PHOTO:

ON THE MEANING OF THE TRISTESSE AND THE LIE

Few saw the dissolution of the Soviet Union coming, except perhaps right before it happened. Since then, a number of experts have claimed that they did in fact foresee the breakup. The fall of the Soviet empire and its causes constitute a historical puzzle that will keep researchers occupied for a long time, and numerous explanations for the breakup have already been advanced: the US vanquished its rival in a war of military spending, the planned economy did not work, the incipient information society played a decisive role, developments in Eastern Europe brought down the empire, the ruthless exploitation of nature and people led to collapse.[1] There may, of course, be an element of truth in most of these explanations: the fall of an empire is an enormous change, an event so complex that no single explanation is likely to suffice. In any case, research on the dissolution of the Soviet Union is still in its infancy.

What is clear is that the Soviet Union dissolved despite having one of the world's largest militaries, a nuclear arsenal on par with that of the US, and an efficient penal system to keep the population in check. A bewildered political regime, the military, and the security police could only stand by and watch the process of dissolution unfold, and the collapse became a reality in just a few short years. The fall of the Soviet empire also took place in the absence of direct influence from any violent event (making the event a historical exception). In brief, the fall of the Soviet empire was *not* the result of a revolution, a coup d'état, *or* a military coup, *nor* was it the result of the empire's having lost a major world war.[2] But then what was it? Can it be described as the result of yet another period of top-down Russian reform? Or should the dissolution of the Soviet Union be viewed as a revolution, comparable to the February Revolution of 1917, or even the Bolshevik seizure of power later that same year?[3] Can the disintegration of the Soviet empire be seen as the result of some sort of Russian apocalyptic tradition in which the desire to "start anew" is the driving force?[4]

THE TRISTESSE EMERGES

The disintegration will be discussed from a somewhat different perspective in this essay. The emphasis here is on an aspect that has to some degree been in the background up to now, but which deserves to be given attention and tested as potentially important factor: *tristesse* in combination with the decreasing level of fear in the society. This paper does not claim to offer any sort of comprehensive explanatory model, but rather seeks to shed light on a generally overlooked element in the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The *tristesse* in combination with decreasing fear constituted a process that developed over a long time in what can be divided into three phases. Its origins derive from the terror that had long been used in the Soviet Union as a weapon against the people, a tool that was developed to its fullest under Stalin. This led in turn to fear and distrust becoming permanent elements of existence. Writing to Stalin from prison shortly before he was executed, Nikolai Bukharin offered this analysis: "There is something daring and magnificent in the political idea of a general purge [...] People inform on one another, giving rise to an eternal distrust of one another [...] In this way the regime has succeeded in creating a complete guarantee of its existence."[5] One historian recently observed that a silent and compliant population was a permanent consequence of Stalin's domination.[6]

In the next phase the *tristesse*, the listlessness, emerges. The notion is broader than "boredom"; it is the mixture of tedium and resignation that is found in Soviet daily life, the sense of hopelessness.[7] The *tristesse* was the antipode of the inflated proclamations, and grew out of the gap between the public lie, the propaganda, and the Soviet reality. In turn, this gap grew bigger and bigger within the Soviet system. To this must be added the disappearance of fear that became a major factor when Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed: "We can no longer live like this."[8] The *tristesse* was ultimately the product of a heavy dissatisfaction among both the party leaders and the populace, which, once the fear vanished, appears to have played an important role in the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It had a paralyzing effect on the entire society, and resulted in the failure of the attempts at reform initiated under Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Only after Gorbachev had made it clear

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that the reforms were in earnest did the system fail to implement them and instead break up.

Tristesse as a factor in the breakup of the Soviet Union does not bear solely, or even primarily, upon tangibles. It is the general hopelessness that spread throughout the society, a society in which the younger generation had no prospects for the future. This may seem paradoxical, since it could also be said that the entire Soviet state was obsessed with the future. The watchword was that sacrifices have to be made today to bring about a brighter tomorrow. The investments that were made in heavy industry and defense industries rather than in consumer goods such as food and clothing were one practical consequence of this. Under socialist realism, the culture was supposed to foster future generations of devoted citizens. There are manifold examples, but it was out of just this proclaimed reality, rather than true reality, that the *tristesse* grew. Regimented life in a totalitarian system where everything was determined by the Party ultimately became intolerable once the fear had eased. “We are waiting for change”, sang Viktor Tsoi in a popular song from the perestroika years.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) made a perceptive observation when, in 1856, he was examining the causes of the French Revolution. He noted that the most dangerous moment for a bad government is when it begins to reform itself:

> **A sovereign who seeks to relieve his subjects after a long period of oppression is lost, unless he be a man of great genius. Evils which are patiently endured when they seem inevitable, become intolerable when once the idea of escape from them is suggested.**[9]

The *tristesse* was evident even early on, at least for two authors, Ilf and Petrov. In 1931 their somewhat classical hero, Ostap Bender, made the following statement in their novel *The Golden Calf*: “During the past year I have developed very serious differences with the Soviet regime. The regime wants to build socialism, and I don’t. I find it boring.” This was written in the middle of the first five-year plan launched by Stalin, which focused on heavy industry.

Stalin ratified the violent social transformation by proclaiming “socialism in one country”, thereby rejecting Leon Trotsky’s theory of the permanent revolution and his ideas regarding a constantly evolving worldwide coup d’état. Stalin instead created his own revolution through ruthless terror. Fear became a permanent fixture of Soviet society. Despite the rewriting of history, despite the fact that literature and the arts were regulated with ideological fervor, and despite the fact that the entire system was organized to defend the revolution, it became more and more difficult to win new generations to the cause. Nikita Khrushchev tried to reform the system, and believed that his reform program meant a return to Lenin’s principles.[10] Attempting to say at least part of the truth about Stalin was one element of Khrushchev’s reforms. It was an attempt to awaken some measure of critical thinking in order to improve the system.

Another element of the reforms was economic decentralization, which was undertaken to increase efficiency and improve the material conditions of the people. Incentives to work were to be expanded without abandoning the planned economy. Khrushchev’s attempts to reform the Party and set term limits for functionaries were unsuccessful. His attempted reforms revealed the reason for the inability of the Soviet system to change – its inherent *tristesse*. Sergei Dmitriev, who was a history professor at Moscow University in the 1940s, made the following entry in his journal on March 29, 1961: “Everybody is sick and tired of Khrushchev. His foreign voyages and empty and erratic verbiage have finally reached the state of idiocy. In the public and political atmosphere one increasingly notices the signs of absolute inertia, intellectual vacuum, and a lack of purpose. There are no thoughts, no movement.”[11]

However, no less importantly and perhaps paradoxically, what Khrushchev did accomplish with his “thaw” policy was to create a sliver of hope. A hope for something different was ignited for a few years, before the Soviet Union shut down again under Leonid Brezhnev. Fedor Burlatskii, then a young employee of *Kommunist* magazine, recalls his trip to Europe on the steamship Pobeda (Victory): “I swear that this trip affected me more than twenty party congresses. I got to see a culture and a way of life that we could not have dreamed of. Khrushchev opened up the West to us – and that was an incredible event for the entire country.”[12]

That hope for something different was quashed, however, when Leonid Brezhnev rose to power, and the next eighteen years were characterized in part by “cadre stability” and growing repression. The sense of resignation spread ever further through the society in those years. All the reforms that were supposed to make the system more efficient proved to be counterproductive. Of course, according to the official statistics, the standard of living and levels of education rose. With its nuclear weapons, global fleet and numerous allies, the Soviet Union was indisputably a superpower. But the fear and *tristesse* led to stagnation (*inertsiia*) throughout the society, and the reverse was true as well. No reforms could alleviate that. Despite the general secretary’s exhortations to the people to work, the quality of Soviet production did not improve. It was during these years that the *tristesse* even began to spread in earnest among the top political leadership. It has been referred to as “spiritual sclerosis”.[13]

ON THE LIE AND THE LANGUAGE

A life of lies emerged between the propaganda – the proclaimed reality – and the actual circumstances, that is, “the terminological confusion”.[14] Changes in the language followed in the wake of the new Soviet government, inspiring, among others, George Orwell, who was one of the first to popularize the term “newspeak”. Viktor Klemperer wrote about the use of language by the Nazis.[15] In addition to being a key element in the building of a nation, language is much more. He who controls language controls the thought.

The totalitarian language was intended to serve as a tool of the ideology. The language became a powerful instrument in creating the new state, and was controlled by the Party. The young Bolshevik government was well aware of the importance of language in creating the new Soviet man.[16] The language was suffused with clichés in which nuances or meanings were altered. Words like “peace”, “party”, “worker”, and “peasant” took on their own particular ideological stamps. There were no “innocent” words; they all had their assigned interpretations.[17] Consequently only the socialist countries could, by definition, be advocates of peace, while the “enemies” were imperialists, militarists who compromised the peace. “Our party is the ruling party, and every resolution that the party congress adopts will be obligatory for the entire republic,” wrote Lenin in 1921. Words like “party” and “party member” became synonymous with “Communist Party” and “Communist”.[18] Members of other parties were referred to as renegades, fellow travelers, social traitors, and bourgeoisie lackeys. The unity of the Party was officially established at the 10th Party Congress in 1921, when the ban on factions was implemented. This unity had to be “hard, iron hard, hard as steel”.[19] When the Soviet Union began its exploration of outer space, it was always referred to as *zavoevanie kosmosa* (conquering the cosmos), while the American efforts were termed *osvoenie kosmosa* (“colonization”).[20]

Another example is the word “election”, which refers to choosing one of a number of alternatives. In the Soviet Union, elections were held with a single candidate, and the purpose of the election was to provide anything but choice. The point was to demonstrate the legitimacy of the government, particularly on the basis of the high level of voter participation (usually 99.8 percent), and to give the populace and the Party workers practice in teaching and propaganda in the service of the Party.

Over time, a linguistic gap developed between the official language, which was full of meaningless phrases, and the language actually being spoken and used by the people.

The totalitarian language is far from a rich one, but rather is exhausted, impoverished, and riddled with clichés. A study conducted in the 1980s revealed that journalists normally used about 1,500 different words to write their articles.[21] Renowned lexicographer Vladimir Dal’s dictionary from the 1960s contains roughly 200,000 words while, in the early 1980s, Soviet lexicographer Sergei Ozhegov’s version contained about 57,000. The language was filled with pat expressions, and the Party had a monopoly on their interpretation and use in the service of propaganda. As one language researcher put it: “this system of automatic thinking, of mechanical words hypnotizes the mind and paralyzes common sense.”[22]

Imre Kertész has distinguished this totalitarian language as something unique to the totalitarian dictators of the 20th century. “With the help of the well-proportioned dynamics of violence and fear, this language”, writes Kertész, “penetrates the individual’s consciousness and gradually pushes him out of himself, pushes him out of his own life.”

The language evolved into a circular model that came to “represent immutability and predictability”. It was closed to nuance or any unexpected turns of phrase.[23] The result was a widespread hopelessness, a paralysis that made the system impossible to reform. The Soviet Union began to crack under a way of life that author Alexander Solzhenitsyn characterized as living by lies. In his article “Live not by Lies” (1974) he wrote: “For violence has nothing to cover itself with but lies,

and lies can only persist through violence. And it is not every day and not on every shoulder that violence brings down its heavy hand: It demands of us only obedience to lies and a daily participation in deceit – all loyalty lies in that."[24]

Václav Havel describes a phenomenon similar to the one noted by Solzhenitsyn. A manager at a grocery store hangs a sign in the window bearing the slogan: "Workers of the world, unite!" Why? Not doing so would be tantamount to revolting against the system. Taking the sign down would have had immediate consequences: he would have lost his position and been demoted, his salary would have been reduced, the continued education of his children would have been put at risk, and his workmates would have shunned him. But by putting up the sign, whose words meant nothing, the store manager contributed to the lie in the system, to the maintenance of order in a false system. In brief, he was imprisoned in a dictated existence, with no room to maneuver.

ON THE CONSTITUTION AND RESEARCH

The constitution also reflected the public lie.[25] The constitution of a state governed by law takes precedence over its other laws and ordinances; the letter and, perhaps most importantly, the spirit of a constitution is respected. In the Soviet Union the purpose of the constitution was to serve the Communist Party, and thus the State, in order to create the ideal society. It became one of the Party's tools, an ideological and political document, rather than the fundamental body of law on which a state governed by law rests. Interestingly enough, and in addition to the three major revisions of the constitution, it was subject to constant amendment at various times, and altogether the three Soviet versions were revised more than 50 times. The Soviet constitutions failed to fulfill the purpose of a constitution, which is to regulate and limit the power of the government, to protect the individual from that power, and to provide a framework for the legal system. The constitutions were instead part of the Party's ideological propaganda apparatus, and the Soviet constitution was asserted to be the "world's most democratic" as far back as 1936.

The first constitution, which dates from January 1924, did not mention the Communist Party, even though it was already the ruling government body in the Soviet Union.[26]

Research in the Soviet Union, especially research in history and the social sciences, was particularly affected by the totalitarian language and the ideological strait jacket. When new findings were to be reported, they were carefully packaged in the peculiar forms of the totalitarian language in such a way that they fit into the ideological format. And that particular ideology, Marxism-Leninism, had devastating consequences for the writing of history. As early as 1931, Stalin determined that what was important in writing history was not the sources, but rather a "correct attitude".[27] Decrees were issued on how history had to be presented. The former head of the Russian state archives, Rudolf Pikhoia, describes the many books about the recent history of the Soviet Union that were produced during the Soviet era as follows: "After having read these books, I thought: this is interesting, akin to science, and there are literature and source references. But what country are they about? I have not lived in that country."[28] Furthermore, research that is rooted in received dogma does not generate new knowledge – that was never its purpose – and thus becomes superfluous and uninteresting. The researchers were mired in *tristesse*, even if many of them had good intentions. The bitterness over, as well as insight into, these deficiencies is discernible in the introduction to one of the most recent works on Russian history in the 20th century, which states that the book is an account of facts and people within a context, a story "without impersonal descriptions of 'objective processes' or 'mobile forces'".[29]

Václav Havel wrote of this *tristesse* early on. In his essay "Stories and Totalitarianism" he reveals his thoughts on the consequences of the ideological writing of history: "Totalitarian power brought bureaucratic order into the living disorder of history and thus effectively anesthetized it." He points to the writing of history having been characterized by a well-arranged game of conformities, social formations, and conditions of production. "The tension and thrill in real events were dismissed as accidental and therefore unworthy of the attention of scholarship. History became boredom." This had consequences for people's lives as well.

> **The asthma our society is now suffering from is a natural continuation of the war that intellectual arrogance once declared on the story, on history, and thus on life itself. Boredom has jumped out of the history textbooks and into real life.**

Yet another important element in Soviet society was the attempt to create the new Soviet man: an unselfish, ideologically irreproachable member of society who constantly worked efficiently in the best interests of society: Alexander Zinoviev's *homo sovieticus*. Random chance was not recognized as a factor in people's existence; there was no accommodation for the unexpected or the insightful in a society founded on an ideology that had scientific pretensions. One of the characteristics of the new Soviet man was that he would rise above everyday life; for instance, he would never consider drinking or smoking, the reason being that, in his ideological fervor, he would be too busy building the communist future. This new man never became a reality. Instead, alcohol abuse increased and the birth rate fell (except in Central Asia). And it was a population that spent a lot of its time standing in line.

The Soviet lines in which people spent so much of their time serve to illustrate the *tristesse* as well. These lines were a part of Soviet life from cradle to grave, and even a little longer, since "burials almost always entailed a wait".[30] Standing in line was integral to the Soviet economy, which was a shortage economy. This did not prevent the Soviet line from developing its own dynamic and culture. But it is telling that, despite all the time people spent in them, the lines never served as grounds for extensive criticism of the Soviet system. There was not particularly a lot of conversation in the lines, according to Rubinov, and the sense of powerlessness was intense – but no one denies that they were boring.[31]

ATTEMPTS AT RESISTANCE

The *tristesse* thus evolved into a product of, among other factors, the mendacity of Soviet society, the life of lies identified by Solzhenitsyn. The younger generations had little or no means of influencing their predetermined (by the State) future, and the revolutionary slogans rang hollow. Opposition movements arose out of this now and then, at least in the bigger cities. In the mid-1950s, young people in the big cities began protesting in a somewhat peculiar way, but also in a way that took an obvious poke at the *tristesse* in evidence even then. They wore colorful clothing and listened to (forbidden) jazz music, and went under the name of *stiljagi*.[32] They were tired of the cultural mandates of social realism, and interested in, for example, abstract art. The government's countermeasures consisted of a combination of public hectoring of the movement (with young people from the Komsomol being sent out to cut up the colorful clothes) and repression by the security service. The movement died out.[33]

The *samizdat* and *tamizdat* literature that began to be spread underground represented another countermovement. Typewritten copies of forbidden works by Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelstam, Boris Pasternak, Alexander Solzhenitsyn and others were read. This phenomenon did not end until Mikhail Gorbachev lifted censorship and it became possible to start printing the books in the Soviet Union.

The noted dissident movement could also be said to have been a countermovement against the growing *tristesse*. The dissidents were officially painted as advocates of "false" ideas, in contrast to the Communist Party's "scientific truth". They assayed a sort of underground liberation movement. These were people from the big cities who had intellectual interests and, often, networks of former camp inmates, with a knowledge of foreign literature, art, and contemporary liberal ideas.

As they wearied of the lies, top political leaders and members of society began to demand real change.

THE LETHARGY THAT DEVELOPED

Even the top officials ultimately seemed bored, prisoners of their own rhetoric, with no means of breaking free of the slogans, the lies, the decreed existence. From Brezhnev's stagnation period and a few tired attempts at change by superannuated general secretaries, the limit was finally reached. Viewed from this perspective, Gorbachev's reforms can be seen as an attempt to alleviate the *tristesse*. Gorbachev and the other reformers initially diagnosed the Soviet system's problem as follows. In December 1986 Gorbachev noted: "We are plagued by conservatism, complacency, inertia and an unwillingness to live in a new way. [...] And everything will depend on reforming our psychology."[34]

By the mid-1980s, even the mighty armed forces (with a total of some five million men) could be said to have become corrupted by the *tristesse*. Their inability to respond when a private German citizen, Mathias Rust, flew his little sports plane and landed in Moscow's Red Square on May 28, 1987, can be seen as an example. Afterwards, Anatoly Chernyaev described the officer corps as follows in an internal memo: "They are mired in routine, and serve out their time instead of serving the Motherland."[35] Nor was it unusual for the military to be used by the State for patently non-military activities, such as helping out on the farms at harvest time. Certainly there were parts of the military forces that functioned well, but it appears that even they began to be affected by the growing *tristesse*.

Gorbachev concentrated his efforts mainly in three areas, all of which were intended to lift the country out of its widespread lethargy. First he launched perestroika, the economic reforms that led to the incorporation of a degree of private profit motive into the Soviet plan economy. Then came glasnost, or openness, which made it possible to start publishing books that had formerly been forbidden. Glasnost played an important role in diminishing the fear and then making it vanish entirely. Lastly came *demokratizatsiia*, the attempts to introduce an element of pluralism into Soviet political life. Once these reforms actually started to mean something, the system could not be saved. The gap between the proclaimed reality and the actual state of affairs had grown too great. Or to put it another way: "The more immovable the system appeared, the more it separated itself from its asserted reality."[36] Once the fear disappeared, it became possible to overcome the paralyzing power of the lies and the *tristesse*, and the entire empire fell apart.

How then are we to view the breakup of the Soviet Union? As noted above, various explanations for its dissolution have and will continue to be offered, both internally and externally. The significance of the lie and the *tristesse* has been elucidated here as a complement to other explanatory models. They grew, in a third phase, out of the terror and fear that initially came to be a part of the Soviet system. The Soviet Union was not unique in this regard. Engendering *tristesse* among large segments of their populations appears to be a trait totalitarian systems share.[37] Naturally this does not prevent individuals from occasionally being able to work within the system and find it satisfactory. All writing of history, not just about Russia, is about nuance, seeking out what is particular to each time in order to clarify and explain a broader context. From this perspective, it may be noted that the dissolution of the Soviet Union appears to have depended in large measure on internal factors, where *tristesse* and mendacity, combined with diminishing fear, contributed to the breakup of the empire. ■

Note — An abbreviated version of this article appeared in *Tvärsnitt* magazine (1:2009), which is published by the Swedish Research Council.

1 The literature in this area is extensive. Some of the earliest works on the subject are listed here: Michael Kort, *The Soviet Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the USSR*, New York 1993; Martin Malia, The *Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991*, New York 1994; Scott Shane, *Dismantling Utopia: How Information Ended the Soviet Union*, Chicago 1994. Russian research was initially characterized by the publication of large quantities of archive documents and memoirs - valuable sources, but not syntheses. Noteworthy works in the large body of literature that has begun to emerge on the subject more recently include Rudolf Pikhoia, *Sovietskii soiuz: Istoriia vlasti 1945-1991*, Novosibirsk 2000, and Jegor Gaidar, *Gibel' imperii*, Moscow 2006.

2 Gudrun Persson, *Varför föll Sovjetunionen*? [Why did the Soviet Union fall?] Stockholm 2006, p. 6.

3 Vladimir Mau & Irina Starodubrovskaya, *The Challenge of Revolution*, Oxford 2001, p. 32 et seq.

4 Rudolf Pikhoia, *Sovetskii soiuz*, p. 639.

5 Bukharin's letter to Stalin, December 10, 1937, published in J. Arch Getty & Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, New Haven 1999, pp. 556-560.

6 Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, London 2007, p. xxxi

7 There is as yet no accepted scientific definition for the term, but it has been documented and discussed. An attempt is made here to define the term "tristesse" and then use it as a part of and complement to other explanatory models for the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

8 Gorbachev was quoting the title of a documentary by film director Stanislav Govorukhin.

9 Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution*, New York 1856, p. 214.

10 One of the best overviews of Khrushchev and his reform policies to date is William Taubman's *Khrushchev: The Man, His Era*, London 2003. An interesting contemporaneous book about Khrushchev was written by Alexander Werth, *The Khrushchev Phase*, London 1961.

11 Quoted in Andrei Zubov, *Istoriia Rossii: XX vek, 1939-2007*, Moscow 2009, p. 364.

12 Quoted in Zubov, *Istoriia 1939-2007*, p. 333.

13 Zubov, *Istoriia 1939-2007*, pp. 503-505.

14 Persson, *Varför föll...*, p. 31.

15 Viktor Klemperer, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen*, Leipzig 1975. The book was first published in 1947.

16 Françoise Thom, *La langue de bois*, Paris 1987, p. 128 et seq.

17 Thom, *La langue*, p. 25.

18 Afanasii Matveevich Selishchev, *Iazyk revolutionnoi epokhi: Iz nabliudenii nad russkim iazykom poslednykh let 1917-1926*, Moscow 1928, p. 98, 193.

19 Selishchev, *Iazyk*, p. 99.

20 Thom, *La langue*, p. 25.

21 Thom, *La langue*, p. 124.

22 Thom, *La langue*, p. 211.

23 Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*, Princeton 2006, p. 284.

24 The article is dated 1974-02-12. It was distributed underground in the Soviet Union, but published in the West. (A. Solzhenitsyn, *Zhit' ne po lzhi*, Paris, 1975.) It was first published officially in the Soviet Union in 1989. It is currently available on the Internet; cf. http://www.kulichki.com/inkwell/text/hudlit/ruslit/solzheni/solzh_p02.htm. Downloaded 2010-01-14.

25 Gudrun Persson, "Ryssland - på spaning efter en konstitution" [Russia – in search of a constitution] in Anders Mellbourn (ed.), *Författningskulturer i jämförelse* [A comparison of constitutional cultures], Stockholm 2009, pp. 109-122.

26 A constitution was adopted for the Russian Socialist Federal Republic back in July of 1918. It, too, failed to mention the Communist Party.

27 Zubov, *Istoriia Rossii*,, p. 933.

28 Pikhoia, *Sovietskii soiuz*, p. 643.

29 Zubov, *1894-1939*, pp. 5-6.

30 Anatoly Rubinov, *Strasti na kazhdyj den' ili etika i estetika ocheredi*, unpublished, 1990, p. 1. – A special thanks to Lars Kleberg, who generously lent out a copy of Rubinov's essay.

31 Rubinov, *Strasti*, p. 10.

32 Major thanks to Elisabeth Hedborg, who drew my attention to this.

33 The movement appeals to modern Russia, and a film about it that was released in 2008 became very popular. The film, *Stiliagi*, was also awarded a prize for best film of the year.

34 Anatoly Chernyaev, *My Six Years With Gorbachev*, Pennsylvania 2000, pp. 92-93.

35 Chernyaev, *My Six Years*, p. 117.

36 Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, p. 295.

37 Ingemar Karlsson & Arne Ruth, *Samhället som teater: Estetik and politik i Tredje riket* [Society as theater: Aesthetics and politics in the Third Reich], Stockholm 1984, p. 21.