the June issue to replace Vladimir Vasil'ev as deputy chief editor indicated both the newly tolerant official attitude towards Russian nationalist ideology and the increasing influence of Bondarev at the journal. Korobov was a former head of the department of criticism at *Nash sovremennik* (1974–80) and had recently been appointed to the journal's board. He was a frequent writer on Bondarev, contributing three articles on the author, including one in *Nash sovremennik*, to the periodical press on the occasion of his 60th birthday.[18] Korobov had recently written the introduction to an edition of Vikulov's collected works.[19] The same month, the RSFSR Writers' Union and the editorial board of *Nash sovremennik*, in order to regain some of the ground lost in the course of 1983, jointly put Mikhail Alekseev's popular nationalist *The Brawlers* forward for the Lenin and State Prizes of the USSR.[20] A critic reviewing the work described it as 'undoubtedly one of the outstanding literary works of socialist realism'.[21] Meanwhile the RSFSR Writers' Union publicly confirmed its loyalty to the leadership, as in 1983, by affirming its commitment to the struggle for peace.[22]

Following Korobov's appointment, *Nash sovremennik* regained a tinge of the statist nationalist radicalism with which Yurii Seleznev had endowed it in 1981–82 publishing important articles, notably by Kunyaev, Kuz'min, Seleznev, Semanov and Kazintsev.[23] Kunyaev and Semanov had not been published in the journal since 1981, Kuz'min

since 1982 and Seleznev since his dismissal. Moreover, Kozhinov's words (on the patriotic significance of Rubtsov's verse) also appeared in the journal for the first time since 1981, albeit as a quotation in a review of a collection of reminiscences about Rubtsov (the review also quoted Kunyaev).[24] An article in *Literaturnaya Rossiya* had already described Kozhinov's remarks as 'not objective'.[25] The articles by Kunyaev and Kuz'min had, according to their authors, both been written earlier in the Andropov period but had not then been able to appear in print.[26] They restated in sharply anti-Gorbachevite tones key themes of anti-Western statist nationalist ideology, warning of the dangers of reform. The more important of Kunyaev's two articles was a defence of the Great Power mentality and a warning that liberalization would only lead to a 'Time of Troubles'.[27] Originally written for *Literaturnaya gazeta* under Andropov, according to its author it had been rejected for publication in that paper at the insistence of Belyaev, deputy head at the Department of Culture.[28] A second contribution by Kunyaev was a conservative-nationalist attack on Vysotskii and his songs as 'mass culture'.[29] It had also been written earlier, according to Kunyaev in 1982, during Andropov's rise to power. The attack on the popular figure of Vysotskii was immediately controversial, both among the reading public and within the editorial office (as a result of protests by the journal's responsible secretary, Sergei Lukonin, a photograph of the grave of a Soviet soldier, which Kunyaev claimed had been desecrated by Vysotskii's fans, was removed from the issue).[30] Vikulov showed his support for the article by awarding it one of the journal's prizes for the year. Readers could contrast Kunyaev's attack on Vysotskii with Kazintsev's eulogy, set in bold nationalist terms, to Davydov, a patriotic Russian poet of the Napoleonic era.[31] Apollon Kuz'min's new article, 'In Continuation of an Important Conversation', attacked the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy of Yurii Surovtsev and, in Brudny's words, 'was an Aesopian way of calling upon Gorbachev to reform the Soviet state, according to the ideological precepts of Russian nationalism'.[32] Seleznev's article, 'Respect Life!', urged that the resources of the Russian literary tradition be used in the ideological battle with the West.[33] It was published as a tribute to Seleznev who had died of a heart attack on a visit to the GDR (the permission for this trip a possible sign of his rehabilitation) at the early age of 43.[34] Coincidentally, Seleznev died the month that Korobov became deputy chief editor at *Nash sovremennik* and began to give the journal a radical edge that had been absent since Seleznev's own sacking in 1981. Following his death, it became an element of nationalist lore that Seleznev's death had been a result of his dismissal from *Nash sovremennik*.[35] The obituary

published in the literary press made no reference to Seleznev's time at *Nash sovremennik*, but indicated a partial rehabilitation. Seleznev was described in warm tones as one who had died 'at the height of his creative powers'.[36] He was a 'writer-communist' who had 'stood up for the best that has been gathered in the experience and traditions of our national culture and fought for the preservation of the purity of our civic and moral ideals'.

**Vladimir Mussalitin**

The team of Krivtsov and Korobov as deputy chief editors had been barely established when the Central Committee Department of Culture intervened to secure the appointment of Vladimir Mussalitin as deputy chief editor, with effect from the journal's September issue (deputy chief editor Krivtsov has recalled that he returned from vacation to find his job gone).[37] It would seem that the statist nationalist publications published under Korobov had acted as warning signals to the Central Committee, which then immediately took measures to limit the freedom enjoyed by the journal (although allowing Korobov, who had strong support from Bondarev and Vikulov, to remain at his post).

Mussalitin (b. 1939) was a former *Izvestiya* correspondent, a recent graduate of the Academy of Social Sciences of the CPSU and an associate of Viktor Stepanov, head of the literature section in the Central Committee's Department of Culture and author of *The Thunderers*.[38] However, Mussalitin seems to have been more closely connected with the Gorbachev grouping than with that of Chernenko. In his own words, he was sent by the Department of Culture to 'balance' (*uravnovesit'*) the existing forces at *Nash sovremennik* and to 'broaden the range' (*rasshirit' diapazon*) of the journal, while avoiding what were perceived as Russian nationalist extremes.[39] He came to the journal confident of the support he enjoyed outside the journal, and sure of his independence from Vikulov.[40] In short, Mussalitin was to be an antidote, no doubt at the initiative of a Gorbachevite faction in the Central Committee, to Korobov. The timing of Mussalitin's appointment indicates his association with the Gorbachev, rather than the Chernenko, camp. In July, Chernenko had left Moscow to rest in the North Caucasus, leaving Gorbachev in charge. Before long, the General Secretary's poor health required his removal to the Crimea, whence, on August 10th, he returned to hospital in Moscow. The decision on Mussalitin's appointment therefore coincided with a period when Gorbachev-oriented cadres may have had the confidence to act against

the Chernenko line. It was at this time that an ideologically 'Andropovite' article, naming 'fusion' (*sliyanie*) as the goal of nationalities policy, appeared in *Literaturnaya gazeta*.[41] Stepanov, acting on the instructions of Al'bert Belyaev, the deputy head of the Department and an official later closely identified with Aleksandr Yakovlev, telephoned Vikulov to request Mussalitin's appointment.[42] Vikulov had no choice but to comply, although he viewed the appointment as an unwanted intrusion and a threat to his position.[43] Thereafter, the competition between the rival deputy chief editors Korobov and Mussalitin for influence over publication policy reflected a wider contest between Vikulov, Bondarev and the RSFSR Writers' Union, on the one hand, and, on the other, Gorbachevite elements in the Central Committee apparatus who sought to 'rein in' the journal.

From the start, Mussalitin's relations with both Vikulov and Bondarev were poor.[44] No doubt with Bondarev's agreement, Vikulov appointed Korobov, the younger of the two deputy chief editors, first deputy chief editor from September 1984. Nonetheless, Mussalitin's influence was soon felt at the journal. This was partly because of restraints evidently placed on the journal's publication policy by the literary authorities. However, another factor was the failure of the leading established Russian nationalist writers to supply *Nash sovremennik* with sufficient new quality works of fiction (leading 'village prose' writers were not only ageing, but becoming less productive; Bondarev, Astaf'ev, Nosov, Soloukhin and I. Vasil'ev, for example, all reached the age of 60 in this period). Vikulov's declared policy of finding new, young Russian writers 'in the periphery',[45] for example Sergei Alekseev from Vologda and Mikhail Shchukin from Siberia, was designed to compensate for this shortage of works by the leading nationalist writers, but the quality of the new writers proved unequal to the old.[46]

*Publitsistika*, which Mussalitin formally oversaw, now became the mainstay of publication policy. Ivan Vasil'ev, whom Literator described as 'our prominent publicist' and whose work was 'activity of state significance' (*gosudarstvennoe znachenie*), continued as the backbone of the journal's writing on rural affairs.[47] New pro-reform elements also appeared in the journal's *publitsistika*. One was the 'patronage' (*shefstvo*) of a major industrial project after the fashion of the 1930s, following a recommendation by Literator that literary journals take up the 'patronage of important national construction projects'. *Nash sovremennik* announced that henceforth it would 'patronize' the construction of 'the largest blast furnace in the world' at Cherepovets in Vologda region (this innovation in publication policy, moving away from the traditional rural

focus of the journal towards an Andropovite stress on industrial modernization, nonetheless successfully maintained the journal's link with Vologda, the home region of numerous *Nash sovremennik* associates, including Vikulov, Belov, Korobov and Aleksandr Bragin – the head of the *publitsistika* department under Mussalitin).[48] Nonetheless, the new direction was controversial among Russian nationalists, an indication of the extent to which Mussalitin was a 'foreign body' at *Nash sovremennik*. At the Sixth Congress of the RSFSR Writers' Union in December, Rasputin criticized the *shefstvo* of the Cherepovets industrial project.[49] At the end of the year the secretariat of the RSFSR Writers' Union studiously ignored the *shefstvo* of Cherepovets when it praised the journal for the successful way it had fulfilled the demands of the decree of 1982, 'On creative links…', for its 'patronage' (*shefskaya svyaz'*) of the non-black-earth region, and for publishing writers such as I. Vasil'ev and Sinitsyn.[50]

A second new element in the *publitsistika* was illustrated by Fatei Shipunov's article on the environmental problems of the southern black-earth zone of the RSFSR, all the more a sensitive topic since this was Second Secretary Gorbachev's home region.[51] Shipunov's article, written in an impassioned, almost apocalyptic, tone, criticized the failure to prevent soil erosion in that region, placing the blame on bureaucratic mismanagement and indifference (for which the Ministry of Soil Improvement and Water Resources [Minvodkhoz] could largely be held responsible).[52] A published selection of readers' letters received in response to the article included a number by forestry officials who called for the establishment of an ecological agency with powers to make improvements at local level and resolve conflicts between competing institutions.[53] The article, which received one of the journal's prizes for 1985, had been written in 1980, a year of particularly bad soil erosion, but had lain unpublished at the journal for five years.[54] Mussalitin had edited the piece and Vikulov had insisted his deputy chief editor take full responsibility.[55] No doubt calculated by Mussalitin to raise his standing in Russian nationalist circles, it may be surmised that permission to print the article was obtained from Gorbachev's aides. For Gorbachev, the article served the purposes of winning support from popular Russian nationalists and developing his policy of *glasnost'* in relation to environment issues (in particular regarding the controversial work of Minvodkhoz).

## Gorbachev's first year

*Nash sovremennik* showed no hint, on Gorbachev's succession, of the dissatisfaction it had shown on the appointment of Andropov (in April

1985 all the 'thick' journals printed identical material on the leadership change). Yet, despite the unattractive alternatives (Viktor Grishin and Grigorii Romanov), there is little reason to believe that Russian nationalists welcomed Gorbachev's succession 'with real enthusiasm', as one observer has claimed.[56] There were some grounds to believe that Gorbachev, as the first General Secretary whose background lay in agriculture (a key nationalist concern), and whose period as Central Committee Secretary for Agriculture (since 1978) had seen increasing investment in that area, would continue to make agricultural policy a priority. Moreover, *Nash sovremennik*, as a journal specializing in rural affairs, had close links with the Central Committee Agricultural Department, and Gorbachev had encouraged reformist popular nationalist writing in the journal. In the first year of Gorbachev's rule, investment in the non-black-earth zone increased and, in November 1985, the State Committee on the Agro-Industrial Complex (Gosagroprom) was set up, replacing five ministries and one state committee.[57] However, more significantly, Gorbachev was Andropov's chosen heir, and the new General Secretary was therefore closely associated with the former leader's vigorous campaign against statist Russian nationalism.

Gorbachev's first year in office saw a resumption of the general direction in policy-making begun under Andropov, albeit with a new political style. In his inauguration speech, Gorbachev committed himself to continuing Andropov's policies, describing them, as tradition required, as those of Chernenko.[58] '*Perestroika* Mark One', to use Geoffrey Hosking's phrase, consisted of three chief elements: (1) a 'restructuring' (*perestroika*) of the economy based on Andropovite 'intensification' (*intensifikatsiya*) of economic production and a 'speeding up' (*uskorenie*) of economic and social progress; (2) the renewal of party and state cadres, begun by Andropov and now resumed, significantly increasing the proportion of ethnic Russians, and of former Kirilenko cadres, in the highest echelons of power;[59] (3) a new urgency in foreign policy in making contacts with foreign leaders and developing strategies on arms control, soon to become a new, more open approach to the West. In addition, Gorbachev committed himself in principle to the need for 'the development of the individual [*samogo cheloveka*]' and to widen the scope of 'public openness [*glasnost'*]'.

Gorbachev's early appointment, in April, of Egor Ligachev to the Politburo as 'Second Secretary' to chair the secretariat and assume responsibility for ideology provided the initial 'public face' of the new General Secretary's moderate reformism. It was a face acceptable to the Russian nationalists, since Ligachev sympathized with their concerns on

a number of specific issues, although he was, and remained, a committed Marxist-Leninist.[60] Ligachev, since 1983 head of the Party Organs Department and relatively unknown in Moscow before then, was a Siberian party official with a reputation for toughness and personal honesty. He had close contacts with fellow Siberian Georgii Markov, the conservative First Secretary of the USSR Writers' Union.[61] When Rasputin, later in 1985, wished to approach the Central Committee on the question of Lake Baikal, it was to Ligachev, his fellow Siberian, that he handed a written appeal.[62]

Ligachev, together with Mikhail Solomentsev, chair of the Party Control Committee, was put in charge of the anti-alcohol campaign, which began in May with a press campaign and tough new anti-alcohol laws.[63] The campaign, which was partly a result of lobbying by Ligachev, was strongly supported by Russian nationalists since the alcohol problem had been a long-standing concern of Russian nationalists (the theme became the subject of a series of publications in *Nash sovremennik*).[64] However, Ligachev's orthodox communist views on literature were soon indicated in an article by Literator that called for the harnessing of literature to the needs of current economic 'speeding up', and argued that the classic production novels of the 1930s could provide a model for contemporary literature (while the title of the article, 'Time Forward!', alluded to Kataev's classic socialist construction novel of the first Five Year Plan, the recommendation of Ovechkin's *District Routine*, a forerunner of the *derevenshchiki*, as a literary model was perhaps intended to sweeten the pill for the Russian nationalists).[65]

In July, Gorbachev issued an immediate and profound warning to the Russian nationalists when he appointed Aleksandr Yakovlev to head the Propaganda Department in place of Stukalin. It was to be Yakovlev, rather than Ligachev, who was henceforth to play the key role in implementing Gorbachev's policy in the area of literature. Yakovlev was an ambitious and sophisticated politician who was to leave his strong personal mark on the Gorbachev period. Unlike Gorbachev, he was not a consensus-building politician but, in his distinctive political style, liked to take, and implement, concrete decisions on his own initiative, subsequently confronting colleagues with the consequences.[66] Such tactics would have been impossible without Gorbachev's support. Equally, without Yakovlev's own personal daring, the politics of the Gorbachev period could have been fundamentally different.

Although Ligachev remained Second Secretary with responsibility for ideology, and formally Yakovlev's senior, he soon lacked the General Secretary's full backing and was less influential than Yakovlev in the

actual making of ideological policy.[67] An early sign of Ligachev's weakness came in April, the month of his appointment as Second Secretary, when Gorbachev snubbed both Markov and Aleksandr Chakovskii (editor in chief of *Literaturnaya gazeta*), despite Ligachev's close association with the former, when the literary bureaucrats were told the General Secretary was too busy to see them (Andropov had received both writers soon after assuming power and 'expressed his confidence in them').[68] From that time onwards, therefore, there were, in practice, two rival 'ideological' administrations within the party *apparat*. Second Secretary Ligachev ran the conservative and 'formal' administration. Yakovlev, with Gorbachev's backing, headed a more informal structure with a strongly reformist line. This gave the editors of newspapers and journals some possibilities to play on the differences between these two leading politicians.[69]

### *Glasnost'*

In Gorbachev's first year as General Secretary, with Yakovlev at the Department of Propaganda, policy towards culture in general, and towards nationalist ideology in particular, had three elements. Firstly, a policy of 'openness' (*glasnost'*) was developed, according to which writers of *selected* persuasions were given greater freedom of expression. An early example was the publication in *Pravda* of a poem in support of reform by the liberal Evtushenko (this followed a letter the poet wrote to Gorbachev about the poor state of Soviet literature and the severe censorship).[70] Popular nationalists, not least at *Nash sovremennik*, benefited considerably from this new openness. This was reflected in the official support for Russian nationalist writing, popular in essence and oriented towards reform, whether in agriculture, industry and the economy, education or the environment.[71] Statist nationalists also benefited to some degree in this early period, for example the debate between Kuz'min and Surovtsev on patriotism and Soviet power was evidence of the new *glasnost'*.[72] Gorbachev encouraged individual editors and writers to feel they enjoyed his personal attention. According to Mussalitin, Gorbachev often telephoned *Nash sovremennik* to praise particular publications.[73] Mikhail Antonov may not have been unusual in that he believed Gorbachev read and approved of his articles.[74]

Ecology in particular was an area where greater *glasnost'* was officially encouraged. Popular nationalists Zalygin and Likhachev were both published in *Kommunist* at this time. Zalygin, a hydrologist by training, in an article that he had taken to *Kommunist* himself to 'test the waters',

criticized the wasteful loss of fertile land and the irresponsibility of planners.[75] Dmitrii Likhachev co-authored an article calling for parts of the Russian north-west to be declared 'protected historical areas'.[76] It was with Gorbachev's blessing that the Northern Rivers scheme, inaugurated in December 1978 under Brezhnev despite Russian nationalist opposition, became a leading topic in the new phenomenon of public debate on policy issues.[77] The Northern Rivers scheme also provided a point around which Russian nationalists could rally while at the same time generating public support.[78]

At *Nash sovremennik* Mussalitin organized a round table ostensibly on the theme of erosion in the black-earth regions illustrative of the new willingness by party authorities to see criticism expressed in the press. Participants included high-ranking members of the Academy of Sciences who primarily attacked the Ministry of Soil Improvement and Water Resources (Minvodkhoz) on the grounds that it was pressing for the planned diversion of Siberian rivers south to supply the cotton-growing districts of Central Asia with water.[79] Minvodkhoz was criticized for disregarding the concept of land improvement and for a one-sided focus on water irrigation, which, it was claimed, resulted in salination and soil erosion.[80] The Ministry's plans to link the Danube to the Dnepr by canal and other 'global ideas of transforming nature' were condemned. Minvodkhoz, it was argued, should be subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture. One contributor to the discussion asserted that ecological conservation was patriotic in essence: the Russian (*russkaya*) Plain was the 'historical cradle of the Eastern-Slavic and many other peoples', with not only 'a natural and environmental, but also a spiritual and moral significance'.[81] The scientific community was being invited to engage in public discussion of controversial issues, although at Glavlit's insistence all the materials published were approved by the State Committee on the Environment (Goskompriroda), headed by Academician Israel, a supporter of Minvodkhoz.[82] In November the officially published draft Five Year Plan omitted all plans to divert Siberian rivers to Central Asia (plans to divert northern rivers to the Volga, Caspian and Don basins for the irrigation of the southern Russian steppe were not withdrawn at this time, however).

### Attacks on selected targets

A second aspect of official policy towards nationalism consisted of the orchestration of a series of attacks against selected Russian nationalists in the press, beginning symbolically, at the end of June, with a fierce

attack in *Komsomol'skaya pravda* on Yurii Bondarev.[83] Bondarev had hitherto been a virtually untouchable figure, and the attack signalled the end of the officially authorized 'cult' of that author. *Nash sovremennik* was to be a particular focus of these attacks, prompted by a virulently anti-Semitic article by Mark Lyubomudrov on contemporary drama (writing of this type won *Nash sovremennik* the accolade of being 'the very first journal in the Gorbachev era to publish neo-Stalinist and anti-Semitic attacks on the new, liberalizing trends in Soviet cultural life').[84] Lyubomudrov's anti-Semitic article provoked a swift response from Yakovlev, who thereby demonstrated that he had greater influence over the media than his nominal superior, Central Committee Secretary with responsibility for ideology Mikhail Zimyanin (tension within the political hierarchy on the issue of anti-Semitism was also reflected in the different approaches of Yakovlev and Zimyanin to the publication of the writings, many formerly banned, by Jewish authors, for example Anatolii Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat*).[85] On August 1st an article in *Pravda* accused Lyubomudrov of 'setting some writers tendentiously against others'.[86] A week later (its first publication under Yakovlev as head of the Propaganda Department), Literator condemned Lyubomudrov, using the same phrase.[87] Other officially sponsored attacks on Lyubomudrov soon appeared. In November the theatre critic Yurii Dmitriev accused Lyubomudrov of 'ignoring the new historical community – the Soviet people' as well as socialist realism.[88] Literator was also highly critical of contemporary journals, identifying among their 'chronic diseases' a clannishness typified by the habit of dividing writers into 'one's own' (*svoi*) and 'others' (*chuzhoi*).[89] The article included a humiliating personal attack on chief editor Vikulov for having compared Ol'ga Fokina, the Vologdan poet frequently published in *Nash sovremennik*, to Nekrasov. Literator also rebuked Kunyaev, reminding readers that 'making absolutes of one's own aesthetic predilections is an unproductive path in criticism' (a reference to Kunyaev's statist nationalist article in *Nash sovremennik* of the previous February).[90] In *Kommunist*, in a more sophisticated version of the anti-nationalist attacks on *Nash sovremennik* of 1982, Yurii Afanas'ev attacked both popular nationalist Belov and statist nationalist Kozhinov.[91] Afanas'ev condemned 'the conservative tradition of Russian social thought' and denounced 'inaccurate and mistaken judgements on the nature of the Russian autocracy, on the *oprichnina* [a reference to the rule of Ivan IV, whose *oprichniki*, a type of special militarized police force, symbolized arbitrary and repressive government] of Ivan the Terrible, on the genealogy of the Decembrists and of the Populists'.[92] Afanas'ev called

for 'clarity of social and class criteria' in the understanding of history, and criticized Belov's *Harmony* for idealizing the past and the patriarchal way of life.[93] One intention was presumably to encourage Belov not to make allies of statist or anti-Semitic nationalists. However, the attacks on this writer may have had the opposite effect to that intended, driving him towards the statist nationalists.

**New cadres**

In the third element of policy in this area, Yakovlev secured the appointment of reform-minded literary figures and officials to leading positions in the Soviet media. Yurii Voronov, for example, a former chief editor of *Komsomol'skaya pravda* dismissed under Brezhnev for publishing anti-corruption articles,[94] replaced Kozhevnikov as chief editor at *Znamya*. Al'bert Belyaev, who until then had been deputy head of the Central Committee Department of Culture for many years, became chief editor of the Central Committee paper *Sovetskaya kul'tura* (Yakovlev offered Belyaev this post on January 10th, 1986).[95] In the context of these new appointments, the fierce attacks in the press against *Nash sovremennik* must have made Vikulov wonder if he would retain his position for long. Indeed, Yakovlev did contemplate Vikulov's removal.[96]

**Major works by Belov and Rasputin**

As a result of the attacks on the journal, combined with the influence of Mussalitin, and possibly other administrative measures, there was no return to the publication of statist Russian nationalism as had occurred in the Chernenko period. Nor did the journal resume publication of anti-Semitic works such as Lyubomudrov's for the rest of Gorbachev's first year in office. Indeed, the journal's literary criticism (like fiction, the domain of Korobov), which had shown greater boldness as the struggle for the Chernenko succession reached its climax, grew muted. In a mood of increasing caution, *Nash sovremennik* turned to its 'in house' critics – Korobov, Kazintsev and V. Vasil'ev – for contributions, a factor which limited the journal's range and scope and interest for readers.[97]

However, that first summer under Gorbachev *Nash sovremennik* did succeed in maintaining its profile as a leading literary journal thanks to new works by its most established leading authors – Vasilii Belov and Valentin Rasputin. Belov's powerful account of his life in his northern village, *Reflections in the Motherland*, had been written over a 20-year period, and although an extract had been published as early as 1982 before Andropov came to power, only now did the full text appear.[98]

Rasputin's new novella, *The Fire*, possibly the journal's most important publication since Belov's *Harmony*, became, with its pessimistic view of society, one of the most discussed literary works of the 1980s.[99] Edited by Mussalitin in Korobov's absence, *The Fire* was also the cause of a dispute which illustrated the increasingly difficult nature of personal relations at the journal. Mussalitin had argued that the genre of *The Fire* was that of a 'short story' (*rasskaz*).[100] Vikulov, Korobov and Bondarev, however, prevailed in their view that the work was of a longer genre, the 'tale' (*povest'*).[101] This apparently minor dispute seems to have further soured Mussalitin's relations with Vikulov and Bondarev, although Mussalitin's influence over the prose department continued to increase.[102]

## The Sixth RSFSR Writers' Congress

The Sixth RSFSR Writers' Congress, which took place in December 1985, highlighted the leading place *Nash sovremennik* now occupied as a voice of Russian nationalist ideology.[103] It also illustrated the manner in which so many of the public debates in the early period of Gorbachev's General Secretaryship were focused around a Russian nationalist agenda.[104] Attendance at the opening ceremony by the full Politburo indicated the importance of the occasion. The re-election of the 72-year-old Sergei Mikhalkov as chair of the RSFSR Writers' Union may have been a blow to the ambitious Bondarev. Yet Bondarev may nevertheless have been gratified to see the increase in status accorded *Nash sovremennik* within the Union. Seven members of the journal's editorial board sat on the presidium. In addition, *Nash sovremennik*'s representatives on the secretariat of the Union – Vikulov, Shundik and Nosov – were now joined by three board members of the journal, Belov, Rasputin and Leonid Frolov (a former deputy chief editor of the journal). Astaf'ev, not currently a board member at the journal, was also elected to the Union's secretariat at this time.

The Congress also showed the impact of Gorbachev's liberalization of cultural policy. Belov, Rasputin, Lanshchikov and Vikulov all made speeches imbued with popular nationalist reformist pathos. Belov and Rasputin both denounced the scheme to transfer the waters of the Siberian rivers to the south and the flooding of productive land. Belov was highly critical of ministries (notably Minvodkhoz) for supporting the project, but praised the steps against alcohol and protested against the 'narcotic' of rock music.[105] Rasputin linked the struggle to save the environment with patriotism, stressing the need to

focus attention both on Lake Baikal and what he called the 'Holy Land' of north Russia. 'We are ready', he claimed, 'to immolate ourselves both in a literal and in a figurative sense, if it is necessary for Russia.'[106] Lanshchikov made a remarkable plea to end censorship.[107] The critic also defended Belov's *Harmony* and Bondarev's *The Game* from recent attacks. Vikulov spoke loyally of the 'fresh wind' now blowing through the country and condemned the 'rotting blockages of conservatism'.[108]

## Mussalitin alone

Soon the new possibilities presented by Gorbachev's developing programme of *glasnost'* were opening up fissures within the nationalist literary community.[109] According to first deputy chief editor Korobov, his wish to take advantage of the policy of *glasnost'* developed by the new party leadership by expanding the range of authors and themes published was opposed by Vikulov and Bondarev.[110] Works that might have appeared in *Nash sovremennik*, but were rejected, apparently included Viktor Likhonosov's *Our Little Paris*, a novel on the themes of emigration and the intelligentsia at the time of the civil war (the novel was later published in the journal *Don*), Dudintsev's *White Clothes*, Platonov's *The Sea of Youth*, Yurii Azarov's *Pechora* and works by 'non-Russian' writers such as Trifonov (a Jew) and Iskander (an Abkhaz).[111] Boris Mozhaev was later to criticize Vikulov for not having published the second volume of his novel, *Peasant Men and Women*.[112] As a result of these tensions, Korobov's relations with the chief editor turned sour and he was removed from his post (the last issue on which he worked as deputy chief editor being that of January 1986). Tat'yana Ivanova, head of the department of criticism, left the journal a month after Korobov for apparently similar reasons (she was to become one of the leading opponents of *Nash sovremennik* on the pages of Korotich's *A Small Flame* [*Ogonek*]).

Following Korobov's departure there was a hiatus in the recruitment of new personnel. Mussalitin, whom Vikulov and Bondarev could not remove because of the patronage he enjoyed in the Department of Culture, remained sole deputy chief editor. If Vikulov and Bondarev had shown their strength in removing Korobov, their failure to rapidly appoint a successor indicated weakness. Indeed, on the eve of the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress there was a marked contrast between the leading role *Nash sovremennik* played within the nationalist movement (as shown at the December RSFSR Writers' Congress) and the

weak organizational state of the journal itself. Vikulov and the journal's sponsors in the RSFSR Writers' Union needed to find new cadres to revive the journal. Yet they were dependent on Yakovlev's literary authorities for permission to make the necessary appointments. Indeed, as recent attacks on Vikulov had witnessed, the chief editor's position was itself hanging in the balance.

# 6
# Aleksandr Yakovlev and the 'Cultural Offensive'

In an important break with the traditional authoritarian Soviet political culture, Gorbachev and Yakovlev, building on policy initiatives from the new General Secretary's first year in office, invited public opinion to play a role in influencing policy-making. The resultant change in Soviet life was to be nowhere more evident than in the realm of literature. As Gorbachev told a group of writers prior to the 1986 Writers' Congress:

> We do not have an opposition. How then can we monitor ourselves? Only through criticism and self-criticism. And most important, through *glasnost*'. ... The Central Committee needs support. You cannot imagine how much we need the support of a detachment like the writers.[1]

At that meeting Gorbachev seems to have particularly valued the support he received from two senior representatives of different wings of Russian nationalist ideology, the conservative Leonid Leonov and pro-reform Sergei Zalygin.[2] Policy towards Russian nationalism emerged as an important factor in political developments. Careful to draw a distinguishing line, as he did at the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress, in the traditional style of Soviet leaders, between a 'healthy interest in national culture' and 'reactionary, nationalistic and religious survivals', from his first months as General Secretary, Gorbachev nonetheless showed he recognized the potential of popular nationalist ideology (in particular, with regard to support for reform in agriculture, alcohol prohibition and on ecological issues) as a force to mobilize support for reform.[3] At the same time, Gorbachev consistently took steps to break down the polarization in Soviet intellectual life and bring nationalists 'on side' by promoting policies favoured by Russian nationalists and continuing

the patronage of nationalist cultural figures. This patronage of Russian nationalists was also intended by Gorbachev to prevent the ever-present danger of his opponents 'playing the Russian card'.

Despite what might be called Gorbachev's 'benevolent' attitude towards the nationalists, responsibility for implementing policy in this area on a day-to-day basis he placed in the hands of Aleksandr Yakovlev, now Central Committee Secretary and the General Secretary's most influential adviser, who instinctively adopted a more hostile stance towards Russian nationalism.[4] Yakovlev interpreted statist Russian nationalism as a strictly neo-Stalinist phenomenon.[5] The result of the Gorbachev–Yakovlev tandem, therefore, was a sophisticated policy mix on the issue of Russian nationalism in which Yakovlev's aggressive stance and Gorbachev's more accommodating one were intrinsic parts of an overall political game plan. Nevertheless, differences between the two leaders seem to have existed. In early 1986, for example, Yakovlev wished to remove Vikulov as editor in chief of *Nash sovremennik*, but Gorbachev opposed him in this.[6] In May 1987 Yakovlev sent the first of several memoranda to Gorbachev on the dangers of what he called 'Nazism', with the suggestion that the KGB was behind Nazi-type propaganda. In Yakovlev's view, the General Secretary did not take the question sufficiently seriously.[7]

## The cultural offensive

In the wake of the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress Gorbachev and Yakovlev launched a 'cultural offensive' intended to give the initiative to a pro-reform lobby within cultural institutions, and by this means win support for reform among the intelligentsia and the general public. The 'offensive' – a part of what Hosking has termed '*Perestroika* Mark Two'[8] – consisted of a series of direct interventions in literary and cultural institutions described by Dunlop as a 'massive pre-emptive strike' against conservative forces.[9] As the reforming intentions of the new leadership became clearer, a new period of intellectual excitement opened in the Soviet Union. Disputes of long-standing within the intelligentsia now came into the newly created public arena of debate. The reforms themselves further polarized political views, a polarization perhaps all the greater for the atmosphere of expectation and uncertainty they produced. No one knew for certain just what Gorbachev's intended 'reforms' would actually turn out to be, or where the 'reform process' would lead. Nonetheless, as Gorbachev and Yakovlev had anticipated, their liberalizing policies received enthusiastic support from the

Westernizing and pro-reform elements of the intelligentsia who were the chief beneficiaries of these new policies.[10] Writers for their part – both those favoured and those spurned by the authorities – were eager to avail themselves of their traditional authority in Russian culture and take on the mantle of spokespeople for conflicting camps, participating in debates over fundamental questions relating to a multitude of issues, including the direction of reform, Westernization, democratization, the role of the market in the economy and ethnic relations.

This radicalization of public opinion increased the disagreements within the political elite, exemplified at an early stage by the diverse responses to a *Pravda* article of February 1986 attacking party privileges.[11] The reformist El'tsin supported the article; the conservative Ligachev argued the article was a 'political mistake'.[12] This also reflected a change in the attitude of Soviet leaders to public debate. By tradition their views were not known to the public, and to the extent that political debates took place in the official media, they tended to be conducted vicariously, with politicians allowing and encouraging writers to promote versions of their own in a 'politics by proxy'. Now some politicians were becoming public figures. At the same time, Gorbachev's policies of liberalization generated concern among political conservatives that public opinion was getting out of control. The group that most evidently aroused these concerns were the so-called 'democrats', at first a small, but increasingly active and influential group, though heterogeneous, that was to move rapidly towards advocacy of multiparty democracy and a market economy.[13]

Sweeping changes were made in the personnel of the Central Committee departments of Propaganda and Culture.[14] Yakovlev's replacement at the Department of Propaganda was Yurii Sklyarov (an official with whom Mussalitin had links that went back at least to 1978 when the latter had been Supreme Soviet correspondent for *Izvestiya* and Sklyarov had been head of the Supreme Soviet's Department of Letters).[15] Nail' Bikkenin, a supporter of Yakovlev, became deputy head of the Propaganda Department. Shauro, a Suslov nominee and a benefactor of nationalists who had headed the Cultural Department for 20 years, was replaced by Yurii Voronov (who had only recently been appointed chief editor of *Znamya*). At a lower level in the Department of Culture, however, nationalist sympathizers were not eradicated. Yakovlev's supporter Al'bert Belyaev was replaced as deputy head of the Department in charge of the sector on literature by Vladimir Egorov, an official with nationalist sympathies, formerly head of the Gor'kii Literary Institute.[16] The nationalist sympathizer Ivan Zhukov was

replaced as 'overseer' of *Nash sovremennik* by Sergei Potemkin, like Vikulov and Bondarev a veteran of the Great Patriotic War (*frontovik*).[17]

Within a short space of time the future flagships of *glasnost'* – publications such as *Literaturnaya gazeta*, *Moskovskie novosti*, *Ogonek*, *Novyi mir* and *Znamya* – all gained new chief editors (a similar process took place in the main creative unions). Vitalii Korotich replaced Anatolii Sofronov as chief editor of *Ogonek*, an important patron of Russian nationalists and a long-term opponent of Yakovlev whom the latter had unsuccessfully sought to remove as chief editor of *Ogonek* in 1972 (at that time Sofronov had helped Yakovlev's opponents to outmanoeuvre him, organizing the letter from Mikhail Sholokhov to the Central Committee which contributed to his dismissal and 'exile' to Canada in 1973).[18] Egor Yakovlev replaced Gennadii Gerasimov at *Moskovskie novosti*. The non-party, pro-reform popular nationalist Zalygin took over from Vladimir Karpov at *Novyi mir* on Gorbachev's personal initiative (Gorbachev having already taken care to sound Zalygin's views).[19] Grigorii Baklanov was appointed chief editor at *Znamya* (unlike Zalygin, Baklanov believed he owed his appointment to Yakovlev, rather than Gorbachev).[20] Reform-minded Ivan Frolov became editor in chief at the official party journal *Kommunist*, replacing the orthodox Marxist-Leninist, and opponent of Soloukhin, Richard Kosolapov.[21]

The 'cultural offensive' was a major blow against conservative and statist Russian nationalists in the literary world. It seemed to the Russian nationalists that the traditional party principle – espoused by Brezhnev and Suslov, and not fundamentally altered even during Andropov's brief period in office – that opposing ideological groupings of writers should all be given 'a share of the cake' had been abandoned. The new pluralism was a clear breach in the conservative Soviet cultural tradition and threatened to undermine the access to media previously enjoyed by Russian nationalists. Five publications were left as a rump in the hands of the opponents of reform – the monthly journals *Nash sovremennik*, *Moskva* and *Molodaya gvardiya* and the newspapers *Literaturnaya Rossiya* and *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. Three of these – *Nash sovremennik*, *Moskva* and *Literaturnaya Rossiya* – were organs of the RSFSR Writers' Union, a body which henceforth was to play a key co-ordinating role in promoting opposition to the reforms (*Moskva* was jointly a publication of the Moscow Writers' Organization). *Molodaya gvardiya* and *Sovetskaya Rossiya* were organs of the Komsomol and of the RSFSR Council of Ministers (jointly with the Central Committee) respectively. The only journal of the RSFSR Writers' Union to follow the reformist line was

*Oktyabr'* which, under the chief editorship of Anatolii Anan'ev, was to become a thorn in the side of its parent organization, finally leading in 1989 to a bitter battle for control of the journal. *Molodaya gvardiya*, for its part, assumed an important role in the political-literary debates as a mouthpiece for neo-Stalinism.[22] In the wake of the flood of literature, new and old, in the reformist journals, the five Russian nationalist publications were reduced to mounting a rearguard action, largely in their pages of literary criticism. From this point on the ability of the Russian nationalists to 'set the agenda for socio-political debate', always severely limited, progressively diminished.[23]

It was against this background that the political leadership sought to divide Russian nationalist opinion by encouraging a pro-reform lobby within this group. In this game plan, an important role was allotted to Sergei Zalygin, the new chief editor of *Novyi mir*, who was to make of that journal 'a bulwark of enlightened nationalism'.[24] The Northern Rivers water diversion project was cancelled. There were major celebrations of the 800th anniversary of the *Lay of Igor's Campaign* (*Slovo o polku igoreve*), an anonymous literary masterpiece of the late twelfth century.[25] In the summer of 1986, Russian nationalist painter Il'ya Glazunov was allowed to hold an exhibition of his works at the Manezh (and at Glazunov's request Gorbachev prolonged the exhibition, overturning the initial decision by Yakovlev to close the exhibition after one month).[26] In November 1986 the pro-reform popular nationalist Dmitrii Likhachev was appointed chairman of the newly created Soviet Cultural Foundation.[27] Likhachev, a much-feted figure on the pages of both Korotich's *Ogonek* and Belyaev's *Sovetskaya kul'tura*, became a Hero of Socialist Labour on his 80th birthday in November.[28] Gorbachev continued to maintain personal relations with a number of leading nationalist figures, including Bondarev, Belov and Rasputin, despite their criticism of party policy and pro-reform nationalists (witness Bondarev's criticism of Likhachev for having argued the need for 'repentance' for the tragedies of the Soviet era).[29] *Nash sovremennik* was on occasion given air time on central television, an indication of official good will.[30]

Yakovlev now sought the removal of Vikulov from *Nash sovremennik*. He ordered an investigation into the journal by the Propaganda Department after, he has claimed, he received complaints from within the journal that things were not in order.[31]

> The Central Committee received a letter stating that at the journal *Nash sovremennik* they were permanently drunk, chief editor Vikulov

> and his closest colleagues never sobered up, and after drinking they played football in the corridor with a rubbish bin.[32]

However, despite this, Gorbachev allowed Vikulov to keep his post at *Nash sovremennik*, apparently on the grounds that the latter, as chief editor of a Russian (*rossiiskii*) journal, enjoyed the support of chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers Vorotnikov.[33] While this was symptomatic of the difference in approach towards Russian nationalist ideology on the part of the two leaders, at the same time both Gorbachev and Yakovlev were well aware that the threat of removal of a journal's chief editor was a useful means of influencing publication policy.

According to Vikulov, he again came under pressure to resign following the June 1986 Eighth USSR Writers' Congress.[34] This may well have resulted from the fact that Yakovlev's desire to remove him was strengthened by the contents of the May 1986 edition of *Nash sovremennik*. The 'highlight' of the issue was a collection of short stories by popular nationalist Viktor Astaf'ev, *Place of Action* (the issue also contained minor – although symbolic – works by statist nationalists Apollon Kuz'min and Stanislav Kunyaev).[35] Astaf'ev's collection of stories was his first, and in the event highly explosive, publication in *Nash sovremennik* since he had left the editorial board in 1981. As such, it demonstrated a renewed rapprochement between the writer and the journal, and one all the more important for *Nash sovremennik* following the publication of Astaf'ev's most substantial recent work, *A Sad Detective Story*, in the rival and increasingly pro-reform journal *Oktyabr'*.[36] *Place of Action* included one particular story, 'Catching Gudgeon in Georgia', that voiced a critical and unsympathetic attitude to Georgian ways of doing things and was to cause a storm of protest.[37] The town of Zugdidi, for example, is described by Astaf'ev with considerable distaste as:

> the richest town in Georgia. Here you can buy a car, medicine, an aeroplane, a Kalashnikov automatic rifle, golden teeth, a first class graduation certificate from a Russian school and from Moscow University, without even knowing a single word of Russian, or of Georgian for that matter.[38]

The publication of *Place of Action* indicated a weakening in the influence at the journal of Mussalitin, who had opposed publication.[39] Mussalitin's position may also have weakened as a result of lower-level personnel changes in the Department of Culture, where Vladimir Egorov had succeeded Al'bert Belyaev and the appointment of the

*frontovik* Potemkin as Central Committee 'overseer' for the journal strengthened Vikulov's hand. Mussalitin has recalled that Potemkin told him to 'find a common language' with the chief editor.[40]

## The Eighth USSR Writers' Congress and its results

The Eighth Writers' Congress held in June 1986 was a major test of the new policies.[41] It showed the party authorities calling on writers to take a position vis-à-vis reform, and demonstrated how this summons created divisions among writers of a broadly nationalist orientation. This was illustrated by the election at the Congress of Vladimir Karpov, until then chief editor of *Novyi mir*, as a compromise choice for the post of First Secretary of the USSR Writers' Union (Georgii Markov, Ligachev's close associate, was provided with the newly created honorary position of chair of the Union).[42] The two leading alternatives to Karpov were both representatives of Russian nationalist tendencies: the pro-reform, popular nationalist Sergei Zalygin who closely identified with Gorbachev's policies; and the statist nationalist Yurii Bondarev, an informal leader of the 'Russian party' who was increasingly opposed to the reforms and who enjoyed the support of Ligachev.[43] It would seem that while Bondarev was genuinely disappointed not to win the election, Zalygin was already aware that Gorbachev had decided to appoint him to the potentially more influential post of chief editor at *Novyi mir*. According to Zalygin his candidacy for the post of First Secretary of the USSR Writers' Union was a result of a motion by delegates from the Ukraine and Belorussia who, presumably, were concerned about Bondarev's statist nationalist views.[44]

The divisions among Russian nationalists were illustrated by the unwillingness of many writers to follow the lead of Zalygin and Likhachev in support of Gorbachev and Yakovlev.[45] Statist nationalists, led by Bondarev, were already moving strongly into opposition. Influential popular nationalist writers, such as Rasputin and Astaf'ev, were inclined to adopt a position of 'political "fence-sitting"'.[46] However, they were increasingly faced with the need to choose 'for' or 'against' reform. Indeed, the apparent 'choice' of Viktor Astaf'ev had already been made. His story 'Catching Gudgeon in Georgia' immediately caused a scandal at the Congress.[47] 'Catching Gudgeon in Georgia', its critics claimed, depicted the Georgian people as corrupt, venal and inclined to criminality. Georgii Tsitsishvili, speaking for the Georgian delegation, referred to 'several writers and leaders of literary organs [who] permit vulgar mistakes'. Sergei Mikhalkov, chairman of the

RSFSR Writers' Union, summing up the official position, remarked,

> Let the excellent Russian prose writer Viktor Astaf'ev not condemn me if I say that his story 'Catching Gudgeon in Georgia' … offensively and tactlessly wounds the national feelings of a fraternal people.[48]

Popular Russian nationalist Rasputin, however, came to Astaf'ev's defence, arguing, 'There was no insult directed towards the Georgian people in Astaf'ev's short story; read it and you'll be able to distinguish pain from mockery and truth from a lie.'[49] The Georgian delegation thereupon walked out. It was reported that their departure was 'accompanied by cries of "get back to the markets" and similar chauvinistic abuse'.[50] The fact that 'Catching Gudgeon in Georgia' had been published in *Nash sovremennik*, a journal with which Yurii Bondarev was closely associated, would seem yet further to have reduced the latter's chances of being elected First Secretary of the USSR Writers' Union. In the event, Bondarev was elected to the bureau of the Union's secretariat at the Congress, but he was largely isolated there as a representative of Russian nationalist views (the other members of the bureau were the First Secretary of the USSR Writers' Union, Karpov, the chair of the Union, Markov, and the writers Chingiz Aitmatov, Oles' Gonchar and Vasil' Bykov).

Following the Congress, *Nash sovremennik* was obliged to print a letter from distinguished Georgians complaining about the Astaf'ev publication.[51] Astaf'ev also came under attack for religious views he had expressed in *Place of Action* in an article strongly reminiscent of the attack on Soloukhin in 1982 (Astaf'ev was accused of 'flirting with goddikins' [*koketnichaya s bozhen'koi*]).[52] The author, Iosif Kryvelev, a Soviet 'authority' on religion, cited Astaf'ev's call for a 'chastising rain' to revenge the 'contemporary defilers of temples' and expressed the view that it was 'more than strange' to read such ideas in a Soviet publication. Astaf'ev was also criticized, particularly for anti-Semitism, by the distinguished Jewish literary historian, Natan Eidel'man, in an exchange of private letters that later circulated widely.[53]

## A new team of editors: Svininnikov and Mussalitin

The hiatus in *Nash sovremennik*'s organizational life, which had begun prior to the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress with Korobov's departure, continued until, following the end of the USSR Writers' Congress, the July issue of the journal when Valentin Svininnikov was appointed

deputy chief editor and a 'Mussalitin–Svininnikov' team was established.[54] Until then, Vikulov and the RSFSR Writers' Union had feared not only that Vikulov would lose his post, but that the need to replace Korobov would provide Yakovlev's cultural authorities with an opportunity to further increase their influence over the journal. In the event, in a significant concession to Bondarev and the Russian nationalist community, the authorities allowed Vikulov to remain as chief editor[55] and gave Vikulov and his colleagues at the RSFSR Writers' Union a free hand in the choice of a new deputy chief editor. However, Vikulov was not permitted to get rid of Mussalitin.

Svininnikov (b. 1937), a journalist of Red statist nationalist sympathies with a reputation for anti-Semitic views, was a long-term and close associate of Vikulov who had considerable administrative experience and, since 1971, had been a frequent reviewer on the journal.[56] In 1981 Vikulov had sought, unsuccessfully, to bring Svininnikov, then deputy chief editor at *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, to *Nash sovremennik* (Svininnikov believed his appointment at that time had been barred by the chairman of the RSFSR Writers' Union, Sergei Mikhalkov, on the grounds that he was suspected of anti-Semitism).[57] Vikulov nevertheless had kept faith with Svininnikov (and shown his agreement with his ideological views) by regularly publishing him.

Svininnikov's arrival reduced Mussalitin's influence and gave the journal a new Red statist nationalist edge. Two months after his appointment, in a snub to Mussalitin, Svininnikov was made first deputy chief editor. Thereafter, in a repetition of the situation under the Korobov–Mussalitin team, although at a higher level of polarization, disparate ideological tendencies associated with the two deputy chief editors became more marked, with Svininnikov (the departments of fiction and criticism) having the upper hand.

### Belov's *Everything Lies Ahead*

The best example of the new line associated with deputy editor Svininnikov came from the pen of Vasilii Belov with his new novel, *Everything Lies Ahead*.[58] The manuscript of this novel had been in the possession of the journal's editorial office since at least the summer of 1985. Only now, after confirmation that Vikulov would keep his post and the appointment of Svininnikov, was the chief editor confident enough to take the decision to go ahead with publication. Korobov, while deputy chief editor, had initially prepared the text for publication but it was not then published, despite Bondarev's support.[59]

Subsequently the novel was re-edited by Mussalitin and changes, toning down the work, agreed with Belov.[60] The newly confident Vikulov now overruled the agreed changes and, against Mussalitin's wishes, published the novel in an earlier, more outspoken variant.[61]

The work of a leading and prestigious popular nationalist writer, the novel demonstrates how deeply rooted anti-Westernism, anti-Semitism and conspiracy theory – the psychology of *ressentiment*[62] – were in the Russian nationalist psyche.[63] Gorbachev's reforms that began to open the country to Western influences had clearly increased anxieties within the nationalist community to a pitch, at the same time as they provided the conditions in which these anxieties could be brought into the public sphere. The novel showed a section of the nationalist intelligentsia moving to the right, rejecting qualities such as 'introspection, self-criticism and, where called for, penitence' that Laqueur argues are a 'basic difference' between extremist and moderate nationalists.[64] *Everything Lies Ahead* defined the Russian nation in restrictive ethnic and moral terms, exaggerated the nature of threats to the nation, and located their origin in 'the Other' – primarily the Jewish community and the West. Belov had plainly written the novel with a view to attracting attention by an open treatment of this 'forbidden' theme. He was well aware that anti-Semitism was a topic that could strengthen solidarities among his nationalist readers, popular and statist, Red and White, as well as more widely built alliances with conservative communists against the challenge of reform.[65] As an artist, Belov wished to provide a visceral emotional motivation for this political alliance. Taken together, these elements explain the eagerness of Vikulov, Svininnikov and Bondarev – all Red statist nationalists – to publish *Everything Lies Ahead*.

Publication produced an immediate critical storm. Reviewers divided in their views with a polemical intensity hitherto unseen. Of reviews published by the end of 1986, only *Molodaya gvardiya* carried one which was favourable.[66] *Literaturnaya gazeta*, *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* all published hostile notices.[67] In 1987 more favourable reviews of Belov's novel appeared in the nationalist press – in *Molodaya gvardiya*, *Moskva* and *Literaturnaya Rossiya*.[68] However, there was still a far greater number of negative reviews in the liberal press – *Ogonek*, *Znamya*, *Literaturnaya gazeta*, *Sovetskaya kul'tura*; the academic – *Voprosy literatury*, and the official – *Kommunist*.[69] Aleksandr Yakovlev used the pages of *Sovetskaya kul'tura* to add his personal voice to the criticism.[70] In June 1987 the novel was published, in an edition of 2,700,000, by Sovetskii pisatel', and was one of the bestselling books of that year.[71]

The scandal – interpreted by many nationalists as a 'success' – created by Belov's *Everything Lies Ahead* overshadowed an underlying failure by *Nash sovremennik* to compete with the main reformist literary journals. Vikulov's persistence in his policy of shunning publication of works hitherto banned by the authorities, while seeking out young writers from the provinces, met with little success.[72] In the search for literature of merit, Vikulov broke his own rule, publishing a war novel by the late Konstantin Vorob'ev, *It's Us, Oh Lord!* This unfinished, autobiographical novel, written in 1943, significantly expanded the range of the journal by treating a theme generally shunned by official Soviet literature before Gorbachev, that of a Russian taken prisoner of war by the Germans.[73] Other fiction published included the return of the popular and controversial Valentin Pikul' to the journal's pages for the first time since the scandal of the 1979 publication, *At the Final Boundary*.[74] The journal's literary criticism was almost exclusively limited to the journal's in-house authors.[75] Only in Anatolii Lanshchikov did *Nash sovremennik* find an authoritative critical voice outside the circle of its immediate associates. He contributed an article praising the new biographical novel by Vladimir Karpov, *The Commander*, although literary politics would seem to have played a part here.[76] The article appears to have been a reverence in the direction of Karpov, recently elected First Secretary of the Writers' Union, and one that Bondarev, Karpov's unsuccessful rival for that post, may not have appreciated. Lanshchikov's article may also have been intended to attract the favourable attention of Yakovlev. Such speculations are not idle, given that Lanshchikov was to be the candidate favoured by Yakovlev to succeed Vikulov as chief editor of the journal during 1988–89.

### Mussalitin's *publitsistika*

Against this background, Mussalitin continued to persevere with a pro-reform popular nationalist line, with some modifications (notably, the theme of the *shefstvo* of the Cherepovets iron foundry was now abandoned). Key topics included agricultural reform, educational reform, reform of the railways, environmental issues and the anti-alcohol campaign.[77] Ivan Vasil'ev, in his influential articles on agricultural reform, supported the decisions of the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress on agriculture and called for *perestroika* in the countryside.[78] Vasil'ev now received the Lenin Prize for Literature for his writing, including for several articles first published in *Nash sovremennik* in 1982.[79] The award was a personal mark of favour from the General

Secretary: Vasil'ev had attracted Gorbachev's attention when the latter was still Central Committee Secretary for Agriculture (in his memoirs Gorbachev writes of Vasil'ev's 'outstanding articles').[80] The award was also designed by Gorbachev to indicate his principled sympathy with many popular nationalist positions.[81] *Glasnost'* could be seen in vigorous action with the publication of Mikhail Antonov's sharp nationalist critique of bureaucratic mismanagement of the railways.[82] This was followed by a response to Antonov by representatives of the Railways Ministry (including a deputy minister) on the pages of *Nash sovremennik*, and Antonov thereupon defended his views in a further response.[83]

A round table on environmental issues, organized by Mussalitin, in which Rasputin and Zalygin took part (other participants included Gorbachevite reformist economists Nikolai Petrakov and Pavel Bunich and the nationalist environmentalist Mikhail Lemeshev) revealed the extent of bureaucratic opposition in this area. The Minister of Minvodkhoz refused an invitation to take part, and the text was examined closely in the Central Committee (in the aftermath, the Department of Agriculture admonished Mussalitin for the views expressed).[84] The round table also showed the potential for an 'alliance for *glasnost'* between nationalist writers and the scientific community. Rasputin was forthright in his support for *glasnost'* and demonstrated a conviction that civil society could force the party-government bureaucracy to pay attention to its demands.[85] Writers and scientists, as Hosking has noted, were 'the two categories of Soviet citizens most forcefully impressed by the discrepancy between ideal and reality in Soviet life, and also the two categories in the best position to voice concern about the problem'.[86] Yet despite Rasputin's warm words, this alliance was to have no future on the pages of *Nash sovremennik*. While Zalygin was to continue writing on environmental themes, he was no more to appear on the pages of Vikulov's journal. This was an indication of the increasing polarization within the nationalist community. Zalygin's distinctive, pro-reform stance that was not to be welcome at *Nash sovremennik* was illustrated by a major article he contributed to *Novyi mir*, 'Turning Point', on the Northern Rivers' scheme exposing the major institutional interests surrounding the project (published in the same month that the *Nash sovremennik* round table appeared).[87] 'From now on,' Zalygin wrote in strong pro-reform and democratic tones, 'public opinion has acquired the rights of citizenship.'[88] In the vision of an ideal future Russia that was to predominate in *Nash sovremennik* in the second half of Gorbachev's period in office, there was little place for either public opinion or civic rights.

**The removal of Mussalitin**

In his closing address to the January 1987 Central Committee plenum, Gorbachev gave full backing to the policy of *glasnost'*, remarking, 'We need democracy as we need air.'[89] The plenum marked a new stage in the rise to power and influence of Aleksandr Yakovlev, who became a candidate Politburo member and formally replaced Zimyanin as Central Committee Secretary with responsibility for ideology. By this time the initial phase of the 'cultural offensive' was bearing practical fruit.[90] The old limits had first been stretched by a film – Abuladze's *Repentance* – about the legacy of Stalinism (a film made in 1984 under Chernenko but first shown to selected audiences only in October 1986).[91] The banner soon passed to literature.[92] During 1987, a wide range of previously unpublished or banned works was printed, many as a result of the direct intervention of Yakovlev himself.[93] The success of the new policy could be seen in the rapid increase in demand for precisely those publications which were flagships of *glasnost'*. Yakovlev proceeded to push through the Department of Propaganda a decision, presumably opposed by Ligachev, to allow the levels of print runs to rise, despite the chronic shortage of paper.[94] In January 1987, the print runs of the reformist journals *Novyi mir* and *Znamya* rose by 16 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. Those of 'opposition' journals over the same period either stagnated or decreased. *Nash sovremennik*'s print run remained unchanged; that of Mikhail Alekseev's *Moskva* fell by 14 per cent; Anatolii Ivanov's *Molodaya gvardiya* declined by 1.5 per cent.

By early 1987, ideological battles were increasingly couched in terms of a debate between Westernizing and Russian nationalist trends. Party conservatives were coming to believe that Marxism-Leninism was a largely uncompetitive ideological force in the new conditions of *glasnost'* and, moreover, Gorbachev's ideological apparatus, under Yakovlev's direction, proved unwilling to surrender traditional Marxism-Leninism to the party conservatives (in a series of articles in *Sovetskaya kul'tura* under the rubric 'We are Born of October' [*'My rodom iz Oktyabrya'*] authors such as Afanas'ev and Kaltakhchyan attacked exponents of statist nationalist views such as Kozhinov and Kuz'min associated with *Nash sovremennik* from Marxist-Leninist positions).[95]

Conservative political elites looked to the figure of Second Secretary Egor Ligachev as a potential leader of opposition to reform. Although Ligachev was typical of senior conservative communists in that he never abandoned Marxism-Leninism in favour of Russian nationalism, he courted prominent nationalists in what amounted to a public recognition

of the lack of authority of traditional Marxism-Leninism, maintaining regular public contacts with leading Russian nationalists and expressly agreeing with their views. In March 1987 Ligachev visited Saratov a few days before the opening of an RSFSR Writers' Union plenum in that city.[96]

The March 1987 plenum of the RSFSR Writers' Union was a watershed in Soviet life, marking as it did the first tentative steps towards an open and legal opposition to the ruling regime since the Tenth Party Congress.[97] For some of the participants, the venue for the plenum had a special significance symbolizing the nationalists' long-term struggle with the authorities: Saratov was the literary fiefdom of Mikhail Alekseev and home to the journal *Volga*, which had published Lobanov's 'Liberation' in 1982. At the plenum Bondarev established himself as the leader of Russian nationalist opposition to Gorbachev's policies, calling in a keynote speech for a new 'Stalingrad' to be fought and won against the tide of reform. Subsequent meetings of the USSR Writers' Union confirmed the emergence of an opposition to the reforms led by statist Russian nationalists.[98]

This development thrust *Nash sovremennik*, the chief literary journal of the RSFSR Writers' Union, further into the literary and political limelight. However, after the sensation of *Everything Lies Ahead*, the journal seems to have suffered from a failure of nerves. Certainly, *Nash sovremennik* failed to find writing able to take the ideological initiative and fulfil its potential as a voice of the opposition. This was no doubt the result of a number of other contributory factors: Vikulov's innate caution, pressure from Yakovlev's cultural authorities, the moderating influence of Mussalitin and a shortage of writers of the appropriate qualities. Deputy chief editor Svininnikov himself was surprisingly cautious. In a review of a novel about a Russian dynasty of workers, for example, he drew attention to the importance of moral qualities in human behaviour, which he termed, in suitably Gorbachevite language, the 'human factor'.[99] The polemics in which *Nash sovremennik* engaged with the liberal reformers continued to be largely conducted at the back of the journal in the criticism section, mostly by members, or ex-members, of the editorial office. In an article widely denounced in the liberal press, Petr Tataurov, head of the journal's department of criticism, defended the anti-Semitic views of Lyubomudrov.[100] Kazintsev, now head of the department of poetry, was also much criticized for his statist nationalist views on culture, not least by Tat'yana Ivanova, formerly of *Nash sovremennik*, now a regular contributor to *Ogonek*.[101] A review of a posthumous collection of essays by Yurii Seleznev published in the

journal perhaps hinted, with a sense of nostalgia, that the articles of its former first deputy chief editor were the kind of thing it would *really* like to publish.[102]

Dissatisfaction with the journal's publication policy came to a head at the May 1987 meeting of the secretariat of the RSFSR Writers' Union. The work of *Nash sovremennik* was discussed in the light of the earlier March plenum and 'organizational conclusions' (*orgvyvody*) were drawn. Mussalitin, for clear ideological reasons, was made the scapegoat for the journal's failings. The secretariat concluded that the journal should be improved by the choice of new 'professional and gifted editors'.[103] The May 1987 issue was the last on which Mussalitin worked. Shortly afterwards he became the chief editor at Sovetskii pisatel', the publishing house of the more liberal USSR Writers' Union.[104]

# 7
# Ligachev and the Conservative Counter-Offensive

The gloves were coming off in the political struggle. At the June 1987 party plenum, Yakovlev, Central Committee Secretary with responsibility for ideology, was promoted to full membership of the Politburo, a challenge to Ligachev and his backers. Immediately after the plenum, Yakovlev intensified his anti-nationalist campaign, now perceived by some as designed not only to weaken the nationalists, but to attack opponents of reform within the leadership inclined to adopt nationalist rhetoric. He condemned 'unhealthy mutual [national] relations, nationalism and chauvinism, Zionism and anti-Semitism' and 'religious prejudices' and insisted there should be no 'waxing lyrical about what is reactionary in the history and culture of the past'.[1] At the long-awaited plenum of the USSR Writers' Union on nationalities questions, First Secretary Karpov, no doubt at Yakovlev's behest, condemned nationalism in his official report.[2]

Ligachev fought back. In July he twice visited the offices of the leading reformist paper *Sovetskaya kul'tura* to stress his conservative views and his agreement with Russian nationalist writers, in particular Rasputin (who received the USSR State Prize for Literature in 1987).[3] In attacks on the liberal publications *Moskovskie novosti* and *Ogonek*, Ligachev claimed that 'unprecedented heights were reached in the development of culture, education, literature and the arts' in the 1930s.[4] An important ally of Ligachev, it soon became clear, was KGB Chairman Chebrikov. On the 70th anniversary of the Cheka's foundation (December 20th, 1987), Chebrikov accused the forces of 'imperialism' of seeking to penetrate Soviet society, instil 'bourgeois' democracy and break the control of the party.[5]

Yakovlev now moved to further expand the frontiers of *glasnost'*.[6] A *Kommunist* editorial, attributed to Yakovlev, linked contemporary *glasnost'* with earlier party traditions of ideological tolerance embodied

in a party 1925 decree on literature.[7] Much of the previously forbidden Russian twentieth-century literary heritage now returned to the public realm in the pro-reform monthlies *Novyi mir*, *Oktyabr'*, *Druzhba narodov* and *Znamya*, journals which saw extraordinary increases in their print runs.[8] *Druzhba narodov* increased its print run by 400 per cent, *Znamya* by 81 per cent and *Novyi mir* by 13.5 per cent. In comparison, *Nash sovremennik* edged its print run up by only 9.1 per cent (*Moskva*'s print run increased by 14 per cent, that of *Molodaya gvardiya* by 9.4 per cent). *Nash sovremennik* was patently losing in the competition for readers, and this was a cause for concern among Russian nationalists and conservatives.[9] Kazintsev accused the authorities of stifling *Nash sovremennik* and promoting a 'one-sided' *glasnost'* (although liberals also complained about restrictions).[10] In the long run, the failure to raise *Nash sovremennik*'s print run was to become one of the chief reasons for Vikulov's replacement as chief editor in the summer of 1989.

Gorbachev regularly intervened in the debate over *glasnost'* in Yakovlev's favour and sought to extend the realm of *glasnost'* himself.[11] In his November speech on the anniversary of the Revolution, for the first time Gorbachev criticized Stalin, albeit mildly, for 'real crimes stemming from an abuse of power', saying that 'many thousands of party members and non-party members were subjected to mass repression'.[12] In the same speech Gorbachev noted that, with regard to the mass suffering that resulted from Stalin's policies in the countryside, 'flagrant violations of the principles of collectivization took on a universal character'.[13] The General Secretary also called for participants in the debates to show greater tolerance of criticism and respect for one's opponents. A *Pravda* article in August called on journals and their writers to 'seek the truth together' and 'learn to live in conditions of *glasnost'* ': 'In a word, we now have more discussions, but we lack the culture to conduct them.'[14]

Yet the General Secretary was proving to be something of a Janus figure. In the month of his liberal speech criticizing Stalin, Gorbachev dismissed the leading reformer and Moscow party boss, Boris El'tsin. At a January 1988 meeting with cultural figures, Gorbachev adopted a conservative line, equivocating on the nature of *glasnost'*. 'We are for *glasnost'* in the interests of socialism', he remarked.[15]

## A new team of deputy editors: Valentin Svininnikov and Aleksandr Kazintsev

The new deputy chief editor chosen to partner Valentin Svininnikov was Aleksandr Kazintsev. The appointment from the June issue (the month

that Yakovlev became a full member of the Politburo) reflected the freedom Vikulov and the RSFSR Writers' Union now enjoyed in selecting personnel. Kazintsev (b. 1953) was the first deputy chief editor not to be a member of the Communist Party in the history of the journal. Ideologically a White statist nationalist, Kazintsev was an associate of Kozhinov and other radicals, and his appointment looked back to that of Yurii Seleznev in 1981 when Kazintsev had himself joined the journal as a junior staff member (links with the 1981 period were also forged in the department of *publitsistika* when Aleksandr Bragin, head of that department under Mussalitin, left and was replaced by Gennadii Buzmakov, who had held that position under Seleznev from January 1981 until December 1982).

The Svininnikov–Kazintsev team represented a combination of the Red and White strands within the statist Russian nationalist tendency and reflected the processes of radicalization and coalition-building proceeding within the nationalist camp. Yet this radicalization of the journal in terms of personnel was only partially reflected in publication policy. A moderate, essentially popular nationalist, line wholly compatible with Gorbachev's *perestroika* continued in the journal. The semi-autobiographical novel *The Devil's Wheel*, by Georgii Semenov, a pro-reform popular nationalist work, was a marked contrast to Belov's *Everything Lies Ahead*.[16] Semenov's novel portrayed the ills of contemporary urban life as originating, not from the influence of malignant Jews or in a Zionist-Masonic plot, but in human nature and the rejection, in the post-revolutionary period, of private property.[17] Vikulov apparently published this work unwillingly,[18] and, it may be speculated, was pressured into doing so by Yakovlev's literary functionaries. Another pro-reform line was that of Ivan Vasil'ev, of whom Vikulov as ever enthusiastically approved, speaking of him as 'an encyclopaedia, a loud-speaker of *perestroika*, the embodiment of the people's soul, an expert on the bureaucratic machine that harms and tears the people's soul'.[19] The official reformist *Sovetskaya kul'tura* evidently agreed, and published an extract from Vasil'ev's latest novel.[20]

The statist nationalist element in *Nash sovremennik* at this time was most evident in the war of words between the journal and an array of reformist publications, including *Oktyabr'*, *Znamya*, *Novyi mir* and, above all, Korotich's *Ogonek*.[21] In this ideological conflict, in which (on the part of *Nash sovremennik*), anti-Semitic and anti-Western motifs figured increasingly prominently in contributions by statist nationalists Kazintsev, Kuz'min, Lyubomudrov and, most significantly, Kozhinov,

who returned to the pages of the journal for the first time since November 1981.[22] Kozhinov in a wide-ranging article defended the journal's nationalist positions from the attacks in the liberal press (*Sovetskaya kul'tura* and *Komsomol'skaya pravda*), including a defence of *Nash sovremennik*'s new-found ally Viktor Astaf'ev from an attack in *Voprosy literatury* (Astaf'ev was shortly, from March 1988, in an act of solidarity, to rejoin the journal's editorial board). Kozhinov accused many 'democratic' critics of having been, but recently, orthodox Marxist-Leninists.[23] He also refused to condemn *Pamyat'*, which he described as 'froth' (*pena*), not something to be taken seriously.

Most controversial, however, was Rasputin's defence of *Pamyat'* in a republication of his speech at the 5th Congress of VOOPIK held in Gor'kii (now Nizhnii Novgorod) that June, although Rasputin did not more than confirm a view he had expressed earlier, and one shared by his colleagues at *Nash sovremennik*, including Belov, Vikulov, Bondarev and Kunyaev.[24] However, Rasputin's position was a special one as a writer who continued to be courted by both conservatives and reformers (as witnessed by the publication in the reformist press of extracts from his latest works).[25] Rasputin's support for *Pamyat'* resulted in the first serious criticism of him in the Soviet press, although unabashed the writer went on to repeat his defence of the organization on a visit to Sweden.[26] In retrospect it seems clear that Russian nationalists were not the innocent victims of an 'anti-*Pamyat'* ' campaign organized by Yakovlev, but to varying degrees felt a genuine sympathy for many of the aims of *Pamyat'*, while consistently underestimating the high level of public concern *Pamyat'* aroused.[27]

In reaction to the heated debates, and possibly also motivated by a sense of the inadequacies of the journal's publication policy, Svininnikov now took the initiative to organize a series of public meetings, both in Moscow and the provinces, intended to spread the journal's nationalist ideas and increase readership (the journal also encouraged readers in their own localities to set up 'Clubs of Friends of *Nash sovremennik*' to discuss publications and encourage subscription). The first such meetings were held in late summer 1986 at the Moscow House of Construction Workers and the Central House of Writers (TsDL). They were often covered by press, TV and radio, and taped by members of the audience who afterwards circulated their recordings informally. Some were conducted jointly with the nationalist journals *Molodaya gvardiya*, *Moskva* and *Roman-gazeta*.[28] At a time when open political gatherings were still banned, these meetings were evidence of a new, nascent political process.

## The 'Nina Andreeva effect': April–December 1988

The publication of the Ligachev-sponsored, neo-Stalinist Nina Andreeva letter of March 13th, 1988, in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* was the most serious challenge yet to the General Secretary.[29] Gorbachev himself later called the letter 'a frontal attack on the ideology of *perestroika*'.[30] It also confirmed the profound changes that were taking place in Soviet ideological perceptions. Traditionally, Red nationalist tendencies had been collaborationist; White tendencies had been in opposition. The letter heralded a co-ordinated campaign by conservative politicians, under the political patronage of Ligachev, to bring conservative communists and Russian nationalists together on an essentially Red but *oppositionist* conservative ideological platform.[31]

In the terms of this alliance, the Russian nationalists were offered support on the issues of corruption, the anti-alcohol campaign, ecological issues, the preservation of historical monuments and the struggle against mass culture. In return, they were asked to consolidate around an ideologically Red position, reconciling themselves with the October Revolution and at least moderating certain White views on tsarism, the peasantry and religion. The issue of Stalinism was to be downplayed, in part because it was seen as a weak point in the ideological debates with reformists, and in part because nationalists were themselves divided on this issue.[32] The programme advanced anti-Semitism as a weapon in the ideological struggle against reform, and, as exemplified by Belov's *Everything Lies Ahead*, as emotional common ground among anti-reform groupings.[33]

*Nash sovremennik* reflected this campaign in a new crop of aggressive publications, by predominantly White statist nationalists, which engaged in what might be called, from their viewpoint, a 'constructive dialogue' with Nina Andreeva's neo-Stalinism and were typified by a marked intensification in anti-Semitic polemics. Leading the way was Kozhinov's 'Truth Subjective and Objective', essentially a variation on the theme of the Nina Andreeva letter and a statist nationalist counter-proposal, setting out the ideological ground for a conservative-nationalist alliance.[34] Kozhinov adopted the suggested programmatic approach to Stalinism and the role of Jews in Russian history. Yet in minimizing the negative features of Stalinism, Kozhinov also gave a true reflection of the thinking of many White statist nationalists who believed that the reformers' critique of Stalinism obscured the fact that the roots of Stalinist ills lay with Lenin, the Revolution and the 1920s. These were not views shared by Stalinists or by Red statist nationalists. Such a view

was also expressed, however, by Soloukhin, in *Nash sovremennik* in an explanation why he refused to support a project by the human rights organization Memorial to build a monument to Stalin's victims.[35] Soloukhin was soon to publish abroad an outspoken attack on Lenin which elaborated in depth on these views.[36]

A second key work was Viktor Ivanov's novel *Judgement Day*, that blamed *perestroika* on Masons, Jews and the US.[37] The novel told the story of the crisis of conscience of the son of a Russian émigré who grew up in the US and was recruited to return to the USSR as a spy by a White Masonic organization with roots in Judaism and links with the CIA. The novel was a justification for the activities of the KGB and as such showed strong signs of having been inspired by that organization. *Judgement Day* appeared in the month that Chebrikov had spoken of a threat posed by foreign intelligence services.[38] The fact that the journal's editorial office had had a copy of the manuscript for six months before publication indicates that the timing of the publication was important.[39] Immediately after the first part of the novel appeared there was an outcry in the reformist press.[40] Svininnikov defended the publication on television as a portrayal of 'the ideological struggle against our people'.[41] The novel also caused dissension at the journal: responsible secretary Lukonin resigned soon after, at least partly in protest at what he considered a 'shameful publication' (*Judgement Day* rather overshadowed the return to *Nash sovremennik* of a much better known conspiracy theorist, the popular novelist Valentin Pikul', who published a full-length novel for the first time in *Nash sovremennik* since 1979).[42]

Thirdly, evidence of the new campaign came in the form of expressions of solidarity between *Nash sovremennik* and *Molodaya gvardiya*.[43] This alliance exemplified the new-found solidarity between neo-Stalinists and Russian nationalists. *Molodaya gvardiya* veteran Mikhail Lobanov, in an article in *Nash sovremennik*, defended the record of *Molodaya gvardiya* under Tvardovskii's contemporary, Anatolii Nikonov, and the signatories of the 'Letter of the Eleven' (who included Vikulov) from attacks in the reformist press.[44] Chief editor of *Molodaya gvardiya*, Anatolii Ivanov, set out the common political and cultural ground between neo-Stalinists and conservative nationalists in an interview with *Nash sovremennik*, amongst other things warning the party leadership, in a manner that identified him as a conservative communist rather than a nationalist, that it should not dismantle mechanisms of social control since 'social classes which have been overthrown always try to get revenge'.[45] A fourth strand in the journal, and the least impressive, was an attempt to raise the profile of Ligachev as a political leader

by praising him for his nationalist orientation, for example in association with the campaign against alcohol.[46]

The campaign also marked a crucial point in *Nash sovremennik*'s publication policy with regard to pro-reform popular nationalism. While conservative popular nationalists such as Belov, Rasputin and Soloukhin continued to be printed with pride, the journal now found no place for reformist Ivan Vasil'ev.[47] The campaign also served to emphasize an area of continuity in publication policy, it might be noted. This was Vikulov's firm refusal, completely compatible with the alliance with neo-Stalinists, to publish writings formerly banned under the pre-Gorbachev Soviet regime (although a small number of 'archival' works did nevertheless appear).[48]

## Reformers counterattack

It was almost a month after the appearance of the Nina Andreeva letter that *Pravda* printed an anonymous rebuttal, assumed to come from Yakovlev.[49] Thereafter the reformers regained the upper hand and the affair ultimately tipped the balance of influence in ideological policy in Yakovlev's favour.[50] Yakovlev's counterattack had such success that the nationalist weekly of the RSFSR Writers' Union, *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, published the reformist and anti-nationalist authors Oskotskii and Afanas'ev (a fact that was to arouse the ire of the paper's institutional sponsors).[51] When liberal writers affirmed their commitment to Gorbachev's policies and opposition to Ligachev, conservative writers, including Bondarev and Mikhail Alekseev, found it necessary also to comply.[52] The authorities took steps to engage their opponents in dialogue, as witnessed by a conference, attended by Yakovlev and leading nationalist figures, statist and popular, including Astaf'ev, Kazintsev, Lanshchikov and Zalygin, on the relationship between literature and history.[53] Yakovlev's success nonetheless did not prevent opposition from being voiced at the Nineteenth Party Conference held that summer. Indeed, Ligachev largely controlled preparations for the conference. Ligachev's ally Bondarev in particular attracted attention by his conference speech in which he issued an important signal of discontent with official policies by depicting *perestroika* in metaphorical terms as an aeroplane which was taking off without knowing where it would land.[54]

The affair of the letter and the generally negative public reaction it provoked proved to both orthodox communists and nationalists that they had overestimated the appeal and the usefulness of a 'Red' nationalist ideology. They had also overestimated Ligachev, whose reputation

was now tarnished. As reformist ideas were increasingly successful in a more open political arena and the 'Red' ideology became less attractive to elites in opposition, the search for an alternative began. Among Russian nationalists this was reflected in the growth of a White statist nationalist mood. Nationalists hoped that such an anti-communist stance would have greater popular appeal and be able to generate a successful challenge to the democratic movement.

The affair of the Andreeva letter made Gorbachev more wary of losing influence over the nationalists. He thereafter continued his patronage of key nationalist individuals and also sought to drive a wedge between neo-Stalinists and the Russian nationalists. The millennium of the Orthodox Church, coupled with Ligachev's hostility to religion, provided one opportunity to do this.[55] In April 1988, Gorbachev met the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Pimen, and other members of the Holy Synod, the first time a Soviet leader had done so in the post-war period (also that year approximately 500–700 new churches were opened).[56] This did not stop Gorbachev, however, in another indication of Ligachev's loss of influence and in disregard of the Russian nationalist lobby, drawing to a close the disastrous anti-alcohol campaign in the autumn of 1988.

Gorbachev's determination to draw lessons from the Nina Andreeva affair could also be seen in his decision in the autumn of 1988 to reorganize the Central Committee departments into commissions covering a reduced number of policy areas. The decision marked a demotion for Ligachev, who became head of the Commission on Agriculture, and, to a lesser degree, for Yakovlev, who took up the reins at the Commission on Foreign Affairs. Vadim Medvedev, a Gorbachev loyalist, ostensibly took over Yakovlev's role when he was appointed to head the new Ideological Commission, becoming at the same time a full member of the Politburo. The Cultural Department was abolished and a Propaganda Department, headed by A. Kapto, was subordinated to the Ideological Commission.[57]

## A new politics: January–September 1989

From November 1988, in the run-up to the elections for the Congress of People's Deputies announced for the following spring, a new freedom was manifest in the ability of political activists to form associations, political pressure groups and parties-in-embryo. This allowed the traditional *gruppovshchina*, which had always characterized literary life, to flow into new organizational forms.[58] Russian nationalists, including *Nash sovremennik*'s writers and editors, took part in this more open

politics, eager to have their ideas tested by public opinion – a process one commentator compared with the intelligentsia's 'Going to the People' of the nineteenth century, but another described as 'a desperate attempt to mobilize wide public support for nationalist positions'.[59] As Belov remarked, 'There is just no time to write, I have to spend my time on politics.'[60] Newly founded organizations, in which *Nash sovremennik* associates took part, included the Association of Russian Artists (Tovarishchestvo russkikh khudozhnikov), the Union for the Spiritual Rebirth of the Fatherland (Soyuz za dukhovnoe vozrozhdenie otechestva), Fatherland (Otechestvo), the Fund for Slavonic Literature (Fond slavyanskoi pis'mennosti), the Public Committee to Save the Volga (Obshchestvennyi komitet spaseniya Volgi) and its Leningrad branch, the Committee Neva-Ladoga-Onega (Komitet 'Neva-Ladoga-Onega'), and the United Workers' Front (Ob''edinennyi front trudyashchikhsya or OFT).[61] The latter organization was intended to act as an umbrella organization for groups opposed to reform and was an important attempt to institutionalize opposition to Gorbachev's reforms.[62]

The chief concern of virtually all the newly created organizations of nationalist orientation, irrespective of whether their members were popular or statist, 'Red' or 'White', was the preservation of the Soviet Union as a state, as demonstrated by their published appeals to the general public.[63] For conservatives of all hues, 'the oneness of the Soviet state became their principal, and even obsessive, concern'.[64] The sense of urgency among Russian nationalists was intensified by the moves in the union republics to secure independence from the USSR.[65] As independence movements became more vociferous – this occurred first in the Baltic region – so statist nationalism became more attractive for Russian nationalists and their desire to develop an alliance with the anti-reformist wing of the party became stronger. However, in September 1989, when most of the new nationalist organizations united under yet another broad umbrella organization, the United Council of Russia (Ob''edinennyi sovet Rossii), the declared goals of this organization included both preserving 'the state sovereignty of the USSR as a voluntary union of republics' and 'assisting the development of the sovereignty of the RSFSR'.[66] The element of mutual exclusivity between these two goals was supposedly finessed by attributing a special relationship between RSFSR and USSR. The Russian republic should serve 'as the indispensable core and the nucleus of the Soviet Union'.[67] However, as the question of the creation of a national Russian state came on to the political agenda for the first time, surprisingly statist Russian nationalists evinced an attitude of uncertainty not unlike that of the proverbial

donkey unable to choose between two equidistant bales of hay. This uncertainty was demonstrated by *Nash sovremennik*, which was closely identified with the creation of the United Council of Russia and a number of whose leading contributors were members of the co-ordinating council of the body, including Stanislav Kunyaev, Mikhail Antonov and Aleksandr Prokhanov.

The March 1989 elections to the Congress of People's Deputies, in which leading writers and editors of *Nash sovremennik* participated, saw Gorbachev's authorities make a clear distinction between popular nationalists, who were supported as candidates, and statist nationalists who were not. Popular nationalists, with official support, met with success. Rasputin and Astaf'ev, who were not party members, successfully stood as candidates from the USSR Writers' Union.[68] Party members Belov and I. Vasil'ev were elected as candidates from the CPSU.[69] Statist nationalist figures who stood as independent candidates, however, and had no official support, such as Bondarev and Kozhinov, were defeated. The defeat of their acknowledged leader Bondarev, who stood as a candidate in Volgograd, was particularly galling for Russian nationalists. As one historian of the period has observed, Bondarev's defeat 'exposed the emptiness of [the nationalists'] claims of strong support in provincial Russia'.[70]

## Replacing Vikulov

Many Russian nationalists were convinced by this time that the intrinsically 'party-minded' Vikulov lacked the necessary temperament and polemical skills to be successful in the role of leader of the nationalist faction. Vikulov's contributions to *Nash sovremennik* stressed his loyalty to Gorbachev's reformist goals, focused on the theme of *perestroika* in the countryside, and showed him to be unwilling to tackle the larger themes of national politics.[71] At meetings between the General Secretary and leading cultural figures, Vikulov demonstrated his loyalty and moderation by calling for a clean-up of the bureaucracy and emphasizing the need for patriotism.[72] The mass media, Vikulov said, should 'awaken in people a feeling of pride in their country [and] confidence in the victory of *perestroika*'.[73] Perhaps to repay Vikulov, Gorbachev accorded the chief editor a greater than usual prominence at such meetings.[74] At the same time, liberal journals continued to increase their print runs at an extraordinary rate, and Russian nationalists became correspondingly more frustrated and radicalized (in January 1989 *Znamya*'s print run rose by 90 per cent, that of *Oktyabr'* by 53.4 per cent, *Novyi mir* by 45.5 per cent

and *Druzhba narodov* by 38 per cent; *Nash sovremennik*'s print run by contrast went up by only 4.4 per cent; *Moskva* secured an increase of 13 per cent; *Molodaya gvardiya*'s print run fell by 7.7 per cent). As a result, nationalist opinion swung away from Vikulov and in favour of a new chief editor more hostile to the political leadership, a move that coincided with a general swing in opinion within the Russian nationalist community from Red ('collaborationist') to White ('oppositionist').[75] Radicals pushed for an appointment to be made 'without a decision of the Central Committee'.[76] Bondarev insisted, no doubt realistically, on obtaining Gorbachev's consent.[77]

The decision to replace Vikulov at *Nash sovremennik* was also one part of a general campaign by Russian nationalists to secure control of media outlets at this time. Thus the RSFSR Writers' Union successfully removed the chief editor of the weekly paper *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, Mikhail Kolosov, who had sought to take the paper in a pro-reform direction (the last straw for the RSFSR Writers' Union had been when Kolosov republished a November 1988 unsigned editorial from *Kommunist* that had strongly condemned Russian nationalism).[78] Despite the fact that the post was on the Central Committee's *nomenklatura* list, the Central Committee's newly created Ideological Department did not prevent Kolosov's removal and ultimately acceded to the appointment of a conservative Russian nationalist, Ernest Sofronov, as chief editor of the paper.[79] In the spring of 1989 the Russian nationalists secured control over the Sovetskii pisatel' publishing house of the USSR Writers' Union (replacing the 'democrat' Anatolii Strelyanyi as director with the nationalist Anatolii Zhukov).[80] During the summer and autumn of 1989, the RSFSR Writers' Union also pushed to reassert control over the journal *Oktyabr'*, headed by Anatolii Anan'ev, that had moved in a liberal direction during *perestroika*.[81] However, the authorities did not allow this to happen.

At the Nineteenth Party Conference, Bondarev had defended *Nash sovremennik* and its chief editor from critics.[82] Nonetheless, by the early summer of 1988 the influential deputy chair of the RSFSR Writers' Union had probably come to share the view that Vikulov should be replaced. Presumably in consultation with his colleagues at the RSFSR Writers' Union and at *Nash sovremennik*, and possibly emboldened by Gorbachev's apparent tolerance of his criticism, Bondarev selected as his preferred candidate the White statist nationalist poet and critic Stanislav Kunyaev. In retrospect, it could now be seen that Kunyaev's appointment to the *Nash sovremennik* editorial board from the May 1988 issue, part of the 'Nina Andreeva effect', had owed more to Bondarev than to

Vikulov (Kunyaev's recent receipt of the RSFSR State Prize for Literature could also be seen as a mark of Bondarev's favour).[83]

Vikulov, although apparently willing to leave his post, seems to have attempted to circumvent the appointment of Bondarev's nominee. Perhaps a factor in this was that Vikulov, himself a poet, apparently had no high regard for Kunyaev as a poet, as illustrated by the fact that, since Gorbachev had come to power, Kunyaev's verses had appeared only once in *Nash sovremennik* before his appointment to the board.[84] The chief editor himself sounded out a number of potential candidates, including Kunyaev, Rasputin, Belov, Lanshchikov and Stepanov (no longer head of the Literature Sector in the now defunct Cultural Department).[85] Of these, Lanshchikov seems to have been favoured by Yakovlev.[86] Vikulov's hasty publication of an article by Lanshchikov in July may also indicate the chief editor's preference for a successor.[87] The June 1988 issue announced forthcoming publications by both leading candidates for Vikulov's post, Lanshchikov and Kunyaev.[88] In his article, Lanshchikov took care to distance himself from recent neo-Stalinist writing in *Nash sovremennik* on Stalinism, arguing there was both evil and necessity in what Stalin had done, and avoided seeking Jewish scapegoats for national ills or demonizing Trotskii. This contrasted sharply with the 'Nina Andreeva' line taken by Kunyaev in his first article in the journal since February 1985, defending Stalin, hostile to the West and virulently anti-Semitic.[89] After the Party Conference, Vikulov proposed to Lanshchikov that he become editor in chief.[90] Such a proposal would probably not have been made without the consent of the Central Committee. It was presumably Lanshchikov's sense of opposition from Bondarev and the RSFSR Writers' Union that made him demur.

Bondarev and his colleagues in the RSFSR Writers' Union seem to have reached a final decision to support Kunyaev as the candidate to succeed Vikulov, and to reject the more moderate Lanshchikov, at a plenary meeting of the RSFSR Writers' Union in December 1988, at which conservative writers attracted attention by criticizing Gorbachev by name.[91] The strength of the White statist mood among nationalists was intensified by the sense that, at the end of 1988 and beginning of 1989, Gorbachev was distancing himself from the conservatives.[92] This strengthened the radicals' determination to force the authorities to accept the retirement of Sergei Vikulov and his replacement by a figure more representative of current opinion in nationalist circles.

Gorbachev initially opposed the appointment of Kunyaev. At Gorbachev's behest, Vladimir Egorov, then deputy head of the Department of Propaganda, spoke, unsuccessfully, with Bondarev to dissuade

him from backing Kunyaev.[93] Belov, Rasputin and Bondarev lobbied both Ligachev and Medvedev on Kunyaev's behalf.[94] Bondarev himself met Gorbachev and pressed for the appointment of Kunyaev to replace Vikulov.[95] The General Secretary's tactics in encouraging this lobbying to secure his support for Kunyaev's appointment were successful in inducing leading popular nationalist figures to moderate their criticism of him. Belov and Rasputin, for example, keen to avoid offending Gorbachev at the moment when he might make a key decision in their favour, both spoke in support of Gorbachev at the Congress of USSR Deputies.

Somewhat ironically, given the desire of the RSFSR Writers' Union to replace Vikulov, the pro-reform Moscow Writers' Organization, a body formally subordinate to the RSFSR Writers' Union, chose this moment to call for all chief editors who had served for more than ten years to be replaced.[96] Gorbachev evidently had some sympathy with this view, as shown by the retirement of senior figures in the Soviet literary-administrative world, Aleksandr Chakovskii and Georgii Markov.[97] In the early summer of 1989, Gorbachev decided to allow the appointment of Kunyaev as chief editor of *Nash sovremennik*, against influential opinion (Yakovlev and Medvedev) within his own entourage.[98] The appointment was announced in the press in mid-August.[99] From Gorbachev's point of view the decision had three positive elements. Firstly, Gorbachev saw continued patronage of the Russian nationalists, even political radicals such as Kunyaev, as a means of maintaining some influence over nationalist opinion and preventing the 'Russian card' falling wholly into opposition hands (the appointment could also be seen as compensation for the nationalists for their failure in regaining control over Anan'ev's *Oktyabr'*). Secondly, the appointment was significant as a measure that could satisfy conservative demands. Indeed, Kunyaev's appointment is evidence that Gorbachev's 'shift to the right', which took place between October and December 1989, had been planned in advance. Thirdly, having seen off the conservative challenge from Ligachev, Gorbachev was preparing to do battle with the democratic opposition over the issue of Soviet statehood and was keen to recruit 'empire-saving' views in his support. Statist nationalists such as Kunyaev could offer Gorbachev the prospect of support and some ideological underpinning in the battle to neutralize RSFSR institutions as a base for opposition to the centre (similar intentions by Gorbachev can be seen in the party's programme on nationalities policy, developed that summer: the August draft programme, although it described Russia [*Rossiya*] as the 'consolidating basis of the whole of our Union', contained a proposal to weaken the RSFSR by dividing it into a number

of large regions, while strengthening the 'autonomous republics'; it also contained a limited concession to the RSFSR in the form of a Khrushchev-style Bureau for RSFSR Affairs at the Central Committee).[100] However, the creation of a Russian Communist Party was rejected.[101]

## Vikulov and Kunyaev

In the final months before Kunyaev assumed the post of chief editor, two versions of statist nationalism, one 'Red', identified with Vikulov, the other 'White', identified with Kunyaev, competed on the pages of the journal. The Red spectrum of opinion was represented in its most sophisticated form by Mikhail Antonov's call for a 'national idea' that would comprise a synthesis of socialism, Orthodoxy and other traditions of Russian thought, to combat what he called the 'comprador bourgeoisie' (since his last *Nash sovremennik* article in April 1987, Antonov had become a more frequent contributor to the rival nationalist journals, *Molodaya gvardiya* and *Moskva*; in March 1988, the same month that Kunyaev joined the *Nash sovremennik* board, becoming a board member at *Moskva*).[102] While anti-Semitism was lacking from Antonov's writing, it was a strong presence in the works of other Red contributors to *Nash sovremennik*, such as Kuz'min, Lyubomudrov, Fed' and Glushkova.[103]

*Symbolically*, the most important White publication at this time was the appearance in the journal of a piece by popular nationalist Solzhenitsyn (this followed publication of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* in *Novyi mir*).[104] Undoubtedly the single most *influential* White contribution was the first part of statist nationalist Shafarevich's anti-communist and anti-Semitic article '*Russophobia*', a theoretical justification for anti-Semitism originally written in 1980 for *samizdat*.[105] This was joined by a range of major articles, mostly White statist in ideological orientation, including contributions on Stalinism by Kozhinov, Kunyaev and Shipunov that denied Stalin's personal responsibility for the tragedies of his era, located the origins of the Terror in the 1920s, and in general for all ills, whether collectivization or the destruction of historical monuments, alleged that Jews were responsible.[106] These were accompanied by a series of works of imaginative literature, again all with a strongly White colouring.[107]

In a 're-run' of the Vikulov–Korobov relationship, but this time between the chief editor and his heir apparent, observers noted that the publication of émigré literature became a particular point of contention (for example, Vikulov apparently refused to countenance the publication

of Ivan Bunin's *Cursed Days*, proposed by Kunyaev).[108] An indication of the decline in Vikulov's influence was the publication of an indirect criticism of the editor in chief on the pages of the journal when Pikul' complained in an interview about the making of unauthorized changes to his novel *The Final Boundary*, published in 1979.[109] Two of the more pro-reform non-executive board members, Semenov and Nosov, now left *Nash sovremennik* (from the April and September issues, respectively). Kazintsev, on the contrary, was evidently pleased with the prospect of Kunyaev taking over as chief editor, and his fulsome tributes to Bondarev may have been in recognition of the latter's support for Kunyaev's candidacy – and in the hope that relations between the two nationalist leaders might not deteriorate too much in the future.[110]

As White statist nationalists came to dominate *Nash sovremennik*, the emergence of the RSFSR, strongly influenced by pro-El'tsin democrats, as an institution to rival the USSR, challenged traditional Russian nationalist thinking on the issue of statehood. This fundamental challenge to empire came not from the non-Russian republics, but from 'within', a *polity-seeking* Russian nationalism taking as its institutional base the RSFSR. *Nash sovremennik*'s nationalists underestimated the nature of this threat. Kazintsev responded by arguing for the need to improve the political status of the Russian Republic within the Union.[111] Popular nationalists Belov and Rasputin both spoke at sessions of the Congress of People's Deputies in the spirit of 'RSFSR patriotism'.[112] A Russian *polity-seeking* nationalism perhaps seemed too far-fetched to be taken seriously.

# 8
# Chief Editor Kunyaev: From Gorbachev to El'tsin

Despite the political turbulence, by September 1989 Gorbachev had succeeded in strengthening his own position, achieving the isolation of Ligachev and a dominance over the Politburo.[1] At the same time, he was distancing himself from Yakovlev, until then his closest political colleague. He now implemented a tactical 'shift to the right', of which allowing the appointment of Kunyaev as chief editor at *Nash sovremennik* was one small element. This tactical shift was also to be seen in other indications of the General Secretary's changed relationship to the media. In October, the month in which the first issue of *Nash sovremennik* came out under Kunyaev's chief editorship, Gorbachev attacked the liberal press at a meeting with editors in the Kremlin, calling on Vladislav Starkov, chief editor of *Argumenty i fakty*, to resign.[2] In November, Evgenii Averin, liberal editor of *Knizhnoe obozrenie*, whom Kunyaev had attacked in *Nash sovremennik* the previous January,[3] was told to resign by the chair of Goskomizdat, the paper's parent organization (in the event, however, neither Starkov nor Averin lost their jobs, and the reformers succeeded in retaining the liberal draft of the new law on the press). [4]

Despite the rightwards shift, the appointment of Kunyaev was also a sign of Gorbachev's continuing reformist strategy of dismantling the system of party and state controls over literature, increasingly allowing journals, writers and their organizations to take their own decisions. Kunyaev as editor in chief was to be free from the tutelage of party and state bodies (for example, when he came to appoint his deputy chief editors, he did not need to obtain Central Committee confirmation).[5] He was also freed from the censor: Glavlit, which by mid-1989 confined itself to giving consultation and advice, rather than instructions, within a year ceased to function (the last issue of *Nash sovremennik* to bear a censor's number was that for August 1990). *Nash sovremennik*, in this

sense, was to be far more Kunyaev's journal than it had ever been Vikulov's. In the new liberalized scheme of things, Kunyaev's relations with the RSFSR Writers' Union would be established on a largely voluntary basis, and his personal influence over the journal as chief editor and that of his close associates (radicals such as Kozhinov and Prokhanov) would outweigh that of the Union, or its top officials (in particular, Bondarev).

The 'takeover' of *Nash sovremennik* by the White statists was not only 'ideological', but also 'generational'. Kunyaev's appointment as chief editor consummated the long-standing desire by 'men of the sixties' (*shestidesyatniki*) to formally assume a leadership role within the nationalist community, taking over from the veterans of the Great Patriotic War (*frontoviki*) such as Vikulov and Bondarev who still dominated the RSFSR Writers' Union. Whether or not the leading Russian nationalist journal would be able to promote coalition-building among the various groupings of Russian nationalists, and more generally opponents of *perestroika*, would depend much on the personality and actions of the new chief editor.

Somewhat paradoxically, a 'thick' journal without formal party and state controls not only gained freedom, but also lost much of its political significance. One consequence of the breakdown in the intimate links, formal and informal, that had existed between political elites and the cultural intelligentsia was that intellectuals progressively lost their importance as political actors.[6] In the case of *Nash sovremennik*, this development was made all the more evident by the fact that much of the basis of the journal's support had lain in organizations whose power and influence had been severely eroded by political change, in particular the RSFSR Writers' Union, the Komsomol and the Department of Culture. The ambitious Kunyaev found the role of chief editor as a political figure progressively emasculated on taking over at *Nash sovremennik*.

## A new chief editor

When Kunyaev became chief editor at *Nash sovremennik* (with effect from the October 1989 issue) he believed that the journal under Vikulov had failed to fulfil its potential in the conditions of *glasnost'*. As befitted a *shestidesyatnik*, he harboured the ambition of creating a journal to match the influence and renown of Tvardovskii's *Novyi mir*.[7] Yet Tvardovskii's communist-reformist world view was not Kunyaev's. Nor was Tvardovskii's coalition-building approach, encompassing a wide range of writers and views, to Kunyaev's taste. The new chief editor saw

a more attractive role model in the White statist nationalist Yurii Seleznev, to whom he dedicated a poem on the 50th anniversary of the latter's birth, and published it in the journal with a photograph of the former deputy chief editor.[8]

Kunyaev's early public statements in his new role on literature, as on politics, gave mixed signals. In the first issue of the journal to appear under his name, in traditional Soviet style Kunyaev pledged to 'carefully preserve and develop the traditions' of the journal nurtured by Vikulov during his 20 years as chief editor.[9] In early October, Kunyaev told a public meeting jointly organized by *Nash sovremennik* and the All-Russian Bureau for the Propaganda of Literature (a body of the RSFSR Writers' Union), 'We are seeking means of dialogue with our opponents.'[10] However, in an interview given immediately after his appointment, Kunyaev had stressed a distinction between *Russian* (*russkaya*) literature, written by ethnic Russians, and *Russian-language* (*russkoyazychnaya*) literature, written by non-Russians.[11] This view, widely held among Russian nationalists, was essentially intended to exclude writers of Jewish origin from the canon of Russian literature. It meant that the chances for any 'dialogue with opponents' were limited. Also in October, Kunyaev directly identified the journal with Gorbachev's opponents, involving *Nash sovremennik* in the organization of Rossiya, a club for People's Deputies of the RSFSR and USSR congresses of a nationalist orientation, in which other participants included the RSFSR Writers' Union and the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya*.[12] Kunyaev himself, along with Viktor Astaf'ev, Vasilii Belov and Yurii Bondarev, were elected members of the executive board of the club.[13] By late November, Kunyaev was denouncing the country's political leadership, before Gorbachev in person, for failing to control what he called the 'anarchy' sweeping the country.[14]

## A new team of deputy chief editors: a 'White' journal (January–December 1990)

In his first year as chief editor, Kunyaev, in the grip of the anti-communist fever of the times, was able to boldly follow his White ideological inclinations. His choice of Dmitrii Il'in (b. 1938) as deputy chief editor to replace Svininnikov and join Kazintsev in a new editorial team was illustrative of this. Il'in was an army officer turned literary editor and critic of White statist nationalist views who had latterly worked at the Sovremennik publishing house (headed by former *Nash sovremennik* deputy chief editor Anatolii Frolov), and who also had links with the Gor'kii Institute of World Literature (Institut mirovoi literatury imeni Gor'kogo [IMLI]), the

institutional home of many leading nationalists, including Petr Palievskii and Vadim Kozhinov. Il'in's appointment can also be interpreted as a move to strengthen the journal's links with the military (Il'in's connections with the military were illustrated, for example, by the fact that he co-authored an article for *Nash sovremennik* with a major-general who was senior aide to the Chief Military Prosecutor).[15]

The creation of the Il'in–Kazintsev combination broke with the Red–White coalition of the preceding period and established a 'Whiter' journal. At the same time Kunyaev replaced *Red* statist nationalist members of the editorial board all close to Vikulov (Svininnikov, Frolov, Khvatov, Shundik and [popular nationalist] Ol'ga Fokina) – with new *White* members closer to himself – Kozhinov, Soloukhin, Shafarevich, Sorokin and Yurii Kuznetsov. Of particular importance was the appointment of Kozhinov, Kunyaev's close associate from their time at Moscow University together and one of the most active and influential of statist nationalist publicists. Kozhinov was to bring both writers (for example the poet Yurii Kuznetsov) and editors (in the form of a new team of young White editors) to *Nash sovremennik*.[16]

To emphasize the break with the past and the new ideological direction, the January 1990 issue came out with a new, symbolically white cover, displaying the statue of Minin and Pozharskii, the two 'provincials' from Nizhnii Novgorod who saved Russia from foreigners in the seventeenth century, which stands in Red Square. Appropriately the journal now published a major work by the White author Solzhenitsyn, *October 1916*. Kunyaev had been particularly keen to publish this novel, attracted by the fragment 'Lenin in Zurich', which stressed the influence the Jew Parvus (Helphand) exercised over Lenin, and historical parallels that could be drawn between the Congress of People's Deputies and the tsarist State Duma.[17] The publication acted as a litmus test in the nationalist community, indicating a division between White statist nationalists and popular nationalists on the one hand, and Red statist nationalists on the other. Soloukhin, Shafarevich (who had been instrumental in enabling Kunyaev to enter into correspondence with Solzhenitsyn),[18] Rasputin, Borodin and Krupin all contributed heartfelt appreciations of Solzhenitsyn to the pages of the journal.[19] For his part, Solzhenitsyn probably agreed to the publication in *Nash sovremennik* because of the journal's association with the popular nationalist writers Belov, Rasputin and Astaf'ev he was known to value.[20]

This new 'White' journal lost something of its traditional rural focus under the new chief editor, and turned more towards historical and national themes. Kunyaev maintained the journal's commitment

to popular nationalist authors, publishing Astaf'ev (a previously unpublished chapter from *King Fish*, which told of the tragic death of a Christian in a Stalinist labour camp), Rasputin and Belov.[21] Publication of *The Third Truth*, a novel by Leonid Borodin that cast Soviet power as the enemy of the Russian people, broke new ground.[22] Borodin was a popular nationalist of White views who had been released from his second term in prison camp in August 1987, and in the near future was to take over as editor in chief at the journal *Moskva*, replacing Vladimir Krupin. The two chief characters in the *The Third Truth* were both victims of the Soviet regime, but had contrasting fates. Ryabinin, a conscientious Soviet citizen, spent 25 years in camps for arresting an important official for poaching; Selivanov, whose father was killed by the Reds in the Civil War, pursued his own, independent path and remained at liberty. Asked by Ryabinin whether he recognized the authorities, Selivanov characteristically replied: 'I take care of myself [*sam po sebe*] and the authorities take care of themselves!'[23] Elsewhere he described his view as neither 'Red' nor 'White' but a 'third truth'.[24] After Ryabinin's death, Selivanov went to the local KGB office and put 'the most important question in [his] life' to the officer in charge: 'You see, I've got to find out … this regime [*vlast'*] of ours, our very own Soviet regime, for how much longer is it going to rule us?'[25]

There was a new interest in émigré and pre-Revolutionary writers.[26] Criticism and *publitsistika*, also predominantly reflecting the White tendency, were characterized by appeals to the Orthodox essence of the Russian nation, anti-Semitism, and a hostility to reformers and the reformist regime, notably including the second part of Shafarevich's 'Russophobia' and Kazintsev's peroration on the 'Rothschild Idea'.[27] In a concession by the statist Kunyaev to popular nationalist Belov's views on the importance of the RSFSR as an embodiment of Russian ethnic aspirations, the journal printed the latter's speech on this theme to the USSR Supreme Soviet that Belov claimed had been boycotted by other media.[28] While *Nash sovremennik* continued to host Red economic writings (by Antonov, Aleksei Sergeev, leader of the United Workers' Front, and Anatolii Salutskii), it was the White Yurii Borodai (whose anti-Western and anti-Semitic interpretations of Gumilev had brought him into trouble with the authorities in 1981) who now replaced the Red Antonov as the journal's leading writer on economics.[29] There was no return to the traditional *publitsistika* that characterized *Nash sovremennik* before 1988 (neither I. Vasil'ev nor Sinitsyn was published), and certain themes were either dropped (such as the anti-alcohol campaign) or reduced in prominence (such as ecological issues).

## An electoral pact: nationalists and communists in alliance

Kunyaev's determination to maintain the political influence of *Nash sovremennik* – and the financial support this would bring – drove him to set about finding political patrons. The choice was limited, and included the conservative communist political elites and the military. In this period, the perception of a growing threat to Soviet statehood confirmed the view, widespread within the nationalist community, that only the traditional Soviet institutions of state power – which included the Communist Party as well as the Soviet army and the Orthodox Church – could hold the USSR together as a single state. This situation was highlighted following the repeal in March by the Congress of People's Deputies of Article VI of the USSR Constitution, which had given a privileged position to the CPSU.

Nevertheless, Kunyaev was also forced to moderate some of his imperial ideological preferences for political purposes. The struggle for supplies of paper showed Kunyaev taking cognizance of the importance of RSFSR institutions. In an appeal to paper producers, the journal complained that, although the RSFSR produced 80 per cent of paper in the USSR, *Nash sovremennik*, a 'voice of Russian [*rossiiskoi*] *glasnost'*', was unable to obtain sufficient paper.[30] Editors noted that appeals to the Central Committee, *Gosplan*, the Councils of Ministers of the USSR and the RSFSR and the Ministry of Forestry and Paper had gone unheeded (this despite the fact that Vitalii Vorotnikov, then chair of the RSFSR Council of Ministers, has claimed he persistently pressed the Central Committee during 1989 to raise the quality and quantity of RSFSR print and electronic media).[31]

In his endeavours to find support for the journal, Kunyaev met with considerable success. *Nash sovremennik*'s print run surged on his appointment from 250,685 to 313,000 copies (the highest level since 1982). In January 1990, the print run rose by 54 per cent (to 482,000), the only journal to experience such a major upturn. Il'in attributed the rise to the publication of Solzhenitsyn (outgoing deputy chief editor Svininnikov believed, on the contrary, that at this time some subscribers cancelled their subscriptions in protest).[32] However, since the journal's printing press, Krasnaya zvezda, belonged to the Ministry of Defence, and given the weakening of party control, the increase in print run may be considered directly owing to support from the military. The 'oppositionist' journal was enjoying strong 'official' support.

Despite Kunyaev's instinctive White ideological preferences, in the elections to the RSFSR Congress of People's Deputies *Nash sovremennik*

identified itself with the newly formed and ideologically Red, Bloc of Social-Political Organizations of Russia, founded in December 1989 on the basis of the Russian Club.[33] The Bloc's Red statist nationalist programme united a socialist ideology with a confusing mixture of popular nationalist, polity-seeking 'RSFSR patriotism' and statist, nation-shaping defence of the USSR, calling for the strengthening of RSFSR institutions and demanding the RSFSR declare its sovereignty.[34] The people, the programme declared, had rejected capitalism (the market economy) in 1917, but the West now wanted, through economic reform, to make a colony of Russia. Reddaway and Glinski have commented on the nationalist supporters of this programme: 'Their foolhardy attempt to counter secessionism in the republics with an even more virulent and divisive ethnocratic agenda was a surefire recipe for speeding up the destruction of the Soviet Union.'[35]

Both Kunyaev and deputy chief editor Kazintsev stood as candidates from the Bloc in Moscow electoral districts (other Bloc candidates included former first deputy chief editor, Svininnikov, *publitsist* on economic themes Anatolii Salutskii and future 'third' deputy chief editor Aleksandr Pozdnyakov).[36] The Bloc's election programme was broadly restated at the beginning of March in a 'Letter of the Writers of Russia', addressed to the Supreme Soviets of the RSFSR and USSR, and the Central Committee of the CPSU. The letter's 76 signatories included Kunyaev, Vikulov, Rasputin, Kuz'min, Shafarevich and Kozhinov.[37]

This nationalist-communist alliance was not new (it was a re-run of the alliance created at the time of the 'Nina Andreeva affair') but the conditions – an open election – were. The result was what one observer has described as the first 'close organizational and political-ideological co-operation by Russian nationalists with Communist organizations and with the part of the political elite in opposition to Gorbachev'.[38] As electoral mobilization became a more important function of ideology, conservative elements in the party elite believed Russian nationalist ideology would prove electorally attractive and were ready to allow nationalists the role of 'junior partner' in a coalition.[39] Yet despite administrative and logistical support from the party *apparat*, including from the Moscow City party committee,[40] all 62 candidates of the Bloc were defeated, not one receiving more than 50 per cent on the first ballot. Kunyaev (and the nationalist painter Il'ya Glazunov) were among 16 of the Bloc's candidates to reach the second round. Statist and conservative brands of Russian nationalism were patently not electorally attractive.[41] In addition, the nationalists had run a poor campaign, possibly partly a result of their innate lack of respect for

democratic institutions.[42] At the same time, the democrats were successful in seizing the political initiative by taking up a wide range of *polity-seeking* nationalist demands including RSFSR sovereignty, a new RSFSR constitution, the return of churches to believers and the creation of a Russian Academy of Sciences and Russian mass media (both radio and television).[43] In a very short time, these ideas in a *liberal* popular nationalist version had come to enjoy considerable popular support. It was an example of Brubaker's 'nationalism as an event'.[44] In the words of Valerii Solovei, 'The idea of Russian [*rossiiskogo*] sovereignty "took possession of the masses", and the "democrats" took possession of the idea.'[45] The 'Russian nationalists' – conservative and statist – found the ideas of national statehood and the nation being used against them.[46]

## Responses to the failure of the 'Red' alliance

The electoral failure was a severe blow to the 'Red' ideology the Bloc had espoused, and damaged the emerging co-operation between Russian nationalists and elements in the Communist Party. The reaction of Kunyaev and his colleagues at *Nash sovremennik* was to become increasingly dissatisfied with Red statist nationalist views, which clearly enjoyed only limited popular support, and to feel justified in returning to follow their White instincts. This sparked fresh disagreements between White and Red nationalists. There was evidence of this in June when, with a marked lack of support from *Nash sovremennik*, Red statist nationalist Yurii Bondarev set up a new patriotic organization, Edinenie, with himself as chairman (of *Nash sovremennik* associates, only the 'Red' statist nationalist, Apollon Kuz'min, a close Vikulov associate, spoke at the founding meeting).[47] In its October issue, the journal urged readers to set up a network of '*Nash sovremennik* clubs' to strengthen ties with the journal and promote 'patriotic work' – a move that might be construed as an expression of discontent, on the part of the journal, with its parent organization, the ideologically Red RSFSR Writers' Union, which itself organized events to promote 'patriotism' in the provinces.[48] Some of the radicals at the journal, especially those of a White orientation, may well have toyed with the idea of using the new law on the press to establish *Nash sovremennik* as a journal independent of the RSFSR Writers' Union (other journals were doing the same with regard to their formal owners at this time).

A step away from the RSFSR Writers' Union was taken before the end of 1990 when Kunyaev appointed Aleksandr Pozdnyakov (b. 1951) to the new post of 'third' deputy chief editor at the journal. Pozdnyakov

was a young army officer, fiercely loyal to the army and bitterly hostile to the liberal writers whom he accused of seeking its destruction, Kozhinov's protégé and an instinctive 'White' in politics who owed no allegiance to Yurii Bondarev.[49] Pozdnyakov's appointment was formally announced in the December 1990 issue, although he had joined the journal in the early autumn. The appointment strengthened the journal's White nationalist line by freeing Aleksandr Kazintsev from organizational matters to become a regular columnist on social and political affairs. Pozdnyakov also had plans, with which at least Kunyaev, Kozhinov and presumably Kazintsev, were in full agreement, to develop the journal's *publitsistika* in a new White direction based on a rejection of traditional Red economic principles and an acceptance of the basic elements of modern market economics (for example by introducing a section entitled 'The Ethics of Entrepreneurship' [*Etika predprinimatel'stva*] in which to publish writings by economists and bankers).[50] These ideas showed a desire to 'modernize' nationalist thinking by freeing it from electorally unpopular Red, communist approaches to these questions.

Another reaction among Russian nationalists to the electoral debacle was to seek a scapegoat. Following the electoral defeat, the 'Letter of the Writers of Russia' was not forgotten: more nationalist writers, including Belov, Loshchits, Lyubomudrov and Svininnikov, added their names to it.[51] Moreover, *Nash sovremennik* published a new version, distinguished by its anti-Semitism (blaming the Jews for the ongoing crisis *and* the electoral failure of the Bloc) and passages attacking the political leadership in virulent terms.[52] Both popular nationalists (for example Belov and Ivan Vasil'ev) and statist nationalists (Bondarev, Fed', Il'in, Kazintsev and Lyubomudrov) were among those writers who signed this version of the letter. The fact that past and current chief editors of *Nash sovremennik* – Vikulov and Kunyaev – signed only the more moderate, *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, version of the letter may indicate a recognition on their part that anti-Semitism still lacked public respectability.

The electoral failure also had the effect of making *Nash sovremennik*'s nationalists newly aware of their distance from the real levers of political power. Cultural figures were progressively losing their influence, just as cultural newspapers and periodicals were losing their circulations and cultural institutions such as the RSFSR Writers' Union were going into rapid decline. As a result, approaches from Gorbachev continued to remain attractive to those nationalists who had become used to enjoying a high political profile. When Gorbachev invited Rasputin in March to join the newly created Presidential Council (which included

Aleksandr Yakovlev), he accepted the invitation, albeit, according to the writer, unwillingly (the leader of the United Workers' Front Veniamin Yarin also joined the Presidential Council at this time).[53] Rasputin soon became disillusioned both with the Council, which was ineffectual, and with Gorbachev, who, Rasputin believed, was playing a double game. Nonetheless, Rasputin's apparent inability to refuse such invitations reflected at an individual level the ambiguous relation of nationalists to Gorbachev as the holder of real political power (in December, Rasputin accepted another official invitation, this time to become a member of a new Commission on Public Morality, and subsequently made a much-quoted speech at the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in which he called for a 'moral censorship' and a 'moral police').[54]

The journal now sought to consolidate its links with the army, an institution in which statist nationalists – of both Red and White complexions – could place their loyalty. Along with other meetings the journal continued to organize, Il'in began to organize meetings at military bases to promote the journal and propagate its ideas (most of these took place at army bases; one was held at the Black Sea fleet).[55] The May 1990 issue of the journal, prepared by Il'in and dedicated to the armed forces, celebrated victory in the Great Patriotic War and included articles stressing the vitally important place of the army in Russian life – one by Aleksandr Prokhanov, the 'Nightingale of the General Staff', another by Karem Rash (a reprint of a version of an article by that author originally published in the Defence Ministry's journal, *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*).[56] Il'in in person received the congratulations of the Minister of Defence, Yazov, on the success of the issue.[57] During this time, several journals published by the army's main political administration, including *Sovetskii voin*, *Kommunist voruzhennykh sil* and *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, were turned into Russian nationalist publications.[58]

## The rise of Russia

Kunyaev and his colleagues found themselves increasingly confronted with a polity-seeking nationalism, oriented towards the RSFSR as a putative 'national' Russian state. As Reddaway and Glinski have forcefully stated, 'The election of El'tsin as Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet on May 29th, 1990, his stature as the most popular and trusted politician in the country, and the mass grassroots movement standing behind him at that time ... made El'tsin the only legitimate national leader ... .'[59] Nor was it just the democrats who were inspired by the idea of a Russian national state. Solzhenitsyn, for example, that

September issued a widely heard and much debated call, resonant with *polity-seeking* nationalism, to surrender the empire and build a nation.[60] Solzhenitsyn wrote: 'We must choose firmly between an empire that first of all destroys us ourselves, and the spiritual and bodily salvation of our people.'[61] Such a view found little favour among the nation-shaping nationalists at *Nash sovremennik* for whom the goal was to preserve the imperial state, and to use the traditional Soviet-wide institutions of authority, including the Communist Party, the Soviet army and the Orthodox Church (but not, or at least, not often in public admission, the KGB), to do so. At best, the journal's nationalists saw RSFSR institutions as a potential tactical counterbalance to the Gorbachev centre.[62] Symptomatic of the failure of many Russian nationalists to grasp the potential significance of RSFSR sovereignty was a speech by Vasilii Belov.[63] In one of the few direct nationalist responses to Solzhenitsyn, instead of discussing the major issues of Russian statehood and elaborating his own vision on this question, Belov defended the writer from the accusation, itself quite off the point, that he was an imperialist.

Perceptions of a major threat to Soviet statehood strengthened the Russian nationalists' conviction that only the conservative communists could hold the USSR together as a political state. Nonetheless, *Nash sovremennik*'s ideologists did give their support to the founding of a *Russian* Communist Party.[64] Aleksandr Prokhanov, writing in *Nash sovremennik*, argued that only the *Russian* Communist Party could secure the survival of the *Soviet* state.[65] Gidaspov, First Secretary of the Leningrad city and oblast party committees, and a leading figure in the recently created Russian Bureau, returned the compliment, expressing 'the greatest respect' for the journal and its authors. Following its founding, the Russian Communist Party set about creating a 'right bloc', in which statist Russian nationalists and their popular allies would be included.[66] So far as the journal and its publication policy were concerned, political expediency was making inevitable a return to the Red.

## A return to the 'Red': January–December 1991

From October 1990 until April 1991, in an attempt to re-establish his political strength vis-à-vis the RSFSR, Gorbachev again shifted to the 'right'. This gave rise to renewed optimism among nationalist groupings that the President might yet be made to serve their political ends. Such a mood was reinforced by the generally conservative and nationalist personnel Gorbachev and Valerii Boldin, head of the presidential *apparat*,

were recruiting into that organization. These included Vladimir Egorov, who became an adviser on culture to the President, and Ivan Zhukov, who was put in charge of the *apparat*'s publishing operation.[67] Mussalitin became prospective editor in chief of a journal, *Forum*, to be published by the *apparat*.[68] Observers also noted the high proportion of KGB personnel moving into Gorbachev's administration.[69]

At the journal the change in mood from White to Red was reflected in the fact that promises deputy chief editor Il'in had made to readers in October 1990 were not kept.[70] Il'in had then claimed the journal would publish a range of new authors, but in 1991 very few new names were published. The most significant new author brought to the journal was Dmitrii Balashov, a White statist nationalist whose works Vikulov had never published.[71] Plans to publish widely from nineteenth-century authors and the emigration were largely discarded.[72] Il'in had also promised the journal would present a 'united [economic] programme' accepting the necessity of the market and centred around the writings of Yurii Borodai. However, in 1991 Anatolii Salutskii, a writer on economics far better disposed to socialism, was published more frequently than Borodai.[73] The publication of Salutskii, an ethnic Jew, was also an indication of a new aspect of policy: the toning-down of anti-Semitism in the journal.[74] In striking contrast with the previous year, there was little material on the 'Jewish question' (an exception was Shafarevich's latest contribution summarizing his arguments from his earlier article, 'Russophobia').[75] This, it might be hypothesized, was a result of pressure from the journal's conservative communist allies, concerned about their international image at a time when, as they conceived, they might soon be in power (according to some accounts, the 'right bloc' planned to seize power in the late autumn of 1991 by removing Gorbachev at the Party Congress scheduled for that time).[76] The best demonstration in the course of the year of the journal's new Red line was a round table on the future of socialism.[77] Of the five participants, only Shafarevich rejected the socialist idea outright. The other authors, to varying degrees, accepted socialism as the idea of social justice, while recognizing it had been deformed in Soviet conditions.

The spirit of compromise with Red positions that now predominated at *Nash sovremennik* also took the form of a reconciliation between the journal and the RSFSR Writers' Union, signalled by Il'in in October when he stated that *Nash sovremennik* intended to remain an organ of the RSFSR Writers' Union.[78] At the Seventh Congress of the RSFSR Writers' Union that December, Bondarev succeeded Mikhalkov as chair and Kunyaev was formally confirmed as chief editor of *Nash sovremennik*.[79]

*Nash sovremennik* thereupon published Yurii Bondarev's latest novel (Pozdnyakov had opposed publication)[80] and, a mark of reconciliation with its own recent past, a poem by Vikulov (on the tragedy of collectivization), prefaced by a laudatory editorial note on the former chief editor's role at *Nash sovremennik*.[81] The Seventh Congress of the RSFSR Writers' Union was also attended and addressed by Gennadii Zyuganov, who for the first time 'openly provided a rationale for the ideological transformation' of the Russian Communist Party towards Russian nationalism.[82]

Following the reconciliation between the journal and the RSFSR Writers' Union, Kunyaev put an end to plans to bring young White writers and literary critics into the editorial office. The appointment of Pozdnyakov as 'third' deputy chief editor was cut short (having lasted, formally, for just one month) and thereafter the group of young, White editors also left the journal (these included Andrei Pisarev, Igor' Stepanov and Dmitrii Galkovskii).[83] Yurii Maksimov (b. 1947), an official of Red statist views who had worked for many years in the censorship office, Glavlit, latterly as a deputy to deputy chief censor Vladimir Solodin, and who had had professional contacts with Vikulov, was now brought in as 'third' deputy chief editor in place of Pozdnyakov.[84] This organizationally confirmed the new ideological direction. Unlike Pozdnyakov, Maksimov knew neither Kunyaev nor Kozhinov, but came to the journal on the recommendation of Vikulov, and presumably with the approval of Bondarev.[85] The appointment also showed Kunyaev's continued preference for representatives of institutions of state control and left Kazintsev free to concentrate on his regular column, 'The Diary of a Contemporary'.

Bondarev and Kunyaev now engaged in a number of joint enterprises, lobbying Khasbulatov at the RSFSR Supreme Soviet for help on publishing matters and criticizing the 'unfriendly attitude' of El'tsin's RSFSR press minister, Poltoranin.[86] The two men were among the signatories of the so-called 'Letter of the Fifty-Three', an open letter to Gorbachev, whom the text called the 'deserved [*zasluzhennyi*] leader of the nation [*natsii*]', published in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* in late December 1990.[87] The signatories included Patriarch Aleksii, Aleksandr Prokhanov, future participants in the GKChP (Gosudarstvennyi komitet po chrezvychainomu polozheniyu – State Committee for the State of Emergency) Oleg Baklanov, Aleksandr Tizyakov and Valentin Varennikov (head of the ground forces of the Soviet army) and other leading military figures, including Mikhail Moiseev (chief of the army general staff) and Yurii Shatalin (commander of the USSR MVD ground troops). In line with

Prokhanov's own recent articles, the letter declared the pillars of the projected rebuilding of the country to be both the Communist Party and the Orthodox Church. The Letter, published just before the January 1991 attempted coup in the Baltic, called for the Fatherland to be saved, and emergency, presidential rule imposed in the Soviet Union.[88] In fervid statist nationalist tones, it announced:

> Our Fatherland, to the creation of which the whole potential of the people's life [*narodnoi zhizni*] has been devoted, that which is most valuable to us, which we have inherited from a thousand years of history, is under threat.[89]

The new-found spirit of co-operation between Whites and Reds was also evident in a series of open letters issued by *Nash sovremennik*'s writers and editors from the start of 1991 protesting, along with conservative communists, against El'tsin's policies, the war in the Gulf, and other issues.[90] None of this, however, prevented the exposure of the fragility of the nationalists' ideological unity when the journal's writers failed to unite behind a single candidate in the June 1991 RSFSR presidential elections. As Rasputin campaigned on behalf of Nikolai Ryzhkov (whom he claimed stood for 'conscience against power'),[91] Kazintsev wrote that Zhirinovskii 'appeared highly attractive', while making no secret of his preference for General Makashov, 'a hero of another order'.[92]

The army had an especially high profile in the journal throughout this time.[93] Deputy chief editor Il'in's article on Russian statehood – a defence of Russian authoritarianism, arguing that the essence of the 'Russian Idea' was authoritarian political power underpinned by the Orthodox Church – was rather too White for the current ideological fashion (the work had been written somewhat earlier),[94] but compensated for this by providing a justification for the imposition of a 'state of emergency' and a major political role for the military.[95] Viktor Eremin went furthest in indicting the effects of *perestroika* on the army and ridiculed what he called the 'provocative idea' that the military should *not* intervene in domestic politics.[96] Eremin insisted that the army 'not only has the right, but in an emergency is obliged, to intervene in internal affairs'. *Sovetskaya kul'tura* denounced Eremin's call for what the paper described as 'a patriotic dictatorship with the participation of the army'.[97] Meanwhile the journal was publishing *Barbarossa*, a new novel on the Great Patriotic War by the ever-popular Pikul' (according to the head of the prose department of the time, the publication of Pikul''s

novel was motivated by the need to maintain the subscription level, rather than by an admiration of him as a writer).[98]

The USSR Minister of Defence, Dmitrii Yazov, clearly welcomed the line taken by *Nash sovremennik*, praising the journal as one which 'consistently carries out a line of preserving and strengthening the defence consciousness of the Soviet people'.[99] The military also made a parallel approach to nationalists at this time, when the Chief Political Administration of the Soviet army and fleet founded a new patriotic organization, the All-Russian Patriotic Movement 'Fatherland' (Vserossiiskoe patrioticheskoe dvizhenie, 'Otchizna').[100] Early in August Il'in met Valentin Varennikov, head of ground forces of the Soviet army, to arrange a meeting between representatives of the journal and army units (as a result of the failure of the August coup, this meeting never took place).[101] At the beginning of July, Yazov issued an order to increase subscriptions to *Nash sovremennik* at military bases, enterprises and colleges, and to use the journal's materials in educational work.[102] The July issue had a print run of 314,909 copies, up on the June issue's print run of 279,275 copies. This was welcome news to Kunyaev and his colleagues. The journal's print run had peaked in December 1990 (at 488,000), and from January 1991 (print run 275,000) had shared in the precipitous decline which affected all central journals that year. Assistance from the military served to keep the print run at a level of 311,697 in December 1991, down by 36 per cent, from December 1990 (the print runs of nationalist journals *Molodaya gvardiya* and *Moskva* fell, over the same period, by 43 per cent and 66 per cent, respectively; those of leading liberal journals declined even more sharply, *Druzhba narodov* by 76 per cent, *Novyi mir* by 66 per cent and *Znamya* by 58 per cent). *Nash sovremennik*, printed on the military press, Krasnaya zvezda, was on the way to becoming a house publication of the Ministry of Defence. It was to be the only central journal whose printing was not disrupted by the coup.[103]

At the end of July, Bondarev and Rasputin were among the signatories of 'A Word to the People', a public declaration calling for the Soviet populace, the army and the Orthodox Church to support the introduction of emergency rule to 'save' the Soviet state and stop further reform. 'A Word to the People', written chiefly by Prokhanov, was an expression of Russian statist nationalist ideology, equating the Soviet Union ('our home and our bulwark') with Russia ('unique and beloved').[104] Other signatories of the appeal, which was also printed in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* and Prokhanov's *Den'*,[105] included Zyuganov, Varennikov and Boris Gromov.[106] *Nash sovremennik* was thus the only 'thick' journal to be

associated with the document, one which many, with hindsight, linked directly with the attempted coup of August.

Paradoxically, at about the same time as popular nationalist Rasputin was putting his signature to the declaration 'A Word to the People' calling for the preservation of the imperial state, statist nationalist Vadim Kozhinov was penning a short essay on Yaroslav (1019–54), arguing that during the break-up of Rus' that followed Yaroslav's reign, Russian culture had succeeded in flourishing without the protection of a centralized state.[107] Kozhinov was perhaps prompted by a premonition of the end of the Soviet state, and wished to find reason for hope in the future. A similar pessimism about the short-term future was expressed by Kozhinov's fellow White statist nationalist Kazintsev, who argued that Russian culture, having survived the greatest *smuta* of all (the 200-year-long occupation by the Mongols), would have the strength to overcome any current difficulties.[108]

It must have been with mixed feelings that Russian nationalists listened to the pronouncements made by the GKChP plotters, which were shorn of nationalist pathos and were more reminiscent of the policy statements of that arch-foe of the nationalists, Yurii Andropov. Yet this indicated a basic truth about Russian nationalist ideology in the Soviet context. Attractive as an ideology of intra-elite opposition, politicians with pretensions to lead the country, and moreover brought up in the Soviet school of politics, would not base their claim to power on a narrow, ethnically founded appeal to Russian nationalism.

After the coup, the journal's editorial staff and board expected reprisals, including closure of the journal.[109] It was also feared that, if the journal's parent body, the RSFSR Writers' Union, was taken over by the democrats, the journal would not survive as a nationalist organ.[110] For several nights nationalist activists, including *Nash sovremennik* staff members, slept at the offices of the Union.[111] Calls by the leaders of the Union to prevent 'political terror' against them were published in the press.[112] In the event, despite demands by democrats, such as Evgenii Evtushenko, *Nash sovremennik* remained in nationalist hands, and no sanctions were applied against it.[113] Even the high level of the journal's print run, boosted by Yazov in July, was maintained.

Immediately following the coup, first deputy chief editor Il'in left the journal (with effect from the December 1991 issue, the last to be published in the Soviet period and, given the timescale of production, the first wholly produced in the post-coup period). The reasons for his departure may have been various, including ideological disputes and personal disagreements.[114] Yet the fundamental cause would seem

to have been a recognition by Kunyaev that Il'in's close relations with the military and the coup plotters made his departure a politic sacrifice in the circumstances. Thus Il'in in many ways might be said to have repeated the fate of Seleznev in 1981–82, although in considerably more dramatic circumstances.

Various reasons have been suggested as to why strong measures were not taken against the nationalists following the coup. One reason is plain: there seemed to be no grounds to bring legal charges against them, and El'tsin was at that time eager to appear to be an adherent of the rule of law. In addition, El'tsin was in general to prove reluctant to take measures against his political opponents once they had been defeated. Moreover, the nationalists continued to enjoy considerable political support, and some degree of 'reconciliation' would be an important part of any post-coup settlement which wished to reduce the likelihood of civil war – or chaos – in Russia.[115] Indeed, El'tsin and his political allies and supporters were already promoting themselves as popular, polity-seeking Russian patriots who knew what the Russian nation was and what it needed. There was every reason therefore for El'tsin to view the imperial statist, nation-shaping nationalists in the longer term as potential allies, rather than permanent enemies.[116] Indeed, that December the El'tsinites were to create a state – the Russian Federation – which would provide the terrain for a potential strategic alliance between nationalists and political elites, on the condition that differences over the Soviet past could be put behind them. Not only had El'tsin, the supreme populist, like a political magpie stolen from Gorbachev the ideas of 'reform' and 'democratization', but he had also stolen the idea of the national state from the nationalists and showed them how it could be put into practice.

Here was a paradox of history writ large. The 'Russian nationalists' had to all appearances lost. Yet their democratic opponents were now using the symbols and discourse of nationalism to defeat the Soviet imperial centre and in the Russian Federation were about to create the prerequisites for the development of a nationalist ideology such as had never existed in the Soviet Union. As Gellner has warned students of nationalism:

> In the case of nationalism ... the actual formulation of the idea or ideas, the question concerning who said or wrote precisely what, doesn't matter much ... . What matters is whether the conditions of life are such as to make the idea seem compelling, rather than, as it is in most other situations, absurd.[117]

# 9
# Epilogue: Paradoxes of Russian Nationalism

The Russian nationalism of *Nash sovremennik* 1981–91 was in many ways a paradoxical phenomenon. This was in part a result of the diverse tendencies within the Russian nationalist current: popular (conservative and reformist) and statist (Red and White). In conclusion, it may serve to draw attention to what might be called seven paradoxes of Russian nationalism.

## First paradox

The main intellectual currents of Russian nationalism, as seen in Chapter 2, were deeply anti-communist. Both conservative popular nationalism and White statist nationalism fundamentally rejected Marxism-Leninism and a whole range of Soviet policies. Despite this, in the 1990s Russian nationalism emerged as the ideology of the newly created Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), led by Gennadii Zyuganov (formerly of the Propaganda Department of the CPSU), and the leading political opposition to the El'tsin government.

The origins of this paradoxical development lie in the Brezhnev era compromise with Russian nationalism, itself building on earlier traditions from the Stalin period. Under the Brezhnev compromise Russian nationalism was patronized as a 'shadow ideology', and thereby enabled to play a co-ordinating role for intra-elite opposition to the leadership (witness the *Molodaya gvardiya* publications of the mid-1960s associated with the Shelepin group, the 1969 'Letter of the Eleven' that hastened Tvardovskii's downfall, and the 1988 'Nina Andreeva affair'). During the Gorbachev reforms, this traditional 'oppositionist' role, hitherto largely covert, became increasingly public as open and electoral politics developed. A constant 'struggle for hegemony' of the

nationalist idea within a 'field of differentiated and competitive positions or stances' took place.[1] Conservative communists sought nationalist allies, while Gorbachev attempted to bring popular nationalists on to the side of reform and disrupt relations between nationalists and conservative members of party and state elites. *Nash sovremennik* in these years can be conceived as a kind of workshop for this political field, in which the competing interests and the resulting tensions were developed and expressed. At that time, as has been seen, for *Nash sovremennik*'s nationalists the question of the survival of imperial statehood was decisive in determining their political allegiances. For Russia's conservative communists, the deepening of the alliance with the nationalists brought profound changes, not least a reconciliation with Russian Orthodoxy.[2] In retrospect, the emergence of Russian nationalism (ethnic, conservative and statist) as the leading ideology of opposition in the 1990s marks a strong element of continuity between the political systems of the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation.

## Second paradox

*Nash sovremennik*'s Russian nationalism was strongly nation-shaping and oriented towards the preservation of the imperial state. Yet this nationalism both hastened the end of the Soviet imperial polity and made a significant contribution towards ensuring the viability of the Russian Federation as a state.

At the end of the 1980s the existence of the Soviet Empire was in the balance and the degree of coercion the authorities under Gorbachev were willing and able to use was limited. In such a situation, ethnic Russian nationalism could only hasten the collapse of empire by exacerbating interethnic relations. At the beginning of the 1990s, the existence of the newly created Russian Federation was in doubt, threatened with further territorial dissolution as a result of the fragility of its institutions, the vast expanses over which it claimed sovereignty and the ethnic heterogeneity of the population. Despite the rejection of RSFSR statehood by leading Russian nationalists, ethnic Russian statist nationalism was a powerful impediment – as expressed, for example by the CPRF – to the further dissolution of Russian statehood. Among the ethnic Russian population of the Russian Federation, a nationalism of this type, in the form of a widespread conviction that they wished to live in a single state, was a significant factor preventing further disintegration and promoting social and political cohesion.

## Third paradox

Russian nationalism was opposed to modernization and Westernization. Yet the Russian nationalist ideology of *Nash sovremennik* made a significant contribution to both the modernization and Westernization of the Soviet imperial polity.

The creation of the Russian Federation needs to be seen in the context of the breakdown of the great land-based empires that had dominated Eastern Europe into the twentieth century (the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires). The Russian Empire had collapsed in 1917 only to be reassembled by the Bolsheviks. But for the new lease of legitimacy provided by victory in the Second World War, the Soviet successor empire might not have lasted as long as it did. In these terms, the Russian Federation as a 'nation-state' represents at once a more modern and a more Western type of social structure than the imperial forms that preceded it: in Gellner's words, the nation-state is, historically speaking, 'a new form of social organization, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state'.[3]

Gellner has pointed out that nationalism displays what he calls a 'pervasive false consciousness', in that it 'preaches and defends continuity, but owes everything to a decisive and unutterably profound break in human history'.[4] The deeply nostalgic popular nationalist myth of an ethnic Golden Age that *Nash sovremennik* promulgated was an appropriate myth, not for an ageing multiethnic empire, but for a young Russian nation-state. Deeply hostile to the motion of Westernization, *Nash sovremennik*'s nationalists were nevertheless themselves representatives of a Western mode. One of the major consequences of their influence has been to hasten the transformation of Russia into a society more similar to those of the West.

## Fourth paradox

By the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, *Nash sovremennik*'s Russian nationalists were firm proponents of Soviet forms of state and society and perceived the creation of the Russian Federation as a defeat. Yet in the Soviet polity Russian nationalism had been a weak political force; in the Russian Federation nationalism as a political phenomenon had the potential to become a far more powerful and influential political force.

In the Soviet political system, the propensity for the popular nationalist tendency to be polity-seeking had been suppressed; statist nationalists,

for their part, were frustrated by the refusal of Soviet political elites to adopt a nation-shaping Russian nationalism in place of the official ideology of Marxism-Leninism. With the empire/nation divide ostensibly removed, in 1991, for the first time since the sixteenth century, there existed a relatively ethnically homogeneous Russian national state (in which in excess of 80 per cent of the population of approximately 150 million were ethnic Russians, and more than 85 per cent claimed Russian as their mother tongue).[5] In these new conditions, Russian elites would find Russian nationalism a much more attractive ideology, and the two nationalist tendencies, popular and statist, could potentially draw closer together on the basis of a shared concept of statehood. Moreover, the creation of a national state and the political strengthening of Russian nationalism, it could be predicted, may reduce the level of the nationalists' propensity for strident anti-Westernism and anti-Semitism. These traits had in part derived from the political weakness and vulnerability of Russian nationalism in the imperial Soviet era. The new political strength of Russian nationalism may also give new life to a reformist, and potentially liberal, nationalist current, oriented to practical improvements and to lobbying nationalist interests within a more open political system.

## Fifth paradox

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the victory of the El'tsin regime following the failure of the 'nation-shaping' (and 'empire-saving') coup of August 1991 represented a defeat for *Nash sovremennik*'s Russian nationalists, yet these events also witnessed a triumph for nationalism.

The El'tsin regime that rose to power during 1990–91 rode the wave of liberal and polity-seeking nationalism. This nationalism appeared relatively suddenly at the end of the 1980s (after the pattern of Brubaker's 'nationalism as an event'), based on the institutional strength of the RFSFR and the populist appeal of Boris El'tsin. In terms of popular support, for a short but crucial historical period, this liberal, polity-seeking nationalism, backing radical Westernizing reform and opposition to the empire, won the 'struggle for hegemony' of the nationalist idea.

For its proponents, this nationalism, liberal, popular and polity-seeking, held promise of being a force for stability in the new state, giving a sense of identity to the 'nation', legitimizing the state at home and in the eyes of the international community, and providing a much needed sense of historical continuity. Importantly, this new liberal

nationalism incorporated the ideals of democratic governance, protection of human rights and the rule of law. Hence, its proponents argued, this nationalism could provide the means for a peaceful consolidation of Russian society, based not on coercion but on consensus and equal rights.[6] Liberal, rights-based nationalism also offered a resolution to the question of the future relation of the state to the many ethnic minorities that inhabit the Russian Federation: this was a state of the 'citizens of Russia' (*rossiiskoe gosudarstvo*) and not a state of ethnic Russians (*russkoe gosudarstvo*). The new nationalism had also firmly turned its face to the future with a forthright adoption of the market as the putative economic basis of the new Russia.

## Sixth paradox

The El'tsin regime during the 1990s increasingly cultivated an ethnic, popular-conservative and statist nationalism, closely based on the traditions supported by *Nash sovremennik*, as a 'shadow ideology'. Gradually, liberal nationalism acquired what might be described as the role of an 'official ideology'.

The El'tsin regime soon discovered that the liberal, polity-seeking nationalism it had adopted in its pursuit of power was at variance both with Russian political traditions and with contemporary Russian realities. When the enthusiasm of 'nationalism as an event' subsided, citizens of the new state quickly came to the realization that its borders were largely arbitrary. Not only did they lack symbolic significance, but they failed to include a number of regions considered in Russian ethnic consciousness to be 'naturally' part of Russia (like the Crimea) and left outside the new 'nation-state', in what became known as the 'Near Abroad', approximately 25 million ethnic Russians, formerly Soviet citizens. In many respects, the Russian Federation that resulted from the dismemberment of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, was, as one historian noted, 'more a bleeding hulk of empire [than a nation-state]: what happened to be left over when the other republics broke away'.[7] This offered a dangerous parallel with the Weimar republic, when ideas of nation and state radically lacked congruence, with woeful consequences for the body politic.[8]

Liberal nationalism was also perceived as failing with regard to its political essence. In reality, democratic institutions, human rights, the rule of law, and civil society all existed in the form of declarations by President El'tsin and other political leaders, rather than as matters of political, social or legal practice. The Russian bureaucracy remained

powerful and had become progressively more corrupt as market reforms were introduced. The judiciary lacked independence, human rights violations were ubiquitous, political parties were weak and, with the gulf between citizens and authorities as great as ever, the state continued to enjoy a large degree of autonomy.

It was in this context, and against the background of an ongoing economic crisis, that the El'tsin government had unleashed its programme of economic reform, a species of 'top-down' social engineering to restructure the economy on market lines that has invited comparison with earlier forms of forced modernization by Peter the Great and the Bolsheviks.[9] In the pursuit of liberal values, the El'tsin team were to show a greater commitment to marketization than to democratization.

In these circumstances the regime clearly faced a number of threats. One was that the ethnic statist nationalist ideology elaborated by *Nash sovremennik* and adopted by Zyuganov's CPRF, and the associated Bloc of National-Patriotic Forces of Russia, could provide the ideological underpinning for an opposition sufficiently strong to sweep away the reformist government. Feelings of national humiliation, combined with desperation arising from the pauperization of large sections of the population, could be manipulated, on the basis of an ethnic nationalism, to generate support for forces willing to bypass weak democratic institutions in the quest for power. It was widely remarked that Russian conditions could lead to the generation of fascism.[10]

Within the regime there were also opponents of democratic values. Some argued that the threat from the nationalist CPRF and other forms of statist and populist nationalism made democratic politics inappropriate – just as they were 'inappropriate' when Hitler came to power through the ballot box in the 1930s in Germany. Others argued that the creation of a market and democratic government required a period of authoritarian rule (Pinochet's Chile was often cited as a model). Even the more 'optimistic' of the reformers in power seemed to see their task as a race against time. Egor Gaidar and his colleagues believed that the economic reforms, if they could be maintained, would in the long run generate a new social class that could provide political support for the social transformations underway. Yet the reformers also believed that if the creation of this class were delayed, the social misery caused by the reforms would result in the collapse of the reformist government.

In response to this situation, the El'tsin regime developed a two-fold strategy. Firstly, it maintained the liberal, polity-seeking nationalism as its 'official ideology', an official Truth that invited parallels with the introduction of Marxism-Leninism under the Bolshevik regime.[11] This

official ideology was directed in the first place towards the international audience of states, primarily Western, that the El'tsin regime hoped would provide sufficient assistance to ease the transition to a market economy (again inviting a parallel with the situation following 1917 when Marxists hoped the Russian Revolution would survive as a result of support from the outside – from a world revolution).

Secondly, in another development that highlighted continuities with Soviet politics, the regime promoted a nationalism that was, in essence, ethnic, statist, authoritarian and nation-shaping as a 'shadow ideology'. This was in a sense in fulfilment of Brubaker's prediction that the new states that emerged as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union would adopt a 'nation-shaping' (or 'nationalizing') ideology, the only question being 'not *whether* the new states will be nationalizing, but *how* they will be nationalizing – and *how nationalizing* they will be'.[12] The new shadow ideology itself had four chief constituencies within the Russian Federation: the bureaucracy; the military together with the police and security agencies; the new business elites, and elements of industrial interests originating in the Soviet era; and large segments of the population. The bureaucracy favoured an authoritarianism to which it was accustomed and which had provided both a justification for its power and a modus operandi in the Soviet period. The military, the police and the security agencies, for similar reasons, favoured an authoritarian, ethnic nationalism. Such an ideology could be used to justify a maintenance of the status, and the large share of national economic resources, these bodies had enjoyed in the Soviet polity. The new business elite, closely linked to the bureaucracy, had no interest in democratic policy-making that might reduce their ability to maintain control of the material wealth they had secured and limit their capacity to make greater gains. In addition, industrial interests associated with the military-industrial complex also favoured an ideology that could legitimize high levels of military-related expenditure. Finally, large segments of the population, as a result of the persistence of a political culture related to the practices and demands of life under the Soviet regime, were attracted to an authoritarianism based on ethnicity and statist values. Their experiences of the economic hardship and uncertainties of life in the 'period of transition' in the early 1990s only served to strengthen these innate political preferences.

There were five stages in the development of this 'shadow ideology'. A first stage can be identified with the resolution of the conflict between the Congress of People's Deputies and the presidency in October 1993. The demonstration of executive power by El'tsin's administration at that

time (using the military and special services to overcome the armed opposition of the Congress), following a failure over several months to reach a meaningful compromise with the Russian parliament, indicated a new trend towards authoritarianism. A second stage may be associated with the rise of Vladimir Zhirinovskii and his Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR). The Zhirinovskii phenomenon would seem to indicate a strategy by the El'tsin team of promoting, guiding and manipulating this somewhat bizarre political figure as a populist nationalist alternative to the CPRF. In this interpretation, the rise of Zhirinovskii and his party allowed the authorities to continually 'test the nationalist waters', while at the same time providing a lightning conductor for discontent and a means to weaken potential support for the CPRF. A third stage was the first war in Chechnya (1994–96), marking a significant move from 'polity-seeking' to 'nation-shaping' nationalism. In their use of military force and promotion of an exclusive Russian ethnic identity in the search for popular support, the regime's hawks relied on a nationalism not liberal and polity-seeking, but ethnic and statist. The presidential election of 1996 marked a fourth stage in the development of the 'shadow ideology'. The conduct of this election by El'tsin's circle indicated a sophisticated strategy to engineer a 'managed democracy' that included the control of electoral politics through media management and other administrative measures. The election was conducted following a conflict between two groups of El'tsin's advisers over whether it was necessary to maintain the democratic forms of electoral politics. El'tsin resolved the dispute in favour of those who argued that it was better, in terms of regime legitimacy, to conduct managed elections rather than to dispense with elections altogether. Events proved that, given the right management, even a leader as unpopular and as physically incapable as Boris El'tsin was still able to win a presidential election in Russia.

A fifth stage in the development of the shadow ideology (1999–2000) saw the start of the second Chechen war and the election of Vladimir Putin as President. The authorities seized with alacrity the opportunity provided by unexplained bomb explosions in four apartment buildings in September 1999 in Moscow (where two explosions occurred), Volgodonsk (Rostov region) and Buinaksk (Dagestan) that killed in excess of 300 people. The resultant public outrage, and the popular receptivity to authoritarian rule, meant that the start of a new military campaign in Chechnya was greeted with something close to euphoria. Vladimir Putin, a new candidate with an image much more appropriate to the authoritarian shadow ideology (he had made his early career in

the KGB) than that of the unpredictable and ailing El'tsin, was elected president shortly afterwards – among other things, to prosecute the war.

## Seventh paradox

The final paradox concerns the future as much as the past. In the Russian Federation in the first decade of the twenty-first century, *Nash sovremennik*'s version of Russian nationalism, for so long hostile to the regime, may shed its oppositionist character to become a regime-based conservative ideology in an authoritarian state.

Under President Putin there are many indications that an ethnic, statist nationalism may become the ideological basis for the regime. The distinction between 'official' and 'shadow' ideology that characterized the El'tsin period has progressively diminished. Liberal nationalism, in the hands of state leaders, has become a form of discourse primarily reserved for communication with Western leaders and partners in organizations such as the Council of Europe. In domestic politics, the 'shadow ideology' of ethnic, statist nationalism has been transformed quite rapidly into an overt means of communication between elite and population and has provided the legitimizing ideology for the activities of state bodies. Still officially committed to democratic forms of government – elections, independence of the judiciary, separation of powers, independent media, development of local government – the political leadership has moved to establish an increasingly centralized authoritarian form of rule drawing implicitly on an ethnic statist Russian nationalism for ideological support. To mediate this change the regime introduced a range of intermediate values between the official (liberal) and shadow (statist) ideologies, including such notions as 'order' and 'consolidation'. In these circumstances, Russian nationalist support for the CPRF, traditional in the 1990s, may wither, and its allegiance be transferred to take root in a pro-presidential party.

However, Russia's fundamental change in the direction of a market economy would seem potentially to place new limits on this authoritarianism. Key sections among Russian elites today do not wish to see an unlimited authoritarian rule in Russia. At the same time, civil society, strengthened by the influx of economic actors at least partially independent, may give new life to countervailing forces, such as the existing liberal political parties (Yabloko, the Union of Rightist Forces), human rights organizations, trades unions and groupings of business leaders. The return to state traditions of authoritarianism, seeking to entrench

the divide between state and civil society, may also in the long run revive, in new forms, the traditional bifurcation between popular and statist tendencies within Russian nationalism. Popular Russian nationalism, in the minds of a new generation of Russians, may develop as an idea imbued with liberal values and opposed to the statist nationalism promulgated by the authorities. Will Russia's future give birth to a new liberal nationalism? At the dawn of the twenty-first century, Russia, not for the first time in its history, stands at a crossroads.

# Appendix 1: Editorial Structures and Policy-Making of the Soviet 'Thick' Journal

## Inside the 'thick' journal

Approximately 30 people were directly involved with the journal in the monthly production of *Nash sovremennik* (1981–91). These were divided among two bodies with overlapping membership, the editorial board (*redaktsionnaya kollegiya*, or *redkollegiya*) and the editorial office (*redaktsiya*).

### The editorial office

The editorial office, which carried out the day-to-day work of preparing each issue of *Nash sovremennik*, consisted of the editor in chief, the deputy chief editors, the responsible secretary, the heads of department (usually four in number – of prose, poetry, criticism and *publitsistika*) and the regular staff members (*literaturnye sotrudniki*), one or two in each department. In addition, there was a staff member to deal with readers' letters, a technical editor, one or two proofreaders, a typist and a secretary. When the workload of the journal became especially onerous, 'ad hoc readers' from outside the journal could be called upon to help with the work of the editorial office.

### The chief editor

Executive power within the journal was concentrated in the hands of the chief editor. The chief editorship was a *nomenklatura* post to which appointment was made by the Central Committee. If the chief editor came from outside Moscow, he would be granted a *propiska* (Moscow living permit) and an apartment. The RSFSR Writers' Union played an advisory and consultative role in making this appointment. The chief editor was held responsible by higher instances for the content of each issue of the journal: final decisions on publication policy were always formally his. The chief editor was endowed with wide-ranging powers, including those of appointment, and relations at the journal were authoritarian. Adherence to the established hierarchy of relationships was strict. Each level of authority and responsibility – deputy chief editors, responsible secretary, heads of department and regular staff members – was well defined. The personal views and style of work of the chief editor had a great impact on the journal. The chief editor was able to take decisions without consulting his colleagues, or against their better judgement. The chief editor's voice was one to be reckoned with in the discussions with the Central Committee departments and the censorship if disagreements arose.

### Deputy chief editors

In the running of the journal, the deputy chief editors were the chief editor's main aides. Together with the chief editor they took the most important decisions on

publication policy, in so far as these were made at the journal itself. Together with the chief editor, they were also the journal's most important representatives in dealing with outside institutions – the Writers' Union, the censorship, the Central Committee departments, ministries and other bodies. The post of deputy chief editor was demanding and time-consuming, requiring a combination of literary and editing talent and organizational ability. The restrictions placed on the deputy chief editor by the hierarchical nature of the journal's organization, and a chief editor's reluctance to delegate, limited the scope for creativity.

Two deputy chief editors were responsible for co-ordinating the work of the editorial office in line with the instructions of the chief editor. Of the two, one would be nominated *first* deputy chief editor. Each deputy chief editor oversaw two of the departments in the journal. The *first* deputy chief editor would normally oversee the departments of prose and criticism, and the *second* deputy chief editor the departments of *publitsistika* and poetry. Deputy chief editors took responsibility for overseeing the production of alternate numbers of the journal. Formally, these appointments were made by the chief editor in association with the RSFSR Writers' Union, and required confirmation by the Cultural Department of the Central Committee. Since these were not *nomenklatura* positions, the Central Committee would not arrange a Moscow living permit or an apartment for a deputy chief editor. The deputy chief editors (and other members of the editorial staff) therefore had to be drawn from the capital city.

Appointments to the two posts of deputy chief editor were a key means by which political influence could be brought to bear on *Nash sovremennik*, and the ideological and institutional ties of the journal variously established, strengthened, weakened or broken altogether. Each deputy chief editor brought to the journal their own views and connections within the intellectual community, and these appointments thereby allowed policy-makers to encourage, restrain and generally manipulate ideological groupings within the intellectual community. It was customary for the 'team' of deputy chief editors to reflect a balance of interests, and therefore they tended to be appointed and removed in pairs. Periods when an established team worked together would be followed by a 'transitional' period until a new team of deputy chief editors was formed. As a result, these appointments were sensitive indicators of political influences on the journal and illustrative of the wider world of Soviet politics. The appointments also provided a mechanism for the chief editor to escape responsibility for controversial publications. Deputy chief editors could be used as scapegoats and sacked when political problems arose. In this way a chief editor could survive successive teams of deputy chief editors.

## The responsible secretary

Appointment to the post of responsible editor (secretary) was made by a process similar to that for deputy chief editor. The duty of the responsible editor was to act as a 'chief of staff', co-ordinating the work of all departments in accordance with instructions from the chief and deputy chief editors. The responsible secretary ensured that all procedures in the production of each issue were carried out on time. The responsible secretary was the official who conducted the initial and regular contacts with the censorship in the course of the production of each issue. The post's functions included dealing with the printers (in the case of

*Nash sovremennik*, Krasnaya zvezda, a Ministry of Defence printing press) and preparing the meetings of the editorial board.

## The departments

The four 'heads of department' at the journal could be appointed by the chief editor without prior consultation with any other bodies. They were frequently made on the advice of the deputy chief editors. The prose department was the most important and therefore had the largest staff of two or three regular staff members under the head of department. The departments of criticism, *publitsistika* and poetry usually had only one additional staff member. The head of the poetry department, given the interest the chief editors took in the poetry published (both Vikulov and Kunyaev were poets), was at once on closer terms with the chief editor and more directly subordinated to his wishes than were his colleagues.

## The party organization

By tradition, the party secretary was usually the head of one of the more minor departments less burdened with work, frequently the head of the poetry department. The small Communist Party organization at the journal was a rather anomalous institution in which one of the members – the editor in chief – was a *nomenklatura* appointee of the Central Committee. As well as the chief editor, deputy chief editors had normally to be party members (in 1987 Aleksandr Kazintsev became the first non-party deputy chief editor). For the responsible secretary and the heads of department, party membership was the norm but exceptions were frequent. It was not usual for regular staff members (or the technical staff) to be party members. As a rule, the party organization would play a significant role in the life of the journal only on the rare occasions when there arose a serious conflict between the chief editor and higher party bodies. Even then, the etiquette of party behaviour was such that the chief editor was spared humiliation by his subordinates. The journal's party secretary would visit the party district committee (*raikom*) at least once a month to report to an official in that committee's department of propaganda responsible for overseeing the work of the journal, one of the numerous official 'overseers' (*kuratory*) of the journal at different levels of the party.

## The trade union organization

As in every Soviet workplace there was a trade union organization concerned with employees' affairs, including vacations and various social matters. One member of staff would be the trade union representative.

## The editorial board

The editorial board (*redkollegiya*) consisted of the editor in chief, the deputy chief editors, the responsible secretary, usually the heads of departments and a selected number (between ten and fifteen) of well-known writers. Non-staff members of the editorial board were usually party members, but this was not obligatory. Members of the editorial board were listed on the title page of the journal each month.

Non-executive members of the editorial board were appointed by the chief editor in consultation with the RSFSR Writers' Union, and confirmed by the Department of Culture (on occasion by the Department of Propaganda). The *redkollegiya* played a consultative role in determining overall publication policy. Plenary sessions of this body were held usually twice a year to discuss both the past work of the journal and plans for the future. Individual members of the editorial board varied greatly in the personal interest they took in the journal. Some, commonly referred to as the 'active group of authors' (*avtorskii aktiv*), regularly contributed their own work. Some actively sought out new work by other authors which they forwarded to the chief editor (for example, Viktor Astaf'ev). Others were 'sleeping' members, who took only the barest, formal part in the life of the journal. Unlike members of the editorial office, members of the editorial board were not obliged to live in Moscow, although it was much easier for those who did to play an active part in the journal's life. In the case of *Nash sovremennik*, a number of non-staff members of the editorial board lived a long way from Moscow, a factor which tended to reduce their influence on publication policy. The editorial board played a special role when the journal was considering publication of controversial works. The opinion of established writers was taken into consideration by the Central Committee and could be used by the journal to support a case for publication. This process of consultation might take place by post or telephone. In special cases, members of the editorial board might be asked to provide written opinions on a particular work proposed for publication, or a special meeting of the board might be called to discuss it.

## Beyond the journal

Like every 'thick' journal, *Nash sovremennik* existed in a web of institutions with supervisory or advisory functions. The most important elements in this network were the Writers' Union, in particular the RSFSR Writers' Union of which *Nash sovremennik* was an organ, the Central Committee departments, notably the Departments of Culture and Propaganda, the censorship (Glavlit) and the party leadership in the Central Committee secretariat and Politburo.

### The RSFSR Writers' Union

The RSFSR Writers' Union was the formal overlord of *Nash sovremennik*. As noted above, the Union's secretariat formally appointed the chief editor and confirmed the appointments of members of the editorial board, deputy chief editors and the responsible secretary. The Union also exercised a general function of supervision (*kontrol'*) of the journal through the secretariat. The deputy chair of the RSFSR Writers' Union, Yurii Bondarev, was the Union's 'overseer' (*kurator*) of the journal (Bondarev was also a board member of the journal and a frequent contributor). The RSFSR Writers' Union held regular meetings of its secretariat at which the work of its journals (which included, for example, besides *Nash sovremennik*, the journals *Moskva, Oktyabr'* and *Neva*). The chief editors of these journals had to account for their publication policy to the Union's secretariat. The RSFSR Writers' Union was formally a subdivision of the USSR Union. However, the RSFSR Writers' Union was in important respects autonomous, and dealt largely independently with the supervisory party bodies. The RSFSR Writers' Union consisted

of a veritable empire of journals, newspapers and publishing houses. While the chair of the RSFSR Writers' Union, Sergei Mikhalkov, seems to have remained distant from the day-to-day running of *Nash sovremennik*, the deputy chair of the Union, Yurii Bondarev, played a special role in the journal's affairs (see above) and, on occasion, directly influenced the 'operational decisions' of publication policy. The five 'working secretaries' of the RSFSR Writers' Union could also influence appointments to the journal and publication policy. One oversaw the Russian regional literary organizations; another the publishing houses and journals; a third the literatures of the national republics within the RSFSR; and a fourth, literary criticism. The fifth, the organizational secretary, was perhaps the most important and had close ties with party bodies and the KGB. Several members of the editorial board were conjointly members of the RSFSR Writers' Union secretariat and played an important role in effecting liaison between the two bodies. In cases of conflict between the journal and party authorities the support of the secretariat of the Union was all the more certain and swift as a result of this joint membership. The increase in representation of *Nash sovremennik*'s board members on the secretariat of the RSFSR Writers' Union during the 1980s (from three – Vikulov, Nosov and Shundik – at the start of the 1980s, to seven – these three plus Astaf'ev, Belov, Frolov and Rasputin – elected at the Sixth Congress of the RSFSR Writers' Union in 1985) indicated the increasing importance of the journal for the Union.

## The Central Committee departments

In practice, the RSFSR Writers' Union would often be acting on instructions from the two Central Committee departments which supervised literary life, the Department of Propaganda and the Department of Culture. The dual supervision of the literary process exercised by these two key Central Committee departments gave rise to a certain competition, and on occasion antagonism, between the two. In such conflicts the Department of Propaganda could invariably impose its will.

## The Department of Propaganda

The heart of the Soviet system of literary administration was the Department of Propaganda. This organization took all the most important decisions affecting the life of the journal. It was responsible for the general ideological line of Soviet publications, had the final say in all senior appointments and controlled the distribution of material resources to the journals. This department determined the number of staff working on the journal, the number of deputy chief editors, the levels of pay, the number of pages of the journal and the size of the print run. Print run levels were set taking into account the existing print run, the change in demand for subscriptions, the availability of paper and political considerations. This work of the Department was conducted through a Sector on Journals. Within the Sector on Journals were a small number of officials known as 'overseers' (*kuratory*). Each overseer was responsible for reading and reporting on a selected group of three or four journals, and had the duty to influence publication policy in line with the Department's ongoing policy and the latest party directives. Once every two to four weeks chief editors would be called to attend meetings in the Department at which the work of the journals would be reviewed

and future directions discussed. The Department of Propaganda oversaw all publications, but had a special responsibility for central newspapers and the publications of the Komsomol, including the journal *Molodaya gvardiya*.

### The Department of Culture

The Department of Culture, the 'junior' ideological department, acted as something of a 'buffer' between the authority of the party, represented by the Department of Propaganda, and the intelligentsia. Among the Department's responsibilities was supervision of the literary newspapers and journals. Within the Department, a Sector on Literature carried out this function on a day-to-day basis. Within the Sector on Literature was also an 'overseer' with direct responsibility for the journal. The overseer had functions similar to those of the corresponding official in the Department of Propaganda. The Department of Culture also confirmed appointments to the posts of chief editor, deputy chief editor and responsible secretary at the 'thick' journals. The Department was also concerned with the supervision of the ideological content of publications. The Department oversaw the monthly publications of the journals and engaged in meetings with chief editors to discuss particular publications where questions arose. It played a role in the resolution of conflicts arising either within the journal or between the journal and other institutions, in particular the censorship.

### Other Central Committee departments

The Central Committee Department of Science and Higher Educational Establishments had responsibility for overseeing the publication of numerous journals, including the influential *Voprosy literatury*, *Voprosy istorii* and *Voprosy filosofii*, and therefore also had an interest in the mutual relations between 'thick' journals in general. The International Department and the Department of International Information had special interests in ideological questions because of the role they played in external propaganda and relations with other socialist countries. The important Department of Administrative Organs which oversaw the KGB, the army, the Procuracy, the courts, the Ministry of Justice and the MVD was also an important influence on literary life and the 'thick' journals. In addition to these influential departments, others had special interests related to the subject matter of publication. They might also seek to get works into print espousing their point of view. The Central Committee Department of Agriculture was of great importance in relation to *Nash sovremennik*, taking a close interest in the journal as a publication devoting a large part of its *publitsistika* and prose sections to agricultural questions.

### The censorship

If the activities of the Union of Writers and of the Central Committee were generally acknowledged in public, that of the censorship was not. Although all involved in the production of the journal were aware of the work of the censor, Glavlit (Main Administration for the Protection of State Secrets of the Council of Ministers of the USSR), it was forbidden to publicly acknowledge its existence. Censorship, in the general sense of exerting influence on publication policy, was

practised by a wide variety of bodies, as indicated above. In a more restricted sense, censorship of *Nash sovremennik* was the work of a sector of Glavlit concerned with literature, which consisted of approximately 150 censors. One low-level member of Glavlit was appointed the journal's 'own' censor, and read each issue from cover to cover. Glavlit's work involved control over the publication of two broad types of subject matter: state secrets and 'ideological' questions. On the one hand, the censorship sought to eradicate from the media all mention of state secrets (most obviously those of a military nature, but, in the Soviet period, state secrecy was very broadly defined). On the other hand, the censorship was responsive to the current political line as it affected literature and journalism. However, even to a senior censor the dividing line between ideology and secrecy was not always clear. Within Glavlit there was a collegium with representatives of 'interested authorities', which included important party and state bodies, such as the Ministry of Defence and the KGB. Formally, Glavlit was subordinated to the Department of Propaganda. However, the list of instructions the censors regularly received (*instruktazh*) on policy came not from the Department of Propaganda, but from the General Department. The ultimate source of this list was the KGB. Glavlit might also seek to have a representative on the editorial boards of journals.

## The KGB

The KGB took an active interest in the cultural life of the country. The 'thick' journals, prime centres of this cultural life, were therefore objects of interest for the KGB. The KGB's Fifth Directorate oversaw the work of the journals as well as the intelligentsia and cultural life in general. After the creation of the Legal Affairs Commission, headed by ex-KGB chief Chebrikov, in 1989, the Fifth Directorate was renamed Directorate for the Defence of the Constitutional System. The KGB operated by both open and covert means. KGB officials read each issue and conducted consultations with the journal, usually through the responsible secretary. The KGB may have paid particular attention to appointments to this post (responsible secretary), yet this was only one of the possible posts which a KGB agent could occupy at the journal. In every journal there was at least one individual who was a KGB agent, and generally it was known within the journal who this was. Eavesdropping might be conducted through hidden microphones, in the chief editor's office and elsewhere.

## *Odnopartiinaya no mnogopod''ezdnaya*

In their work of supervision, the Departments of Culture and of Propaganda had to take into account the various personal and institutional influences, which could frequently compete with one another. The pattern was further complicated by the influence which the numerous government ministries and state committees could bring to bear on the journal's publication policy. As a result, an able chief editor was able to 'play off' competing Central Committee departments, ministries or state committees against each other in favour of the journal. The Departments of Culture and Propaganda might be unwilling to challenge a publication which had the backing of another Central Committee department or ministry or state committee – or one assumed to have such backing. This

complexity was well-expressed in the adage that, while the political system was *odnopartiinaya* (one-party) it was also '*mnogopod''ezdnaya*' (had many entrances) – a reference to the many entrances of the Central Committee building on Old Square in central Moscow. One particular way to make use of this system was to initially publish a short version of an article in as important a newspaper as possible, whereupon other institutions would think twice before challenging the proposed journal version of the article.

## The publication process

The working year of the journal, during which twelve monthly issues were produced, ran from September to September. Work on each issue lasted four months, so that several issues were in production concurrently. Ongoing co-ordination of the journal's work was achieved by means of monthly meetings (*planerki*) of the chief editor, the deputy chief editors, the responsible secretary and the heads of departments. Once a month there were also separate meetings (*letuchki*) when the past issue was reviewed and press reviews were discussed. As noted above, the *redkollegiya* would be called to a meeting to discuss past and future issues, usually twice a year. In September each year, in consultation with the editorial board, the chief editor drew up a publication plan for the year. In doing so he would take into account the results of recent meetings he had attended in the Central Committee, and limited circulation information to which he had access, as a member of the *nomenklatura*. In turn, each head of department, overseen by the relevant deputy chief editor, would draw up a corresponding departmental plan in accordance with allotted space. Members of the editorial office and editorial board would seek out, often from among their regular writers, work that suited the publication plan. Many manuscripts nonetheless arrived, by hand or by post, unsolicited at the editorial office (so-called *samotek*). The staff members in each department first read and evaluated manuscripts. If the manuscripts were considered unsuitable, they were returned to the author. If accepted, they were passed on to the head of the department. If accepted at that level, the manuscript was edited and, if changes were made, the author was consulted, either in person or by telephone. All texts were edited, even those of established authors. In order to deal with the possibility that the censor would reject certain works, the editors prepared reserve material, the so-called *dubler*. This was also necessary given the common practice for a chief editor to seek to publish one rather more daring publication in an issue. The simultaneous preparation of several issues of the journal simplified the problem of coping with rejections by the censor. The work of each department was overseen by one of the deputy chief editors. The work of co-ordinating between departments was that of the responsible secretary. One deputy chief editor, aided by one head of department, was responsible for the production of each issue. When the agreed materials for the issue had been gathered, they were typed up (in about 530 A4 pages), reread by the heads of department and signed by the two editors on duty. This was then sent to the printers (the Ministry of Defence printing press, Krasnaya zvezda, in west Moscow). From the typed sheets, the printers made up *granki* (long, printed sheets). These were sent back to the journal where they were cut up and distributed among the respective departments. They were reread and mistakes

corrected. Thus improved, they were stuck together again as a mock-up (*maket*) and sent back to the printers, a date indicated as 'sent for typesetting' (*sdano v nabor*) in the published issue. The printers turned this mock-up into a second version of the journal known as the proofs (*verstki*), already in journal format. These were again sent back to the journal and distributed to the departments. The *verstki* were reread and contractions made to fit things together. Some material might be removed from the *verstki* altogether, and new material added. Professional proofreaders (*korrektory*) read the result. Corrected *verstki* were then sent back to the printers, who made a third copy, the so-called '*sverka*'. At the journal, the *sverka* was read by the two duty editors (the deputy chief editor responsible for the issue and a head of department), who made final checks and changes. The two editors discussed the issue together and called on heads of department to clear up final questions. The chief editor (or deputy chief editor, if the former was absent) and the responsible secretary now signed the journal. One copy was sent to the censor, the other to the printers. At the censor, each issue was read by the rank-and-file censor assigned to the journal. The work reviewed was marked with blue and red pencils: 'blue' indicated minor changes were necessary to a work, 'red' a strict prohibition. The responsible secretary would then normally discuss the issue with a censor at least one level higher. If problems arose, the matter would be passed upwards to a senior censor, ultimately to a deputy of Glavlit's section on literature. Correspondingly, the rank of the journal's representative would increase. If the censor was against the publication of a whole article, poem or work of fiction, in the first instance the deputy chief editor on duty for the issue would be called to meet the Glavlit officials. If the problem was not resolved at this stage, the first deputy chief editor or the chief editor would meet a senior censor. Very rarely, a senior writer might also be present at these discussions, although the fiction that the censorship did not exist was at all times to be observed. If agreement was not reached between censor and journal, the matter would go to arbitration at the Department of Culture, where usually a final decision was made. In complex and politically highly charged cases, the Propaganda Department might also be involved in reaching a final decision. In this publication process, the journal's representatives were able to exercise some pressure of their own. Firstly, the decision on publication in the last resort remained the chief editor's, although he would have to face the consequences for any 'error'. Secondly, editors, censors and Central Committee workers all acted under the pressure of the need to bring the journal out on time and to avoid any obvious breakdown in their work. This need to preserve appearances, and to keep any dispute, or disruption, hidden as far as possible, concentrated the minds of all participants in the process. When agreement was reached, the censor would stamp, date and sign the issue. One copy was sent to the archive, a second was returned to the journal. The date of the censor's approval was indicated in the journal as 'signed for printing' (*podpisano v pechat'*). Each issue carried a code number, in which 'A' indicated the Literature Sector of Glavlit, and the following number was one of a series allotted to a particular publication. The first copy from the printers was sent back to the journal one final time to be checked. If there were no mistakes, then the printers were given the go-ahead to print the issue. After printing, copies were normally given to each of the authors of that issue, to the RSFSR Writers' Union, to the party *raikom*, to the Central Committee and to the KGB.

# Appendix 2: Brief Biographies of Selected Editors and Authors

## Mikhail Antonov

Mikhail Antonov was born in 1927 into a peasant family in a village in Tula oblast. In 1932, after collectivization, Antonov's family moved to Moscow where his parents became workers. He graduated from the Moscow Institute of Railway Engineers in 1948, becoming a candidate of technical sciences in 1951 and thereafter joined the USSR Academy of Sciences in the section on transport. In 1956 Antonov joined the party. In 1967 he converted to Christianity and left the party as a result of his convictions. An active member of the Fetisov group of radical nationalists at the time (whose informal leader was Aleksandr Fetisov), Antonov criticized Marxism openly at a number of meetings. In 1968, along with Aleksandr Fetisov and two other members of this dissident grouping, Antonov was arrested under Article 70 of the RSFSR Criminal Code and, certified insane ('not responsible') at the Serbskii Institute, was incarcerated in a special psychiatric hospital in Leningrad until 1971. In the year of his release the *samizdat* journal *Veche* published an article by Antonov (without his permission) that he had written before his arrest. In 1977 Antonov was invited by an official at IMEMO to work as an assistant and he was reinstated in the party. Antonov remained at IMEMO until his retirement in 1987. From 1980 Antonov became a reviewer for *Nash sovremennik*. Much of the content and direction of his economic writings in the 1980s derived from his work at IMEMO.

## Vasilii Belov

Vasilii Belov was born in 1932 into a peasant family in the Vologda village of Timonikha. Belov's father was a 'middle peasant' who, after collectivization, had to leave the village to seek work as a carpenter and joiner. He was killed at the front in 1943. Belov attended the local school, leaving at the age of 13 in 1945 to work at the local collective farm as a bookkeeper. After training as a carpenter, in the spring of 1952 he was called up into the army and served three and a half years in a unit of KGB forces near Leningrad. Belov became a party member in 1956, in that year starting work as a journalist on a local district paper, the *Kommunar*. He served for a time as a secretary of the district committee of the Komsomol. From 1957 Belov became a regular contributor to *Literaturnaya Vologda*, edited by Sergei Vikulov. In 1961 the Vologda writers' organization was formed with half a dozen members, Vikulov became its first secretary and Belov, a member, obtained permission to leave Vologda to attend the Gor'kii Literary Institute in Moscow. In 1966, the year Belov left the institute and returned to Vologda to live, *Privychnoe delo* was published in the journal *Sever*. This story of rural life established his literary reputation as a leading representative of 'village prose'. The same year he joined the Writers' Union. In 1968, with the help of

fellow Vologdan Aleksandr Yashin, Belov published *Carpenters' Tales* in *Novyi mir*. When Vikulov in 1968 became chief editor of *Nash sovremennik*, Belov became one of that journal's chief contributors. In 1978 he became a member of the editorial board of *Nash sovremennik*.

## Dmitrii Il'in

Il'in was born into a family of first-generation workers in Leningrad in 1938. After school in the city, he attended the Higher Military College in Leningrad, graduating in 1960. Il'in then served in the army as an officer engineer until 1984, cultivating his interest in literature and seeking to establish a reputation as a literary critic. From the end of the 1970s Il'in had been a regular reader of *Nash sovremennik* and in his writings as a critic was strongly influenced by Kozhinov and Palievskii. In 1984 Il'in left the army to work at the Sovremennik publishing house as the deputy editor of the poetry section. It is probable that his association with Kunyaev dates from this period. Il'in's first major publication was a 1986 article in the annual almanac based at the Gor'kii Institute of World Literature, *Kontekst*. In 1988 Sovremennik publishing house published his book *Fateful Love or Eternal Truths* (*Rokovaya lyubov' ili vechnye istiny*) on literary and political themes. Il'in became deputy chief editor of *Nash sovremennik* at the end of 1989. After Il'in left *Nash sovremennik* in 1991 he worked for a year as deputy on the journal *Radonezh* until it closed. He then worked for a period as deputy editor of the journal *Politika*.

## Aleksandr Kazintsev

Born in Moscow in 1953 of mixed Russian-Latvian parentage, Kazintsev attended a special high school of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and went on to study in the faculty of journalism at Moscow State University. In 1976 he began graduate work in the faculty's department of criticism but did not complete his thesis. Kazintsev participated in the production of an unofficial poetry almanac, *Moskovskii sbornik*. In 1979 he entered an institute training technical editors, directing his energies meanwhile into the Moscow section of VOOPIK as head of its literary sector. At that time Kazintsev made the acquaintance of Kozhinov and, through him, of Yurii Seleznev. In 1981 Seleznev, then deputy chief editor at *Nash sovremennik*, invited Kazintsev to join the journal's department of criticism. In January 1987 Kazintsev became head of the poetry department and in June that year deputy chief editor. Kazintsev was to be the only deputy chief editor to successfully survive the transition to the Kunyaev regime. He was also one of only two deputy chief editors, the other being Vladimir Vasil'ev, who established themselves as major contributors to the journal in the period 1981–91. Kazintsev has worked as deputy chief editor at *Nash sovremennik* since then.

## Vladimir Korobov

Vladimir Korobov was born in Vologda region in 1949, the son of an army officer stationed in the district centre of Sokol. He then moved with his parents to

Kazakhstan where he completed his schooling and trained as a mining engineer at the Karaganda Polytechnical Institute. During army service in Moscow (1969–71) Korobov worked for the Ministry of Defence's construction paper, *Nastroika*, afterwards remaining in Moscow to work at the publishing house Nauka. In 1971 he joined the party. Korobov's interest in writing literary reviews brought him into contact with Oleg Mikhailov, head of the department of criticism at *Nash sovremennik*. In 1973 Korobov joined that department as a staff member and he became department head on Mikhailov's departure in 1974. Korobov wrote a biography of Shukshin and joined the Writers' Union in 1978. In 1980 Korobov left *Nash sovremennik* to work for the publishing house Sovetskaya Rossiya, publishing that year a biography of Vikulov. In 1981 *Nash sovremennik* published extracts from Korobov's article on children's literature, *Books Determine Fates*. In 1982 Korobov was appointed to the *Nash sovremennik* editorial board, the same year writing an introduction to an edition of Vikulov's collected works. In 1984 his biography of Yuri Bondarev was published and he became deputy chief editor at *Nash sovremennik*. After Korobov left *Nash sovremennik* in 1985 he worked as a freelance critic and in the print media as an editor.

## Vadim Kozhinov

Vadim Kozhinov was born in 1930 on Bol'shaya Molchanovka, a street off Moscow's Arbat. He attended the local city school in Smolensk Square and in 1949 entered the philological faculty of Moscow State University, graduating in 1954. He entered graduate school and in 1957 defended his candidate's dissertation, entitled 'The Origin of the Novel'. Kozhinov began to work at the Institute of World Literature where, despite attempts to persuade him, he refused to join the party. However, in 1958, under threat of dismissal, he was obliged to make a speech attacking Pasternak. In 1960 Kozhinov was summoned to the KGB to be questioned as a result of his participation in the *samizdat* journal *Sintaksis* which, together with Aleksandr Ginzburg, he had helped to edit. While still a graduate student Kozhinov had fallen under the influence of the literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) after reading his work on Dostoevskii. In 1961 Kozhinov visited Bakhtin in Saransk, the beginning of an association with Bakhtin that lasted until the latter's death in 1975. From 1962 Kozhinov was a participant in the informal 'Russian Club' of Russian nationalists, and took part in the work of the propaganda department of VOOPIK. Kozhinov established his name as a nationalist literary critic, writing notably in *Molodaya gvardiya* in the 1960s. In 1965 he joined the Writers' Union. In 1972 Kozhinov was one of the writers criticized by Aleksandr Yakovlev in his *Literaturnaya gazeta* article 'Against Anti-Historicism'. It was from that period that Kozhinov turned towards historical rather than purely literary studies, a development he perceived as indicative of a deep change in the national consciousness of Russia in general. Kozhinov died in 2001.

## Vladimir Krivtsov

Vladimir Krivtsov was born in 1928 in Kherson region on the first agricultural commune to be established in the area, Ravenstvo. He attended the village school and subsequently experienced German occupation. After the war he worked on

the local district newspaper until his army service (1949–53), during which time his first short story was published in the almanac *Krym* (1951) and he became a candidate member of the party (1952). After the army he worked on the Simferopol' paper *Boevaya slava*. In 1953 his first collection of stories, *A Small Flame*, was published. In 1954 he became a full member of the party. In 1956 he completed secondary school as an external student and entered the Institute of Cinematography in Moscow. After graduation in 1961, Krivtsov joined the prose department of *Literaturnaya Rossiya*. In February 1974 Krivtsov joined *Nash sovremennik* to work in the prose department. From October 1974 until April 1978, Krivtsov worked as responsible secretary at the journal, in 1974 also becoming party secretary at the journal, a position he held until 1979. In 1978 Krivtsov joined the Writers' Union and he was appointed deputy chief editor to work alongside Leonid Frolov. When Frolov at the end of 1980 became chief editor of the Sovremennik publishing house, Krivtsov was removed as deputy chief editor, remaining, however, a member of the editorial board. After the removal of Seleznev and Ustinov, Krivtsov was recalled as deputy in May 1982. Since his departure from the journal Krivtsov has lived in retirement, devoting himself to his own writing.

## Stanislav Kunyaev

Stanislav Kunyaev was born in Kaluga in 1932, the son of a teacher and a doctor. During the war Kunyaev and his mother were evacuated to a village in Kostroma oblast. His father died in the Leningrad Blockade in 1942. From 1943 Kunyaev lived in Kaluga, where he completed his secondary schooling. In 1951 he entered the philological faculty of Moscow State University where his fellow students included Petr Palievskii and Vadim Kozhinov. After graduating in 1957 Kunyaev was sent to work on a small district newspaper, *Stalinskii put'*, in the Siberian town of Taishet. In Taishet Kunyaev began to write and publish verse. He also joined the party (1959). Kunyaev's first book of poems was published in 1960; he joined the Writers' Union the same year. Back in Moscow, after working as an editor on various publications, he found a niche in the poetry department of *Znamya*. From 1962, together with Kozhinov, Palievskii and others, he participated in the informal nationalist circle, the 'Russian Club'. From 1963 Kunyaev lived on the income from his own writing. His reputation as a radical 'patriot' grew and he increasingly took on the role of literary critic. In 1976 he was elected a secretary of the Moscow Writers' Organization. In 1979 he addressed a letter to Suslov (the so-called 'Kunyaev letter') in which he accused the Politburo of doing nothing to stop a powerful Zionist lobby in the Central Committee (the letter also complained about the almanac *Metropol'*). Kunyaev was dismissed from his post in the Moscow Writers' Organization and thereafter again lived on his own writing. In March 1988 he became a member of the editorial board of *Nash sovremennik*. From the September 1989 issue, at the age of 57, he became the journal's chief editor.

## Apollon Kuz'min

Apollon Kuz'min was born in 1928 in the village of Vysokoe Polyane in Ryazan' region. After village school he attended Ryazan' Pedagogical Institute and

thereafter studied at Moscow State University, graduating as a candidate of historical sciences in 1961. Kuz'min worked first in the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences and then returned to Ryazan' Pedagogical Institute as senior lecturer. In 1967 Kuz'min joined the party. In 1969 he returned to Moscow to become deputy chief editor of the journal *Voprosy istorii*, in which capacity he made the acquaintance of a number of chief editors of literary journals, including Sergei Vikulov at *Nash sovremennik*. Kuz'min began to write reviews for some of these journals, notably for *Molodaya gvardiya*. In 1975 Kuz'min was appointed to the department of history of the Pedagogical Institute of Moscow State University. In 1980 Kuz'min had been one of the internal reviewers for the publishing house Molodaya gvardiya of Seleznev's new work, *In the World of Dostoevskii*. The favourable impression this work created on Kuz'min encouraged him to accept an invitation to join the *Nash sovremennik* editorial board. The appointment, in early 1982, however, took place just as Seleznev was sacked. Kuz'min's first contribution to the journal appeared in the last issue for which Seleznev was formally responsible.

## Anatolii Lanshchikov

Anatolii Lanshchikov was born in 1929 in Saratov. After the death of his father in 1939 he lived in Moscow with his grandmother. After school, Lanshchikov became a cadet at the Suvorov Military College (1943–48) in Peterhof. Although based at Peterhof, Lanshchikov's first three years at the college were spent in Kutaisi, Georgia, to where the college had been moved during the war. They were again in Peterhof during 1946–47. A fellow student at the college was the future novelist Georgii Vladimov. Lanshchikov was influenced by the patriotic atmosphere of the college. After four years as an officer (1950–54), Lanshchikov demobilized in 1955. Initially enrolling as a correspondence student at the Institute of Jurisprudence in Moscow, he soon transferred to the philological faculty of Moscow State University. In 1956, Lanshchikov was christened. From his graduation in 1962 at the age of 33, Lanshchikov made his living as an independent literary critic writing books, articles and reviews. He also participated in the 'Russian Club', the informal association of Russian nationalists, and, after the formation of VOOPIK, in the propaganda department of that organization. In the 1960s Lanshchikov became one of the leading authors of *Molodaya gvardiya*. Lanshchikov was one of the writers criticized by Aleksandr Yakovlev in his article 'Against Anti-Historicism' in *Literaturnaya gazeta* in 1972. In 1974, Lanshchikov, a member of the Union of Journalists since 1965, joined the Writers' Union. Lanshchikov later served as the deputy head of the sector on criticism in the RSFSR Writers' Union.

## Yurii Maksimov

Yurii Maksimov was born in 1947 in Tbilisi, where his father, an officer, taught at a military college. He grew up in Moscow when his father was transferred to the capital to teach at the Frunze Military Academy. A graduate from the historical faculty of Moscow's Lenin Pedagogical Institute (1971), after army service (1971–72) Maksimov worked for three years as a schoolteacher, also spending

some time on a youth newspaper (1973–76). In 1976 Maksimov joined Glavlit, the censorship, working first in the department overseeing the Ukraine (where he joined the party in 1977), before transferring in 1981 to Moscow to work as a senior editor in the central apparatus. In 1983 he became a deputy to deputy chief censor Vladimir Solodin in the Department of Social, Political and Artistic Literature. One of his responsibilities there was to oversee the journal *Nash sovremennik*, a publication with whose views Maksimov strongly sympathized. During *perestroika* Maksimov took part in the polemics in the press, usually writing under pseudonyms, from a nationalist position. At the end of 1989 Maksimov left Glavlit to work for the publishing house Miloserdie. From there, at the beginning of 1991, he moved to *Nash sovremennik* to become deputy chief editor on the recommendation of Sergei Vikulov. When Maksimov left the journal early in 1992 he went to work for a small private printing company.

## Vladimir Mussalitin

Vladimir Mussalitin was born in 1939 in the small town of Novosil', Orel oblast. After local school he attended the faculty of journalism of Moscow State University, graduating in 1965, and subsequently worked as a journalist in Orel for the local Komsomol paper. He joined the party in 1966. The publication of his first book of fiction, *On the Old Wound* (1968), brought him to the attention of Boris Pankin, chief editor of *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, who that year appointed him correspondent in Orenburg, covering an area that included west Kazakhstan and Bashkiria. He became a member of the Central Committee of the Komsomol during that time. In 1975 Mussalitin left *Komsomol'skaya pravda* to become *Izvestiya* correspondent at the Supreme Soviet. In 1981 he entered the Academy of Social Sciences of the Central Committee to write a dissertation on the treatment of historical themes in the contemporary Soviet novel. Soon after defending his dissertation in mid-June 1984, Mussalitin was sent by the Culture Department to work as deputy chief editor at *Nash sovremennik*. After nearly three years at the journal, in 1987 Mussalitin left to become chief editor at Sovetskii pisatel' publishing house, an organ of the USSR Writers' Union. In 1989, when Mussalitin was removed from his post at Sovetskii pisatel', he became an adviser to Gorbachev on questions related to the arts. In 1991, prior to the August coup, Mussalitin left the party. In December that year he left Gorbachev's administration to become chief editor of the literary journal *Forum*, founded as the journal of the former Soviet Peace Foundation, by then renamed as the International Association of Peace Foundations.

## Valentin Pikul'

Valentin Pikul', one of the most popular Soviet writers, was born in 1928 on the outskirts of Leningrad near Pulkovo into a family of first-generation urban dwellers. His family later moved to live on the Obvodnyi canal in the city. In the spring of 1942 during the Leningrad Blockade he was evacuated across Lake Ladoga on the ice to Arkhangel'sk where his father, serving in the Baltic fleet, was then based (his father later died at Stalingrad). In July that year Pikul' ran away to the Solovki Islands to enlist in the Solovetsk school for Sea Cadets. In December 1943 he joined the

minesweeper *Groznyi* of the Northern fleet as a signaller, serving on that ship until the end of the war. After demobilization Pikul' decided to devote himself to literature. In 1954 the journal *Zvezda* published *Ocean Patrol*, his first novel. At the end of the 1950s Pikul' moved to Riga, although he remained a member of the Leningrad Writers' Union. Pikul' published numerous novels with a historical and frequently military flavour. In 1979 publication of Pikul''s latest novel, *An Unclean Force*, in *Nash sovremennik*, albeit in a censored version and entitled *At the Final Boundary*, caused a major scandal by its depiction of corruption at the court of Nicholas II and its presentation of Rasputin as the centre of a Jewish-Masonic conspiracy. Pikul' died in 1990.

## Aleksandr Pozdnyakov

Born in 1951 in a village in Tambov oblast, after leaving school Pozdnyakov entered a military college in Moscow. There, at the age of 20, he joined the party (1971). After graduating as an officer, he studied at the Military Academy specializing in jurisprudence. Thereafter (1981–83) he began a career as a publicist for the Ministry of Internal Affairs, producing a series of books and pamphlets commemorating the past and present activities of the security organs. There was another side to Pozdnyakov's life, however. Having converted to Orthodoxy at the age of 30, he began contributing religious verse to the publications of the Moscow Patriarchate and it was as a poet that he made the acquaintance of Kozhinov, and through Kozhinov's patronage became a member of the Writers' Union. In 1984 Pozdnyakov became head of the analytical department of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court, in that capacity continuing to publish a series of works on the army and the security forces. Early in 1990 Pozdnyakov's career took a new twist when, at the request of the Ministry of Defence, he set up and began to run a literary 'studio' to encourage writing on military themes. Still a serving officer, in the early autumn of 1990 Pozdnyakov moved to work at *Nash sovremennik*, together with a group of young critics and writers that included Andrei Pisarev, Mark Gal'kovskii and Aleksandr Segen'. When Pozdnyakov left *Nash sovremennik* he also left the army. He went into business, was highly successful and set up a bank. He was later to fund the 1994 Congress of the Union of Writers' of Russia, the Union having no funds of its own, and at that congress was elected General Director of the Union.

## Valentin Rasputin

Valentin Rasputin was born in 1937 in Irkutsk region in Atalanka, a poor *kolkhoz* at the confluence of a river of the same name with the river Angara, 50 kilometres from Ust-Uda and 300 kilometres from Irkutsk. As a result of collectivization both Rasputin's father and mother left the land; his father became a postman and his mother went to work in the local savings bank. From 1944 Rasputin attended the village school at Atalanka. In 1954 Rasputin entered Irkutsk State University in the faculty of history and philology, studying to be a teacher. He began to write articles for the local youth paper to supplement his meagre student's grant. In 1961 Atalanka was flooded as a result of the construction of the Bratsk hydroelectric power station on the Angara. Rasputin no longer lived at home, but his parents were

resettled into a logging enterprise (*lespromkhoz*). In 1962 Rasputin moved with his wife to live in Krasnoyarsk, where he spent the next seven years as a journalist on local papers. In this capacity he covered the major construction projects of the time – the Abakan–Taishet railway and the Bratsk and Krasnoyarsk hydroelectric power stations. In 1966 Rasputin's first book, a collection of journalistic articles, was published. In 1967 he became a member of the Writers' Union and gave up journalism. Rasputin began to publish in *Nash sovremennik*, and in January 1973 he became a member of the editorial board, of which he remains a member. From 1976 for nine years Rasputin did not produce a major work. He was baptized in 1979. On two occasions in 1980 Rasputin was beaten up: once near his home in Irkutsk and the second time in Krasnoyarsk.

## Yurii Seleznev

Yurii Seleznev was born in 1939 in Krasnodar region in the Kuban', at the edge of the Northern Caucasus. After attending the local school in Krasnodar, Seleznev served in the army (1958–61), where he headed the Komsomol bureau. In his last year of army service he joined the party (1961). He attended Krasnodar Pedagogical Institute (1961–66, the faculty of history and philology) and on graduating worked for five years teaching Russian to foreigners at the Kuban Agricultural Institute. Ambitious to continue his studies on Dostoevskii in Moscow, he wrote to Vadim Kozhinov in 1969 from Krasnodar. The two first met in Moscow in the autumn of 1970 and the next year Seleznev entered the Gor'kii Literary Institute to write a dissertation on Dostoevskii with Kozhinov as his supervisor. In 1975 Seleznev became a member of the Writers' Union. In 1976 he defended his dissertation, published his first book of literary criticism and was awarded the *Ogonek* prize for the year. A book on Dostoevskii followed. In 1977 Seleznev succeeded Sergei Semanov as chief editor of the nationalist biographical series, 'The Lives of Remarkable People' (*Zhizn' zamechatel'nykh lyudei*). The same year Seleznev was awarded the Lenin Komsomol Prize. At the end of 1980 Seleznev became deputy chief editor at *Nash sovremennik*. For the next three years Seleznev lived at Kozhinov's dacha outside Moscow. After being sacked as deputy chief editor in 1982, Seleznev taught for the academic year 1983–84 at the Gor'kii Literary Institute. In June 1984, aged 45, he died of a heart attack while on a visit to East Germany.

## Georgii Semenov

Georgii Semenov was born in Moscow in 1931. He came from a family that had lost its wealth and property at the time of the 1917 Revolution. Semenov, christened in childhood by his religious mother, never joined either the Komsomol or the party. During the war Semenov was evacuated with his brother to Perm', where his mother later joined them. When the family returned to Moscow, Semenov attended the local school. After high school, he studied in the department of sculpture at the Stroganov Institute, a well-known art college. In 1950 Semenov left the capital to work on a six-year contract on the construction of the town of Angarsk near Irkutsk. However, repelled by the conditions of life

there, where the building workers were mostly prisoners, he stowed away on a train back to Moscow. Back in Moscow in 1951 Semenov began another false start, becoming a correspondence student of Moscow State University in the faculty of art studies. In 1952 he married and in 1954 his first story was published. The following year he entered the Gor'kii Literary Institute. After graduating with distinction in 1960 Semenov worked at a number of literary journals, including *Smena* and *Znamya*, becoming at that time a member of the Writers' Union. His first book, a collection of short stories, was published in 1964. Semenov later became a member of the board of the RSFSR Writers' Union. From 1973 Semenov became a regular contributor to *Nash sovremennik*. He was a member of the editorial board of *Nash sovremennik* from July 1978 until February 1989. He died in 1992.

## Ivan Sinitsyn

Ivan Sinitsyn was born in February 1917 in the village of Bukreevka in Kaluga oblast. From 1924 he attended a local village school. In 1929 the village was collectivized. Sinitsyn's father died in 1930 of a wound he had received during the Civil War, fighting in the Red Army against Kolchak in Siberia. On leaving school Sinitsyn began to work on the collective farm. In 1937 he went to study at the Leningrad Institute of Journalism. Upon graduation in 1941, Sinitsyn moved to the south, to Stavropol', to work as responsible secretary on a local youth paper, *Molodoi Leninets*. When war broke out, Sinitsyn entered the Kharkov Military College, which was then transferred to Tashkent. He served at the front in an infantry unit, and after injury in January 1942 he worked as a war correspondent. In July 1943 Sinitsyn became a candidate member of the party and in October 1944 a full member. He ended the war as a lieutenant in Breslau. After demobilization in Voronezh, Sinitsyn became the editor of a local paper in that region. Two years later he returned to Kaluga, working as a correspondent for the regional paper *Znamya* until 1966. His first book, a collection of articles, was published in 1958. In 1966 he joined the Writers' Union, and thereafter made his living as an independent writer. In 1974 *Nash sovremennik* published Sinitsyn's first major contribution to a 'thick' journal on agricultural affairs and from then on he became a regular contributor to the journal. Sinitsyn also wrote extensively as an enthusiastic devotee of the ideas of the Soviet educationalist Anatolii Makarenko, who had advocated the inclusion of labour in the school curriculum. From the 1970s Sinitsyn's articles on agriculture and education were published not only in *Nash sovremennik* but also in a large number of papers and journals, including *Pravda*, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* and *Trud*. He also became a frequent commentator on television and the radio on educational and agricultural matters. Ivan Sinitsyn died in 1997.

## Vladimir Soloukhin

Vladimir Soloukhin was born in 1924 into a peasant family in the village of Alepino in Vladimir region. In early childhood Soloukhin lived through collectivization. He attended the village school and then studied tool mechanics at the

engineering technical secondary school in Vladimir (1938–42). During the war Soloukhin served in a special Kremlin unit (1942–45). After demobilization, he studied at the Gor'kii Literary Institute (1946–51). Soloukhin's first poems, lyrics in praise of Lenin and the successes of communism, were published in *Komsomol'skaya pravda* beginning in 1946. After graduating from the Literary Institute Soloukhin worked for the journal *Ogonek* (1951–58). Soloukhin joined the Communist Party in 1952. His first collection of verse was published in 1953, and he joined the Writers' Union in 1954. As a member of the young Soviet journalistic elite, Soloukhin travelled widely in the USSR and abroad, visiting Hungary in 1955 where he met the then Soviet Ambassador, Yurii Andropov. Despite his ambitions as a poet, it was a work of prose which established Soloukhin's reputation as a writer. In 1956 *Novyi mir* published his sketches of life in his native Vladimir region, *Vladimir Byways*. In 1958 Soloukhin gave up full-time journalism and quit *Ogonek*. He became a board member of the newly formed RSFSR Writers' Union (1958) and a member of the board of the USSR Writers' Union (1959). He was a member of the editorial board of *Literaturnaya gazeta* (1958–61). Somewhat later he served as a member of the editorial board of *Molodaya gvardiya* (1963–81). In 1979 Soloukhin received the RSFSR State Prize for Literature. He joined the edtorial board of *Nash sovremennik* under Kunyaev in 1990, and remained a member until his death in 1997.

## Valentin Svininnikov

Valentin Svininnikov was born in 1937 in the small Siberian town of Mogoch, Chita oblast, near lake Baikal. In 1957 Svininnikov, already a Komsomol activist and from that year a party member, joined the Sverdlovsk region youth paper, *Na smenu!*, soon to be edited (1959–61) by Yurii Melent'ev who was later to become a Russian nationalist-minded official of considerable influence. While working at *Na smenu!* Svininnikov studied part time at Sverdlovsk University in the faculty of journalism, graduating in 1962. That year he moved to Omsk to work on the local regional paper, and in 1967 became chief editor, but was soon transferred to Moscow to head the information section of the Komsomol Central Committee. In 1970 Svininnikov left the Komsomol to work in the department of publications and information of the USSR Committee of People's Control. From 1971 Svininnikov became a regular contributor to *Nash sovremennik*. In 1978, after a year at the Central Committee publishing house, Plakat, Svininnikov joined *Komsomol'skaya pravda* under Valerii Ganichev, soon becoming deputy chief editor. In 1980 Vikulov's request to appoint Svininnikov as deputy chief editor at *Nash sovremennik* was refused by the authorities, apparently on the grounds of the latter's anti-Semitism. When Ganichev was sacked at *Komsomol'skaya pravda* that year, Svininnikov also left the paper to study at the Central Committee's Academy of Social Sciences. In 1983 he became chief editor of children's literature at the RSFSR State Publishing Committee (Goskomizdat). In 1986 Svininnikov became deputy chief editor at *Nash sovremennik*. Soon after Kunyaev was appointed chief editor, Svininnikov left the journal to become, at the end of 1989, chief editor of the paper *Veteran*. *Veteran* took a position in support of the coup in August 1991, and after the events of that month Svininnikov left the paper. He then became the first deputy chief editor at the publishing house Sovetskii pisatel'.

## Valentin Ustinov

Valentin Ustinov was born in 1938 in a village in Novgorod region. From 1941 he lived in Leningrad where his father worked as a teacher (his mother had died shortly after his birth). After wartime evacuation from the city, Ustinov spent nine years in children's homes where his father worked as director (in Kirov, Vologda and Novgorod regions). In 1947 his father was arrested and did not return from the camps (he died of TB in 1949). From 1952 Ustinov lived in Leningrad where he studied at a technical college. After graduation in 1954 he worked in the city's shipyard. After military service (1957–59) on the Kola Peninsula, he returned to Leningrad to work on a shipyard newspaper, *Baltiets*, studying part-time at the journalism faculty of Leningrad University. From 1962, now a member of the party (1961), he worked in a Leningrad district Komsomol committee. In 1965 Ustinov left the city to work as a journalist on the Arkhangelsk region paper, *Pravda severa*. In 1969, Ustinov joined the Petrozavodsk journal, *Sever*. His first book of verse, *Atalan*, was published in Petrozavodsk and in 1971 he joined the Writers' Union. In 1977 Ustinov entered the 'Higher Literary Courses' of the Literary Institute in Moscow on the recommendation of Sergei Orlov, poet and secretary of the RSFSR Writers' Union. In 1979 Ustinov became responsible secretary in the admissions' commission of the Moscow Writers' Organization. In 1981 he became deputy chief editor of *Nash sovremennik*. After leaving the journal in 1982, for three years he worked as a writer and reviewer. In 1985 he was elected a secretary of the Moscow Writers' Organization for a five-year term. In 1989 he was elected chairman of the recently founded publishing organization, Moskovskii pisatel'.

## Ivan Vasil'ev

Ivan Vasil'ev was born into a peasant family in 1924 in the village of Verkhovinino, Pskov region. After attending the village school, he studied at the Navy Technical secondary school in Leningrad for a year and then became a village schoolteacher. When war broke out in 1941, Vasil'ev joined the army. He joined the party in 1942 while at the front. After demobilization in 1946 he became the headmaster of a rural school in his home area. In 1949 he became the director of a children's home. Vasil'ev's interest in journalism, however, led him to seek a career change and he began to work as a journalist for local district newspapers. By 1955 he had become deputy chief editor on a district newspaper and later worked as editor on papers in the Novgorod and Kalinin (now Tver') regions, before becoming a correspondent for the Moscow paper *Sel'skaya zhizn'*. Between 1956 and 1960 Vasil'ev studied by correspondence at the Leningrad party school. In 1959 he was a founder member of the Union of Journalists. In 1960 Vasil'ev became correspondent in Rzhev for the Kalinin region paper *Kalininskaya pravda*, a position he held for the following twelve years. In 1972 Vasil'ev was forced to quit his job as a result of ill-health. He then began contributing articles to journals, such as *Volga* (then edited by the Russian nationalist writer and literary official Nikolai Shundik). In 1973 Vasilev joined the Union of Writers. In the 1970s Vasil'ev became a regular contributor to *Nash sovremennik* and also *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, organ of the Central Committee and the RSFSR

republican government. He was a member of the editorial board of *Nash sovremennik* 0000from December 1979 until March 1992. He died in 1994.

## Vladimir Vasil'ev

Vladimir Vasil'ev was born in 1944 in Dinamo, a small town in Volgograd region, about 300 kilometres from Volgograd. After local school, he attended the Volgograd Pedagogical Institute, studying in the Russian literature department (1961–68), his studies interrupted by three years' army service, during which time he joined the party (1966). After graduation, Vasil'ev taught Russian language and literature at the same institute to foreigners from socialist countries. His literary career began in the mid-1970s with the publication of articles in *Volga*, edited at that time by Nikolai Shundik, and he was taken on to work in the department of criticism of that journal, in 1975 becoming head of the prose department. In 1977 Vasil'ev moved to Moscow to work for *Komsomol'skaya pravda*. At the end of 1978 he moved to *Nash sovremennik* to become responsible secretary. In this capacity, Vasil'ev edited Pikul''s controversial novel, *At the Final Boundary*, for publication in 1979. In 1980 he was dismissed as responsible secretary, probably as a result of the scandal caused by this novel, although he remained a staff member of the journal. From 1981 until 1982 Vasil'ev was again responsible secretary at *Nash sovremennik*. He became deputy chief editor of the journal from the May 1982 issue in the wake of the dismissal of Seleznev and Ustinov. After leaving *Nash sovremennik* in 1984, Vasil'ev went to work at the Institute of World Literature. He has been literary adviser to the group at the Institute preparing the academic edition of Sholokhov's works.

## Sergei Vikulov

Sergei Vikulov was born into a peasant family in a village in Vologda region in 1922. As a young child he experienced the impact of collectivization. After the local village school, he attended the Pedagogical Institute in the provincial centre, Vologda. On graduation in 1940 he entered a military college from which, in 1941, he was sent to the front near Moscow in an artillery division. In 1942 Vikulov took part, already an officer, in the Battle of Stalingrad, in that year obtaining his party ticket. Before he was demobilized in 1946, by then a captain, he had advanced with his unit to Austria. Vikulov lost his father and a brother in the war. After the war Vikulov returned to Vologda to work in the local Komsomol organization and pursue his literary ambitions. His first book of poetry was published in 1949. In 1951 he was one of the first two writers in the region to join the Writers' Union. He began to work in the Vologda publishing house as editor of the literature section. In 1955 Vikulov became chief editor of a new annual almanac, *Literaturnaya Vologda*. Vikulov became the first secretary of the Vologda Writers' Organization on its creation in 1961. Vikulov went on to attend the two-year Higher Literary Courses at the Gor'kii Literary Institute in Moscow (1964–66). In 1967 he was appointed deputy chief editor of *Molodaya gvardiya* under chief editor Anatolii Nikonov. In 1968 Vikulov was appointed to the post of chief editor of *Nash sovremennik*. Vikulov retired from that position in the summer of 1989 (the September issue for that year being the last produced under his chief editorship).

# Notes

## Preface

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