
Documentation

The Soviet nationalist mobilization that belies Malthusian gameplans

by Soviet Sector Editor Rachel Douglas

The promotion of science and the example of the military were keynotes of last spring's Soviet Communist Party Congress, skimmed over by many commentators. But the Soviet foreign-policy posture of late 1981 throws the spotlight back on those critical commitments of the Soviet command presented by the party General Secretary, Marshal of the Soviet Union Leonid Brezhnev. In the section of his report dealing with *how* the Five-Year Plan would be carried out, Brezhnev said:

"The country greatly needs the efforts of the major sciences, together with the elaboration of theoretical problems, to be concentrated to a greater degree on the resolution of key national economic questions, on discoveries capable of making genuinely revolutionary changes in production. . . . It would be certainly worthwhile . . . to introduce proposals for a certain regrouping of scientific forces. Here we have every right to count also on help from industries having a particularly strong scientific base, including defense."

If this was a demand on the military sector to contribute to the national economy, then the military—in a year when Moscow sources said every available ruble of surplus was going into military development and production—stated its claim, in turn. A June 1981 article by Deputy Defense Minister V. Shabanov, in charge of armaments, made the case for a military buildup:

Our party and its Central Committee and the Soviet government are compelled to earmark the funds necessary for the improvement of armaments and military equipment. . . . "The economy, science and technology in our country are now at such a high level," Marshal of the Soviet Union D. F. Ustinov . . . points out, "that we are capable of creating within a very short time any type of weapon. . . ." Our efforts . . . are directed toward a continued scientific quest. . . . Our unified military-technical policy serves us well in maintaining the technical equipment of the armed forces at the level of modern requirements.

To come within range of their economic growth targets, the Soviets have to solve a serious population

problem—their shortage of labor. This has become a subject of national debate and policy initiative, closely related to the economic and military buildup. Prof. Jeffrey Hahn has documented that Brezhnev's Party Congress presentation, in pledging "an effective demographic policy," espoused the policies of Russia's "pro-natalist" faction of demographers. The state will fund maternal leaves-of-absence from work and extend allowances to families for their second and third children.

With that as state policy, there is evident historical coherence in the fact that one of the two Soviet officials who joined the Malthusian Club of Rome executive board during 1981, Academician Ye. K. Fyodorov, died on Dec. 30.

The military in politics

With the imposition of General Jaruzelski's martial law in Poland Dec. 13, instead of the then-looming alternatives of a takeover and crackdown by communist party hacks or the direct introduction of more Soviet armor, the military moved into political prominence throughout the Warsaw Pact. Not only was Warsaw Pact Commander Marshal Viktor Kulikov in Poland to monitor Jaruzelski's operation—the same Kulikov whose busy schedule in 1981 included at least four visits to Poland and, in October, a mission as courier of a message from Brezhnev to East German party chief Honecker on "urgent questions of the international military-political situation." On the eve of Polish martial law, the Soviet military daily *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*) presented a lengthy theoretical article called "The Political Significance of Military Service." In that Dec. 11 piece, Col. A. Timorin and Maj. A. Zyuskevich made a case for a politically engaged military:

The fact that all plans and accomplishments in our country today are measured by the scope of the decisions of the 26th Party Congress gives an even greater political content to the social practice of Soviet people in any sphere of life. This includes the military. Soviet military labor and service in the Army have a pronounced political character:

their chief significance is the reliable defense of the peaceful constructive labor of Soviet people and the protection of the Motherland's security and that of other socialist community countries and stable peace on earth. . . .

The pronounced political character and political meaning of Soviet servicemen's labor flows from the nature of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union as an army of a new, socialist type, from its place and role in the political system of socialist society, from its historical predestination. . . . V. I. Lenin decisively exposed the false assertion of bourgeois ideologues, that the army allegedly stands outside politics. . . . The army has always been and remains an extremely important political weapon, an instrument of state policy.

Because the Stalinist leadership mode of national mobilization to win World War II relied on the self-esteem and political authority of the Soviet soldier, this *Krasnaya Zvezda* feature resounded with echoes of the 1940's. But party directives, too, reflect an effort for national mobilization. A lengthy Nov. 30 *Pravda* article on communist party ideological work included the following:

The party and the people are solving such tasks of historical significance as transfer of the economy onto a primarily intensive track of development and implementation of complex, large-scale national economic programs, on which depend not only the growth of popular prosperity and strengthening of the economic and defense capacity of the Motherland, but also its possibilities for the future. These tasks are complicated by the influence of several objective factors that have emerged in the 1980's (such as drought, which has inflicted great damage on our agriculture, and hence our entire economy, for three years in a row). It must also be considered that . . . [these] plans are being carried out today in a deteriorated international situation.

A word on "empire"

Since Dec. 13, the pitch of Soviet denunciations of "imperialism" and, in particular, Western intelligence services for allegedly masterminding the Polish crisis has leapt up an interval. A series of Soviet commentaries in the first days of 1982, however, confirmed that something more than another round of sniping at the United States is involved. The Soviet media, with *Krasnaya Zvezda* in the lead, took aim at the more sophisticated global strategies of Britain, at Lord Carrington and other lords who had counted on becoming Moscow's chief interlocutors when Russia and America had been irrevocably set at loggerheads.

From *Krasnaya Zvezda's* V. Pustov, Jan. 3:

British Foreign Minister Lord Carrington is energetically promoting the idea of forming, inside the "Common Market," a standing body to coordinate the foreign policies of its ten member nations. He has proposed the formation of some sort of "crisis mechanism," which would work out a unified position upon the emergence of a dangerous situation anywhere and would limit the ability of the individual countries to advance their own foreign policy initiatives. The Western press indicates that the British representative did not go further than this—toward development of the military aspects of "European cooperation"—only because he had to take into account the position of countries such as Ireland, which is not a member of NATO and opposes the transformation of the European Economic Community into a military bloc.

On Dec. 31, *Krasnaya Zvezda's* A. Leontyev compared Secretary of State Alexander Haig's outlook with that of Mussolini and with "British colonialists, [who] asserted a hundred years ago that England could not be secure until it controlled the Pamirs and Tibet."

Leontyev went on to attack the notion that there are too many people on earth, insinuating that some strategists, like the Chinese, thought nuclear war a good way to get rid of them:

Some people, like the late Mao, are trying to give a theoretical foundation to the "acceptability" of nuclear war, alluding to the fact that there are allegedly "too many" people. One professor, to whom science contributed nothing of wisdom, seriously forecast that people will become so crowded that they will suffocate each other. He even predicted that this would happen on Friday, Nov. 13, 2026. This could be avoided, he added, if there were some catastrophe like nuclear war.

It is not superfluous to add that Leontyev reported also on the relative military incompetence of top American officials like desk-general Haig, Weinberger ("even less versed in military matters"), and Reagan.

Political observer V. Matveyev of the government daily *Izvestia* picked up these themes in a Jan. 3 article:

Longing for the past! This is what made one high-ranking American official, upon receiving Mrs. Thatcher in Washington last year, practically weep aloud over the days when sea and land were ruled by the Anglo-Saxon race and such of its scions as Cecil Rhodes, Joseph Chamberlain, Curzon, Winston Churchill.

This is a way of saying that British geopolitics once more has been espied as an adversary.