

There were mutinies, notably the 1825 Decembrist (Guards) revolt against the accession of Nicholas I; the Petrograd garrison's defection in 1917; and the Kronstadt (Fleet) revolt of 1921, which, as Lenin said, "lit up reality better than anything else", and led to Lenin's New Economic Policy. Yet the changes they wrought reflected the larger dynamics of which they were part, not the nature of their metier—they were societal agents, not military.

Nevertheless, history reminds us that notions of role and duty are not always synonymous with status quo; they may also serve forces of societal change. The Army as a whole has never truly led such forces of change. But it has in the past signalled the death of the old order, as when Marshal Alexsey Brusilov and many of the Tsar's finest officers "stood down" in 1917, and it has been decisive in defining the new, as when these officers rallied to the Red Army after the Polish invasion, in 1920.<sup>2</sup>

In August 1991, also, the Army effectively "stood down", thwarting the coup plotters' attempt to revive the old order. The voices of Russian President Boris Yeltsin at the Russian Parliament, Vice President Alexander Rutskoi on Moscow's Ekho radio, and Mayor Anatoly Sobchak in Leningrad signalled societal change. But it was the physical intervention of some of the armed forces' premier units that protected, and thus confirmed change.

By Summer 1992, and even more pronouncedly in September 1993, when Yeltsin suspended legislature and constitution and declared personal rule, the Army had also become instrumental in defining the evolution and nature of that change. To understand the winds of change, the crucible of revolution, and the nature of the new, emerging order, however, one must first go back to 1988.

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### From Revolution Controlled to Revolution Unleashed

Elected General Secretary in 1985, Michail Gorbachev hoisted the banner of Revolution Controlled. His election signalled acceptance of the thesis first put forward by Michail Suslov, the Party's old ideologue, in 1977, that there was now dangerous contradiction between a fossilized Party-rule superstructure and a much better educated, more sophisticated population base; the former **must** be reformed, to reflect the demands and aspirations of the latter. Gorbachev embraced Nikita Khrushchev's failed slogans of "Return of Socialist Legality...and Leninist Norms", and re-packaged them in calls for **Glasnost** (openness) and **Perestroika** (re-building). His goal was that of Czechoslovakia's Alexander Dubcek, crushed by Soviet tanks in 1968: Communism with a Human Face—or Social Democracy.<sup>3</sup>

The socio-economic attempt to rebuild was four-pronged.<sup>4</sup> There were campaigns against corruption and alcoholism (the initial focus also of former General Secretary Juri Andropov's reform agenda, before his untimely death in 1983). There was a significant freeing of central controls and increased acceptance of independent entrepreneurship, at least in the services and small business sectors. Administrative and production facilities seen to be inefficient were reorganized—though, as with Khrushchev's similar efforts, the new constructs often